

GFSI Conference Agenda

DAY 1 - 24th March

A Warm Welcome to the GFSI Conference 2026

8:15 am - 8:45 am

Join moderator Isabelle Kumar, as she opens the GFSI 2026 conference alongside Sean Summers, Group CEO of Pick n Pay and Wai-Chan Chan, Managing Director of The Consumer Goods Forum. Together, they will set the stage for three days of collaboration, innovation and shared commitment to advancing food safety worldwide.

Location: Plenary Hall

Speakers

Isabelle KUMAR, Presenter and Journalist - Moderator

Sean SUMMERS, Group CEO, Pick n Pay

Wai-Chan CHAN, Managing Director, The Consumer Goods Forum

The GFSI Conference After 25 Years: Looking Back & Looking Forward

8:45 am - 9:15 am

Join Elizabeth Andoh-Kesson of GFSI, Amy Parks of Dole plc and Kazuaki Miyagishima of AEON, as they celebrate 25 years of the GFSI Conference. This session reflects on GFSI's global impact, achievements and lessons learned, while exploring how inclusivity and collaboration will shape the food safety ecosystem going forward. From evolving CPO engagement to strengthening trust and transparency, this milestone conversation invites all participants to join in defining the future of food safety together.

Location: Plenary Hall

Speakers

Isabelle KUMAR, Presenter and Journalist - Moderator

Elizabeth ANDOH-KESSON, GFSI Interim Director, The Consumer Goods Forum

Kazuaki MIYAGISHIMA, Director, Research Institute for Food Safety, Aeon Co. LTD

Amy PARKS, Director, Global FSQA Governance and Regulatory Compliance, Dole plc

Charting Canada's Food Safety Future with Health Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency

9:15 am - 10:00 am

Join Dr. Evelyn C. Soo of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and Dr. Joyce Irene Boye of Health Canada as they explore how they are collaboratively addressing today's food safety challenges while building resilience for tomorrow. Delegates will discover how CFIA and Health Canada are leveraging

current tools and emerging technologies – including innovative approaches like reliance, artificial intelligence (AI), advances in data modelling and digital traceability, etc. – to strengthen Canada's food safety system, while highlighting the importance of cross-agency collaboration in an evolving food safety landscape. Whether you're navigating today's pressures or preparing for future challenges, this session offers valuable insights into how leading regulatory organizations are working together to protect consumers and the integrity of our food supply.

Location: Plenary Hall

Speakers

Isabelle KUMAR, Presenter and Journalist - Moderator

Dr. Joyce Irene BOYE, Director General, Food and Nutrition Directorate, Health Products and Food Branch, Health Canada

Dr. Evelyn C. SOO, PhD, Executive Director, Food Safety and Consumer Protection, Policy and Programs Branch, Canadian Food Inspection Agency

Networking Break - kindly hosted by Kerry Group

10:00 am - 11:00 am

Exhibition Hall

Tech Talk: kindly hosted by SGS Nexus

10:15 am - 10:30 am

Turn Regulatory Blind Spots into Competitive Advantage

Missing even a single local regulatory update can lead to delays, recalls or stalled market entry – a real and familiar risk for teams working across multiple regions and supplier networks. But what if you could spot these changes early enough to act with confidence instead of reacting under pressure?

That's exactly what Nidhi Chaturvedi will address in her Tech Talk featuring [SGS Nexus](#).

What she'll cover:

- The Challenge: Managing the overwhelming volume of global food safety data and changing legislation without drowning in spreadsheets
- The Solution: AI-powered tools that deliver insights and flag relevant changes before they become problems

Key Takeaways:

- How to move from manual, reactive compliance tracking to AI-driven, predictive regulatory intelligence
- How to prioritize the truly relevant regulatory signals across countries, categories and suppliers
- How leading food companies use regulatory foresight as a strategic advantage, not just a compliance task

Location: Presentation Theatre in the Exhibition Hall

Speakers

Nidhi CHATURVEDI, Business Development Manager, SGS Nexus

Tech Talk: kindly hosted by Rentokil Initial

10:35 am - 10:50 am

Rodents are a relentless force, opportunists and masters of shadows. They can use hard-to-reach or unmanned areas in your facility as highways to move around, causing contamination and damage, all while going unnoticed.

So, it's important to stop them in their tracks. It's time to adopt a strategy that will keep you one step ahead of pests.

Join Marc Potzler for our 15-minute tech talk to find out how to fortify facilities from the outside in. Shifting from reactive pest control to a proactive pest management approach, designed to protect the future of our food supply chain. With a digitally connected ecosystem, enhanced by AI-powered camera technology, for unparalleled insights and a whole new level of visibility and protection. It's pest control that's always on watch, so you don't have to be.

Do you want to wait for the pest to reveal itself? Or do you want to be the one watching?

Location: Presentation Theatre in the Exhibition Hall

Speakers

Marc POTZLER, Technical Services Manager, BCE, PCQI, Rentokil Initial

Safeguarding Trust: The Retail Business Case for Food Safety at Loblaw Companies Limited

11:00 am - 11:30 am

Mary MacIsaac, EVP and CMO of Loblaw Companies Limited, joins moderator Isabelle Kumar to discuss how food safety underpins business decision-making and consumer trust. This session explores inclusivity in the food safety ecosystem, the challenges shaping modern retail and the strategic innovations guiding Loblaw's approach. Attendees will gain insights into how certification, supplier collaboration and evolving retail technologies are driving food safety excellence across the supply chain.

Location: Plenary Hall

Speakers

Isabelle KUMAR, Presenter and Journalist - Moderator

Mary MacISAAC, Executive Vice President & Chief Marketing Officer (CMO), Loblaw Companies Limited

From Compliance to Credibility: The Next Frontier in Food Traceability

11:30 am - 12:00 pm

This panel will explore how companies can move beyond compliance to build real credibility in today's increasingly complex food supply chains.

Experts from a leading processor, a certification label, and an animal health company will discuss how traceability, scientific verification and connected solutions strengthen transparency, protect consumers, and drive business value.

The session will also highlight how DNA integrity safeguards premium concepts and ensures a level playing field for farmers who go the extra mile — turning additional efforts into stronger consumer trust and brand reputation.

Location: Plenary Hall

Speakers

Catherine DORFMAN, Strategic Solutions and Partnerships Lead, Global Technology Solutions, Merck Animal Health

Dr. Veronika WEBER, Chief Sustainability Officer, Vion Food Group

Susanne MAASSEN, Managing Director, Better Life Quality Mark Foundation (Stichting Beter Leven keurmerk)

Aurélië MANSORD BILLIEZ, DNA TraceBack® EURAM head, Merck Animal Health

Networking Lunch - kindly hosted by The Coca-Cola Company

12:00 pm - 1:30 pm

Exhibition Hall

Special Session - kindly hosted by Ecolab

1:30 pm - 2:15 pm

Data-Driven Food Safety: Everyone has a Vital Role

In an interactive Q&A format, discover how data and AI are reshaping food safety practices across the value chain, providing insights that lead to real, practical improvements. This session will highlight how leadership across the value chain can use data-driven insights and tools – including predictive analytics and AI – to drive meaningful improvements and achieve a safer, more efficient system.

Key Takeaways:

Explore how a digital ecosystem contributes to delivering measurable outcomes and decreases food safety risk through visibility, insights, and guidance.

- **AI Models:** Learn the distinct roles of generative AI and agentic AI in food safety and how you can apply either or both into your food safety programs.
- **Enhancing Human Performance:** Explore ideas for using AI to standardize routine tasks and how it can help train your team members.
- **Roadmap to Adoption:** Leaders will discuss how their teams have responded to AI integration and how to navigate change culture around AI tools.
- **Real-World Applications:** Gain practical examples of AI adoption in food safety, highlighting current successes and what's next.

Location: Breakout 1

Speakers

Lisa ROBINSON, VP Global Food Safety & Public Health, Ecolab Inc.

Tola ALADE-LAMBO, VP, Food Safety and Quality, McCain Foods

Catherine COSBY, Senior Director, Food Safety and Regulatory Compliance, The Kroger Co.

Kevin DOYLE, SVP and Chief Digital Officer, Ecolab Digital

Pavlos FRAGKOPOULOS, Global Quality Management Director, Mars Petcare

Gary van BREDA, Director, Global Food Safety (Food & Packaging Suppliers) and Consumer Product Safety, McDonald's

Special Session: kindly hosted by Kersia

1:30 pm - 2:15 pm

From Audit Volume to Audit Value - When More Audits Stop Making Us Safer

Food safety, quality and sustainability audits have never been more extensive. Yet many organisations face a growing and often unspoken reality: despite more audits, more dashboards and more standards, it is becoming harder to know what truly reduces risk.

This is not because audits have failed — but because the audit system has grown faster than organisations' capacity to operate it.

Expectations continue to rise, while time, specialist skills, digital fluency and cross-functional coordination struggle to keep pace.

This session explores what happens when audit demand outgrows organisational capacity, and why this can lead to:

- audit overload and competing priorities
- digital systems that exist but their potential is not fully exploited
- sustainability and food safety being run in parallel not as one system
- a growing gap between compliance and real confidence

Rather than questioning the value of audits, the discussion focuses on how audit systems can be designed so people can realistically run them, trust them and act on them.

The session will combine a framing presentation with a panel discussion bringing together different perspectives on how leading organisations are working to close the gap between audit pressure and operational reality.

Participants will leave with:

- a way to distinguish audit activity from audit value
- insight into why digitalisation does not automatically improve risk management
- practical ideas for dealing with capacity, skills and ownership gaps
- examples of how organisations are breaking silos between food safety, sustainability and operations

As regulatory, customer and sustainability expectations continue to rise, organisations are being asked to rely on audits more than ever before. Yet many leaders experience a growing disconnect between how much is being audited and how confident they feel about their risks.

This session offers a forum to examine that gap — and to explore how organisations can strengthen both compliance and confidence in a more integrated way.

How do we stop auditing more — and start understanding better?

Location: Breakout 2

Speakers

Katrin TURVEY, Vice President, Global Food Safety for Key Accounts, Kersia

Cath CHAPMAN, Global Head of Food Key Accounts, Kersia

Sabahnur DEMIRCI, Vice President, Expert Partners - North America, Mérieux NutriSciences

Patrick HUSMANN, Quality & CSR Director, Lactalis

Nada GALESNE-ARMAND, Group Quality & Food Safety Director, Refresco

Food Safety Innovation - The Future of Catering

2:30 pm - 3:45 pm

Modern catering operations face unprecedented challenges in maintaining food safety and quality standards while scaling production across dynamic, fast-paced environments. This session explores how leading catering organizations are leveraging AI, data analytics and digital innovation to transform their operations – from intelligent menu design and real-time supply chain monitoring to predictive demand planning and advanced food safety management. Participants will gain practical insights into navigating the complexities of high-volume production, diverse regulatory requirements and evolving consumer expectations, whilst integrating cutting-edge solutions that enhance operational agility, end-to-end traceability and customer satisfaction while upholding the highest food safety standards.

Location: Breakout 1

Speakers

Isabelle KUMAR, Presenter and Journalist - Moderator

Dom MITIAL, Vice President of Food Safety & Quality, Goldbergs Group

Tom FORD, Vice President, Food Safety and Quality Assurance, Compass Group

From Store to Door - Ensuring Food Safety Excellence & Consumer Trust in Modern Retail

2:30 pm - 3:45 pm

This session explores how retailers build consumer trust through food safety excellence at every touchpoint – from what customers see in-store to the critical last-mile delivery experience. As online ordering and third-party delivery services expand, managing temperature control and hygiene standards during delivery has become as vital as maintaining visible food safety practices on the store floor. Experts will discuss practical strategies for addressing food safety challenges in retail environments and examine successful food safety programs that strengthen brand loyalty and consumer trust. Attendees will gain actionable insights into strengthening food safety operations across all channels, building consumer confidence and fostering lasting trust in an evolving retail landscape.

Location: Breakout 2

Speakers

Cindy JENKS, General Manager , Pick n Pay

Vaneska MATTOS, Vice President - Food Safety, Quality Assurance and Regulatory Affairs, Loblaw Companies Limited

Philip BRONSTEIN, PhD, SVP, Global Food Safety and Quality Assurance, OSI Group, LLC

Kelvin CHEN, Head of QA , Wu-mart & GFSI Steering Committee Member

Robin FORGEY, Food Safety and Quality Assurance, Costco Wholesale

Workshop: The Future of Food Safety Auditing - First-Come, First-Served

2:30 pm - 3:45 pm

Join this interactive workshop series designed to foster open discussion and collaboration on the evolving landscape of food safety auditing. Guided by expert facilitators, participants will explore key questions and challenges shaping audit practices of tomorrow. Through inclusive small-group discussions and hands-on engagement, each session will generate practical insights contributing to

a post-conference paper that will help define GFSI's future auditing approach.

*Separate registration is required for the workshop (at no additional cost) and places will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. An RSVP link will be sent to all registered delegates who have completed their registration fee payment.

Location: Plenary Hall

Speakers

Jane SIEBUM, Chief Executive Officer, Freshcare Ltd

Stefano CREA, Senior Vice President, Global Director Market & Industries, DNV

Eduardo Martinez DEBEZA, Head of Quality Assurance International & Global QA CoE, Restaurant Brands International

Adam ZAMORSKI, Global Director for Quality Auditing, Mondelēz International

Networking Break

3:45 pm - 4:45 pm

Exhibition Hall

Tech Talk: kindly hosted by GS1

4:00 pm - 4:15 pm

Visibility Feeds Safety: GS1 Standards and a Smarter, Safer Food Chain

Ensuring food safety in a complex, globalized supply chain depends on one foundational capability: true, end-to-end visibility. This 15-minute tech talk explores how that visibility is only possible when every product, location, and trading partner speaks the same global digital language. The GS1 System of Standards provides that common language through its system of unique identification, modern data-capture technologies, and interoperable data-sharing frameworks that allow organizations to track, trace, and trust the movement of food across borders and through every node of the supply chain.

Attendees will gain a clear understanding of how GS1 identifiers—for products, locations, and entities—enable precise traceability; how next-generation capture tools such as 2D barcodes and RFID unlock richer, real-time data; and how standards like EPCIS support the exchange of Critical Tracking Events and Key Data Elements essential for rapid response and risk reduction. Participants will leave with a concise, practical understanding of how GS1 standards strengthen food safety programs, streamline regulatory alignment, and build a more transparent and resilient global food system.

Key takeaways:

- **Supply chain visibility is essential to food safety**

Modern food safety programs depend on real-time, end-to-end visibility to identify risks, respond quickly, and protect consumers. GS1 standards create a common language that makes visibility possible.

- **The foundation is identification**

A standardized system of globally unique identifiers across products, locations, and entities ensures every part of the supply chain is referencing the same precise data.

- **Next-generation data carriers unlock richer, more actionable information**

Technologies such as 2D barcodes and RFID enable faster, more accurate data collection across the

supply chain.

· **EPCIS enables sharing of Critical Tracking Events and Key Data Elements**

Standardized data exchange supports interoperable traceability and strengthens global food safety collaboration.

Location: Presentation Theatre in the Exhibition Hall

Speakers

Debby ATALLAH, Senior Vice President, Global Standards, GS1 Canada

Michelle COVEY, Vice President of Customer Success, GS1 US

Tech Talk: kindly hosted by SGS Nexus

4:20 pm - 4:35 pm

Leveraging AI to Transform Static Spreadsheets into Dynamic, Audit-Ready Fraud & Vulnerability Assessment

Food fraud and adulteration risks are evolving faster than traditional vulnerability assessment models can capture. While GFSI-recognized schemes require documented, risk-based food fraud vulnerability assessments (FFVAs), many organizations still rely on static, spreadsheet-based methodologies that are reviewed annually and supported by fragmented intelligence sources.

This technical session will present how AI-powered global risk intelligence can transform food fraud vulnerability assessment into a continuous, evidence-based prevention system. By structuring data from recalls, border rejections, import refusals, enforcement actions, and emerging fraud alerts, organizations can dynamically reassess ingredient and supplier exposure in near real time. The session will demonstrate how external signals can be translated into structured risk scoring models that strengthen preventive controls, enhance audit readiness, and support more proactive sourcing and mitigation strategies in alignment with evolving 2026 food fraud expectations.

Location: Presentation Theatre in the Exhibition Hall

Speakers

Giannis STOITSIS, CTO, SGS Nexus

Georgia BRISENIU, Marketing Manager, SGS Nexus

Beyond Compliance: Rethinking Auditing to Deliver Real Food Safety Outcomes

4:45 pm - 5:30 pm

Maintaining the highest standards of food safety and quality is both a shared industry responsibility and a cornerstone of consumer trust. Since its establishment in 2000, the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) has aimed to harmonize expectations and reduce audit duplication. Ultimately, the goal of a food safety audit is to protect the consumer by verifying that a food operation consistently produces safe foods and not merely to achieve a passing score or meet a checklist. However, despite significant increases in audits carried out under the GFSI umbrella, customer addendums, and new revisions to the Certification Program Owner standards, the number of recalls continues to rise. This raises 2 questions, is it right to expect audits to reduce recall numbers and are audits by GFSI programs effectively measuring the elements that genuinely prevent food safety events, or do they miss what truly matters?

Drawing on extensive hands-on experience across diverse manufacturing environments, this presentation examines how the current GFSI audit landscape, while well intentioned, often emphasizes procedural completeness over operational performance. The layering of scheme requirements, auditor interpretations, and customer-specific checklists can overshadow the core drivers of food safety: environmental control, hygienic design, process capability, training effectiveness, and rapid hazard response. As a result, organizations may excel in audit preparedness while still facing vulnerabilities that contribute to outbreaks, recalls, and costly rework.

With the CDC reporting roughly 48 million cases of foodborne illness annually in the United States and economic losses exceeding \$15 billion, the urgency for a more impactful approach is clear. A redesigned GFSI audit model, one that prioritizes real risk reduction, measures leading indicators, and focuses on dynamic hazard control, is essential for the industry to progress.

This presentation proposes practical strategies for transforming GFSI audits into stronger tools for prevention, focusing into how to streamline non-value-added requirements, emphasize performance-based verification, and reorient audits toward outcomes that meaningfully improve public health. By moving beyond compliance toward relevance and effectiveness, the industry can strengthen food safety systems and deliver true, measurable improvements in preventing outbreaks and recalls.

Location: Plenary Hall

Speakers

Isabelle KUMAR, Presenter and Journalist - Moderator

Dr. Alejandro MAZZOTTA, Senior Vice President of Global Quality, Food Safety and Regulatory Affairs, Chobani

Official Opening Cocktail

5:30 pm - 6:30 pm

Exhibition Hall

DAY 2 - 25th March

Workshop: Invitation Only - Strengthening Audit Integrity for Local Insights and Global Impact

7:30 am - 8:30 am

This invitation-only workshop brings GFSI Local Group members together for candid discussions on the evolving landscape of food safety auditing. Participants will explore key questions around the future of audit integrity in small-group sessions designed to foster collaboration and real-time engagement.

Location: Breakout 1

Speakers

Howard POPOOLA, Vice President - Corporate Food Technology and Regulatory Compliance & GFSI Steering Committee Co-Chair, The Kroger Co.

Heather GALE, Executive Director, CanadaGAP Program

Steering the Future of Food Safety with GFSI

8:45 am - 9:15 am

Join moderator Isabelle Kumar with GFSI Steering Committee Co-Chairs Howard Popoola of The Kroger Co. and Mark A. Fryling of General Mills, as they reflect on GFSI's recent progress and address key priorities for the year ahead. This session will spotlight GFSI's leadership in strengthening audit integrity and provide a forward-looking view of the organisation's evolving strategy. Setting the scene for Day 2, the discussion will outline the initiatives driving global collaboration and shaping the next chapter of food safety.

Location: Plenary Hall

Speakers

Isabelle KUMAR, Presenter and Journalist - Moderator

Howard POPOOLA, Vice President - Corporate Food Technology and Regulatory Compliance & GFSI Steering Committee Co-Chair, The Kroger Co.

Mark A. FRYLING, Vice President, Global Food Safety and Quality & GFSI Steering Committee Co-Chair, General Mills

Beyond Compliance: Food Safety Audits for Real-World Impact

9:15 am - 10:00 am

The food safety auditing landscape is ripe for transformation, with emerging technologies, evolving regulatory frameworks and industry innovations creating unprecedented opportunities to enhance audit effectiveness. This session explores approaches to risk assessment, data-driven inspection methodologies and stakeholder alignment strategies that are reshaping how we evaluate and ensure food safety. Join leading experts as they share solutions, case studies and actionable insights for building audit systems that deliver measurable improvements in consumer protection and industry accountability.

Location: Plenary Hall

Speakers

Alec KYRIAKIDES, Independent Food Safety Consultant & Chair of the Stakeholder Forum

Elmé COETZER-BOERSMA, CEO, Agraya GmbH

Heather GALE, Executive Director, CanadaGAP Program

Stephan TROMP, Managing Director, IFS Management GmbH

Gigi VITA, Chief Food Safety Assessment Officer at SQFI and Senior Vice President at FMI, SQFI & FMI - The Food Industry Association

Networking Break

10:00 am - 11:00 am

Exhibition Hall

Tech Talk: kindly hosted by Testo Saveris

10:15 am - 10:30 am

Language No Barrier, Science No Guesswork: Scaling Food Safety Culture through AI and Automation

The 2026 GFSI theme, “**Food Safety is Everyone’s Business**,” serves as a call to action to democratize safety protocols across every level of the supply chain. However, as labor markets shift and kitchen complexities rise, the “human element” remains the greatest variable.

This session introduces how **Testo Saveris Food** bridges the gap between high-level compliance and frontline execution. We will demonstrate how our latest hardware and software ecosystem removes the friction of language barriers and the inaccuracies of manual monitoring. By integrating Large Language Models (LLMs) and advanced thermal modeling directly into the workflow, we are enabling a culture not only focused on “doing the right thing” but one that where “everything’s done right” is engrained into daily operations.

The Three Pillars of Connected Safety

We will explore how Testo is revolutionizing process controls through three specific technical advancements:

- **Pillar 1: Breaking Language Barriers with On-Device LLMs** To make food safety “everyone’s business,” everyone must first understand the instructions. We will showcase our LLM-based software functionality that provides real-time, device-level translation. This allows a diverse workforce to interact with complex CCP (Critical Control Point) prompts in their native language, ensuring clarity, reducing training time, and eliminating the “silent risk” of misunderstood protocols.
- **Pillar 2: Automated Batch Cooking & Cooling Transitions** Manual logging during high-volume production is a recipe for error. We will detail our hardware automation that tracks the entire thermal lifecycle—from batch cooking to multi-stage cooling. By automating the hand-off between these phases, the system ensures that “Time/Temperature Control for Safety” (TCS) foods never linger in the danger zone due to human oversight.
- **Pillar 3: Non-Invasive Simulated Internal Product Temperature** We’ll dive into the science of simulated internal temperatures, where smart algorithms calculate the core temperature of a product based on ambient conditions to provide a continuous, real-time product profile.

Key Learning Objectives

- **Employee Empowerment:** Leveraging AI to foster a sense of ownership among non-native speaking staff.
- **Operational Efficiency:** Streamlining batch cooking and cooling workflows through automated hardware.
- **Data-Driven Safety:** Utilizing algorithmic simulations to maintain product integrity while ensuring 100% compliance.

Location: Presentation Theatre in the Exhibition Hall

Speakers

Stephanie BURCHARDT, Head of Subject Matter Experts for Food, Testo Saveris GmbH

Tobias MATT, Director Product Management Food, Testo Saveris GmbH

Tech Talk - kindly hosted by NSF

10:35 am - 10:50 am

From Disruption to Differentiation: How Collaboration Builds Resilient, Transparent, and Trusted Food Systems

The global food system is being reshaped by converging pressures – fragmented trade, accelerating digitalization, and rising consumer expectations around health, ethics, and transparency. These forces are increasingly interconnected, amplifying risk across supply chains and raising the stakes for consumer protection and public trust.

This session explores how collaboration across the food system – between brands, suppliers, retailers, and certification bodies strengthens shared resilience, transparency, and confidence in food safety outcomes.

Using a real world product example, we follow its journey from farm to shelf to show how trade disruption, digital vulnerability, and consumer trust intersect at each stage of the supply chain.

Participants will examine how GFSI-benchmarked certification, supplier verification, digital governance, artificial intelligence, and cross-functional collaboration support a shift from reactive risk response to proactive risk prevention and trust assurance – reinforcing food safety as a foundational pillar for protecting consumers and supporting a resilient global food system.

What this session delivers for leaders:

- **A systems-level view of risk:** Understanding how today's geopolitical, digital, and supply chain disruptions compound food safety risks across the industry
- **Practical insights on resilience:** How alignment across stakeholders strengthens prevention, preparedness, and response
- **Clarity on trust-building mechanisms:** The role of certification, verification, and governance in sustaining consumer confidence
- **A common language for collaboration:** How food safety frameworks enable consistent expectations, shared accountability, and continuous improvement across the food system
- **Actionable takeaways:** How leaders can better align food safety programs with consumer protection, transparency, and long-term system integrity

Location: Presentation Theatre in the Exhibition Hall

Speakers

Marci BURTON, Senior Client Manager, NSF

From Genomics to Metagenomics - The Next Frontier in Food Safety

11:00 am - 12:30 pm

Discover how metagenomics is transforming the future of food safety in this forward-looking session. Industry experts will demonstrate how this advanced technology reveals complex microbial ecosystems, detects unseen contaminants, and reinforces preventive control measures. Through practical case studies, participants will gain insight into how metagenomics enhances food safety diagnostics, supports bio-mapping, and drives continuous improvement throughout the supply chain.

Location: Breakout 1

Speakers

Roy KIRBY, Partner, FoodsafERM

Dr. Alejandro MAZZOTTA, Senior Vice President of Global Quality, Food Safety and Regulatory Affairs, Chobani

Marcos SANCHEZ, Associate Professor, Global Food Security, Texas Tech University

Aaron UESUGI Ph.D., Principal Scientist Global Food Safety and Quality Systems, Mondelēz International

Felipe OLIVEIRA, Chief of Technology, Data and Genomics, Neoprospecta - bioMérieux

Smart Supply Chains - Safeguarding Food Safety Behind the Shelf

11:00 am - 12:30 pm

This session examines how retailers and suppliers work together to uphold food safety long before products reach the store. Experts will explore strategies to strengthen traceability, cold chain integrity and contamination prevention across complex supply networks. Through real-world examples and innovative technologies, participants will discover how data-driven systems and risk-based oversight are enhancing transparency, accountability and trust from source to shelf.

Location: Breakout 2

Speakers

Alec KYRIAKIDES, Independent Food Safety Consultant & Chair of the Stakeholder Forum

Sanjay GUMMALLA, Ph.D., Senior Vice President of Food Safety and Scientific Affairs, American Frozen Food Institute

Amy PARKS, Director, Global FSQA Governance and Regulatory Compliance, Dole plc

Todd REDWOOD, Global Managing Director - Consumer, Retail and Food, BSI

Fabian SMITH, Global Vice President of Product Safety, Quality, and Regulatory Compliance, Cargill

Networking Lunch

12:30 pm - 1:45 pm

Exhibition Hall

Special Session: kindly hosted by bioMérieux and Mérieux NutriSciences

1:45 pm - 2:30 pm

How Can We Better Contribute to Supply Chain Robustness and Resilience?

The upcoming panel discussion will explore how shifting our collective mindset from reactive management to proactive design and industry collaboration can make food supply chains more robust and resilient. With senior industry leaders sharing concrete examples discussions will especially focus on:

- How to foster safe industry collaboration through the Trusted Third Party model
- How to adopt risk-based approaches in key supply chain verification activities
- How to improve manufacturing performance through quicker and more informed data-driven decisions and simulation

Building a resilient future requires a commitment to transparency and a willingness to share the responsibility of safety. The goal of our GFSI session is to move beyond theory and provide a “collective roadmap for success”.

Location: Breakout 1

Speakers

Roy KIRBY, Partner, FoodsafERM

Susanne GARCIA-SCHAUERMANN, Senior Vice President, Global Quality & Food Safety & Regulatory Affairs, Mondelēz International

Dr. Alejandro MAZZOTTA, Senior Vice President of Global Quality, Food Safety and Regulatory Affairs, Chobani

Raquel MEDEIROS, Head of Food Safety - Chemical Contaminants and Packaging, Nestlé
Sabahnur DEMIRCI, Vice President, Expert Partners - North America, Mérieux NutriSciences
Hannes POUSEELE, Global Solutions Architect for Data and Genomics, bioMérieux

Special Session: kindly hosted by Neogen

1:45 pm - 2:30 pm

Quality and Safety are More Than Just Boxes to Check - Protecting Food. Protecting Your Business. Protecting Consumers.

In today's global food system, quality and safety cannot be treated as mere compliance exercises. They are strategic imperatives that define brand integrity, ensure consumer trust, and drive business resilience. In an era of complex global supply chains, evolving regulations, and heightened consumer expectations, treating food safety as a compliance exercise is a risk no business can afford. During this session, leaders and experts across industry and academia will unravel the complexities of this concept and discuss how the capacity and desire to change the culture of food safety is a dynamic process. Challenges such as compliance vs. proactivity, extrinsic vs. intrinsic motivation, and the role of data and technology will be discussed. This session will challenge traditional "check-the-box" approaches and explore how leading organizations embed food safety and quality into their culture, operations, and innovation strategies. Attendees will have the opportunity to engage directly with the expert panelists and gain valuable insights tailored to their unique challenges.

Key Takeaways for Attendees:

- **Food Safety is a Key Strategy:** How embedding food safety into corporate strategy reduces risk, strengthens resilience, and drives growth beyond compliance.
- **Moving Beyond "Check-the-Box" Compliance:** Treating food safety as a mere regulatory obligation is a high-risk approach in today's global supply chain environment. The intersection of where regulations, consumer demands and diagnostic tools will be explored.
- **Culture Change is Dynamic:** Organizations must embed safety and quality into culture and operations, making them intrinsic values rather than afterthoughts. Practical steps for organizations to champion a culture where safety and quality are core business values will be discussed.
- **Global Responsibility:** Why supporting developing markets is critical - not only to protect vulnerable consumers but also to safeguard global supply chains and brand reputation. How do we influence standardization in these developing regions?
- **Transparency Builds Trust:** How transparency and accountability translate into loyalty and consumer trust. Perspectives from a Global Food Manufacturer.

Join us to discover how elevating quality and safety from regulatory obligations to strategic priorities can protect what matters most - your food, your business, and your consumers.

Location: Breakout 2

Speakers

Erin CROWLEY, Head of Global Thought Leadership, Neogen

Dr. Jeremy YARWOOD, Chief Scientific Officer, Neogen

Julian M. COX, Associate Dean (International - Emerging Markets), Faculty of Engineering, University of New South Wales (UNSW Sydney)

Robin FORGEY, Food Safety and Quality Assurance, Costco Wholesale

Dr. Jeffrey FARBER, JM Farber Global Food Safety Consulting; Adjunct Professor, Dept. of Food Science, University of Guelph

AI-Powered Food Safety - From Detection to Prevention

2:45 pm - 4:00 pm

This session highlights how AI is transforming the way the food industry anticipates and manages safety risks. Experts will showcase research innovations and real-world applications of AI in rapid pathogen detection, predictive analytics and contamination prevention. Through industry case studies, participants will gain practical insights into implementing AI-driven quality assurance systems that move food safety from reactive control to proactive protection.

Location: Breakout 1

Speakers

Deann AKINS-LEWENTHAL, Ph.D., Senior Director of Global Food Safety and Quality Systems, Mondelēz International

Mahir BHAGIA, Vice President - Chief Food Safety & Quality Assurance Officer, PepsiCo

Rozita DARA, Associate Professor, Data Strategy Director, School of Computer Science, University of Guelph

Ákos JÓZWIAK, Head of Food & Nutrition Science and AI at Syreon Research Institute, Chair of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) Advisory Group on Data

Auditing Food Safety Packaging - Ensuring Compliance and Control Across the Supply-Chain

2:45 pm - 4:00 pm

As demand for recycled content in food packaging accelerates, ensuring food safety and maintaining audit integrity across increasingly complex supply chains have never been more critical. This session examines how stakeholders verify compliance at every step – from confirming the quality of recycled materials to guaranteeing that finished packaging meets safety standards. Amid auditor shortages and overlapping certification schemes, industry leaders will share strategies to preserve trusted controls, strengthen compliance, and keep food safety verification at the heart of circular packaging innovation.

Location: Breakout 2

Speakers

Cédric DEVER, Director, Sustainability, The Consumer Goods Forum

Tola ALADE-LAMBO, VP, Food Safety and Quality, McCain Foods

Professor Carol WALLACE, Emeritus Professor of Food Safety Management, University of Central Lancashire (UK)

Filip MILOJEVIC, Research and Development Manager, Amcor

John FIELD, Chief of the Chemical Health Hazards Assessment Division, Packaging and Contaminants, Bureau of Chemical Safety, Food and Nutrition Directorate, Health Canada / Government of Canada

Workshop: The Future of Food Safety Auditing - First-Come, First-Served

2:45 pm - 4:00 pm

Join this interactive workshop series designed to foster open discussion and collaboration on the evolving landscape of food safety auditing. Guided by expert facilitators, participants will explore key questions and challenges shaping audit practices of tomorrow. Through inclusive small-group discussions and hands-on engagement, each session will generate practical insights contributing to

a post-conference paper that will help define GFSI's future auditing approach.

*Separate registration is required for the workshop (at no additional cost) and places will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. An RSVP link will be sent to all registered delegates who have completed their registration fee payment.

Location: Plenary Hall

Speakers

Alec KYRIAKIDES, Independent Food Safety Consultant & Chair of the Stakeholder Forum

Dr. Alejandro MAZZOTTA, Senior Vice President of Global Quality, Food Safety and Regulatory Affairs, Chobani

Dr. Bizhan POURKOMAILIAN, Director - Global Food Safety, Restaurant & Distribution, McDonald's

Todd REDWOOD, Global Managing Director - Consumer, Retail and Food, BSI

Networking Break

4:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Exhibition Hall

Tech Talk: kindly hosted by PathSpot

4:15 pm - 4:30 pm

Digital Handwashing, Real-World Impact: Using AI to Uplevel Food Safety Culture through a Case Study

Digital hand hygiene is transforming food safety by enabling real-time verification and behavior change at scale. McDonald's and PathSpot together will share practical insights on deploying AI-enabled handwashing programs, integrating data with safety systems, and driving team engagement. This joint McDonald's and PathSpot session brings together a global food safety leader and a technology innovator to demonstrate how AI-enabled, digital food safety systems are transforming safety from a manual, reactive task into a measurable, auditable, and preventive control.

This session highlights the shift from manual checks to technology-enabled compliance, showcasing operator-centric dashboards, AI-driven alerts, and outcomes measurement. The goal is to reduce risks, strengthen consumer trust, and support preventative food safety practices. Christine Schindler, CEO & Co-Founder of PathSpot, will share real-world evidence from deployments of AI-powered hand hygiene verification and analytics, and how these insights integrate with PathSpot's broader digital food safety platform – including temperature monitoring, labeling, task management, and compliance workflows. Dr. Bizhan Pourkomailian, Global Director of Food Safety, Restaurant & Distribution at McDonald's, will discuss operational lessons from implementing data-driven food safety programs at enterprise scale, including governance models, frontline behavior change, and ROI. Together, they will map a practical pathway for moving from manual checks to continuous, data-rich assurance – showing how digital signals across hygiene and other critical control points can trigger timely actions, prevent incidents, and strengthen food safety culture.

Location: Presentation Theatre in the Exhibition Hall

Speakers

Christine SCHINDLER, CEO & Co-Founder, PathSpot Technologies

Dr. Bizhan POURKOMAILIAN, Director - Global Food Safety, Restaurant & Distribution, McDonald's

Tech Talk: kindly hosted by LabWare

4:35 pm - 4:50 pm

Food Safety 4.0: Unifying Quality Operations

From compliance programs to predictive, connected prevention

Food Safety 4.0: Unifying Operations introduces a modern operating model for food and beverage companies seeking to move beyond periodic, compliance-driven programs toward continuous, connected, and predictive control. The presentation highlights how today's digitally enabled food systems generate constant signals from laboratories, suppliers, sanitation, production, and distribution, which require real-time interpretation and coordinated, enterprise-wide decision-making. It outlines the core principles of Food Safety 4.0, including unified risk analysis, connected intelligence across all quality and safety areas, and early-warning use cases such as sanitation drift, environmental monitoring trends, and supplier-risk detection. The session concludes with a practical roadmap for implementation, emphasizing phased pilots, strong data governance, leadership alignment, and measurable indicators that support prevention, resilience, and faster, more confident responses.

Location: Presentation Theatre in the Exhibition Hall

Speakers

John NEWTOWN, Food Safety & Quality Market Director, Digital Quality Systems, LabWare

Shaping Food Safety Policy: FDA's Vision for a Secure Food Supply

5:00 pm - 5:30 pm

Join Dr. Donald Prater, Principal Associate Commissioner for Human Foods at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, for an insightful session on the evolving landscape of food safety regulation and oversight in the United States. In his keynote address, Dr. Prater will share the FDA's strategic vision for enhancing food safety systems, addressing current challenges, and fostering innovation in regulatory approaches. The session will explore critical topics including supply chain security, regulatory adaptation to emerging technologies, and strengthening industry collaboration through initiatives like the Global Food Safety Initiative. Following the keynote, Isabelle Kumar will moderate an engaging Q&A discussion, delving into the FDA's response to current operational challenges, technological integration in food safety monitoring and strategies for building a more resilient food safety framework.

Location: Plenary Hall

Speakers

Isabelle KUMAR, Presenter and Journalist - Moderator

Dr. Donald A. PRATER, Principal Deputy Director for Human Foods, U.S. Food and Drug Administration

Beyond Compliance: The Evolving Role of Food Safety Certification

5:30 pm - 6:00 pm

Location: Plenary Hall

Speakers

Isabelle KUMAR, Presenter and Journalist - Moderator

Spir MARINAKIS, Vice President of Food Safety, Quality, Technical Services & Sanitation, Maple Leaf Foods

Official Conference Dinner - kindly hosted by Merck Animal Health

7:00 pm - 10:30 pm

19:00: Meet at the Vancouver Convention Centre (VCC) for departure to the official dinner at Science World (1455 Quebec St, Vancouver, BC V6A 3Z7).

Wayfinding staff will be available on-site to assist guests.

22:30: Last transfer departs Science World for the VCC.

DAY 3 - 26th March

Leading Change: Building a Resilient and Inclusive Food Safety Ecosystem

8:40 am - 9:00 am

Join Dirk Van de Put, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Mondelez International, to explore how executive engagement is reshaping the global food safety landscape. This discussion will examine why food safety has become a boardroom imperative and how leadership commitment fosters cultural change, resilience and trust throughout organizations. Participants will gain valuable insights into how senior executives set strategy, inspire accountability and keep food safety at the core of sustainable business success.

Location: Plenary Hall

Speakers

Dirk Van de PUT, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer , Mondelez International

Roy KIRBY, Partner, FoodsafERM

Food Safety Culture: Key Insights from Research to Practice

9:00 am - 10:00 am

Join leading voices in food safety management on what research reveals about building and sustaining strong food safety culture. Drawing on practical outcomes from our Dublin 2025 conference food safety culture workshop and review, this discussion explores the real-world elements that translate theory into practice across organisations. Building on your feedback, we've brought this essential conversation back to the agenda with fresh insights on fostering accountability, leadership engagement and continuous improvement in everyday operations.

Location: Plenary Hall

Speakers

Isabelle KUMAR, Presenter and Journalist - Moderator

Julian M. COX, Associate Dean (International - Emerging Markets), Faculty of Engineering, University of New South Wales (UNSW Sydney)

Professor Carol WALLACE, Emeritus Professor of Food Safety Management, University of Central Lancashire (UK)

Vanessa COFFMAN, Program Director of the Alliance to Stop Foodborne Illness, Stop Foodborne Illness

Bianca KOLLN, Corporate Quality & Food Safety Governance Director , Mars

Networking Break

10:00 am - 10:45 am

Exhibition Hall

Ask GFSI

10:15 am - 10:35 am

Come to the Presentation Theatre to engage directly with the GFSI team and regional offices as they address the latest on GFSI's strategic priorities and framework. Gain insights and deepen your understanding of GFSI's vision and initiatives.

Location: Presentation Theater in the Exhibition Hall

Speakers

Isabelle KUMAR, Presenter and Journalist - Moderator

Elizabeth ANDOH-KESSON, GFSI Interim Director, The Consumer Goods Forum

Franck PANDIANI, Head of GFSI Operations, The Consumer Goods Forum

Karla MIJATOVIC, GFSI Senior Technical Manager, The Consumer Goods Forum

Chayanika TALUKDAR, GFSI Community Manager, The Consumer Goods Forum

Abena Lily Nyarko AWURA, GFSI Technical Manager, The Consumer Goods Forum

Tsutomu OKUBO, Senior Manager, GFSI Japan, The Consumer Goods Forum

Yang Ying XU, General Manager, China, The Consumer Goods Forum

Next-Generation Allergen Management - Where Technology Meets Compliance

10:45 am - 12:00 pm

As undeclared allergens remain a leading cause of food recalls, this session will examine how innovation and regulatory evolution are reshaping allergen control. Experts will discuss new approaches to risk assessment, labeling and consumer transparency. Participants will explore how emerging technologies and data-driven tools are enabling more proactive, automated and compliant allergen management across global supply chains.

Location: Breakout 1

Speakers

Deann AKINS-LEWENTHAL, Ph.D., Senior Director of Global Food Safety and Quality Systems, Mondeľz International

Dr. Joseph BAUMERT, Professor in the Department of Food Science & Technology and Director of the FARRP,

University of Nebraska

Jasmine LACIS-LEE, Director Food Science Centre, Mérieux NutriSciences AQ - Director Food Science Centre & Allergen Bureau - President and Board Chair

Simon FLANAGAN, Research Fellow - Global Food Safety, Mondelēz International

The Use of Data and Machine Learning for Food Safety Management in the Food Service Sector

10:45 am - 12:00 pm

The increasing availability of digital tools and real-time data is transforming how the food service sector manages food safety. This session explores how data analytics and machine learning are being leveraged to anticipate risks, improve compliance and enhance traceability across operations. Industry leaders and food safety experts will share practical insights and case studies demonstrating how data-driven approaches can strengthen continuous improvement in food safety management systems.

Location: Breakout 2

Speakers

Isabelle KUMAR, Presenter and Journalist - Moderator

Eduardo Martinez DEBEZA, Head of Quality Assurance International & Global QA CoE, Restaurant Brands International

Robert PREVENDAR, Chief Food Safety & QA Officer, Yum! Brands

Samantha ZEPP, Director, Retail Food Safety Operations, Starbucks

Alex HOANG, Traceability and Quality Systems Manager, Chipotle Mexican Grill

Workshop: The Future of Food Safety Auditing - First-Come, First-Served

10:45 am - 12:00 pm

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Location: Plenary Hall

Speakers

Intisar KHAN, Head of Food Safety, Nestlé

Stephan TROMP, Managing Director, IFS Management GmbH

Shawna WAGNER, Vice President and General Manager for Certification Services, AIB International

Philip BRONSTEIN, PhD, SVP, Global Food Safety and Quality Assurance, OSI Group, LLC

Inspiring Trust: The Power of Science in Shaping Food Safety for Tomorrow

12:15 pm - 1:00 pm

In this inspiring keynote, Wendy Reinhardt Kapsak, President and CEO of the International Food Information Council, shares how science-based communication can restore confidence and connection between the food industry and consumers. Drawing on global insights and practical storytelling, Wendy will highlight ways to make food decisions more transparent, relatable and rooted in trust. This session offers a motivating call to action for leaders to communicate with authenticity and shape a more informed, confident food future.

Location: Plenary Hall

Speakers

Isabelle KUMAR, Presenter and Journalist - Moderator

Wendy Reinhardt KAPSAK, MS, RDN, President & CEO, International Food Information Council (IFIC)

Conference Closing Remarks

1:00 pm - 1:05 pm

Location: Plenary Hall

Speakers

Isabelle KUMAR, Presenter and Journalist - Moderator

Masterclass: Crisis to Confidence - Mastering Media Messaging - Essential Communication Skills for Food Safety Leaders - First-Come, First-Served

2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Your company's been implicated in a food poisoning outbreak. You're in a genuine crisis, the media is calling for answers, and the public needs reassurance. Clear, confident communication has moved immediately from last to first on your to-do list.

This is a real-world challenge that every high-level food safety manager might face.

We are here to help!

Join us for an engaging, interactive workshop designed to give you practical tools to communicate confidently with the media. This session will equip you to effectively manage high-stakes crisis situations, but just as importantly, show you how to proactively shape the positive narrative around the incredible work you do every day: keeping people safe, sharing great stories, educating the public on food safety, and ultimately building the fan base you deserve.

The workshop will be led by Isabelle Kumar, former prime-time news anchor, well known to the GFSI community and food safety fan, alongside Julian Cox, a food microbiologist and passionate science communicator who regularly shares food safety messages with the public through traditional and social media.

Together, Isabelle and Julian will guide you through selected media examples, the ABCs of scientific communication, and hands-on exercises where you'll work directly on:

- Developing clear storylines for print, TV, and social media
- Practicing high-pressure media interviews
- Crafting compelling messages that land and stick

This is a critical skill set that technical expertise alone cannot provide. We'd love to see you there!

Places are strictly limited. An invitation to sign up will be offered to registered participants in the coming weeks.

Location: Breakout 1

Speakers

Isabelle KUMAR, Presenter and Journalist - Moderator

Julian M. COX, Associate Dean (International - Emerging Markets), Faculty of Engineering, University of New South Wales (UNSW Sydney)