

Food Safety Risk Governance-From Evidence to Regulatory Readiness

Unilever

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questions



Safe and Sustainable by Design (SSbD): building safety & sustainability into product innovation

Unilever

- We ensure that our products are safe for consumers and workers and help minimise their environmental impacts
- Unilever Safety, Environmental & Regulatory Science (SERS) experts provide input at every stage of a product's life:
 - Discovery and design
 - New technologies in product innovations
 - Anticipate product use & disposal scenarios
- By being involved throughout the innovation process, SERS experts help design safety and sustainability into our products



Why Risk Governance Matters

More Than Ever

- Food safety risk governance frameworks operate in an environment of:
 - Globalised supply chains
 - Rapid innovation in food and ingredients
 - Heightened consumer expectations and scrutiny
 - Constant external change
- **Poor governance erodes trust; good governance builds regulatory confidence and market competitiveness**
- **Governance frameworks require constant revision to stay relevant in a constantly changing landscape**
- **Fragmented/unharmonized governance frameworks globally**



CONSUMER EDUCATION

Indian survey reveals concern about food safety

by JOE WHITWORTH



“more than eight in 10 people are concerned about food safety.”

“More than three-quarters of participants were extremely or very concerned about the use of pesticides in food.”

GLOBAL AGRIFOOD IMPLICATIONS OF THE 2026 CONFLICT IN THE MIDDLE EAST
Impacts on energy and fertilizer trade, and food security

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The conflict that erupted in the Persian Gulf in February 2023 has generated a major shock to global energy, fertilizer, and agrifood systems. A central factor is the disruption of trade through the Strait of Hormuz, a strategic maritime corridor linking Gulf energy producers with global markets. Under normal conditions, the strait carries around 20 million barrels of crude oil and refined products per day — roughly one-quarter of global seaborne oil — along with significant volumes of liquefied natural gas (LNG) and fertilizer exports.
2. Within days of the conflict, tanker traffic through the strait collapsed by more than 90 percent, severely restricting shipments. This disruption rapidly transmitted volatility to global energy markets and the global agrifood system.

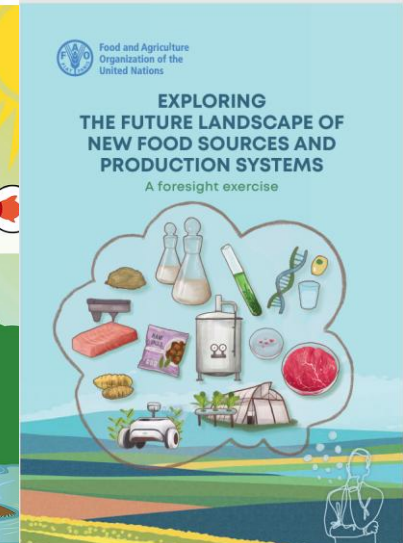
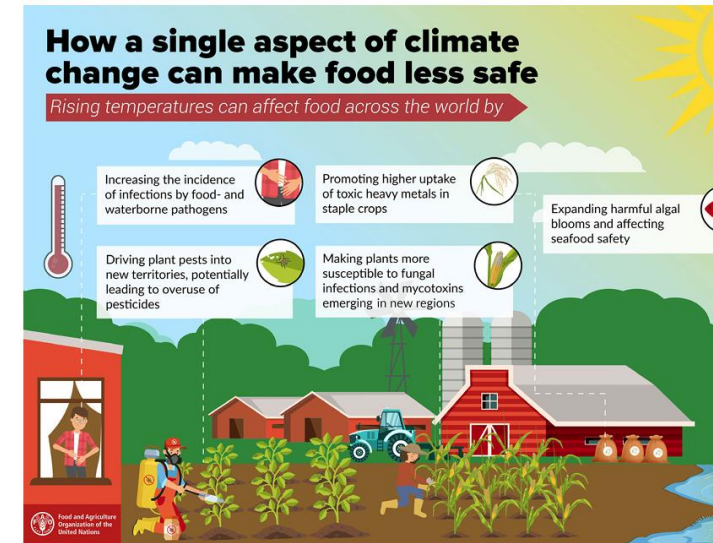
KEY MESSAGES

- The escalation of conflict in the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Middle East has sharply increased risks to global energy, fertilizer, and agrifood systems.
- The Strait of Hormuz, a critical chokepoint for oil, gas, and fertilizers, has already seen disruptions that are raising energy and agricultural input costs worldwide.
- Fertilizer shortages and higher energy prices threaten crop yields, while resistance losses and potential shifts to biofuel production could amplify food price volatility, particularly in Africa, Asia, and other import-dependent regions.
- Immediate measures such as developing alternative trade routes, strengthening market monitoring, providing financial support for farmers, and offering targeted aid for vulnerable countries are needed to stabilize supply chains.
- Longer-term strategies should focus on domestic agriculture, sustainable fertilizer production, renewable energy, and structural adjustments, while diplomatic efforts to reopen the Strait of Hormuz remain essential to safeguard global energy and food security.

CLIMATE CHANGE: UNPACKING THE BURDEN ON FOOD SAFETY

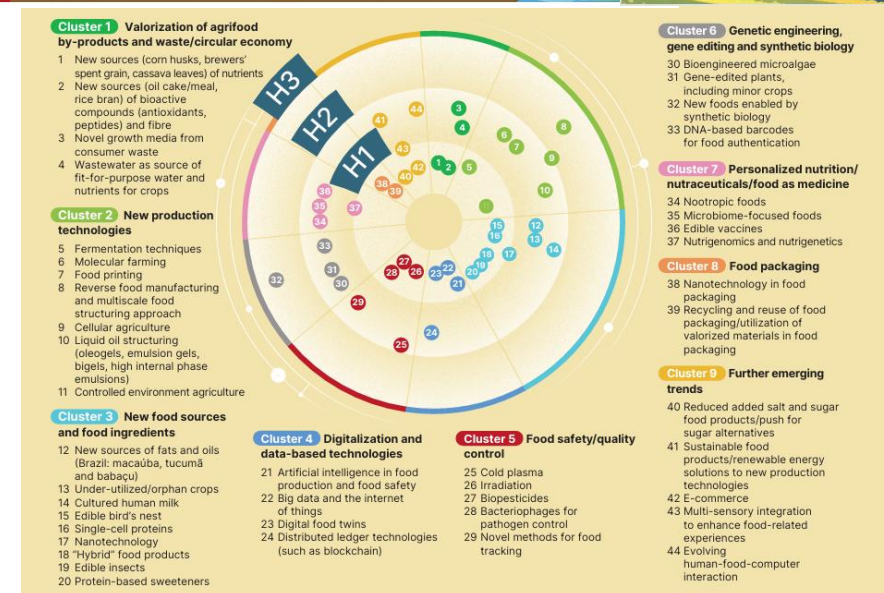
Why Risk Governance Matters More Than Ever – Climate Change

- Climate change poses significant challenges to food safety and security.
- Considerable innovation is taking place to reduce the impact of the food sector on the climate.
- What is 'food' may look dramatically different in 20 years time.



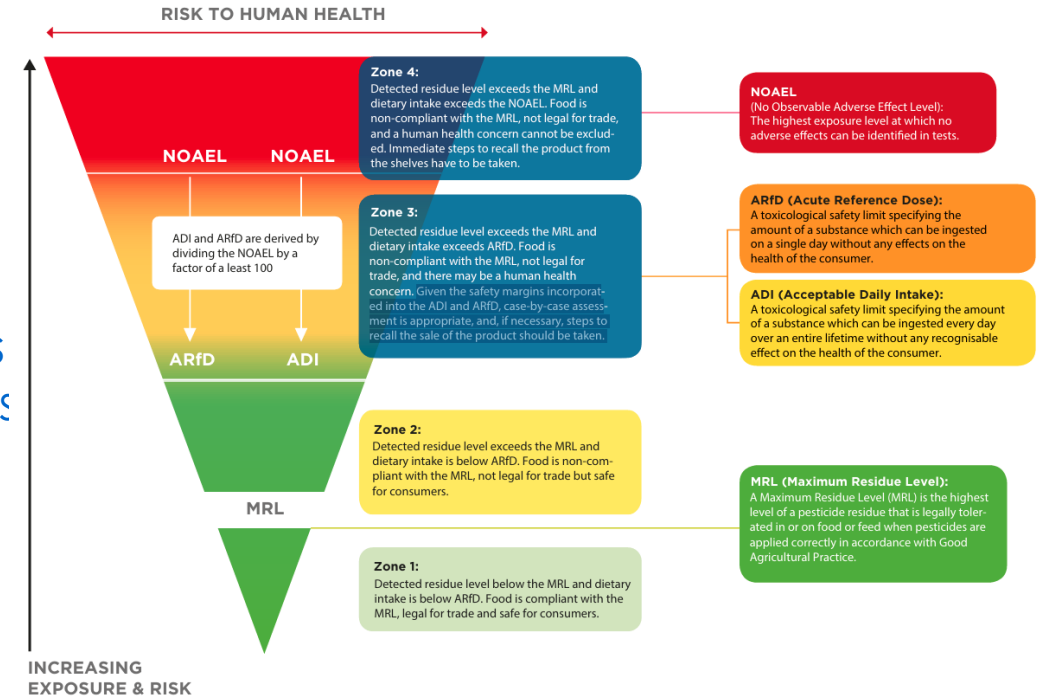
These developments raise the need to consider:

1. Are existing tools/methods relevant to new types of food ingredient/hazard?
2. Can robust data be generated for all potential new hazards? Can it be generated in a timely manner?



Why Risk Governance Matters More Than Ever – Pesticide Residues

- Pesticide residues are a cause for concern among the Indian population. Climate change raises the potential need to increase use of pesticides.
- Use will be central to maintain food security and India's reliance on the agricultural sector.
- In the past, over-reliance on a hazard-based approach has led to destruction of safe food due to modest exceedances of residue limits despite their negligible risk.
- **risk-based approach to food safety assures public health protection in a proportionate and efficient way.**
- **Risk communication required to effectively communicate with the public and maintain informed perception.**

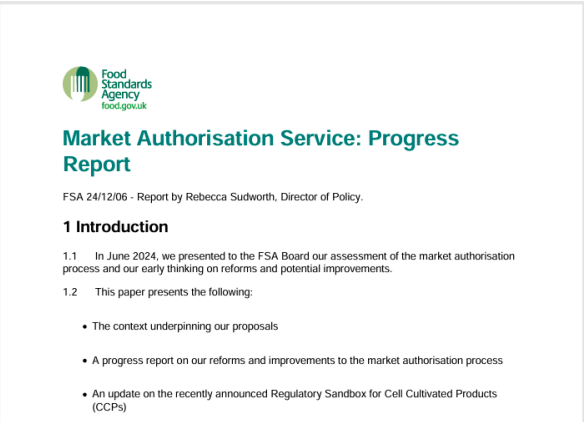


CropLifeEurope, 2022

Role of Industry in Risk Governance

Industry is a partner not just a regulated entity, but one that can:

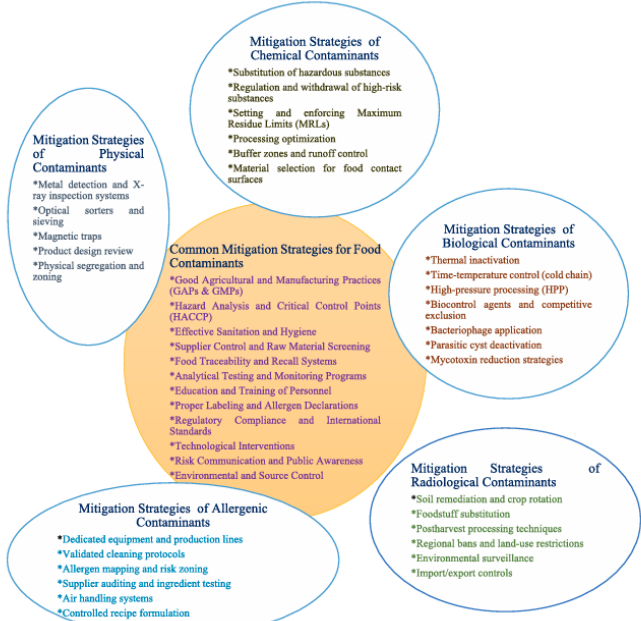
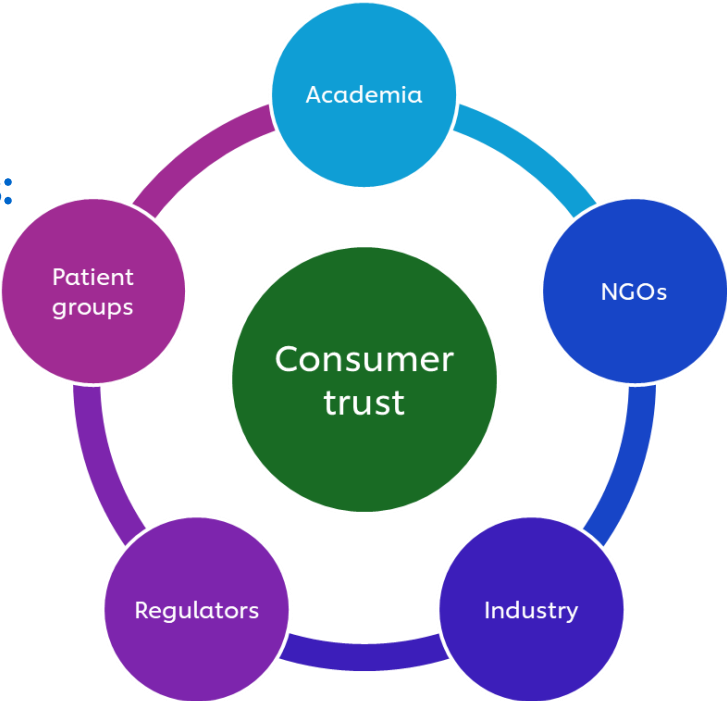
1. Generate high-quality, relevant evidence
2. Design safety into products and processes
3. Share data and learnings proactively
4. Operate to global standards, not minimum compliance



“Sandboxes are programmes that **facilitate extensive dialogue between industry and a regulator** to inform regulatory actions that strike the **right balance between facilitating regulatory innovation and mitigating risk**”

What industry needs from regulators:

1. Predictability and clarity
2. Risk-based decision-making
3. Open scientific dialogue



Looking Ahead: Governance for the Next Decade

Against a rapidly changing external environment:

- Governance frameworks require continual evolution and transformation.
- Transformations must be built on a solid bedrock of transparent, credible decisions. **Non-animal methods can meet these requirements.**
- Only way to adapt to these changes is through technological improvements. Governance is required to 'land' these improvements in regulatory frameworks.
- **Industry and regulatory dialogue required to co-shape transformation.**

