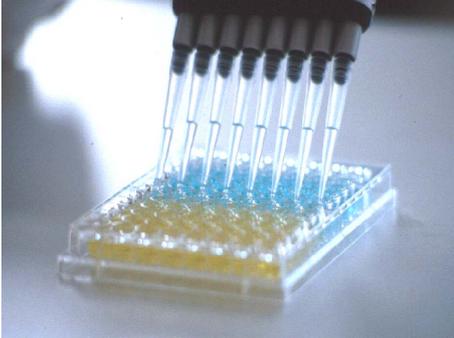


MoniQa

Towards the harmonisation of analytical methods for monitoring quality and safety in the food chain



Harmonising worldwide food quality and safety monitoring and control strategies is the goal of the EU-funded MONIQA (Monitoring and Quality Assurance in the food supply chain) project. The initial network of over 155 scientists from 20 countries has grown to over 400 experts from over 35 countries from five continents in the first 24 months and has expanded further in year three to nearly 500 registered experts and 130 institutions.

The MONIQA project aims at making the food chain safer by harmonising the methods used to analyse food for safety and quality. The project partners have created a virtual laboratory

outlining details of food safety issues and the various food testing and analysis methods in use. Through this, the researchers are able to exchange data and knowledge, helping them to develop common strategies which could form the basis of new standards in food quality and safety.

By implementing joint research programmes and promoting exchanges of researchers between the partners, the project partners are developing solutions which will be acceptable to consumers, manufacturers and regulatory bodies as well as other groups involved in the food chain. The researchers are also investigating the food quality and safety implications of new processing technologies, and identifying future research needs. The activities of the various work packages and work groups address analytical challenges, global harmonisation and standardisation efforts, industry needs for rapid and new analytical methods, modern HACCP concepts, databases, and better future regulations. All MoniQA activities are accompanied by relevant training courses and dissemination activities.

Background

Recent problems like BSE, doubts raised by GMOs, the dioxin scare and hormones in imported beef have raised public awareness on the need for assured food quality and safety. With the rise of globalisation, more and more foods and food products are being traded around the world. Ensuring that these foods are of a high quality and safe to eat when they reach the consumer requires reliable food analysis techniques. However, different countries currently use different methods to test foods for the presence of harmful substances in food. Trade liberalisation raises further concern about imported food.

Traceability of food products throughout the European food chain is essential to reassure consumers and safeguard the internal market. Although valuable research is being done on checking food quality and safety in Europe and beyond, it remains fragmented. The results would spread more rapidly with better coordination and data sharing.

Objectives

The MONIQA NoE seeks to establish durable integration of leading research institutions, industrial partners and SMES working in complementary fields of detection and methods for food quality and safety. MONIQA aims at overcoming European and worldwide fragmentation in food quality and safety (Q and S) research by integrating key organisations in a core consortium.

Results/Impact

Project under execution



MONIQA will have the following long-term socio-economic impact:

- It will generate internationally recognised training courses for academia and industry;
- Development of economic models for the food chain;
- Contribution to "better future regulations" for food safety in the EU;
- Support to the prosperity of Europe's food markets;
- Development of technologies that can be exploited by SMEs;
- Raise consumer confidence in food safety.

Scientific significance

The project contributes to the following scientific areas:

- A portfolio of synergetic research to meet emerging global challenges in food quality and safety
- Common strategies for harmonising and validating detection methods and technologies
- Guidelines for risk assessment in monitoring procedures following current and emerging legislation
- Reference materials and validated analytical methods for food safety assessment
- Database of food quality and safety issues and corresponding analytical tools
- Analysis of the implications of new EU food safety regulations for industry, society and the economy.

Project outcomes

- A sustainable network to integrate international research institutions in shared activities
- New standards in food quality and safety, starting in production and eventually extending throughout the food chain
- A report on the long-term modernisation potential of monitoring and quality assurance in the food supply chain
- Exchanges of personnel in laboratories and research centres worldwide
- Training programmes to harmonise levels of skill and know-how.

For more information, please visit the website: <http://www.moniga.org/>

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Duration: 60 months

Starting Date: 01/02/2007

Partners:

ICC - International Association for Cereal Science and Technology (AU), BOKU - Universität für Bodenkultur Wien (AU), Ain Shams University (Egypt), Campden and Chorleywood Food Research Association (UK), CER - Centre d'Economie Rurale (BE), Eurofins Analytik GmbH (DE), Centro Tecnológico Gaiker (ES), CSL - Central Science Laboratory (UK), Q-Plan - International Quality and Environment Services (GR), Tübitak Marmara Research Center (Turkey), University of Food Technologies (BU), VocalTag (Israel), VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland (FI), University of Napoli, Federico II (Italy), Matforsk - Norwegian Food Research Institute (NO), National Technical University of Athens (GR), National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (NL), Sichuan University (China), Istituto Nazionale di Ricerca per gli Alimenti e la Nutrizione (IT), Budapest University of Technology and Economics (HU), Institute of Environmental Science and Research (New Zealand), National Food and Nutrition Institute (PL), Hacettepe University (Turkey), CCOA - Chinese Cereals and Oils Association (China), Institut Pertanian Bogor (India), Hanoi University of Technology (Vietnam), IFR - Institute of Food Research (UK), National Research Council (IT), RTD Services (AU), JRC - Joint Research Centre (BE), Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms Universität Bonn (DE), Interdisciplinary Centre for Comparative Research in the Social Sciences (AU), University of Bologna (IT)