

# International Commission on Microbiological Specifications for Foods

Note to IUMS on ICMSF activities (2013-2014)



At the turn of 2013 to 2014, ICMSF membership consisted of 16 food microbiologists and related experts from 13 countries, with 7 female and 9 male experts ranging in ages from 48 to 65. ICMSF members' joint professional food safety expertise is wide-ranging, including risk assessment, research, product and process development, public health, agriculture, food technology, food safety management, quality control and education.

Like in the many years in the past, members of ICMSF have participated in many important technical FAO/WHO expert meetings and consultations as well as in Codex. Drs. Wayne Anderson, Jeffrey M. Farber and Leon Gorris have attended ad hoc meetings for Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on Risk Assessment of Microbiological Hazards in Foods (JEMRA) or for Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH), and contributed to the review of web-tools for risk assessment and sampling plans or to the revision of a HACCP document. In the last several years, ICMSF concepts and principles have been adopted by Codex Alimentarius Commission. For instance, the new risk management metrics developed initially by ICMSF (Book 7) have been adopted and found their way into general guidelines on risk-based food safety management and in commodity-specific Codes such as those for milk products or meat products, or into re-evaluation of microbiological criteria for several important new guidelines and Codes of Hygienic Practice developed by CCFH (e.g. on *Listeria monocytogenes* in Ready-to-Eat foods, and on *Cronobacter sakazakii* and *Salmonella* in Powdered Infant Formulae). Some of new standards or criteria in countries such as in China and Japan are also established based on the above concepts.

ICMSF has published "Microorganisms in Foods 8: Use of Data for Assessing Process Control and Product Acceptance" (Book 8) in June, 2011. Book 8 provides useful testing that can be undertaken to ensure operational control of food safety for various food commodities and basic principles of the risk management framework. ICMSF is then working on the revision of Book 7 with the leadership by Prof. Robert Buchanan, a retired Member. More recently, the Commission has published our urgent considerations on *Clostridium botulinum* in powdered infant formula through our website: Usefulness of testing for *Clostridium botulinum* in powdered infant formula and dairy-based ingredients for infant formula.

In 2013, ICMSF held its Annual meeting in Dubai, UAE, from 18-28 November 2013. During this meeting, discussions and writing activities were focused on the revision of Book 7 and several discussion papers. In the same period, the Commission co-organized the 8th Dubai International Food Safety Conference, to which all the ICMSF members have contributed by providing lectures and instructions on particular chapters of Book 8. Plans are underway for the 2014 Annual meeting which is to be held in Iguassu Falls, Brazil in October, 2014.

An overview of activities is available to the public through our website.

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