



THEME --- GLOBAL FOOD SAFETY AND SUSTAINABILITY

'This year's WEHD theme of 'Global Food Safety and Sustainability' aims to support the provision of more safe food, to make use of precious water and nutrient resources, and for communities to increasingly value sustainable food production.'

To provide more food and make use of precious water and nutrient resources, communities increasingly value sustainable food production. However, this should be done safely to maximise public health gains and environmental benefits. Food safety is being challenged nowadays by global dimensions of food supply chains, the need for reduction of food waste and efficient use of natural resources such as clean water. Food safety deals with safeguarding the own national food supply chain from the introduction, growth or survival of hazardous microbial and chemical agents. But within a larger international context, borders are fading and surely this is the case for foodstuffs which are an important globally traded commodity.

As our food supply becomes increasingly globalised, the need to strengthen food safety systems in and between all countries is becoming more and more evident.

WHO helps countries prevent, detect and respond to foodborne disease outbreaks in line with the Codex Alimentarius, a collection of international food standards and processes. Together with the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FOA), WHO alerts countries to food safety emergencies through an international information network.

New threats to food safety are constantly emerging. Changes in food production, distribution and consumption; changes to the environment; new and emerging pathogens; antimicrobial resistance all poses challenges to national food safety systems. Increases in travel and trade enhance the likelihood that contamination can spread internationally.

Foodborne diseases comprise a wide spectrum of illnesses that result from ingestion of foodstuffs contaminated with microorganisms or chemicals.

Food may become contaminated at any stage in the process from production to consumption and contamination may be the result of environmental contamination, such as pollution of water, soil or air.



Foodborne diseases are a growing public health problem throughout the world and causes a considerable burden of disability and mortality, WHO studies of the global burden of foodborne diseases in 2010 estimated that 31 hazards (including viruses, bacteria, protozoa, helminths and chemicals) caused 600 million foodborne illnesses globally and 420,000 deaths (WHO 2015). An estimated 600 million – almost 1 in 10 people in the world, fall ill after eating contaminated food. Children under 5 years of age carry 40% of foodborne disease burden, with 125,000 deaths every year.

Foodborne diseases impede socioeconomic development by straining health care systems, and harming national economies, tourism and trade.

FOA estimates that each year, approximately one-third of all food produced for human consumption in the world is lost or wasted. This food wastage represents a missed opportunity to improve global food security and the use of resources from food chains, but also to mitigate environmental impacts.

Wastage happens at all steps of production, handling, storage, processing, distribution and consumption. Agricultural production being responsible for the greatest amount of total food wastage volumes, with 33% of the total.

In a world where we produce enough food to feed everyone, one in nine still go to bed on an empty stomach each night. Eradicating hunger and malnutrition is one of the great challenges of our time(<http://www1.wfp.org/zero-hunger>).

Food wastage is fast assuming serious dimensions. According to FOA, staggering 1.3 billion tons of food is being wasted annually.

Even if just one-fourth of the food currently lost or wasted globally could be saved, it would be enough to feed 870 million hungry people in the world.

Raising awareness among industries, retailers and consumers as well as finding beneficial use for food that is presently thrown away are useful measures to decrease the amount of losses and waste.

It must be remembered that this food that is saved and distributed must still comply with the agreed food standards and legislation, including the countries that it is being sent to.

We encourage all member organisations and regional groups, academic associates and associate members to set up local initiatives and events to celebrate World Environmental Health Day.



World Environmental Health Day 26th September 2018

We would specifically ask Universities to encourage and support their students in producing short videos on topics important to them.

Regarding information about planned national / regional initiatives as well as short videos we will provide opportunity for this to be displayed on the specific page on the IFEH website www.ifeh.org/WEHD . This opportunity is open to all – regardless of membership of the IFEH. Please send information about your initiatives to IFEH PR Officer, email: pro@ifeh.org

We are looking forward to hear about your 2018 initiatives in order to pursue the intentions behind our World Environmental Health Day.

Peter Archer

President