

# *Preface*

Food safety is important. Consumers have a right to expect that those who supply the food that they buy have taken every care to manufacture products that will do them no harm. Those with a responsibility for the regulation of the global food industry recognise this principle and legislate accordingly. This confers a legal and a moral duty, as well as an economic incentive, on all food businesses to ensure that the food they supply is as free from food safety hazards as is practically possible. The food business that tries to evade its responsibilities in this regard will not remain in business for very long.

The business of managing and regulating the safety of the food supply chain has come a long way in the last 25 years or so. Prompted by the emergence of new food safety hazards, such as the bacterial pathogens *Listeria monocytogenes* and *E. coli* O157, powerful new techniques for evaluating and managing the risks presented by these threats have been developed. For example, hazard-analysis critical control point, or HACCP, has now become the food safety management system of choice worldwide. Similarly, the technique of risk assessment has been developed to the point where it can be applied to almost anything. There now exists a comprehensive toolbox of techniques for managing the safety of food, and a plethora of training and guidance options for learning how to use the tools. As a result, there is now little to excuse any food business that fails to protect its customers from known food safety hazards.

Although the food safety management tools are now widely available, they are still virtually useless unless they are supported by adequate and accurate information. HACCP does not work unless its practitioners have access to enough data and scientific knowledge to enable them to understand hazards and how to control them effectively. For example, there is little point in deciding that pasteurisation is the best way to control a bacterial pathogen unless its heat resistance is known. There is plenty of information available, in countless excellent books and other publications, and increasingly on-line.

Unfortunately, accessing that information can be problematic, especially for smaller food businesses.

The *Food Safety Hazard Guidebook* is an attempt to address that problem by distilling the key facts about a wide range of individual food safety hazards into a single text. We have tried to adopt a clear format and to keep the information included as concise as possible so that it is easy to find the important facts. We would not claim for one moment that the book is a comprehensive or exhaustive reference work on food safety hazards, and it is not meant to be. As the title suggests, it is intended as a guidebook rather than an encyclopaedia, and has been conceived as a portal for the immense and ever-expanding body of scientific knowledge that exists for food safety. To that end, we have included “sources of further information” in every chapter for those needing more detail. As authors, we have drawn on our experience of supplying the technical and scientific information that food safety professionals require to address a real need for accessible knowledge. We have tried to produce a book that is accurate and reliable, as up to date as possible, and above all, useful.

## **Disclaimer**

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