

# LARAS - LATIN AMERICAN RISK ASSESSMENT SYMPOSIUM



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## Introduction

Most Latin American countries strongly rely on producing and exporting primary agricultural products. Consequently, food safety is of major interest to them. The ability to **ensure sanitary and phytosanitary requirements** is essential to achieve and maintain **access to global markets**, especially with an EU-Mercosur trade agreement in view. Firstly, compliance with internationally acknowledged rules and standards will render industries and economies more competitive and boost trade relations. The creation of a **modern, dynamic and internationally compatible food safety system** has the potential to generate wealth, create jobs and thus to **foster stability**. Secondly, it contributes significantly to **improving public health** and the well-being of Latin American citizens. Moreover, the effects of climate change, the depletion of natural resources, digital and technological innovations as well as new consumer preferences will affect Latin America's agricultural and food sectors heavily. It is of utmost importance that policy makers **improve strategies and modernize policies** to adapt to these often disruptive changes and to take advantage of them. The more production and supply chains are globalized, the greater the risk of an international outbreak and quick spread of foodborne diseases. An outbreak puts not only the citizens' health at danger, but also the economies. It results in lost markets, a decrease of consumer confidence, as well as litigations and company closures. Hence, multi-stakeholder cooperation in order to **prevent and react to future crises** remains of utmost importance. To find solutions to the above-mentioned challenges, Latin American states should not only cooperate closely, but can also work with international best practice examples and cooperation projects.

This report stems from the first Latin American Risk Assessment Symposium (LARAS) in August 2019. The three-day event included panel discussions, interactive lectures, workshops and case studies with 152 international practitioners. **The LARAS objective was to contribute to a new approach to food safety based on mutual trust, cooperation, multidisciplinary and state-of-the-art science.**

## Method

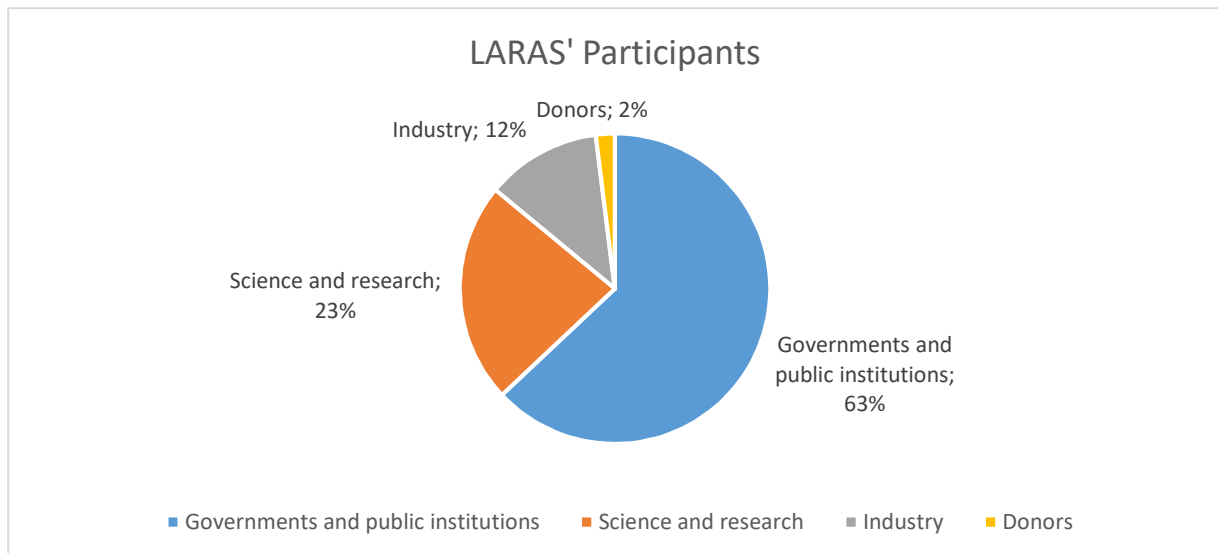
The report was jointly written by the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) and the Uruguayan Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries (MGAP). It reflects the views stated and contributions made by the participants during the symposium and does not reflect the institutions' opinions or recommendations. Results stemming from the panel discussions, interactive lectures, workshops and case studies were analysed and aggregated in a subsequent meeting. The report is complemented by a policy brief summarizing the main recommendations for action in the field of food safety in Latin America.

## 1st Latin American Risk Assessment Symposium



152 food safety professionals from seven countries came together from 27-29<sup>th</sup> August 2019 in Montevideo, Uruguay. They discussed current activities and future issues in Food Safety on regional and international levels. The event provided the opportunity to meet regional colleagues, exchange ideas and jointly shape the future and development of Risk Assessment in Latin America. The agenda included lectures from Latin American and European experts on the topics of Microbiological Risk Assessment (MRA), Chemical Risk Assessment (CRA) and Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR). Additionally, interactive workshops addressed current challenges in Risk Assessment and provided an ideal opportunity for active engagement, collaboration and networking.

The bilingual symposium was jointly organized by the **Uruguayan Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries (MGAP) and the German BfR**. It was supported by the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO), the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), the Portuguese Economic and Food Safety Authority (ASAE), the Spanish Agency for Food Safety and Nutrition (AESAN) and the Spanish Agency of Medicines and Medical Devices (AEMPS). A detailed overview of all participating institutions can be found in Annex A.



### Introductory Comments

The Southern Agricultural Council (CAS) opened the symposium. Adolfo Ochagavia (Chilean representative within the CAS) discussed the growing impact of climate change, the depletion of natural resources, digital and technological innovations as well as new consumer preferences and its effects on Latin America’s agricultural and food chains. He underlined the **necessity to develop adequate strategies and policies** to tackle these challenges. Minister Enzo Benech (Uruguayan representative within the CAS) promoted a **holistic approach to risk analysis** that embraces social, environmental, cultural and economic dimensions as well as collaboration of the public and private sector actors and civil society. However, any adjustment to the risk analysis process should be based on **rigorous scientific evidence**. Andrés Murchison (Argentinian representative within the CAS) stressed the importance to **foster intraregional and international cooperation and trade**. Professor Hensel (President of BfR) reminded the participants that **scientifically sound methods and high quality standards** are the basis for risk analysis. According to Professor Hensel those are indispensable to create trust which in turn encourages trade and cooperation. He underlined that, even if there are diverse structures within the European Union and Latin America related to food safety, all of them pursue the common goal to make the world a safer place.

### Concept of risk analysis

Risk analysis provides policy makers with the information and evidence they need for effective and transparent decision-making, contributing to better food safety outcomes and improvements in public health. According to the Codex Alimentarius Commission, risk analysis is a joint concept consisting of three main components: (1) **risk assessment**, (2) **risk management** and (3) **risk communication**. Risk assessment is a scientifically based process of estimating probabilities and expected consequences for identified risks. Risk management, however, is the process of weighing policy alternatives and implementing appropriate measures to control the risks, if necessary. Risk communication is the continuous process of disseminating the results obtained in (1) and (2). It aims at ensuring that the stakeholders clearly understand outcome, significance, and limitations of the risk assessment.

Figure 1: Schematic diagram of the **risk analysis** framework



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### LARAS' Main Topics

Preceding the symposium, the BfR and MGAP intensively discussed potential thematic priorities to narrow down the complexity and achieve tangible results. They agreed to address the following topics: (1) **Microbiological Risk Assessment** with an explicit focus on foodborne disease outbreaks (2) **Chemical Risk Assessment** with an explicit focus on therapeutic drug residues in food (3) **Resistance to Antimicrobial Drugs** and (4) **Risk Communication**.

### LARAS' Objectives

LARAS' overall objective was to **contribute to a new approach to food safety based on mutual trust, cooperation, multidisciplinary and state-of-the-art science**. More specifically, LARAS sought to analyze and compare the current risk analysis structures in Latin America including their advantages and deficiencies and thus providing learning opportunities for relevant issues in risk assessment. Furthermore, LARAS aimed at strengthening the Latin American Risk Assessment community by providing opportunities for collaboration and thus sustainably improving national and regional risk analysis structures. Overall, the symposium aimed at creating trust among the actors in the Latin American risk analysis structures for future institutional cooperation.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. World Health Organisation (WHO): About risk analysis in food. Accessed 23.07.2020.

## Symposium design- LARAS' Sessions

Drawing upon the four major topics, the BfR and MGAP structured the symposium combining lectures, workshops and networking events (see agenda: Annex B)

To start, keynotes and short lecture sessions prepared the ground for the upcoming scenario workshops by providing relevant background information on risk analysis in Latin America, MRA and its role in foodborne disease outbreaks, AMR, veterinary drug residues and risk communication.

Fictitious scenarios of multinational crises involving either a microbiological or a chemical hazard were presented. Subsequently, the participants had the opportunity to learn from and with each other in small groups.

Their task was to come up with best practice examples as well as dysfunctionalities regarding the topics governance, risk management, communication, and science with regard to risk assessment in Latin America. The workshop results were collected and presented to the plenary on the last day of the symposium, followed by a closing press conference. Along the professional exchange, joint dinners and activities provided plenty of room for networking. They contributed to mutual trust – a prerequisite for successful cooperation.

Figure 2: LARAS' Symposium design

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Opening	Lectures in CRA, MRA and Risk Communication as Workshop Preparation	Presentation of the Workshop Results
Keynotes and Short Lectures	Press Conference Exercise	Panel Discussion
Keynotes and Short Lectures	Gap Analysis and Best Practice Workshop	Closing and Press Conference
Networking Dinner	Executive Dinner	Satellite Meeting Lessons learned and Follow-up Actions



## Results LARAS

### Workshops results

In three parallel world café sessions the participants discussed in four groups the topics governance, risk management, communication, and science with regard to risk assessment in Latin America. The results resulting from the exchange of the rapporteurs for each topic are presented in Annex 2. These results were further analysed and aggregated in this section. The statements below stem from the group work and do not reflect opinions or recommendations of the institutions opinions or recommendations.

### Sensitization

**“Political commitment for food safety is a must.”**

Overall, the participants repeatedly stated the importance of raising awareness for food safety. According to the attendees, it is mandatory to sensitize decision makers. In particular, health professionals need to be aware of the necessity to report cases of foodborne diseases to the local authorities in order to improve epidemiological data and contribute to prevent crises. Besides, any new approach to food safety can only be implemented successfully, if there is political endorsement to adopt necessary initiatives. Raising awareness about food safety is a basic requirement to seek political commitment and gain legitimacy for political actions.

### Funding

**“Specific funding opportunities for research in food safety should be in place.”**

The importance of sufficient funding opportunities was outlined on several occasions. Participants urged policy makers to provide financial resources at an early stage. Financial support should be ideally backed by public funds to prevent any conflict of interests. The improvement of risk analysis methods, the provision of new research opportunities, new equipment and laboratories as well as training and building of capacities were depicted as the key priorities for funding.

### Communication

**“Risk communication is crucial for respecting consumers' right of information.”**

Participants suggested a stronger focus on effective risk communication. They argued that transparent risk communication procedures needed to be set up at any early stage, including interdisciplinary teams, crisis committees, and establishing clear decision-making roles. It was emphasized that authorities and experts have to address people’s concerns and needs so that the advice they provide is relevant, trusted and acceptable. Particularly in crisis events and pandemics, effective risk communication allows people most at risk to understand and adopt protective behaviors. Effective risk communication should also prevent people to take decisions based on wrong risk perceptions.

### Data Management

**“Food safety at regional and national level requires [easily accessible] databases.”**

Participants stressed the importance of sound and reliable data for the risk analysis process. It was argued that data management systems can help to overcome current constraints in the identification of food safety issues at an early stage. To facilitate networking, new methodologies and tools are



required to help manage the sharing of complex and rapidly updated data. Attendees identified the establishment of data collection systems and thus of data exchange mechanisms as a high priority for enhancing the risk analysis framework in Latin America. It was clearly emphasized that the food safety community has to agree on standards for data collection in order to enable the exchange of data across institutions and borders. As a result, data gaps can easily be identified. In general, participants demanded that data must be compiled, updated and systematized regularly. Additionally, databases have to be easily accessible for decision-makers.



## Cooperation

**“We need coordination to align objectives, strategies, priorities and actions for food safety.”**

Over the course of the symposium, participants often emphasized the importance of encouraging scientific and technical cooperation on regional and international level. They identified knowledge building and information sharing as a prerequisite for a smoothly running food safety system. Besides, cooperation is essential to prepare for and tackle upcoming foodborne outbreaks. A national/supranational food safety plan was discussed to cooperate on and improve incident and crisis protocols. Participants claimed that successful cooperation requires a multi-sector approach by involving all actors across the entire food chain, which could in turn dismantle potential barriers between them. Besides, cooperation should build on already existing networks that could be further enhanced.

## Training

**“Capacity building in food safety [...] is the basis for setting-up sound food safety systems.”**

The food safety community emphasized the demand for capacity building and providing technical assistance to prepare for upcoming challenges. Again, participants recommended following a multidisciplinary approach, involving experts with different academic backgrounds. Training opportunities need to be established along the three main components of risk analysis (1) risk assessment, (2) risk management and (3) risk communication. Additionally, specific graduate and postgraduate degrees should be designed. Attendees particularly stressed the importance of training health professionals to report cases of foodborne diseases to local authorities to prevent crises as well as to improve data quality.

## Governance and policies

**“Roles and tasks for food safety governmental institutions need to be clearly defined.”**

LARAS' participants made the case for the creation of a modern, dynamic and internationally compatible food safety system. According to the participants, it is necessary to re-examine existing policies and legislation particularly in view of the increasingly international intertwining of markets and trade. More specifically, official controls and rules have to be enforced to improve the traceability of goods along the food chain and opportunities for trade should be considered when designing new policy approaches. Additionally, attendees discussed the idea of a national risk assessment organization. As an independent body, it would be responsible for conducting scientific risk assessment before decision-making and be responsible for the scientific coordination of research data. To implement any policy measure, attendees advocate again for a multisector approach to achieve better public health outcomes and align with the One Health Concept. Besides, the need to address closing gaps and avoiding overlaps was stated.

## Policy Brief

As an immediate step towards more awareness, the LARAS' organizers translated the symposium results into a policy brief. A policy brief is a concise summary of a particular issue, the policy options to deal with it, and some recommendations on the best option. The LARAS policy brief targets government policymakers and others who are interested in **finding and implementing new approaches to food safety in Latin America.**

## LARAS Follow-ups and Outlook

### LARAS 2021

The participating institutions agreed to organize LARAS biennially. The Chilean Agency for Food Safety and Food Quality (ACHIPIA) offered to host the **upcoming LARAS in Chile in 2021**. AESAN, AEMPS and ASAE (Portugal) will actively support the organization. Central American countries suggested broadening the range of the event by including their region. In order to ensure political commitment to the event, it will ideally take place in parallel to the CAS meetings and IICA ministerial meetings. Content-wise, the upcoming LARAS should put emphasis on the One Health Approach. Additionally, it should address the topic 'animal feed'.

### Website on food safety

PANAFTOSA/PAHO offered its website to centralise information on food safety. It should contain information on current food safety issues, relevant public institutions and international organizations, as well as trainings and events. Moreover, it can serve as a resource for the upcoming LARAS in Chile. The website will contribute to (1) pooling of and easy access to relevant information and participating institutions (2) raising awareness for the symposium particularly in view of the upcoming LARAS in 2021 and (3) provide opportunities for knowledge exchange.

### Follow-up Meetings

The participating organizations identified the following events for advocacy activities:

- Inter-American Board of Agriculture organised by IICA
- 36<sup>th</sup> Regional Conference for Latin America and the Caribbean (LARC), organised by Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- Inter-American Meeting, at Ministerial Level, in Health and Agriculture (RIMSA)

At each of these events, the participation of the ministers for agriculture is expected. Furthermore, RIMSA will be attended by the ministers of health. IICA proposed that each participating country should identify potential topics and needs in advance of the Inter-American Board of Agriculture.

### Follow-up Support

#### Institutional reforms

The Spanish Agency of Medicines and Medical Devices (AEMPS) offered support regarding the **set-up of institutional reforms**. This support is based on AEMPS experience in coordinating a strategic national plan involving numerous stakeholders.

#### Institutional cooperation

Several institutions declared their willingness to further cooperate on an institutional level.

- **MGAP** offered to use their cooperation agreements to identify experts and contribute to professional networks
- **IAEA** identified RALACA including its laboratory network as a strategic partner

- **AEMPS** offered assistance in coordinating institutions. More specifically, it could conduct a capacity assessment in different countries with the aim to coordinate actions and optimising resources. **ACHIPIA** offered to support the creation of regional networks by sharing its own experience regarding the establishment of laboratory and expert networks

Furthermore, the meeting **RIMSA** can be jointly used as a tool to raise awareness about food safety.

#### Data collection and data management

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) through its Joint IAEA/FAO Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture implements a **project on data collection and sharing among official laboratories in Latin America and the Caribbean**. This project supports the participating countries in the harmonization of data collection, classification and allocation for evidence-based decision-making by national authorities.

#### Capacity Development

- **RALACA** realizes residential capacity development activities in a number of host countries and offers webinars and trainings ([www.red-ralaca.net](http://www.red-ralaca.net)). Additionally, the report “Analytical methods for agricultural contaminants”<sup>2</sup> was put at disposal.
- **IAEA** offers trainings in the framework of its ongoing food safety projects, e.g. on risk analysis.
- **IICA** offers a wide range of trainings on risk analysis on their e-learning platform.
- **ACHIPIA** displays communication tools (mainly as regards trainings) on their website. Upon request, ACHIPIA can share more information on these tools. It offers to conduct a survey of the analytical capacities in Latin America in cooperation with RILAA/INFAL and RALACA and to present the results on LARAS 2021.
- **PANAFTOSA/PAHO-WHO** point out their publications, e.g. the “Risk-based food inspection manual for the Caribbean” (<https://iris.paho.org/handle/10665.2/51775>; focus: food services), and “Evaluacion de riesgos microbiologicos en alimentos – Guia para su implementacion en los paises” (to be published in 2020). They mention the recently created **FSRisk** (Food Safety Risk Analysis Network). Its tasks include the development of training programmes, the establishment of collaborative programmes and the exchange of information regarding food safety and risk analysis-related topics. Current members of FSRisk are FAO, the US-American Food and Drug Administration (FDA), IICA, the International Regional Agricultural Health Agency (OIRSA), several US-American universities and focal points of governmental institutions/agencies from Brazil, Honduras, Chile, and Uruguay.

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<sup>2</sup> Maestroni, B., Ochoa, V. and Cannavan, A. (Eds.) (2018). Analytical Methods for Agricultural Contaminants. Academic Press, London, UK. ISBN: 9780128159408.

## Conclusion

LARAS gathered an international audience to discuss current activities and future issues in the field of food safety. **It marked an important starting point to establishing a new approach to food safety based on mutual trust, cooperation, multidisciplinary and state-of-the-art science.** By comparing Latin American risk analysis structures, it highlighted their achievements as well as deficiencies. Based on these findings, the participants pronounced numerous ideas to jointly advance risk analysis in the following areas of action: sensitization, funding, communication, data management, cooperation, training, governance and policies.

As a whole, the participants evaluated the symposium with above-average marks. They were particularly content with the inputs and first-hand experience of risk assessors on actual foodborne outbreaks. Furthermore, they highlighted the opportunities for interaction and networking with Latin American and European colleagues. Overall, the symposium created trust among the actors in the Latin American risk analysis structures for future institutional cooperation.

## Glossary and abbreviations

ACHIPIA	Agencia Chilena para la Inocuidad y Calidad Alimentaria (Chilean Agency for Food Safety and Food Quality)
AEMPS	Agencia Española de Medicamentos y Productos Sanitarios (Spanish Agency of Medicines and Medical Devices)
AESAN	Agencia Española de Seguridad alimentaria y nutrición (Spanish Agency for Food Safety and Nutrition)
AMR	Antimicrobial Resistance
ASAE	Autoridade de Segurança Alimentar e Económica (Portuguese Economic and Food Safety Authority)
BfR	Bundesinstitut für Risikobewertung (The German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment)
CAS	Consejo Agropecuario del Sur (Southern Agricultural Council)
CRA	Chemical Risk Assessment
EFSA	European Food Safety Authority
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
FSRisk	Food Safety Risk Analysis Network
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IICA	Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture
LARAS	Latin American Risk Assessment Symposium
LARC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MGAP	Ministerio de Ganadería, Agricultura y Pesca (Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries)
MRA	Microbiological Risk Assessment
ORISA	Organismo Internacional Regional de Sanidad Agropecuaria (International Regional Agricultural Health Agency)

PAHO Pan American Health Organisation

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PANAFTOSA Pan American Foot-and-Mouth Disease and Veterinary Public Health Center

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RALACA Red de Latino America y el Caribe

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RIMSA Inter-American Ministerial Meeting on Health and Agriculture



## **Annex A - Participating Institutions**

### **Dirección General de Control de Inocuidad Alimentaria (DIGECIA)**

The DIGECIA belongs to the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries (MGAP) of Uruguay. Its main mission is to incorporate Risk Analysis into biosecurity management measures, in the areas of animal and plant health, control of people, luggage, packages and vehicles entering the country, and food safety.

(<https://www.gub.uy/ministerio-ganaderia-agricultura-pesca/>)

### **European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)**

The EFSA is a European agency funded by the European Union that operates independently of the European legislative and executive institutions (Commission, Council, Parliament) and EU Member States. It was set up in 2002 to be a source of scientific advice and communication on risks associated with the food chain. The EU under the General Food Law - Regulation 178/2002, legally established the agency.

(<http://www.efsa.europa.eu/>)

### **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**

The IAEA is the world's central intergovernmental forum for scientific and technical co-operation in the nuclear field. It works for the safe, secure and peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology, contributing to international peace and security and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

([www.iaea.org](http://www.iaea.org))

### **Red de Latino America y el Caribe (RALACA)**

The RALACA was established with the assistance of IAEA and FAO and brings together analytical laboratories in Latin America and the Caribbean to enhance regional capabilities to target food safety and environmental sustainability. RALACA's objective is to strengthen the technical capabilities of the laboratories in the region, to promote scientific cooperation among member countries and to foster communication between relevant stakeholders, including decision makers. It is organised by a managing board, administration secretaries, technical committees and independent advisory scientists.

([www.red-ralaca.net](http://www.red-ralaca.net))

### **Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA)**

IICA is the specialised agency of the Inter-American System for agriculture that supports the efforts of the Member States to achieve agricultural development and rural well-being. IICA offers technical support to help all the countries of the hemisphere to improve the productivity and competitiveness of the agricultural sector, to strength agriculture's contribution to the development of rural areas and the well-being of the rural population. To improve agriculture's capacity to mitigate and adapt to climate change and make better use of natural resources and to improve agriculture's contribution to food security.

(<https://www.iica.int/en>)

### **Spanish Agency of Medicines and Medical Devices (AEMPS)**

AEMPS is a state agency attached to the Ministry of Health, Consumption and Social Welfare of Spain that is responsible to ensure the quality, safety, efficacy and correct information on medicines and health products, in the interests of protecting and promoting human health, animal health and the environment. AEMPS acts as coordinator of the Spanish Antimicrobial national Plan.

(<https://www.aemps.gob.es/>)

### **Pan American Center for Foot and Mouth Disease and Veterinary Public Health / Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) / World Health Organization (WHO)**

PAHO is the specialised international health agency for the Americas that serves as the WHO Regional Office for the Americas. It works with countries throughout the region to improve and protect people's health. PAHO engages in technical cooperation with its member countries to fight communicable and non-communicable diseases and their causes, to strengthen health systems, and to respond to emergencies and disasters.

RIMSA is the only regional forum for collaboration and coordination on veterinary public health issues, with the participation of the Ministers of Health and Agriculture of PAHO Member States. Through RIMSA, PAHO receives the necessary political support for the technical cooperation developed with these countries in this area. PANAFTOSA collaborates with the countries in the development of national and regional initiatives for the prevention and control of zoonotic diseases, eradication of foot-and-mouth disease and all activities related to food safety.

(<https://www.paho.org/en>)

### **Spanish Agency for Food Safety and Nutrition (AESAN)**

The Spanish Food Safety and Nutrition Agency (AESAN) integrates and performs, the functions related to food safety and healthy nutrition. It is a body dependent of the Ministry of Health, Consumer Affairs and Social Welfare. Its principal objectives are to promote food safety, offering guarantees and objective information to consumers and economic agents of the Spanish agri-food sector. In addition, the Agency works to coordinate and develop strategies and actions in the field of nutrition, and in particular, in the prevention of obesity.

(<https://www.lamoncloa.gob.es/Paginas/index.aspx>)

### **Portuguese Economic and Food Safety Authority (ASAE)**

ASAE is a Portuguese specialised administrative authority in the context of food safety and economic surveillance. It is a national authority, with administrative autonomy, that acts as a police and law enforcement body, being the national liaison body with its counterpart organisations, both at European, and international level.

(<https://www.asae.gov.pt/>)

### **Chilean Agency for Food Safety and Food Quality (ACHIPIA)**

ACHIPIA is a Presidential Advisory Commission administratively under the Ministry of Agriculture through its Secretary. The role of the Agency is to formulate the National Policy for Food Safety and Quality and to lead their implementation plans, programmes and other measures undertaken by public bodies with jurisdiction in the matter (SAG, MINSAL, SERNAPESCA and DIRECON), serving as an entity coordinator and facilitator between them, the food industry, the scientific community, food producers and consumers.

(<https://www.achipia.gob.cl/>)

### **German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR)**

The BfR is a scientifically independent institution within the portfolio of the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture in Germany. It advises the German government on questions of food, chemical and product safety.

(<https://www.bfr.bund.de/en/home.html>)

#### **Southern Agricultural Council (CAS)**

The CAS is a ministerial forum for consultation and coordination of regional actions, made up of the ministers of agriculture of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay. Its main objective is to define the priorities of the agricultural agenda and take positions on issues of regional interest.

(<http://consejocas.org/>)



# LARAS

LATIN AMERICAN  
RISK ASSESSMENT  
**SYMPOSIUM**



## 1<sup>st</sup> Latin American Risk Assessment Symposium

Building-up a Regional Approach

August 27<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019

### Agenda



## Latin American Risk Assessment Symposium

From August 27th to 29th, 2019, we will discuss current activities and future issues in Food Safety on regional and international levels. In an ever more interconnected world, cooperation is becoming increasingly important. The event provides therefore the opportunity to meet regional colleagues, exchange ideas and jointly shape the future and development of Risk Assessment in Latin America. The programme includes lectures from highly qualified and experienced regional and European experts on the topics of Microbiological Risk Assessment (MRA), Chemical Risk Assessment (CRA) and Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR). Interactive workshops will address current challenges in Risk Assessment and will provide an ideal opportunity for active engagement, collaboration and networking.

The bilingual Symposium is jointly organised by the **Uruguayan Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries (MGAP) and the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR)** with the support of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO), the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), the Portuguese Economic and Food Safety Authority (ASAE), the Spanish Agency for Food Safety and Nutrition (AESAN) and the Spanish Agency of Medicines and Medical Devices (AEMPS).

## Venue

Laboratorio Tecnológico de Uruguay (LATU) – Av. Italia 6201, 11500, Montevideo, Uruguay

## Information

For further information please refer to the website of the BfR Academy:  
<https://www.bfr-akademie.de/english/events/laras.html>

## Language

The symposium will be translated simultaneously into English or Spanish, according to the speaker.

## WIFI

There is free access to WIFI, network name: LATUWIFI

In some presentations you will be asked to answer a live survey. For doing so please open the website:  
[www.tedme.com](http://www.tedme.com)

You will be given a number to access the survey.

## Contact

laras@bfr.bund.de

## Organised by

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Constituyente 1476  
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Uruguay  
[www.mgap.gub.uy](http://www.mgap.gub.uy)

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Max-Dohrn-Straße 8–10  
10589 Berlin  
Germany  
<http://www.bfr.bund.de/en>

## Day 1, Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> August 2019

09:00 am–07:15 pm

### Registration and Welcoming Breakfast

09:00–09:45 am

### Opening

09:45–11:30 am

#### **Welcome and opening remarks**

Ministers of the Southern Agricultural Council (CAS) and German authorities (President of BfR Institute and German Embassy in Uruguay)

#### **Coffee break**

11:30–11:45 am

### Session 1: Risk analysis and its implications for global health and development

11:45 am–12:25 pm

*Chair: Nuri Gras, Executive Secretary ACHIPIA, Chile*

Over the past decades, human and animal health has been threatened by antimicrobial resistance, environmental pollution, and the development of multifactorial and chronic diseases. In today's complex but more-connected-than-ever world, the rising trade leads to an increased internationalisation and globalisation of health risks. Due to ongoing changes in current food systems, risk analysis becomes indispensable for health, economic and social science and policies as well as for building trust and transparency in national and international markets. A holistic approach is fundamental for protecting public, animal and plant health as well as the environment.

The increasing complexity of understanding and managing risks leads to unforeseen needs for new and more diverse types of data and larger volumes of evidence to be assessed. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge is part of a continuum. The revolution in information technology, better access to scientific information, the ongoing trend towards open access of published research, has sped up and increased the requirements for global research work. New approaches for scientific assessments, reduction of risks, effective communication, as well as an in-depth understanding of the societal context are needed to better address the internationalisation and globalisation of health.

#### **Keynote: Risk assessment on global health and development**

*Dr Marta Hugas, EFSA Chief Scientist*

### Session 2: Risk analysis in Latin America

12:25–01:25 pm

*Chair: Dr Pedro Portugal Gaspar, Inspector General ASAE, Portugal*

Risk Analysis in Latin America, its obstacles and challenges

#### **The Latin American perspective on risk analysis**

*Dr. Horrys Friaça Silva, Representative of IICA in the USA*

12:25–12:55 pm

#### **Risk based management – MGAP experience**

*P. C. Mariela Mauro Rettich, MGAP, Uruguay*

12:55–01:25 pm

#### **Lunch time**

01:25–02:30 pm

### Session 3: Microbiological risk assessment and its role in foodborne disease outbreaks

02:30–03:45 pm

*Chair: Britt Maestroni, Scientific Officer, IAEA*

A food safety crisis and its lessons learned – EHEC 2011 in Europe: An overview by experts from the two mainly affected European countries – Germany and Spain

#### **EHEC crisis in Europe 2011**

*Dr Anja Buschulte, BfR, Germany and Dr Milagros Nieto, AESAN, Spain*

### Session 4: Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and veterinary drug residues

03:45–07:15 pm

*Chair: Nicole Gollnick, Deputy Head of the Executive Office, BfR, Germany*

AMR as a global public health concern; European and Latin American overview and initiatives; Challenges. Veterinary drug residues in food of animal origin: European overview. Risk assessment of AMR and veterinary drug residues.

#### **AMR as a global public health concern: Latin-American perspective**

*Dr Simone Raszl, PAHO*

03:45–04:15 pm

#### **Coffee break**

04:15–04:30 pm

#### **AMR as a global public health concern: European perspective**

##### **Case study**

*Dr Cristina Muñoz and Dr Antonio López, AEMPS, Spain*

04:30–05:30 pm

#### **Risk assessment of AMR**

*Dr Anja Buschulte, BfR, Germany*

05:30–05:45 pm

#### **Veterinary drug residues and food safety**

*Dr David Schumacher, BfR Germany*

05:45–06:15 pm

#### **Networking dinner**

Starting 06:15 pm

## Day 2, Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> August 2019

09:00 am–05:30 pm

*Chair: Nicole Gollnick, Deputy Head of the Executive Office, BfR, Germany*

Day 2 will be the interactive part of the symposium. During three workshops the participants will have the opportunity to learn from and with each other while developing ideas and strategies on how to deal with a presented fictional foodborne disease crisis.

The scenarios will demonstrate how a scientific risk assessment can be conducted; both, the European and Latin American perspective will be included. While developing ideas and strategies on how to deal with the presented fictional crises, participants will gain a deeper understanding of the key elements of food safety structures within Latin America. Through the exercises, possible gaps in the current regional food safety structures, but also processes and tools that are already working well (best-practice examples) will be identified.

#### **Introduction**

*Dr Nicole Gollnick, BfR, Germany*

09:00–09:10 am



## **Session 5: Microbiological risk assessment regarding Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (STEC)**

*Dr Anja Buschulte, BfR, Germany and Dr Ana Canals Caballero, AESAN, Spain*  
09:10–10:20 am

## **Session 6: Press conference exercise and risk communication**

10:20 am–12:15 pm

### **Risk communication I**

*Dr Frederic Müller, BfR, Germany*  
10:20–10:45 am

### **Coffee break and preparation for press conference**

10:45–11:15 am

### **Press conference**

11:15 am–12:00 pm

### **Risk communication II**

*Dr Frederic Müller, BfR, Germany*  
12:00–12:15 pm

## **Session 7: Chemical risk assessment regarding veterinary drug residues**

*Dr David Schumacher, BfR, Germany, Professor Eloisa Dutra Caldas, University of Brasilia, Brazil, Dr Susanne Rath, University of Campinas, Brazil*  
12:15–01:15 pm

## **Introduction to workshops**

*Dr Nicole Gollnick, BfR, Germany*  
01:15–01:30 pm

### **Lunch time**

01:30–02:30 pm

## **Workshops, gap analysis and best practices**

02:30–05:30 pm

### **Workshops, gap analysis and best practices**

02:30–04:00 pm

### **Coffee break**

04:00–04:15 pm

### **Workshops, gap analysis and best practices**

04:15–05:30 pm

## **Day 3, Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> August 2019**

09:00 am–12:30 pm

*Chair: Dr Simone Raszl, PAHO*

### **Presentation of workshop results and discussion**

09:00–10:30 am

### **Coffee break**

10:30–10:45 am

### **Panel discussion of ministers, executive directors and international key scientists in risk assessment**

10:45–11:30 am

### **Closing and press conference**

11:30 am–12:30 pm

## Annex C- Raw results of workshops: suggestions for action

### *Food safety governance*

1. Short-term key actions
  - 1.1. Sensitise national governments
  - 1.2. Define the national, supra-ministerial and executive structures that coordinate food safety at the country level. Independent of other agencies
    - With its own funds
    - Coordinate with existing food safety policy structures
    - Define roles, tasks and functions
    - Define, when appropriate, a crisis committee and its protocol for action in cases of crisis. (Chain of decisions and communication)
  - 1.3. Sensitise the population
  - 1.4. Strengthen training opportunities
  - 1.5. Begin review of food safety legislation
2. Medium-term key actions
  - 2.1. New Legislation on food safety:
    - Harmonised, updated, dynamic
    - Define constitution, roles, tasks and functions
    - Design a national food safety plan
  - 2.2. Establish tertiary training at all levels of food safety
  - 2.3. Dissemination of food safety campaigns
  - 2.4. Establish an observatory of food safety cases in the world and food circulation in the region.
  - 2.5. Initiate regulatory harmonisation at regional level
3. Long-term key actions
  - 3.1. Seek implementable mechanisms based on existing coordination structures to ensure food safety at the regional level
  - 3.2. Design common strategies to coordinate food safety in the region for the next 5 years
  - 3.3. Periodically review the performance of food safety policies

### *Communication of risks in food safety crisis*

1. Key actions
  - 1.1. Commitment to allocate specific resources by the institutions
  - 1.2. Establishment of an official protocol for risk communication in crisis
    - 1.2.1. Establishment of inter-institutional and interdisciplinary working teams
    - 1.2.2. Elaboration and implementation of consensual and institutional national protocols
  - 1.3. Training in risk communication for specialists of the different Institutions
  - 1.4. Establishment of a system for the exchange of information on food safety events among the countries of the region
  - 1.5. Improving food safety training for communication professionals

### *Science*

Science/Risk assessment was defined as the area related to scientific knowledge that is required to perform a risk assessment. In turn, risk assessment was considered as the scientific evaluation of known or potential adverse health effects resulting from human exposure to foodborne hazards.

## Key actions

### 1. Short-term key actions

- 1.1. Creation of a national risk assessment organisation (NRA) under the One Health concept, which coordinates research, centralises information (data) and ensures adequate analysis and dissemination of data. The format of the organisation will be determined on the basis of an evaluation of the existent international solutions
- 1.2. Generate funding mechanisms that continue to promote the generation of specific food safety research projects
- 1.3. Sensitisation of health professionals to investigate and report cases of FBD in order to improve epidemiological data.

### 2. Medium-term key actions

- 2.1. The organisation created for NRA must manage the laboratories, technicians, methods and equipment available to optimise resources
- 2.2. Creation of a regional RA network with cooperation agreements to international bodies
- 2.3. Training of technicians in RA (specific subjects in undergraduate degrees and availability of specialisations or graduate degrees)

### 3. Long-term key actions

- 3.1. Production of data on consumption, FBDs and biological and chemical contaminants in food (incidence and concentration)

## *Risk management*

### 1. Key actions

- 1.1. Systematisation and unification of existing data and continue generating it
- 1.2. Exchange of expertise between the different actors in order to define common objectives, priorities and actions
- 1.3. Creation of a network of experts at national and regional levels to fill competence gaps and be able to provide clear answers in a crisis situation
- 1.4. Encouragement to use of tools that allow to be aware of health alerts in the region and provide responses (such as INFOSAN)
- 1.5. Establishment of a road map to report results generated at different levels where data related to food safety is obtained
- 1.6. Aim of coordination of national data through a transparent body that gathers, analyses and manages them
- 1.7. Provision of reliable methodologies, periodically validated and evaluated
- 1.8. Dissemination of the importance of the consequences of possible foodborne diseases
- 1.9. Definition of strategic planning for risk management based on international standards adapted to the needs of the region
- 1.10. In the long term, establishment of a risk management protocol that allows us to know unequivocally how to proceed.