Invited speakers

Katie Baert
EFSA, Parma, Italy

Paola Battilani
UNICATT, Piacenza, Italy

Silvio Borrello
MINSAL, Rome, Italy

Carlo Brera
ISS, Rome, Italy

Renata Clarke
FAO, Rome, Italy

Barbara De Santis
ISS, Rome, Italy

Beatrice Lorenzin
MINSAL, Rome, Italy

Isabelle Oswald
INRA, Toulouse, France

Walter Ricciardi
ISS, Rome, Italy

Daniela Rodorigo
MINSAL, Rome, Italy

Giuseppe Ruocco
MINSAL, Rome, Italy

Paul Turner
University of Maryland, USA

Bernhard Url
EFSA, Parma, Italy

Frans Verstraete
DG SANTE, Bruxelles, Belgium

Susana Viegas
ESTeSL/IPL, Lisbon, Portugal
Objective of the Conference

The presence of mycotoxins in the agri-food chain is representing a more and more challenging issue for animal and public health. This aspect is based upon the inherent multifaceted implications that these toxic compounds induce. Agronomic, economic, productive, industrial and sanitary issues are, in fact, concerned at the same time. The worldwide scenario, within this challenging theme of public health is enclosed, originates from several facets regarding primarily the understanding of how to manage a natural cause as source of occurrence of fungal attack and mycotoxin production. It is, in fact, well known that crops are affected by this phenomenon as a result of the occurring climate changes that are expected to create further negative implications in the near future. As known, the more immediate fall-out is the increase of the menace of a further limitation of food availability prejudicing food security firstly and food safety secondly. Since the entire agri-food system is involved in this challenge, any stakeholder in any position and role must deserve the highest attention in encouraging the adoption of preventive actions aimed at minimizing the risk. In this context, the One-Health approach is one of the most promising tools to contribute to improve health and well being through the prevention of risks and the mitigation of effects of crises that originate at the interface between humans, animals and their various environments.

From the above, the full acknowledgment and the resulting implementation of the induced chain of preventive measures, represent the only access key to give a concrete and systematic answer to the fighting of the phenomenon. Therefore, the adoption of Good Agricultural, Storage and Industrial Practices, as well as other relevant preventive measures including the most recent biocontrol activities, together with proper cost- and risk-benefit strategies and accurate policies of risk communication addressed to all the stakeholders constitute the most significant management actions contributing to enhance and ameliorate the consciousness of all parties directly or indirectly involved in the assurance of a safer feeding of the planet, by improving the level of food security and food safety.

In addition, the use of bio-monitoring studies deserves a noteworthy mentioning since they can contribute to provide a quasi-qualitative information on the real intake of toxic compounds with the aim to take targeted intervention strategies aimed both at verifying the safety of the production chains and marketed foods and feeds and at reducing the overall exposure. The entire afternoon session of the Conference will be, therefore, dedicated to this fundamental topic that will see also the presentation of the results of BIODAF project on the characterisation of the metabolic profile of aflatoxin B1 in a particularly sensitive population group such as subjects exposed to mycotoxins in risky workplaces as a result of their intake or via food or by inhalation and contact.

The abovementioned topics are only some examples that will be presented in the International Conference co-organized by the Italian Ministry of Health, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the Istituto Superiore di Sanità (ISS).