



# Nutrition and Food Safety Newsletter

October 2024

## Dear Subscribers

Welcome to our Nutrition and Food Safety Newsletter. In this issue, we present new publications, key meetings and notable events in the field of nutrition and food safety from July to September 2024. For further details, please click on the related hyperlinks.

### New Publications

#### **The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) report**

The latest State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) report was published on 24 July by five United Nations specialized agencies. This year's annual report focuses on financing and presents the latest updated numbers on hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, as well as new estimates on the affordability of a healthy diet.

In 2023, around 733 million people faced hunger, equivalent to one in eleven people globally and one in five in Africa. The report was launched in the context of the G20 Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty Task Force Ministerial Meeting.



## Safety evaluation of certain contaminants in food

The monograph prepared by the Ninety-third meeting of the Joint Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)/World Health Organization (WHO) Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) was published on 15 July. It summarizes the data on certain food contaminants, specifically the trichothecenes T-2, HT-2 and 4,15-diacetoxyscirpenol (DAS).



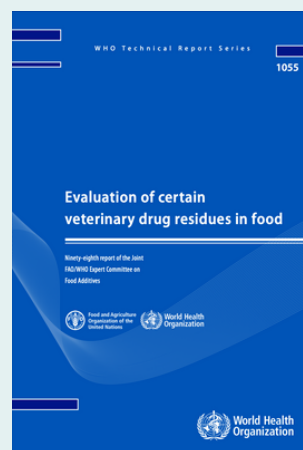
## Safety evaluation of certain food additives

The monograph prepared by the Ninety-sixth meeting of JECFA provides an evaluation of the safety of aspartame and two groups of flavouring agents, and revised specifications for three food additives and eight flavouring agents.



## Evaluation of certain veterinary drug residues in food

The report of the Ninety-eighth meeting of JECFA represents evaluation of technical, toxicological, microbiological and epidemiological data of three veterinary drugs: Clopidol, Fumagillin dicyclohexylamine and Imidacloprid.



## Evaluation of certain food additives

JECFA summary report (publication date: 8 July) and the report (publication date: 19 September) from its Ninety-ninth meeting represent evaluation of data on the food additive butterfly pea flower extract, natamycin A, nisin, polyglycerol esters of fatty acids and four processing aids, and revised specifications for ten flavouring agents.



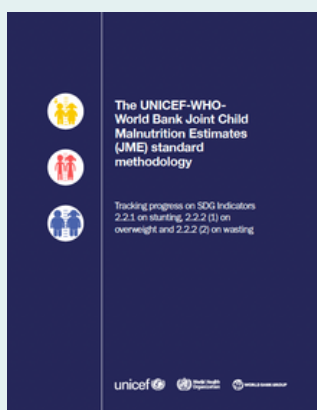
## Food allergens briefs

A series of brief technical documents on [priority food allergens](#), [food allergen reference doses](#) and [precautionary allergens labelling \(PAL\)](#), was published in September.



## Joint child malnutrition estimates standard methodology

The [United Nations Children's Fund \(UNICEF\)-WHO-World Bank joint child malnutrition estimates \(JME\) standard methodology](#) provides the background, rationale and description of the standard approach followed by the UNICEF-WHO-World Bank JME group to generate national estimates for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators 2.2.1 (child stunting), 2.2.2 (1) (child overweight) and 2.2.2 (2) (child wasting), as well as regional and global aggregations for the three indicators.



## Trans fat elimination op-ed

WHO Director-General and the president and CEO of Resolve to Save Lives co-authored an op-ed, [Trans fat: everyone must join the fight to eliminate this invisible killer from the world's food supply forever](#), published by the British Medical Journal on 12 July. The commentary is available in 6 UN languages on the [WHO website](#).

## Effects of daily oral iron supplementation during pregnancy

A peer-reviewed paper, [Effects of daily oral iron supplementation during pregnancy](#), published by the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews (WHO authors: Dr Maria Nieves Garcia-Casal and Dr Luz Maria De-Regil) concludes that women taking daily iron supplements may have reduced anaemia and iron deficiency when they give birth around their due date, compared with placebo or no iron.

## International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN) Quarterly Summary

[INFOSAN Quarterly Summary](#) was published in July. The INFOSAN Secretariat was involved in 51 food safety incidents concerning WHO Member States and territories from all regions during the fourth quarter of 2023.



## Events and Meetings

### Regulatory workshop on sugar-sweetened beverage (SSB) taxation

As part of the WHO Acceleration Plan to Stop Obesity and to support the countries that have prioritized taxation of SSBs, WHO, UNICEF and the World Bank convened a workshop on 23-25 September at the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) office in Washington D.C. The aim of the workshop was to operationalize the recommendations and provide support to countries to introduce, develop, implement and where relevant, improve the design of SSB taxation. Representatives from Ministry of Health and Ministry of Finance from Argentina, Barbados, Brazil, Bangladesh, Egypt, Mauritius, Kazakhstan, Slovenia, Uruguay and civil society participated. The participants identified and agreed on a way forward to accelerate the execution phase, including launching a 100-day challenge to start the process.



### Thematic workshop: Policies to protect children from the harmful impact of food marketing

To support the Acceleration Plan to Stop Obesity frontrunner countries in advancing their efforts to restrict the marketing of unhealthy food and beverages to children, WHO supported the organization of a thematic workshop in Athens, Greece.

Stakeholders explored current policy implementation activity, shared lessons learned and identified challenges and solutions related to the development, introduction, implementation and redesign of policies. Participants identified a 100-day challenge and are using the WHO Food Systems Community of Practice to establish a way forward.



### Accelerating the response to the obesity epidemic

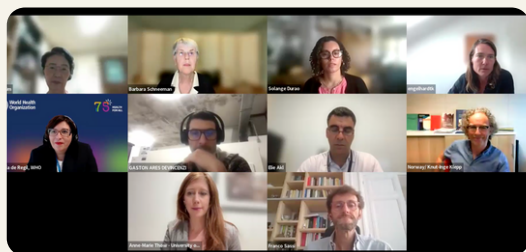
WHO, UNICEF, the World Obesity Federation and the American Heart Association organized a side event at the margin of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on 26 September. The event brought together leaders from government, civil society, the private sector and youth advocates to focus on the interventions to rapidly bring down the growing epidemic.

### Meeting of the WHO Foodborne Disease Burden Epidemiology Reference Group (FERG) for 2021-2025

During the eighth expert meeting of FERG, the members reviewed the progress of the data collection and computational methodologies towards finalizing the 2025 edition of the WHO estimates of the burden of foodborne diseases, expressed in incidence, death and disability-adjusted life years.

## Meeting of the Nutrition Guidance Expert Advisory Group - subgroup on Policy actions

The eighth meeting of the WHO Nutrition Guidance Expert Advisory Group (NUGAG) - subgroup on Policy actions, which took place virtually on 2-3 September, reviewed the results of the rapid search update of the systematic review on the effectiveness of school food and nutrition policies. The group worked to finalize the recommendations and remarks for the school food and nutrition policies.



## INFOSAN introductory webinars for WHO regions

A series of webinars were held to introduce INFOSAN to new members and provide a refresher for existing ones across different WHO regions. The sessions included Europe on 29 July, the Americas on 18 August (in both English and Spanish), the Eastern Mediterranean on 23 July (in English) and 3 September (in Arabic), and the Western Pacific Region (WPRO) and the South-East Asia Region (SEARO) on 27 July.



## INFOSAN Lesotho national workshop on food safety

A national workshop was delivered online for Lesotho on 15-16 July, organized in collaboration with WHO and FAO Regional Offices, with support from the WHO Country Office. Participants included representatives from national authorities responsible for food safety. The key outcome of the workshop was the development of a national roadmap to strengthen the country's food safety emergency response plan.

## WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety workshop in Egypt

On 1-3 July, a workshop was held in Egypt to develop the national roadmap for the implementation of the WHO Global Strategy for Food Safety. The workshop involved the Regional Office and the Country Office. The objectives of the workshop were to prepare the national roadmap and to validate a tool being developed to help Member States identify and prioritize main gaps.



## Webinars on food safety

Two webinars were held on the topic of food safety, "Ranking food safety risks at the national level" and "The neglected problem of foodborne Chagas disease - the importance of foodborne transmission of *Trypanosoma cruzi*".

## Food control system assessment in Cabo Verde workshop

Final workshop to present the results of the assessment of the food control system in Cabo Verde using the FAO/WHO Food Control System Assessment Tool took place on 25-28 June. The meeting, attended by the Minister of Health and the WHO Representative (WR), aimed to present the final results of the assessment. The activity, conducted in Portuguese, involved WHO HQ, Regional and Country Offices. The final workshop prepared a roadmap and the report of the assessment was used to prepare a project grant for the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF).



## Public consultation launch of the WHO guideline on nutrition labelling policies

WHO developed a draft guideline on nutrition labelling policies to support countries in developing and implementing new, or strengthening existing, nutrition labelling policies. The public consultation launch took place on 9 September.



## A decade of advancing global policy- making in nutrition: 2024

### WHO/Cochrane/Cornell Summer Institute

The 10th year of the Institute on Systematic Reviews in Nutrition for Global Policymaking brought together experts, researchers and practitioners to exchange knowledge on systematic reviews, meta-analyses and other methods, and on evidence-informed health care. Over the past ten years, the Institute has trained 252 participants from 38 countries and the 25 completed systematic reviews have contributed to eight WHO global guidelines. Celebrating a decade of impact, the Institute highlighted its accomplishments in advancing evidence-informed policy and its commitment to global health.



## Inaugural lectureship for the Center for Precision Nutrition and Health

Dr Francesco Branca, Director of Nutrition and Food Safety, WHO, delivered the inaugural lectureship at the Cornell University School of Human Ecology Center for Precision Nutrition and Health on the topic of “Transforming food systems for better nutrition and health: from science to policy”.





## **Annual International Association for Food Protection (IAFP) conference**

The NFS department took part in the [IAFP 2024 annual meeting](#) in July by hosting a symposium on new quantitative risk assessment models for *Listeria monocytogenes*. The symposium aimed to give an overview of the latest knowledge on *L. monocytogenes* in various commodities, updates on hazard characterization models, the introduction of new risk assessment models developed by WHO, and a demonstration of their exploitability.

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## **Global Food Regulators Summit 2024**

The Food Safety and Standards Authority in India convened the 2nd Global Food Regulator's Summit on 20-21 September. This summit provided a unique platform to food regulators of various nations to exchange information on food product regulatory and safety requirements, with an emphasis on fostering cooperation between nations in the realm of food safety standards.

The WHO Director-General sent a recorded message for the opening ceremony and Dr Luz Maria De-Regil set the context for the session "Addressing the Hidden Hunger: Fortification as a Strategy".

## **Paris Summit on Sports for Sustainable Development (S4SD)**

The [Summit](#), held in Paris, France, on 25 July, was the only high level political moment during the Olympics, with 500 guests, including Heads of State and Government. WHO Director-General was one of the few leaders invited to speak. Together with the former NBA player and founder and president of the Gasol Foundation, he addressed obesity as a massive global health challenge that threatens the opportunities of future generations, to the point of shortening life expectancy, and committed that WHO will expand support from 32 to 40 countries by 2026, with the aim of reducing obesity prevalence in each nation by 5% by 2030.

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## **Food Day**

WHO Nutrition and Food Safety Department joined philanthropy and advocacy organizations in hosting Food Day on 24 September in New York, United States of America, bringing together climate, health and animal advocacy communities to discuss food systems transformation needed to address the climate crisis while improving health.



## Other News

### WHO Food Systems Community of Practice

WHO has a [Community of Practice](#) (COP) focused on food systems. This online platform aims to connect public health practitioners and allies to enhance the ongoing global efforts to strengthen food systems toward safer and healthier food and food environments. Currently, the COP offers thematic groups on food safety, food fortification, sodium reduction, trans fat elimination, nutrition labeling, harmful marketing and fiscal policies. Anyone can join the COP in a personal capacity.



### A Global Health Observatory page dedicated for WHO estimates of foodborne diseases

A [new page](#) was launched to host the WHO estimates of the burden of foodborne diseases under the Global Health Observatory, WHO's official data space.

### Digital platform for the International Health Regulations 2005 (IHR) benchmarks

WHO and partners have developed [a tool with a list of benchmarks, including food safety](#), and corresponding suggested actions that can be applied to implement the IHR 2005 and strengthen health emergency prevention, preparedness, response and resilience capacities. This tool supports countries in developing, implementing and documenting progress of national IHR or health security plans.

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