

Session title: **Food Allergies: The Enemy Within**
When? Friday, February 19, 2010: 1:30 PM-3:00 PM
Where? Room 6E (San Diego Convention Center)

Protecting the Consumer: Allergen Exposure Risks and the Food Label

Stefano Luccioli , FDA, Office of Food Additive Safety, CFSAN, College Park, MD

Food allergies are of international concern with similar number compared to Europe. To reduce the risks from allergic reactions, the US FDA, closely cooperating with other federal agencies, is working to ensure that major allergenic ingredients in food are accurately labeled in accordance with the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act. The US FDA is developing a long-term strategy that will help manufacturers use voluntary allergen advisory labeling that: is not misleading, conveys a clear and uniform message and adequately informs food-allergic consumers and their caregivers.

Taking on Food Allergies: A Cure Within Our Grasp?

Andrew Clark , National Health Service Trust, Cambridge, United Kingdom

Allergic disease is highly prevalent in the developed world, affecting up to a quarter of the population, with the greatest burden occurring in childhood. Food allergy is responsible for a large component of this burden, causing severe and fatal reactions at any age. As a consequence, many affected families live in constant fear of allergic reactions, causing reduced quality of life. Until now, no disease-modifying treatment has been available. The best current treatment is to teach families how to avoid offending foods, but despite this, accidental reactions are common. The approach to how we treat patients with food allergy is undergoing a revolution. Studies of various disease-modifying techniques are being carried out. Our own studies in Cambridge have demonstrated success of a technique which allows children with even the most severe form of peanut allergy-anaphylaxis- to tolerate peanut ingestion. Further development of this technique (desensitization), and others, could lead to disease-modifying treatments for current and emerging food allergies, effectively curing people of their allergy.

Detecting Food Allergens: The Best Analytical Tools for the Job

Krzysztof Maruszewski , JRC Institute for Reference Materials and Measurements, Geel, Belgium

For millions of European citizens afflicted by food allergies it is essential that they avoid food containing the respective allergen. European Legislation ensures a mandatory labelling of 12 of the most important food allergens, which should be made available to the consumer. The food industry and food authorities need to have reliable analytical methods at hand to detect food allergens, even when present in traces to implement the legislation. Fit-for-purpose methodology, which includes simple and rapid methods needs to be used as international standards. Furthermore, the effect of food processing on the detectability and allergenicity of selected food allergens for example of peanuts and milk has to be investigated. The Institute for reference Materials and measurements of the European Commission's Joint Research centre investigates together with expert laboratories within the EU and worldwide in these activities.