



# GLOBAL FOOD SAFETY CONFERENCE 2018

EXECUTIVE  
SUMMARY



[www.tcgffoodsafety.com](http://www.tcgffoodsafety.com)

Tokyo, Japan  
5th - 8th March 2018

**SAFE FOOD  
FOR CONSUMERS  
EVERYWHERE**

# GFSC 2018

in numbers

+17<sup>TH</sup>  
EDITION

1,200  
DELEGATES

53  
countries

86%  
of delegates  
plan to join us  
again in 2019

+80%  
rank this event  
better than other  
comparable  
events

5  
DAYS  
of sessions,  
meetings and  
events

65  
Speakers

36  
Exhibitors

8  
Special  
sessions

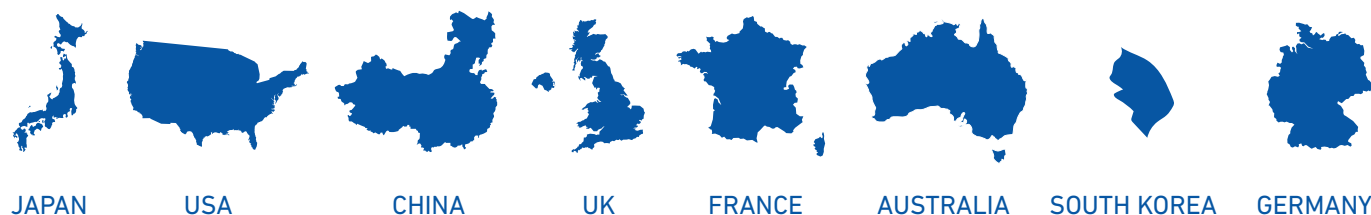
8  
Tech  
Talks

3  
Discovery  
Tours

4  
GFSI award  
winners

3<sup>rd</sup>  
iteration  
of G2B\*  
Meetings

## TOP COUNTRIES



## THE TALK ABOUT GFSC 2018

4.2K

online mentions  
and news pieces  
in trade and  
business media

20

journalists onsite

1.3K

tweets during  
4-day live  
tweeting

#gfsi18

5.2M

potential  
impressions

@myGFSI

7.2K

FOLLOWERS  
(+25% > 2017)

@myGFSI

3.2BN

potential  
audience  
worldwide

LinkedIn

28K

MEMBERS  
(+12% > 2017)

YouTube

39K

views on  
GFSI Web  
Series

2

new episodes

\*G2B: Government-to-business



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# INTRODUCTION

THE GLOBAL FOOD SAFETY CONFERENCE



The 2018 edition of GFSI's Global Food Safety Conference was one for superlatives. Some 1200 delegates congregated in Tokyo for the event, comprising the highest attendance rate in GFSI and CGF history. The packed programme and parallel meetings benefited from unprecedented government support while the conference stage welcomed a host of inspiring and illustrious speakers from some of the world's biggest food companies and organisations.

The delegates hailed from over fifty countries and from every corner of the food industry: multinationals and SMEs, retailers and manufacturers, research labs and regulatory agencies. While the record-breaking attendance is hardly a surprise - the event has grown steadily since its first iteration in 2001 - it is an especially encouraging figure for the first GFSI Conference in Japan.

Japan is only the second Asian country to host a GFSI Conference, after Malaysia in 2015, as the global event typically alternates between Europe and North America. This year's conference attracted a record number of attendees from Japan and elsewhere in Asia, who left poised to spark a food safety revolution in the region.

Western stakeholders, meanwhile, were not deterred by the relatively far-flung location. GFSI stakeholders are food-focused people, after all, and Japan has one of the richest and most innovative food cultures in the world. Speakers from across Japan's public and private sectors continually demonstrated this culture of innovation, from Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who traced Japan's concern with food safety to ancient bamboo-leaf inventions, to Dr. Yuki Hanyu, founder of a startup that dreams of growing meat on Mars.

Whether they hailed from Japan or Jamaica, Canada or Cameroon, the delegates agreed on one key topic: the creative power of collaboration. In every plenary session, speakers mentioned the importance of open communication. The prevailing notion was that collaboration - across the public-private boundary, among international governments, and between companies and their customers - is the solution for every food industry issue from regulatory redundancy to crisis management. The conference itself proved to be a fertile ground for these collaborative conversations.

This year's event was a tremendous success and clearly marks GFSI's position on the global map as leaders in advancing food safety. Together as a community we have the opportunity to push forward the GFSI vision of achieving safe food for consumers everywhere.

# PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

Monday 5 March	Tuesday 6 March	Wednesday 7 March				Thursday 8 March			
Discovery Tours Hosted by Ecolab	Welcome Coffee	Welcome Coffee				Welcome Coffee			
	GFSI & You (10.00-12.00) Hosted by Rentokil Initial	Special Sessions 1 to 4 (8.15-9.15)				Special Sessions 5 to 8 (8.15-9.15)			
		Bureau Veritas Vendome	Ecolab Chatelet	Greenfence Etoile	Rentokil Initial Palais Royal C	Diversey / CxS Palais Royal C	DNV GL Chatelet	SAI Global Etoile	SGS Vendome
		Breakouts 1 to 3 (9.30-10.45)				Breakouts 7 to 9 (9.30-10.45)			
		Breakout 1 Aquaculture & Seafood	Breakout 2 The Changing Role of the Regulator	Breakout 3 Food Safety Culture	Breakout 7 Primary Production	Breakout 8 Food Fraud Compliance	Breakout 9 Food Service & Hospitality		
		Palais Royal C	Palais Royal B	Palais Royal A	Palais Royal C	Palais Royal B	Palais Royal A		
		Networking Break (10.45-11.30) Hosted by Danone				Networking Break (10.45-11.30)			
		Plenary 3 (11.30-13.00)				Closing Plenary (11.30-13.00)			
	Delegate Lunch (12.00-13.30)	Delegate Lunch (13.00-14.30) Hosted by Cargill							
	Opening Plenary (13.30-15.00)	Plenary 4 (14.30-16.00)							
	Networking Break (15.00-15.45)	Networking Break (16.00-16.45) Hosted by Danone Breakouts 4 to 6 16.45-18.00							
	Plenary 2 (15.45-17.15)	Breakout 4 Global Markets	Breakout 5 Big Data	Breakout 6 Auditor Competency					
		Palais Royal C	Palais Royal B	Palais Royal A					
	Opening Cocktail (17.30-19.00) Exhibition Area Hosted by Yamato Holdings	Official Dinner Reception Hosted by Greenfence 18.45 Departure from Grand Nikko Tokyo Daiba to Happs-en							





## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 As globalisation extends its influence across the planet, food safety becomes increasingly complex.
- 2 GFSI benefits from diverse membership and governance - representing seven billion people involved in the global food chain.
- 3 The GFSI Conference 2018 has potential to create lasting change in food safety culture across Asia and the world.

# PRE-CONFERENCE SESSION: GFSI & You

The first morning of the GFSI Conference 2018 opened with an introductory pre-conference session, led by Peter Freedman, Managing Director at The Consumer Goods Forum (CGF), Mike Robach, Chair of the GFSI Board of Directors and Vice President of Food Safety, Quality and Regulatory Affairs at Cargill, and Andy Ransom, CEO of Rentokil Initial.

Intimately titled GFSI & You, the first half of the two-hour session served as a refresher course on the mission and activities of the Global Food Safety Initiative. The speakers covered the Initiative's origins, its recent achievements, and the bright future open to companies that adopt the GFSI approach.



**Katsuki Kishi, GFSI Board Member and General Manager of the Quality Management Department at AEON**, opened the session with a brief introduction that called the audience's attention to the unique location of this year's conference, as well as its global implications. As the Chair of the GFSI Local Group Japan, he spent considerable time thinking about the

successes and challenges of the conference. He recalled worrying about attracting delegates to Tokyo; the conferences are historically dominated by Americans. "But it turned out to be a delightful result," said Kishi.

Scanning the audience in the packed ballroom, Kishi noted that this year's attendance was split nearly in half between Western countries and other regions. "This diversity makes the conference more attractive," said Kishi. It was especially appropriate that this unprecedented diversity occurred in Japan, which has long served as a meeting point between Western and Eastern culture. Kishi envisioned the conference serving as a gateway towards greater GFSI presence in the Asian region.

"It is a pleasure to see so many of you here," Kishi said in closing, as if welcoming old friends to his own home.



Continuing Kishi's point about the potential of Asia, **Andy Ransom, CEO of Rentokil** led the audience through a lightning round of facts about the re-

gion. "I love Asia," he declared, "I love its colour, its entrepreneurial spirit, its culture." But with that increasingly globalised culture comes complexity. Asia is the most highly populated continent, with 60% of the world's people but only 30% of its land mass. Urbanisation and population density place increasing strain on food supply. Meanwhile, the collective GDP of the continent is set to grow by 6.3% between 2018 and 2022, widening the already rapidly-expanding middle class. By 2030, 66% of the global middle class will reside in Asia — over one billion tech-enabled, culinarily curious people to feed.

"There's a big opportunity for companies to be part of the conversation now," Ransom said — "now" meaning the conference itself. "Today's delegates are from every part of the food chain. They're sharing best practices and taking action to deliver safer food everywhere."



**Peter Freedman, Managing Director of the CGF**, zoomed in from Ransom's continent-wide scale with a brief introduction to the Global Food Safety Initiative

(GFSI) and its parent organisation, The Consumer Goods Forum (CGF). He began with a slide that charted the portfolio of strategic topics addressed by the CGF and its members, from health and wellbeing to environmental sustainability. Freedman drew the audience's attention to the CGF projects that relate to the food industry, including an initiative on sustainable supply chains and an effort to reduce food waste.

Clicking to another visual, Freedman introduced the brand of the CGF that conference attendees know best: the Global Food Safety Initiative. His visual aid featured a world map superimposed with GFSI's various groups of stakeholders: retailers, manufacturers, certification programme owners (CPOs), academia, consumers, government regulators, and so on.

"Our duty is to make sure GFSI has the proper governance to represent all stakeholders," said Freedman. He revealed that governance on the following slide, which featured a mosaic of smiling faces from the GFSI Board of Directors. Freedman reported on the changes that took place at the last election: new members Scott Stillwell, Natalia Dyenson, and Roy Kirby joined the Board, while the remaining members were re-elected. Mike Robach began another term as Chair, aided by Co-Chairs Anita Scholte op Reimer and Gillian Kelleher.



**Mike Robach, Vice President of Food Safety, Quality and Regulatory Affairs at Cargill**, stood to introduce the conference from the vantage point of his position as Chair of the Board. Before beginning his talk, he thanked Kishi and his team, the CGF and GFSI teams, and the delegates for coming together to create the largest event ever held by GFSI.

Robach framed his talk by outlining the three core strategic objectives of GFSI: benchmarking & harmonisation, capability building, and public-private partnerships.

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GFSI has also taken new steps forward in thought leadership. The board considers what leaders do on regional and local levels and reshapes these actions for the global stage. This amount of cross-national, vertical collaboration requires transparency and inclusivity. "We want to share best practices to make all our supply networks better," said Robach.

The main goal of all GFSI activities is to create benchmark certification as a passport to food safety. "We must transcend the barriers we're up against and harmonise food safety management and standards," Robach said. That harmony includes regulatory changes, such as the US FDA's Food Safety Modernisation Act, a landmark piece of legislation that impacts all food that finds its way across US borders.

Companies that lack the infrastructure or capacity to achieve full certification can access the first steps of the food safety apparatus through the Global Markets Programme, a curriculum that becomes the basis for training in the supply chain.

After introducing the main strategies of GFSI, Robach pivoted to the recent Government to Government (G2G) and Government to Business (G2B) meetings, at which representatives from over forty governmental institutions met to discuss public-private collaboration in the food safety sphere. This was the third iteration of such meetings, and Robach noted the attendees were "getting comfortable" about sharing best practices, data, and strategies for the benefit of consumers everywhere. As an illustration of this new level of conversation, GFSI entered Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) to continue to put real projects on the ground across the world.

Robach thanked the G2G and G2B meeting attendees, and the audience more broadly, for working towards transparency and collaboration across sectors. He quoted a former Cargill CEO, who perhaps foresaw today's intrinsically interconnected system: *"In a world where you can't hide anything, you'd better not have anything to hide."*



The second half of the session was devoted to panel discussions, moderated by **GFSI Senior Technical Manager Marie-Claude Quentin**, which featured

ing stakeholders from every sector of the GFSI community. First, a broadly international panel of Certification Programme Owners (CPO) discussed their input to **Version 7.2 of GFSI's Benchmarking Requirements**. This recently released version streamlines elements of the previous edition to promote flexibility, efficiency and practicality.

**Tokuji Nishitani, CEO of JFSM**, localised the concept of benchmarking in the Japanese context, reiterating some of Kishi's earlier points about Japan's potential to influence the wider Asia region. JFSM harmonises GFSI Benchmarking Requirements with the principles of washoku, a classical Japanese cuisine concerned with terroir, technique, and craft.

**Marc Proctor, CEO of BRC Global Standards**, sat on the panel as the first CPO to be recognised against version 7.1 of the GFSI Benchmarking Requirements. He embraced the self-assessment aspect of the new benchmarking process, which allowed BRC to look at their own systems with critical objectivity, as well as the more stringent approach to the assessment which the new process introduced.

**Fons Schmid, Chairman of the Board at FSSC**, explained GFSI's forthcoming auditor examination programme: a remotely-proctored, tamper-proof test that asks a baseline set of questions in order to set a global minimum for auditor knowledge. In case anyone in the audience questioned the veracity of the examination, Schmid assured: "It's not fake news, it's great news."

**Dan Lee, Standards Coordinator of the Global Aquaculture Alliance**, introduced three new scopes of the latest GFSI Benchmarking Requirements: food agents, the catering





**Group** was naturally most proud of hosting the GFSI Conference 2018, but his group had much more to brag of: they hosted 400 delegates at GFSI's Japan Focus Day and launched a Japanese version of the GFSI website which was painstakingly translated by members of the group.

**Jie Xu of the China Local Group** had a busy year; her group recently opened the first official CGF office in China. The office has allowed the group to accelerate their engagement with local stakeholders. Their membership now includes 57 companies, which convene to discuss topics such as auditor competence and benchmark localisation. Later this year, the group will host a China Focus Day in Shanghai.

**Fernando Avelleyra and Ana Vera of the South Latin America Group**, also saw considerable growth in the past year. Previously focused almost entirely on Argentina, their group now includes representatives from Chile and other countries in the region. These representatives focus on global market expansion, supplier education, and government collaboration.

**Erich Jaeger of the South LatAm Local Group** represented a brand-new GFSI team. His group, structured by nine major companies from different sectors, is working on an MoU to promote food safety culture in Chile. They hope to strengthen the presence of Chile in Latin America through food.

**Luis Hernandez of the Mexico Local Group** recently helped to create a Mexican food safety standard with the partnership of the Mexican Ministry of Economy, the industrial sector, and academia. The official documents will be published in September. In May, his group will host a Focus Day in Mexico City. He invited anyone interested amongst the audience to support the event through sponsorship.

**Christine Summers and Jorge Hernandez of the US-Canada Local Group** spent the year putting down strong foundations with the help of representatives from com-

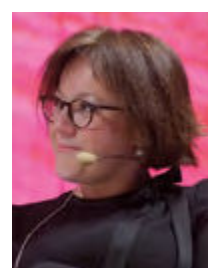
panies including SISCO, Land O'Lakes, Hormel, and Costco, as well as a steering member from Cornell University. "The best thing about it is coming together with smart people in a noncompetitive environment," Summers said, prompting smiles all around the panel.

**Heather Gale, Executive Director of CanadaGAP**, noted the changes that had been made to the requirements to address the specific needs of the primary production sector, including farms. When requirements were impractical for a primary production setting, they were removed; other clauses were streamlined to remove wordiness or excessive specificity. "We're still finding new ways to apply GFSI to the world of agriculture," she allowed.

As the final speaker of the panel, **Stephan Tromp, Managing Director of IFS**, took on the challenge of extrapolating the future of the new GFSI Benchmarking Requirements. Tromp predicted a stronger focus on flexibility so the requirements can stretch to fit new food trends, emerging technologies, and food businesses of all sizes. "To achieve our goals, we must have

everyone on board, no matter where they are located, where they work, or what size company they work for," Tromp said.

The second panel was comprised of nine representatives from **GFSI Local Groups**, who Mike Robach lauded as the ones who "do all the work" at GFSI. True to this praise, the representatives related the intensive, focused work involved in bringing GFSI principles to their regions, from hosting Focus Days to harmonising standards with local governments.



**GFSI Senior Manager Anne Gerardi** moderated the diverse discussion. She asked the representatives what accomplishments they were most proud of and what they wished to achieve in the future.

**Pierre de Ginestel of the Europe Local Group** expressed pride in his group's wide range of members, but hoped for more representation from Eastern Europe. Along with recruiting new members, the group hopes to collaborate more with government regulators across the region. **Katsuki Kishi, Chair of the Japan Local**



panies including SISCO, Land O'Lakes, Hormel, and Costco, as well as a steering member from Cornell University. "The best thing about it is coming together with smart people in a noncompetitive environment," Summers said, prompting smiles all around the panel.

To close the session, a panel of eight key partners from **international governmental and nongovernmental agencies** described their methods for incorporating the GFSI approach into their daily practices. The partners painted a hopeful picture of a world in which the public and private sectors work in tandem toward a shared goal of safe food for consumers everywhere. Anne Gerardi again moderated, here focusing on the nuances of the panel members' relationship with GFSI.

**Vivek Pathak, Regional Director for East Asia and the Pacific at the World Bank's International Finance Corporation (IFC)**, brings GFSI guidelines to agricultural SMEs in developing regions such as Kazakhstan, Georgia, and Ukraine. With GFSI accreditation, these SMEs can access the global market to a much greater extent than mere NGO funds could allow. **Robert Ahern, Leader of Agricultur-**

ty, and building trust is very important."

**Amare Ayalew, Program Manager at the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA)**, was the sole Africa-based speaker of the session. He noted that Robach's map of GFSI stakeholders did not include Africa, but saw this as an "opportunity" rather than a slight. "We have over 55 member states, and we are ready to learn," he said of his organisation. PACA hopes to partner with GFSI to establish a network of food regulatory laboratories on the African continent, similar to the CDC's PulseNet. "We need to ensure safe food as we expand trade," he said.

**Marcia Nightingale, Head of the Industry Assurance Team at the UK Food Standards Agency (FSA)**, has a particularly close relationship with GFSI; she co-chaired an informal working group with the Europe Local Group that drafted a reference document that instructs governments on leveraging private assurance to inform official control programmes for food and feed. She also undertook comparative analysis with government regulations and GFSI benchmarks at last year's conference in Houston.

**Mika Yokota, Director of the Food Industrial Corporate Affairs Office at Japan's Food Industry Affairs Bureau**, reiterated the importance of public-private collaboration. In recent years, her agency has increased communication with GFSI on topics such as improving SME operations, fostering trade, and analysing the food chain. Yokota played an especially important role at this year's conference; she served as the chair of the G2G meetings. "I expect GFSI will join stakeholders of food businesses together," Yokota said - an apt prediction for the outcome of the conference.

**al Health and Food Safety at the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)**, sees GFSI as an opportunity to leverage the technical capacities and resources of the private sector. His organisation traditionally works in the public sector, but public funds for food safety have depleted in his region; IICA is therefore eager to collaborate with businesses that can help them further their development goals.

**Melvin Spreij, Head of the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) at the World Trade Organisation**, agreed with Ahern that resources are limited in the public sector. His organisation therefore partners with GFSI to develop training material for the collaborative food safety projects that they fund in developing regions. STDF also partners with the public sector because "food safety is a joint responsibility

## ACTION STEPS

- 1 Benefit from the GFSI community; reach out to potential collaborators outside of your sector or field of expertise - you might learn something new.
- 2 Check out a GFSI Focus Day hosted by a Local Group near you.



# PLENARY 1: Food Safety Culture and Leadership

In keeping with the theme of leadership, the opening plenary of the GFSI Conference 2018 began with a surprise message from one of the world's most influential leaders:



**Japan's Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe.** The Prime Minister positioned the conference as a natural expression of Japan's long-standing safeguards with food safety, beginning in ancient times with innovations such as antibacterial bamboo leaves. He suggested that international food safety certification will allow other countries to trust the food products that Japanese consumers already recognise as safe. This confident prediction regarding Japan's food safety culture would be reiterated throughout the plenary.



The session's scheduled speakers were almost as illustrious as the unexpected guest. The audience first heard from another lofty member of Japan's public sector: **Ryousuke Kouzuki, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF).** Like Prime Minister Abe, Kouzuki

took Japan's pre-modern innovations for preserving food as evidence of a deeply ingrained food safety culture among the Japanese. "We must thank our ancestors for teaching us to preserve food safely," he said, backdropped by a slide collaged with soy sauce, miso paste, and natto.

While the ingredients in these quintessentially Japanese products have changed little since their invention, the process used to make them has modernised. Kouzuki described his recent visit to a soy sauce factory, where workers used electronic devices to ensure that every machine was perfectly cleaned. These special tools may resemble magic wands, but they can't match the human capacity to adapt and innovate. Even the best-equipped companies must ensure that they motivate employees to improve constantly.

Kouzuki related this motivation with kaizen, or improvement, a defining feature of the adaptive work process popularised by the Toyota Way. Organisations that participate in kaizen constantly look for small, new ways to streamline work, eventually leading to a dramatic increase in productivity. "Japanese people are quite good at this," said Kouzuki, and they therefore value certifications that involve kaizen.

MAFF promotes Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) at agricultural high schools across Japan, where students can learn about certification and confidently explain their actions to adult auditors. "These experiences can be life-altering sources of confidence for the students," said Kouzuki. He described a heartwarming interaction with a student at one agricultural school, who spoke "with starry eyes" about working at Japan's top agricultural corporation in the future.

Kouzuki has high ambitions for the future. He hopes to increase in the number of GAP

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Social responsibility goals are as important as financial goals.
- 2 Consumers have the right to safety, to be informed, to choose, and to be heard.
- 3 No amount of technology can replace a robust food safety culture.

certifications by threefold or more over current levels by the year 2020, when the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics Games will be held. MAFF is advancing certification as a Japanese strategy to improve its status on the global market.

Kouzuki also said, "MAFF supports these actions and hopes to cooperate with everyone. We would like to contribute actively to improve food safety around the world. I believe this conference is a significant step forward."



As the session's first private-sector speaker, **Motoya Okada, President and Group CEO of AEON**, brought a nuanced perspective to the relationship between industry and government in Japan. To illustrate the complex nature of this relationship, Okada related his company's most significant recent food safety incident: in the year 2000, an E. coli outbreak that became a mass

media sensation. Though it was soon revealed that the Health Center of Saitama mistakenly linked the outbreak to AEON, government agencies were then loathed to admit to any fault. Only the then-governor of Saitama had the humility to formally re-investigate the case, leading to their apology. "I remember this incident to this day," said Okada, suggesting that he remains wary of the government's ability to effectively regulate industry.

When mad cow disease became an issue in the global food system later that year, Okada turned to GFSI rather than the government to assess the risk in Japan. Among Japanese retailers, AEON alone participates in sale restriction associated with mad cow disease. AEON also leads the industry on transparency regarding GMOs. While withholding judgement on the safety of GMO products, AEON clearly labels foods with GMO ingredients so that customers can decide for themselves whether to include these foods in their diet. AEON customers never have to consume questionable products against their knowledge.

Some food safety issues are so complex that neither retailers nor consumers can decide how to deal with them. One example is the Fukushima radiation disaster of 2011, to which the government applied only provisional food safety regulations.

AEON took independent steps to acquire inspection equipment that would allow them to regulate and manage their own goods, despite Japanese consumers' general trust of government regulation.

Okada is particularly aggrieved by discriminatory consumer attitudes regarding Chinese products. He sees these attitudes as bordering on hate-speech and feeding upon nationalist ideologies that do nothing to benefit the consumer. "We believe it is pertinent to abolish such attitudes," he declared.

To mitigate against these attitudes, Okada suggested adhering to the Basic Consumer Rights that President John F. Kennedy presented to the United States Congress in 1962:

1. The right to safety
2. The right to be informed
3. The right to choose
4. The right to be heard

Despite this call for basic consumer rights in the United States back in the 1960s, the Japanese government took over forty years to sign their own Bill of Consumer Rights into law. Today, consumers have the legal right to insist on informed choice in all of their shopping decisions. Okada encouraged the private sector to respect that right, and urged the public sector to "constantly improve laws for the sake of the consumer."



**Ken Theriault, CEO of Costco Japan** offered a "short and sweet" alternate perspective on the issues involved with running a retail business in Japan. Though Costco is the second-largest retailer in the world, it remains a relatively niche brand in Japan, with a modest 26 locations across the country; many of Costco's issues involve adapting a quintessentially American product to a Japanese audience.

Costco's food safety mission statement was developed in the US, but it bears a resemblance to the Japanese concept of kaizen: the company "promotes continuous improvement in product quality, and product safety systems, for the benefit of our members and vendors." Food safety culture is ingrained in every level of the company, "from the CEO down."

As a retailer with thousands of suppliers, Costco must maintain constant vigilance





at every stage of its supply chain. They perform vendor audits to meet regulatory requirements as well as in-house rules, which are often stricter than the government guidelines. While the auditor-vendor relationship can sometimes feel antagonistic, Theriault stressed that Costco "works with our suppliers, not against them - really hard."

In the future, Costco Japan hopes to adapt more fully to the Japanese local market, leaving nothing "static." They strive for simplicity and quality in everything they do.

Theriault closed by sharing one of his personal favourite methods for monitoring food safety culture: "walking the buildings" from the front door to the back door, four days a week. "It's very important that we walk the talk every single day we do business," he said.



**Takaaki Nishii, President and CEO of Ajinomoto**, rounded out the session with a manufacturer's perspective on food safety. Ajinomoto celebrated its centennial in 2017, but it strives to remain at the cutting edge of food science and social outreach.

Ajinomoto has a presence in over 130 countries, many of which are home to large food-insecure populations. Recognising their potential to create positive change in these populations, the company developed a list of Ajinomoto Shared Values (ASV), which they apply in every region and at every corner of the company, from food safety to human resource management.

The Ajinomoto Shared Values are:

1. Compliance
2. Human rights



3. Quality control
4. Information
5. Corporate responsibility

Ajinomoto has also developed four "story examples" that apply ASV to specific strategies for addressing global food issues.

1. Increase mental well-being with a delicious and healthy diet.
2. Strengthen family and social proximity with social eating habits.
3. Improve sustainability by connecting local communities with the environmental protection community.
4. Focus on the opinions of the varying customers in different local communities.

Such lofty social goals may seem displaced from a company that makes seasoning powders and prepared foods, but Nishii argued that social responsibility goals are as important as financial goals for a successful company. By creating positive social impact, companies can ensure that "all people associated with the company feel comfortable and at ease."

Moderator Sharanjit Leyl then led a bilingual panel discussion among the four speakers, who fell into surprising agree-

ment despite their diverse backgrounds and fields. All agreed that GFSI programmes effectively promote food safety culture at all levels of an organisation. Okada was particularly complementary: "What I admire about GFSI is that, as a civilian organisation, you act before politicians begin to act. And you perform this on a global scale. We shall continue to hold GFSI in high regard."

The speakers were in similar agreement with regard to the role of technology in food safety, including emerging innovations such as Big Data and blockchain. "20 years ago, whenever incidents such as issues with pesticides occurred, there was no immediate method of analysis and the public went into panic," Nishii said. "Today we are capable of analysing the same events with greater speed and accuracy." Okada was also optimistic, but added, "there are many new cases in which we have very little experience."

On the topic of future trends, all three speakers pointed to natural and organic foods as an emerging priority. Nishii related these trends to his company's social development mission: "We must consider what is necessary to support society beyond 2050."

## ACTION STEPS

- 1 Food safety culture starts at the top, so lead by example.
- 2 Adopt the principle of kaizen to catalyse motivation and drive continuous improvement.
- 3 If the public sector is slow to react to an issue, collaborate with private - sector partners - and vice versa.

## PLENARY 2: Are You Actively Listening to Your Customers? You Should Be

While the food industry is constantly buzzing with technological innovations — Internet of Things, blockchain, Big Data — it's easy to forget how technology can be used to foster meaningful connections between real people. The second plenary of the GFSI Conference 2018 addressed those technological connections through a variety of industry perspectives, from a B2B wholesaler to one of the world's biggest ecommerce sites. Though concerned with different technologies and diverse sectors of the industry, all agreed that sincere communication and collaboration form the backbone of food business.



**Sarah L. Casanova, CEO of McDonald's Japan** illustrated the constructive energy of collaboration by sharing the incredible comeback story that her company has achieved since she took the reins.

Casanova's deadpan wit — an extension of her ability to adapt on the fly — became apparent as soon as she took the stage. "Welcome to McDonald's," she joked, noting the similarity of her headset to those worn by drive-thru crew members. "May I take your order?" In fact, Casanova's comeback strategy didn't stray far from that drive-thru script; at every stage of the

process, she asked the customers what they wanted and acted accordingly. After a series of food safety incidents pushed McDonald's Japan's stock into a freefall in 2014, Casanova led a total overhaul of the company's supply chain and auditing practices. All employees received a fresh round of food safety training, and many were invited to a Food Safety Summit featuring 250 experts in the field.

However, rebuilding a reputation involves more than internal restructuring. Casanova emphasised platforms that allowed the public to comment on McDonald's recovery process. Recognising that mothers make most food decisions in Japanese households, Casanova established a programme called Mom's Eye to involve these key players in the conversation. The programme required her to visit mothers in all forty-seven prefectures, hear their questions and concerns, and take them to McDonald's suppliers around the country.

Of course, Casanova also values the opinions of customers who aren't mothers. In response to the Japanese enthusiasm for mobile applications, her team created Kodo, an app that allows customers to send feedback directly to restaurant managers. By December 2017, Kodo — which translates to "heartbeat" — had received 8.5 million pieces of feedback. Managers used this feedback to improve cleanliness, quality, and service with laser focus.

Casanova closed with the industry version of a "happily ever after" ending: a chart showing three years of healthy growth since the slump of 2014. 2017 was the

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Influencers are replacing traditional media outlets as the "gatekeepers" of culture and information.
- 2 Crisis management requires external outreach as well as internal restructuring.
- 3 Natural language processing allows large companies to scale up the person-to-person communication involved in running a safe, successful food business.

best year in McDonald's Japan's history of public trading, an enormous achievement for a once-beleaguered brand. Casanova isn't one to become complacent in the face of success. "Food safety is a process that's never done," she cautioned. "We'll continue to do everything we can to do even better."



The session's second speaker, **Heidi Hovland, CEO of DeVries Global**, reiterated Casanova's emphasis on customer outreach and the power of new media. Hovland introduced the concept of influence, a perennial marketing concern that has undergone a democratic revolution thanks to social media.

In social media parlance, influencers are users who make an impact by directing their followers towards brands they support. Hovland divided this group into "macro-influencers" — users with followings into the millions — and "micro-influencers," who may have hundreds or thousands of followers.



Brands are quick to court influencers at the macro level, but Hovland reminded the audience not to underestimate the power of micro-influencers. Their followings are often fiercely devoted and can wield considerable influence in themselves. Perhaps most importantly, micro-influencers have authenticity — that indefinite but ineluctable quality that brands need now more than ever.

Hovland emphasised the positive, creative force of influencers and their ability to bolster brands against rumour and innuendo. China is leading the charge on this front; companies such as Tmall and JD.com achieve high conversion rates by marrying influencer content with ecommerce. Some American companies, including Target and BAND-AID, involve influencers in product development to breathe authenticity and relevance into their brand images. Instead of feeling threatened by influencers, these brands are leveraging influencers' platforms to reassert their own influence. *"The right engagement, with the right people, can get you there and more"*, Hovland concluded.



**Takashi Ishida, CEO of METRO Cash & Carry Japan**, opened on a similarly reassuring note. "Don't be scared of the people yelling irasshaimase," he said, in case anyone in the audience was unaccustomed to the enthusiastic traditional greeting of Japanese shopkeepers. "They just want to talk to you."

As a CEO at one of the world's largest B2B wholesalers, Ishida is used to representing the interests of shopkeepers. He brought a fresh perspective to the theme of customer engagement, one geared both toward the business owners who shop at Metro

C&C and those shoppers' own customers. *"If we can support our customers, they will thrive in the growing engaged community"*, Ishida said. To that end, METRO C&C has established a programme that helps businesses access the tools that they need to join this interconnected, digitised community. Busy business owners can use the Metro C&C toolkit to build professional websites, field online feedback, and maintain a social media presence. Metro C&C even offers call centre support to ensure that their partners understand all the ins and outs of digitisation.

To ensure their partners' success on the globalised market, Metro C&C emphasises global food safety certification. They lead by example; Metro was one of the first chains in Japan to adopt GFSI-recognised certification programmes. Their influence even encourages owners of izakaya (a type of informal Japanese pub) to modernise their practices for the sake of safety.

Metro C&C's central goal is to make it easy to run a food business, so their customers can focus on their guests' gastronomic experiences. As Ishida phrased it, *"If we can help our customers win, then METRO will be winning."*



**Carletta Oton, Vice President of Health and Safety, Sustainability, Security & Compliance, at Amazon**, demonstrated what customer engagement looks like on a Big Data scale. As one of the world's largest ecommerce platforms, Amazon requires powerful analytical tools to maintain the meaningful communication involved in any food business.

Though Amazon began as an online bookstore, it now includes a wide range of food



businesses. Amazon.com sells shelf-stable products, while the Amazon Fresh platform offers fresh produce and other perishables. Finally, Amazon Prime Now delivers chilled and frozen foods to customers in dense urban areas. The company has been branching into the brick-and-mortar supermarket business with the acquisition of Whole Foods and Amazon Go, a shop that features prepared foods, groceries, and no checkout counter; the built-in technology charges customers' Amazon accounts as they leave. Safety is of paramount concern on all of these platforms.

As the previous speakers agreed, the best way to maintain safety and quality in food business is to open the lines of communication to customers. However, Amazon receives 2.3 million interactions every day in 40 languages; there are hardly enough content experts in the world to parse that much text. Amazon therefore relies on natural language processing to determine which interactions could point

towards food safety issues. Their software is advanced enough to understand the vast majority of comments. This allows trained, human experts to devote their attention to only the most complex decisions.

Through this system, Amazon can recognise a food safety issue in seconds and take action in minutes. After all, in the world of food safety, *"good intentions don't work. Speed matters."*

The subsequent panel discussion yielded valuable action steps from all four speakers, especially on the topic of crisis mitigation. "Keep your customer at the centre," said Casanova, perhaps the most experienced panel member on the subject. "Listen to what they're saying."

Oton had similar advice. "It's not about the GMs or the financial impact. It's about people. If you keep the customer at the heart of your decisions, you'll make the right decisions."

"Don't hide," said Hovland, recalling the example of Blue Bell CEO Paul Kruse. "The more you can step out of the corporate shadow and present a human face, the quicker your recovery will be."

"Food safety is like breathing: you don't realise you're doing it until you're not," opined Ichida. "So you need to realise it's very important in everyday life." The audience was suddenly aware of their breathing, as well as their own deep-set, everyday efforts towards food safety.



## ACTION STEPS

- 1 Create a "tribe" of influence in the good times so that you have support in case of crisis.
- 2 Leverage the democratising power of social media to connect with consumers on their level.
- 3 Don't hide from your consumers — present a human face to your business and open up the lines of communication.

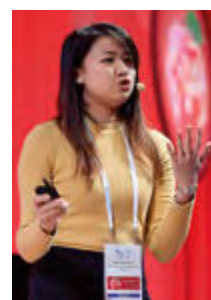


## PLENARY 3:

### GFSI Global Markets Programme, a Proven Pathway to Capacity Building & Food Safety Culture

By providing a stepwise route towards accredited certification, GFSI's Global Markets Programme allows small, developing businesses to join the food safety conversation. Plenary 3 championed these growing businesses, as well as facilitating discussion among the government regulators that small companies are most likely to encounter on the local scale.

Before the public-sector regulators took the stage, the audience heard two private-sector testimonials from Global Markets Programme successes. The first, Tatania Chirva, shared her story in a new episode from the GFSI web series, filmed on-site at her ready-meal factory in Ukraine. Over footage of her hairnetted employees flipping crepes, Chirva explained how the programme allowed her to improve safety, gain consumer trust, and increase sales by over 50%.



**Samantha Mah, Marketing Manager of the Malaysia-based health foods brand Wide Tropism,** offered a similar success story on the stage. Wide Tropism began as a staple-foods distributor based in a shophouse, where Mah and two other employees packaged goods themselves. Despite their humble surroundings, they had big ambitions: a place on the shelves of AEON department stores. They applied to be a supplier, received an audit, and were summarily rejected.

After multiple rejections, Wide Tropism worked with the Global Markets Programme to improve safety through doc-

umentation, batch number tracing, and other measures. They moved into a modern factory and hired new staff. Their efforts paid off in 2014, when they went into business with AEON and were also named an ASEAN Best Growth Company of 2016. "A small company doesn't need to compromise on food safety," Mah beamed.



**Mike Taylor, Former US FDA Deputy Commissioner,** built on Chirva and Mah's positive energy when he subsequently took the stage. "This is a time for optimism," he said, "a remarkable

time for food safety around the world." He noted a pattern of collaboration between the public and private sectors, an allocation of responsibilities, and a dedication to providing safe food for consumers at all levels of society.

Later in his speech, Taylor tempered his optimism with caution. In a vast, globalised food system, he said, "it's not just what happens in the four walls of your company but along the complex and lengthy chains involving thousands of suppliers." This complexity poses challenges in both developed and developing settings.

Through his work with the World Bank in sub-Saharan Africa, Taylor observed the heightened food safety challenges involved in running a small business in the developing world. This region lacks the public goods - such as surveillance systems, land-grant research universities, and regulatory bodies - that businesses in more developed countries take for

#### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 The Global Markets Programme allows SMEs with limited food safety capacity to begin the journey toward GFSI-recognised certification.
- 2 Third-party auditors and public regulators can improve their systems through transparency and collaboration.
- 3 The developing world, including the informal sector, abounds with opportunities for GFSI stakeholders.

granted. The Global Markets Programme can help to fill in the gaps left by underdeveloped public goods, even for businesses currently associated with the "informal" sector.

Balance is key, Taylor urged; *"Private responsibility can't take the place of public oversight, and no amount of regulation can make food safe without the private sector taking responsibility."*



**Xiaoqun He, Deputy Director General of Registration Department of the Certification and Accreditation Administration of China (CNCA),** spoke next to share a public-sector perspective from the opposite side of the world. Like Taylor, she emphasised collaboration between the public and private sectors, as well as among international public-sector representatives.



Xiaoqun He's institution, which lies under the umbrella of the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine, supervises and coordinates certification and accreditation activities across China, including GFSI-recognised certifications. Over 22,000 organisations have received CNCA-approved certificates, but many more remain unaccredited. CNCA encourages companies to earn international certificates and to produce products for export and domestic consumption on the same standard. *"Certification conveys trust and meets the needs of all parties concerned,"* she said.

Since its establishment in 2001, the CNCA has placed an emphasis on collaboration with international regulators. The G2G and G2B meetings at GFSI Conference 2016 were a particularly fruitful moment in CNCA's collaborative history. The following year, CNCA sent a team of representatives to the FDA to study US regulation and share best practices.

The cross-national conversation that began at GFSI 2016 continued in the subsequent panel discussion, which included regulators from nearly every continent on the planet: **Michel Leporati of Chile's ACHIPIA, Dr. Stephen Ostroff of the US FDA, Jason Feeney of UK's Food Standards Agency, and Bill Jolly of the New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries.**

The panel served as a recap of the G2G and G2B meetings that took place earlier in the week. These were condensed for the benefit of the larger audience. Moderator Sharanjit Leyl asked the speakers to share the atmosphere of those meetings, which brought together representatives from over thirty institutions, and the main points that came out of them.

Mike Taylor described the meeting with characteristic caution. "There's great potential for mutual support, but that's easier to say than do," he said. "There was also concern for private audits displacing public regulators, which no one wants." The panel full of public regulators emphatically agreed.



"In an ideal world, we shouldn't have too much third-party certification," said **Bill Jolly.** He argued that Big Data and other emerging methods will eventually be able to offer the assurances that third parties currently provide.



**Dr. Stephen Ostroff** had a more positive perspective on third-party certification. "Third-party audits often hold their suppliers to a much higher standard than regulators," he said.

"This is terrific. It's not us versus them, it's collaboration in the best sense of the word."

Collaboration emerged as a key theme as the panel continued. The speakers promoted a collaborative rather than competitive approach for harmonising government and third-party audits, improving the relationship between industry and regulators, and building food safety culture at every level of society.



**Jason Feeney** agreed that the "us versus them" mentality remains ingrained in regulatory culture at some public institutions. "We should change adversarial culture

into inclusive, collaborative culture. This is the best way to protect customers and deliver safe, authentic food," he said.



"We need more people believing this new approach is possible," added **Michel Leporati.** "We need to create spaces for collaboration, like this conference."

In the final minutes of the plenary, the focus returned to the Global Markets Programme and the small businesses that benefit from it. Mike Robach, Mitch Chait, and Mike Taylor announced the winners of the second annual **Global Markets Awards.** This year's awards went to **Aso-ciaciones Agroindustriales Serranas** of Mexico, **The Nuts & Legumes Company** of Pakistan, **Plantation Industries Limited** of Nigeria, and **Fuji Foods** of Japan. GFSI recognised these companies for improving their safety standards through the Global Markets Programme while providing authentic, high quality food to their consumers. Mike Robach noted that the selection committee received at least two dozen other applicants of similarly stellar calibre, a great sign for the future of the programme.

#### ACTION STEPS

- 1 Whether you belong to the public or private sector, consider collaborating with and learning from your equivalents across national borders.
- 2 Pay attention to innovation and growth in the developing world.
- 3 Keep an eye out for the next iteration of the Global Markets Programme Awards! They may be the opportunity for you to enter, or encourage someone in your supply chain to do so.



## PLENARY 4:

### Emerging Technologies in the Food Industry

#### New Horizons, Challenges and Opportunities



From the lunchtime Tech Talks to the technically-specific Special Sessions and Breakout Sessions, emerging technologies were an overarching theme of this year's Global Food Safety Conference. The fourth plenary addressed these new developments through a focused, strategic lens. Discussion of technology can easily degrade into empty buzzwords for those not directly involved in its development. However, in this session speakers described food innovations in nuanced detail, without avoiding the financial, technical, legal, and health-related challenges involved in bringing these innovations to the consumer.



**Martin Weidmann, Gellert Family Professor in Food Safety at Cornell University**, began the session on a cautionary note that would temper the exuberance of the following talks. He ran through a list of food-tech media darlings — novel foods, lab-grown meats, yeast-produced dairy, ur-

ban agriculture, disruptive startups — and questioned whether the food safety apparatus was equipped to adapt to new fraud and disease potentials in these products.

Weidmann spent the remainder of his talk introducing the audience to one innovation that might have the capacity to mitigate some of the food safety risks associated with emerging foods: whole genome sequencing (WGS), a method of DNA fingerprinting. While DNA fingerprinting has been a much-used tool in the food safety arsenal for twenty years, WGS renders finer detail than any previous method could hope to approach.

WGS creates DNA fingerprints so detailed that researchers can determine the specific strains of bacteria associated with a given plant. These fingerprints allow researchers to track a strain from an outbreak to its source. WGS can also detect outbreaks more effectively than previous methods, which will lead to the illusion of outbreaks becoming more frequent. Weidmann urged the audience not to take this medium-term misconception as a reason to avoid WGS and related new genomics tools. "Not using the tools involves a greater risk than you may realise," he warned.

As a venture capitalist, **Matilda Ho** is just as concerned with risk assessment

#### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Whole genome sequencing offers solutions for the increasingly complex supply chain, including the challenges involved in emerging food technologies.
- 2 Thanks to a winning recipe of talent, investment, and government support, China is at the forefront of food technology innovation.
- 3 There's no one technological "magic bullet" for all the issues of the food system; solutions come from a thoughtful synergy of technologies.



as Weidmann. She founded the Shanghai-based firm Bits x Bites with the goal of shaping the future of good food through early-stage startups. Her investors look for startups that tackle challenges in the food system, from the overuse of chemical fertilisers to the lack of sustainable protein sources.

China is a particularly appropriate place for a firm like Bits x Bites; the country's breakneck economic rise has led to resource depletion as well as unprecedented rates of obesity and diabetes. The Chinese government is pushing for change in the

food industry through legislation and a \$110 million investment in food science. This investment is a key ingredient in what Ho calls the "magic formula" of talent, tech, and capital behind China's burgeoning startup culture. 4000 startups launch every day in China, all vying for attention from 2500 incubators.

Young venture capital firms often look for qualities like branding and "storytelling" when choosing investments, but these surface details aren't enough for Ho. She focuses on thoughtful sourcing, sophisticated manufacturing technologies, and enhanced consumer experience.

Companies that fit those stringent requirements receive three C's of support from Bits x Bites. First, the startups receive just enough capital to quickly produce a proof of concept, plus the necessary connections to acquire the next stage of funding. They also receive four months of coaching and a vibrant community. Like GFSI, Bits x Bites brings together experts from every side of the food industry — academia, science, media, big business, and small startups — all invested in driving positive change.



The final speaker of the session, **Yuki Hanyu**, represented one of the disruptive startups that would be worthy of Bits x Bites' 3 C's. "Disruptive" is Hanyu's own descriptor for his company. "What I'm doing is definitely a huge headache for food safety regulators, like the people here," he chuckled.

Hanyu is the founder of Shojinmeat Project and Integriculture, a startup that makes "clean meat." This euphemistic term refers to animal cells grown in a laboratory —

cruelty-free meat that could be produced in the middle of Tokyo. Or on Mars. "And if on Mars, why not in zero gravity," said Hanyu, clicking to a slide of a sci-fi space station. "Looks cooler."

The main issue with clean meat is its cost; in terms of pennies per pound, it's many years away from competing with ground beef. Shojinmeat's business plan therefore first aims for luxury cosmetic and supplemental products, then high-value proteins such as foie gras. Hanyu showed the audience an example of "clean" chicken foie gras from a recent demonstration: a grayish dollop resting on a basil leaf at the center of a stylishly-plated arrangement of garnish and sauce.

The second issue is customer trust. When it comes to food, consumers are wary of technological novelty — Hanyu held up widespread distrust of GMOs as an example of marketing gone wrong. To avoid becoming the next GMO, Shojinmeat aims for total transparency. They livestream all their demonstrations online, so anyone in the world can observe their process. They also publish their recipes, retaining only their models for scaling as proprietary information.

To ensure that the next generation is ready for clean meat, Shojinmeat brings lab-growing kits to Japanese schools. Curious kids can grow their own blob of cells like a class pet. One of Shojinmeat's high-school interns drew a comic book about the process, which they distribute at comic conventions around the country.

Hanyu conjured a craft-beer future for his brand: local "farmers" would develop their own recipes from the Shojinmeat base,

produce their own brands, and come to Shojinmeat to release their products on a larger scale. "We need to begin on a citizen scale," he said, to avoid the trust failure of GM food.

Sharanjit Leyl moderated a careful exchange between Weidmann and the young innovators. Weidmann took issue with Hanyu's claim that lab-grown meat has "virtually no bacteria"; there could be new, inter-cellular pathogens associated with the product that no current test covers. "It is a giant headache," he said, referring to Hanyu's earlier quip. "We don't have the answers yet." He did, however, agree with Hanyu's emphasis on transparency and citizen science.

Leyl asked the speakers to weigh in on specific innovations, including artificial intelligence and blockchain, and to choose one emerging technology that might offer the most solutions for food safety. Without exception, the speakers resisted assigning primary relevance to any one technology. "We can't bet on one technology solving all problems," said Ho. "We need to aim towards a synergy of technologies to solve specific problems."

"It's not one technology but the combination of all the technology we have that will create a safer food supply," agreed Weidmann.

"The food market is big enough for lots of companies," Hanyu said, when asked about his company's relationship with plant-based meat substitutes such as the Impossible Burger. "It's down to individual preferences." The answer received a nod from several of the diverse food industry representatives in the audience.

#### ACTION STEPS

- 1 Stay on top of developments in the startup sector to anticipate change before it sweeps the industry.
- 2 Acquire consumer trust through citizen science and radical transparency.



## PLENARY 5:

### Japan 2020, Nutrition and the Future of Food

#### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Food safety certification improves consumers' lives by freeing them to focus on their own improvement.
- 2 Unconventional food sources such as algae can play a role in reducing hunger and malnutrition around the world.
- 3 The growing startup culture in the developing world is driving radical innovation in the food industry and beyond.

Traditionally, the final plenary of the Global Food Safety Conference aims its sights towards the future. The GFSI Conference 2018 had a particular point in the distance to focus on: 2020, when the Olympics will be held just steps away from the conference's Tokyo venue. As revealed by the previous plenaries' speakers, Japan's food industry moves at lightning speed — by the time the athletes descend upon Tokyo in two years time, they may very well be able to feast on euglena prepared by robot celebrity chefs.



"Listen closely," said **Daichi Suzuki, Commissioner of the Japan Sports Agency** and 1988 gold medalist. "Can you hear the construction getting ready? The people cheering?"



"No," he sighed, "that's just an auditory hallucination."

The cheering may have been a hallucination, but the construction is real: Tokyo and the surrounding areas are already preparing frantically for events two years in the future. Even the menus are in development. Suzuki shared enticing images of a chirashi-don (rice topped with raw fish) that used only ingredients certified to a GFSI-recognised certification programme. After all, as the Japanese proverb goes, "you cannot fight on an empty stomach."

The adage takes on special meaning for Olympians, who eat not only to fill their stomachs but to power their bodies through feats that test the limits of human ability. As a young Olympian, Suzuki remembered carefully choosing his meals to avoid food poisoning or other issues. He wants modern athletes to focus on their performance instead of the safety of their food, so he's encouraging the organisers to purchase only ingredients with a GFSI-recognised certification for the village.

Food safety for athletes involves issues that might not be involved in every certification programme. For example, athletes must avoid poppy seeds and pork contaminated with steroids to avoid setting off a drug test. They're also conscious of mild food sensitivities that others might

ignore, because the slightest difference in their performance could mean the difference between success and failure. Suzuki claimed that the tennis player Novak Djokovic could only earn his title after addressing his gluten sensitivity.

In addition to providing safe food for the athletes, the Olympic committee could encourage athletes to use their platform to educate the public about food-related issues. Suzuki envisioned sending the Japanese athletes back to their home towns to share a meal with local school children. At the table, athletes could teach children how to appreciate food, prevent waste, and recognise global issues such as food insecurity. This effort would be in keeping with the IOC's sustainability and outreach strategies for 2020.



**Mitsuru Izumo, President of Euglena Co.**, had a very different prediction for Japan 2020. By that year, he surmised, the public would be eating euglena as a daily food. Euglena, a single-cellular organism with both animal and plant characteristics, is the central focus of Izumo's eponymous startup — and, evidently, of his life.

Born to a conventional, middle-class Japanese family, Izumo began his path towards disruptive innovation when he visited Bangladesh on a college internship. Bangladesh was the first place he saw poverty and malnutrition first-hand — but the

country was full of food. Children suffered crippling vitamin deficiencies despite receiving enough calories. Upon returning to Japan, Izumo decided to devote his life to solving malnutrition.

Euglena offered that solution. Packed with 59 nutrients and the complete proteins that occur in meat, euglena offers almost everything a human needs to live. The only difficulty is growing enough to sell cost-effectively. After years of trial and error, Euglena Co. developed a way to cultivate euglena on a large scale.

Since their eureka euglena moment, the company has joined the Tokyo Stock Exchange — the first startup out of Tokyo University to receive that honour — and grown to a market cap of \$1 billion. They've also achieved certification with FSSC, FDA, and halal and kosher authorities. "Japanese customers are very particular about food," he said, and certifications can help consumers ensure safety and quality.

In the future, Izumo would like to see euglena expand from food to the energy market. The "futuristic superorganism" can be made into biofuel or bio jet fuel, sustainable alternatives to petroleum products. "Come back to see us in 2020 and observe how much we've grown," he invited the audience.



The final speaker of the conference, **Adjiedj Bakas of Trend Office Bakas**, had even loftier predictions for the future of food, energy, and beyond. His multimedia presentation offered a kaleidoscopic vision of the future, featuring everything from livestock reared in artificial wombs to corporations with no internal hierarchy to a Zeppelin renaissance. No matter how far-fetched his predictions, Bakas always tied them back to action steps that relate to issues already at the forefront.

After suggesting that the world may adopt an Israeli cryptocurrency based on a diamond standard, Bakas urged the audience to invest in tech security to protect their information and assets. He also encouraged the investors present to pay attention to the burgeoning startup culture in developing countries.

Like Suzuki before him, Bakas was particularly concerned with food waste. He suggested that Zeppelins could be used to ship food more efficiently, preventing food loss during transit. He also noted the startup Copia, which connects people who have surplus food to people or institutions who have a lack. Finally he described a vision of new breeds of fruits and vegetables that have no inedible parts.

Bakas ended on one of the central themes of the conference: collaboration. "You're a great community; a university of food safety," he said. "I urge you to connect, here and digitally."

"He's given us plenty of food for thought," moderator Sharanjit Leyl quipped as she returned to the stage to introduce Gillian Kelleher, Anita Scholte op Reimer, and Mike Robach to close out the conference.

#### ACTION STEPS

- 1 Partner with athletes or other influencers to impact the public perception of food issues.
- 2 Maintain an open-minded flexibility that will allow your company to stretch to fit new trends.



## CLOSING THOUGHTS

Robach marked the end of the conference with heartfelt thanks to everyone involved, from the Japanese government to the GFSI team and their CGF colleagues to the interpreters and moderator Leyl herself. "You've kept this truly a professional operation," he commended.

At last, Robach handed over the podium to his colleagues Pierre de Ginestel and Frédéric René from the GFSI Board. Though lacking some of the fanfare of last year's ceremonious handover to the Japan Local Group — who came decked out in floral kimono — de Ginestel and René were equally determined to represent their country.

"As you understand with the accents, we are French," de Ginestel said. He welcomed the audience to attend next year's conference in Nice, on the French Riviera. "It will be difficult to compete with this year, but the French never give up."

**See you in Nice in 2019!**



## Discovery Tours

The Discovery Tours were the perfect opportunity to experience the culture and traditions of Japan first-hand. Attendees selected their tour from three bespoke discovery tracks, all designed to give unique insight into the Japanese food and beverage industry.

The "300 Years of Food & Beverage" tour charted a journey through time, from an ultra-modern Kewpie Egg Base to Sawanoi, the region's oldest sake brewery. After sipping sake with views over a traditional Japanese garden, the group had the chance to visit the 1900-year-old Ōkunitama Shrine.

The gourmands of the group chose the "All About Taste" tour, which shed light on the ever-evolving Japanese palate. Attendees sampled choice tidbits at Kirin Yokohama brewery, the Ajinomoto Kawasaki, and a local Costco. After satisfying their stomachs, they sought more spiritual nourishment at the 900-year-old Kawasaki Daishi temple.

The "Farm to Fork" tour offered a sweeping view of the Japanese food industry, from the transportation and logistics facility Chronogate to retailer chains METRO Cash & Carry and AEON. The tour wrapped up at FoodEx Japan, the largest exhibition of the Japanese food industry.



## GFSI Global Markets Awards

Four companies were recognised for excellence in advancing food safety as part of the Global Market Awards 2018. Nuts and Legumes Co. (Pakistan), Plantation Industries Limited (Nigeria), Fuji Foods Co. Ltd (Japan) and ASOCIACIONES AGROINDUSTRIALES SERRANAS S.A DE C.V (Mexico) were celebrated for their application of the GFSI Global Markets Programme, on their journey towards GFSI-recognised certification.



## GFSI Board Meetings

Leaders from major retail, manufacturing, primary production and food service operations who make up the GFSI Board of Directors met before the conference to discuss new challenges in the evolving food industry landscape. The Board welcomed valuable new additions from players in food service, ecommerce, traditional retail, primary production and manufacturing. Old and new members worked together on a volunteer basis to provide the strategic direction for GFSI in line with key industry needs.



## G2G and G2B Meetings

GFSI hosted the third edition of the Government to Government (G2G) and Government to Business (G2B) meetings in Tokyo. At this year's G2B meeting, the GFSI Board of Directors were joined by 40 organisations representing 25 countries and five IGOs. The meetings were an opportunity to discuss third-party certification and emerging food safety issues while exploring how regulators and the private sector can advance food safety in the context of value chain management. Paul Mayers of the Canadian government, Mika Yokoto of Japan and Mike Robach, Chair of the GFSI Board of Directors, ran the meeting, informing and aligning understanding of third-party certification from a food safety and trade perspective.





## Press Conference

The key focus of this year's press conference, taking place just before the opening plenary session, was Public-Private Partnerships. Well attended by national and international media business and trade media, the press conference saw new partnerships announced, enabling the public and private sectors to drive progress on operational approaches to food safety culture and expand capacity based on the GFSI's Global Markets Programme — a framework for implementing robust food safety systems in developing markets. "This kind of public-private collaboration is unprecedented," said Mike Robach, Chair of the GFSI Board. "The support we're seeing around the world now is signalling a big, positive change."



## Digital Conversation

The digital food safety conversation continues to grow and this year's conference featured a live Twitter wall that fluttered with activity all conference long. Delegates shared their thoughts and session takeaways by attaching the hashtag #gfsi18

to their tweets. Conveniently located near GFSI's own booth and the Presentation Theater, many delegates stopped to catch up on the conversation, while community members unable to make the trip joined in from around the world as well.



## Exhibition

At the vibrant exhibition hall, delegates learned about new and innovative food safety solutions while mingling with the GFSI community. In fact, the conference's exhibition hall has become a community in its own right, with many familiar faces joined by a few local first-timers. Over 30 exhibitors set up shop in the hall, some even performing traditional Japanese tea ceremonies or providing photo opportunities with mascots. While enjoying the attractions, delegates took the opportunity to make connections and do business with the diverse, friendly crowd.



## Tech Talks

After their first appearance at GFSI 2017 in Houston, Tech Talks returned by popular demand at the GFSI Conference 2018 in Tokyo. These short sessions provided a break from proceedings in the main auditorium and offered a more relaxed and informal setting for discussion of specific topics in food safety. As the name implies,

## Special Sessions

The early birds among the attendees had the chance to catch a series of morning Special Sessions, where some of the leading lights in the industry discussed the hottest topics in food safety, technology and innovation. At the Wednesday sessions, experts from Greenfence, Ecolab, Bureau Veritas, and Rentokil regaled the delegates with tales of their adventures in the world of blockchain and Big Data. On Thursday, key players at DNV GL, SAI Global, SGS, and Diversey & CxS turned out to turn over complex ideas such as consumer trust, food defense, digital transformation, and the role of technology in food safety culture.





## Breakout Sessions

This year's Breakout Sessions provided the chance for delegates to delve further into topics affecting the food industry. Attendees listened to real life case studies — success stories and lessons learned — and got a practical, hands on approach from those at the forefront of food safety.

At the **Aquaculture & Seafood** session, industry-leading speakers focused on the importance of quality and traceability. They outlined best practices to ensure that the world's aquaculture supply-chains are safe, secure, and sustainable.

The **Changing Role of the Regulator** session discussed the need for iterative international food safety standards as global supply chains become more complex and interdependent. The speakers encouraged the implementation of international standards to increase trade and provide safer food for consumers everywhere.

The **Food Safety Culture** session welcomed an especially large crowd, who turned out to hear leaders from Europe, Asia Pacific, and the US share their own food safety culture models while highlighting common themes among the different strategies. Delegates walked away with practical action steps for building their own culture of food safety.

The **Global Markets Programme and Capacity Building** session offered valuable information for delegates curious about how GFSI's pathway to certification can benefit their own organisations. Panelists from the public and private sectors, as well as various Inter-Governmental Organisations, examined how schemes such as the GFSI Global Markets Programme could be a solution to building effective food safety management systems in local manufacturers.

Ruediger Hagedorn of The Consumer Goods Forum moderated the **Big Data** session,



which focused on the emerging role of this technology and predictive analytics in the food industry. Speakers examined the various tools available and demonstrated how these capabilities are helping companies improve consumer engagement, supply chain security and food quality.

The **Auditor Competency** session contemplated the changing role of the food safety auditor in the face of developing technologies and new risk areas. Speakers shared auditing experiences and explored the applicability of wearable technologies such as Google Glass in the field.

The **Primary Production** session focused on the first step in the food supply chain: the farm. Capacity-building in primary production is one of GFSI's core strategic objectives. The speakers gazed into the future of food safety with an in-depth discussion of how producers are exchanging knowledge with global food companies in real-time.

With meat fraud and similar incidents making colourful headlines in recent years, the **Food Fraud** session was understandably popular. This timely session explored the "why" of food fraud prevention strategies with the goal of imparting three key learning objectives: understanding the application of specific countermeasures in actual food fraud incidents, revealing how experts are shifting from traditional approaches to innovative responses, and demonstrating how a multi-disciplinary approach might be applied to reduce food fraud risk.

The final breakout session of the conference provided delegates with a **Food Service** and hospitality perspective on food safety culture. The session included speakers at the forefront of the food service revolution, including Yongjian Zhong from Meituan Dianping, a delivery platform seamlessly integrated into social media. Delegates also received insider tips on meeting the needs of the modern, millennial customer.



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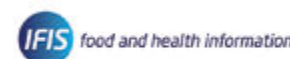
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## SEE THE BIGGER PICTURE FROM A FRESH PERSPECTIVE.

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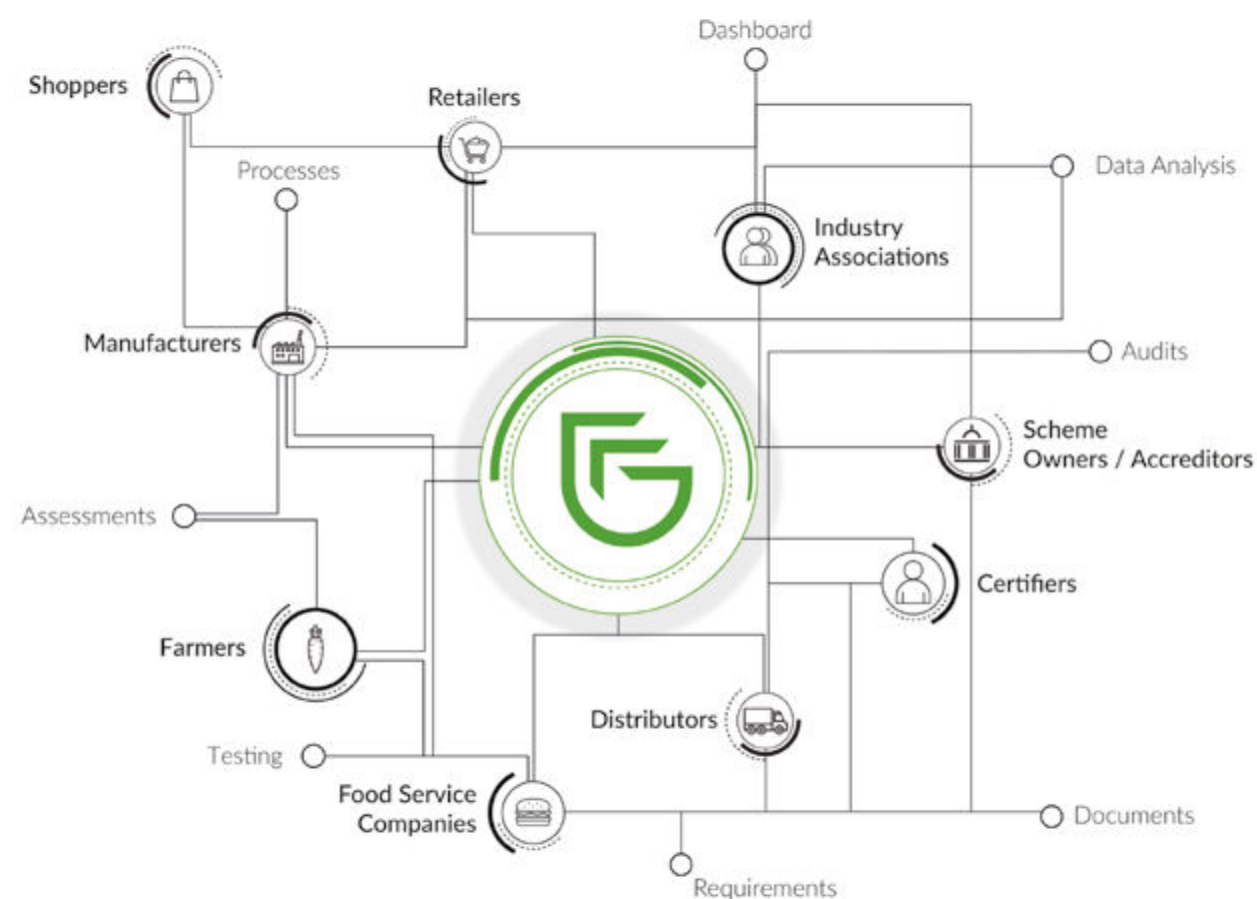
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## FOOD and AGRICULTURAL services



### WHY CHOOSE BUREAU VERITAS



#### A global leader

In laboratory testing, inspection and certification with (75+) testing labs, 2000 food inspectors and auditors providing services worldwide.



#### Field-to-fork services

A comprehensive service portfolio to help clients along the entire food value chain comply with the highest standards of quality, product integrity, health and safety, and environmental and social responsibility.



#### Expertise and reach

International know-how combined with local knowledge and a deep understanding of food business challenges.



#### Bureau Veritas brand

A globally recognized symbol of quality and a commitment to excellence.

A wide range of services to ensure food safety, quality and traceability - all the way from field to fork

#### OUR SOLUTIONS

- Leading certification services (GFSI, food safety and quality standards/ norms, 8000 + certificates per year)
- Leading testing (75+ Food and Agricultural labs) and inspection services



origin

The first consumer facing traceability claim, based on the Blockchain technology, that provides consumers with products proofs of quality. Origin gives access to the complete history of a product: where it comes from, how it was made and processed, and how its quality was preserved



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with innovative food safety and risk management services

Diversey and CxS are proud of having sponsored the 2018 GFSI Global Food Safety Conference.

Diversey is an innovative global cleaning and hygiene technology company employing 9,000 in over 175 countries, while CxS, pronounced "C by S," with the letters representing "Cleanliness" & "Sanitation" serves similar markets in Japan. Both offer food safety services such as consulting, auditing, training and micro-testing for industrial customers in the facility management, health care, hospitality, retail and food service and food and beverage sectors.

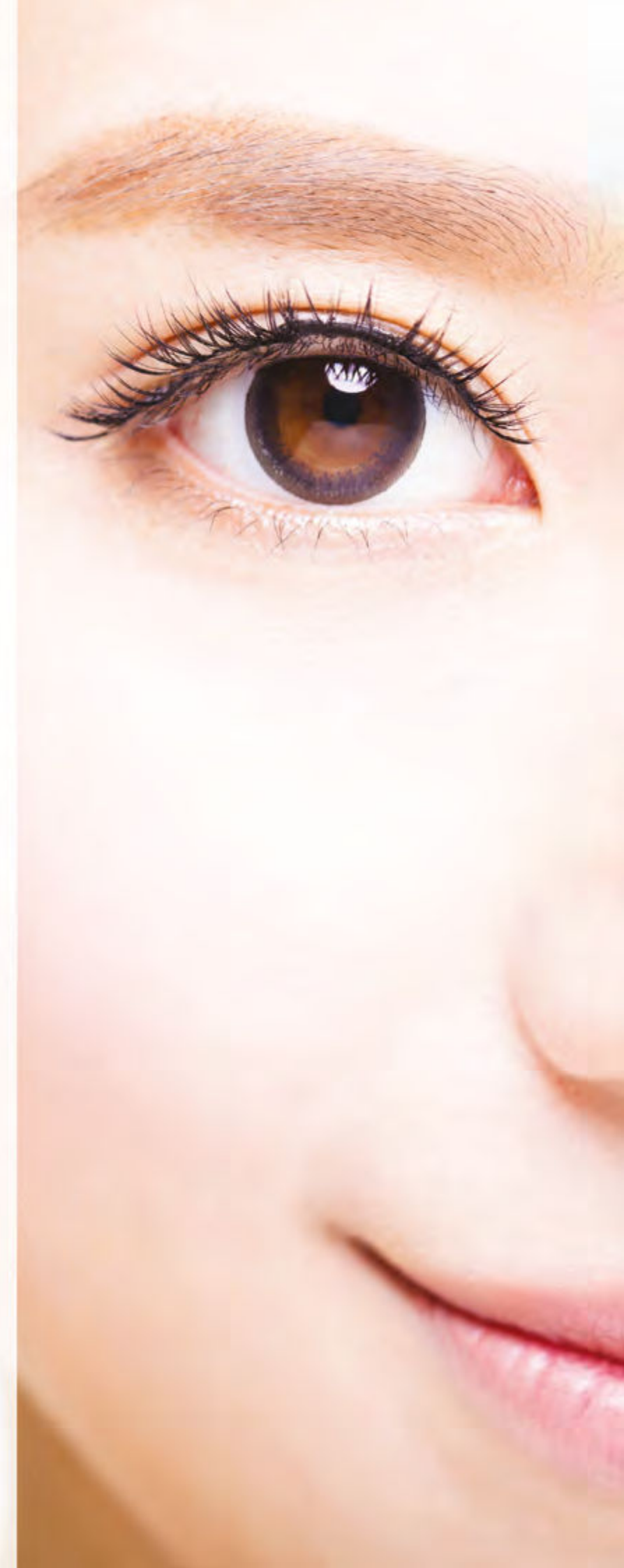
Thanks to the many of you who have attended our special session and interacted with us.

To continue the dialogue:

[www.diversey.com](http://www.diversey.com)

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# CONSUMERS REWARD BRANDS THAT CARE

ASSURANCE CAN HELP YOU BUILD TRUST IN EVERY LINK

How will digital transformation change the food industry and impact food safety? IoT, Big Data, advanced analytics and blockchain may sound like buzzwords to you, but we believe they will significantly improve our food value chains, contributing to safer and more sustainable production.

Digital assurance solutions will help you manage your supply chain more effectively while reducing cost and friction. Enabling unprecedented transparency, providing insight for better decisions, optimizing resource utilization and allowing you to benefit from consumer feedback are just examples of this ongoing transformation.

There has never been greater scrutiny of your supply chains and building trust has never been more important.

Through our portfolio of assurance services – certification, verification & training – we are here to help you assure safe food for consumers everywhere. Through our innovative projects and initiatives, we combine our industry knowledge and technology capabilities to pioneer digital assurance and help you build more trust into every link of your supply chains.

**Want to learn more? Come visit the DNV GL stand. Our experts would love to discuss safe and sustainable food and digital trust with you.**

# ADVANCING FOOD SAFETY

By harnessing global data and insight, pioneering industry leading innovations and exploiting the latest technologies, we help food businesses all over the world proactively mitigate pest and hygiene related risks.

To find out more visit [rentokil-initial.com/food-safety](https://rentokil-initial.com/food-safety)





## Protect Your Consumer Trust

Build your brands reputation and drive customer loyalty with SAI Global's services and solutions to help you achieve the highest food standards – anywhere in the world.

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## FOOD SOLUTIONS

### EXCELLENCE IN SAFETY, QUALITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

Recognized as the global benchmark for quality and integrity, with more than 95,000 employees, SGS operates a network of over 2,400 offices and laboratories around the world. Our food solutions include:

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- Seafood & Aquaculture Certification and Related Services
- FSMA Training, Audit and Consulting Services
- Social, Ethical and Sustainability Audits
- Food Fraud, Defense and Authenticity including:
  - Gluten-free, Halal and Kosher Certification
  - DNA-NGS Testing for Food Fraud and Key Contaminants
- Farm Sustainability Assessments (FSA)
- Animal Welfare Audits
- Services for Catering and Food Service Sector
- Supply Chain Risk Management
- Food Inspection and Testing Services
- Food Technical Training including Tailored Programs

✉ [food@sgs.com](mailto:food@sgs.com)

🌐 [www.foodsafety.sgs.com](http://www.foodsafety.sgs.com)

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# **GFSI** CONFERENCE