



International Commission
for Research into
European Food History

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ICREFH NEWSLETTER

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The International Commission for Research into European Food History was founded at Münster in 1989. ICREFH is a group of scholars working on the history of food and nutrition in Europe since the late eighteenth century. Every two years ICREFH holds a symposium on a single theme and publishes the proceedings. The official language is English, with French and German as working languages. Every two years ICREFH has held a symposium on a single theme in a number of European centres. More significantly, ICREFH has an unmatched record of disseminating its findings by publishing most of the papers presented at its

symposia in book form. To date, there are sixteen volumes published in English, all by commercial publishers. This has made ICREFH unique in terms of its strength and originality as a research seminar committed to the publication of its findings. Its biennial meetings are symposia involving the active participation by members of the network who feel able to contribute their research findings on the chosen theme of the symposium.

ICREFH's website

Please visit <https://icrefh.hypotheses.org/>

President's message

I'm delighted to tell you that ICREFH's 17th book will be published by Editions Routledge. Peter Atkins, Peter Scholliers and Stefano Magagnoli are working with Ilaria Berti, the organizer of the Seville symposium in October 2023, and I'd like to thank them all warmly. The effort of editing is almost invisible but is fundamental to the life of ICREFH. We look forward to seeing you in Paris in September 2025. Jean-Pierre Williot and Gilles Fumey have assembled a team to organize our network's 18th colloquium. I'll leave you to discover the call for papers.

Sylvie Vabre, March 2024.

Call for Papers 17th ICREFH Symposium, Paris, Monday 1 to Thursday 4 September 2025

FOOD SAFETY IN EUROPE XIX-XXI centuries

Deadline for application: 1st October 2024

Organization : Jean-Pierre Williot (UMR SIRICE-Sorbonne Université) - Gilles Fumey (UMR SIRICE-Sorbonne Université)

Scientific Committee : Peter Atkins (Durham University) - Gilles Fumey (Sorbonne Université) - Stefano Magagnoli (Université de Parme) - Nicolas Marty (Université de Perpignan) - Peter Scholliers (VUB - Brussel) - Sylvie Vabre (Université de Toulouse) - Jean-Pierre Williot (Sorbonne Université)

Scientific argument

Food safety is a major challenge for all societies and civilizations. The evolution

of pathologies associated with food has a significant influence on demographic variables over the long term. Ensuring consumers a healthy diet thus generates marketing regulations, recommendations for food processing and packaging, and frameworks for monitoring food production and distribution.

The forms of this food safety have continued to be clarified to the point of taking on the contemporary meaning of this expression. It makes it possible to distinguish between food security, made up of production capacities and the balance of supply chains, and food safety, based on the safety of food. The intensification of scientific knowledge, mastery of techniques, financial issues and the effects of notoriety that agri-food industries such as artisans, businesses and catering establishments must control have led to the essential place that food safety occupies in our contemporary societies.

There are many actors involved: public authorities that have a mission to protect populations at multiple administrative levels; scientists who are developing increasingly detailed knowledge of food mechanisms; agronomists who isolate the least harmful plant varieties; veterinarians who supervise breeding practices; doctors, nutritionists, and dieticians who recommend health checks; food transport and storage companies, responsible for conservation conditions in increasingly precise atmospheres; and finally, those who cook, purchase food and eat, and must ensure safe food each time for consumption.

The subject of food safety has taken on such proportions that national and international institutions are dedicated to it in all countries with varying levels of requirements and in Europe with the EFSA (European Food Safety Authority)

since 2002. These institutions are the heirs of the investigations and awareness of the need to monitor the diet of populations which generated from the middle of the 19th century the regulatory, normative and monitoring action of food sold in the city. They are also the extension of legislation put in place in the United States (Food and drug administration) and in Europe since the beginning of the 20th century.

If these questions have taken on such importance, it is because there are many flaws in the food chain. They are at distinct levels. Food safety has become all the more necessary as criminal commercial practices have increased in line with the lengthening of commercial circuits or behaviour that shows little concern for customers. The fight against fraud has thus become an imperative means of guaranteeing food. But health crises of another magnitude since the end of the 20th century have raised the need to strengthen control strategies and public policies for health safety, and therefore food safety. The BSE crisis created a shock in Europe to which public authorities had to respond with increasingly restrictive regulatory frameworks. The harmonization of practices in Europe, slowly formed by regulations and municipal and regional actions, poses the problem of food safety in terms of scientific expertise and circulation of information. In addition to European directives which were concerned with harmonization on labelling or nutritional quality, interventions on food safety itself have been added. In the midst of the BSE crisis, the President of the European Commission, Jacques Santer, took note of the need to strengthen European action in these terms:

“I plead for the gradual establishment of a real food policy which grants primary

attention to consumer protection and health. In this context, I am in favour of compulsory and systematic labelling. I also think that the creation of an independent Agency, responding to the specific needs of the Community while drawing inspiration from the positive aspects of the American FDA, should be considered” (Speech by Jacques Santer, debate on the report of the Commission of inquiry into BSE in the European Parliament, Strasbourg, February 18, 1997). The expectations of consumers and citizens of the European Union required more information and guarantee of product quality. The food hygiene security policy resulted in the creation of the EFSA (European Food Safety Agency, based on the French Afssa model) in 2002.

Its role is to assess risks relating to food safety and to propose opinions intended to form the basis of food legislation in Europe. A competition took place between Finland and Italy to host the headquarters. The Agency was finally established in Parma. The history of European food is now being written in part within this institution. But there's more to the history of food safety than recent regulations. In the 19th century, the multiplication of frauds and even their frequency, which all observers pointed out, merit further study. The colloquium will therefore focus as much on contemporary players and developments as on those of the previous two centuries.

The purpose of this conference is to explore the plurality of actions, actors, methods and gains or withdrawals from food safety in the 19th to 21st centuries. Two false routes must be avoided. Food safety is not the only product of regulations and institutions born at the end of the 20th century as part of a strengthening of public policies. It was

already informed by municipal policies, of which the city of Brussels set the example in the middle of the 19th century. It already mobilized forms of expertise and the international circulation of information. It will therefore be appropriate not to limit ourselves to an approach exclusively focused on a history of the present time. Food safety is also not exclusively linked to public regulation and surveillance but just as much to the practices of companies whose permanent responsibility, increasingly judicialized, tends ever more towards demanding control procedures. The qualitative approaches of the agri-food industries must therefore be widely considered in this process of guaranteeing food safety.

Possible themes:

EXPERTISE

Experts and expertise: building chains of expertise.
From the first experts (the farmers) to the laboratories: historical evolution of food law, definition of food products;
Work of scientists and scholars on food safety (Pasteur, Liebig, Richet, etc.);
international congresses (hygiene and demography, universal exhibitions, etc.);
Food laboratories (fraud and alteration of substances);
The role of crises (BSE, etc.) ;
Food pathologies (botulism, salmonellosis, listeria, etc.); medicine and food ;
Medical control of food substances;
Food safety and wars (food policy in Great Britain, nutritional education office in the Netherlands, etc.)

ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

Food safety depends on the production, transport and distribution environment. Food Industries, Food Companies, Consumers, business marketing strategies and Diet;

Food techniques (cold chain, conservation, packaging, etc.);
Food transport and its risks (railways, trucks, etc.);
Sense and choice of food (the colour of food to assess freshness, the colour of food to deceive the consumer, etc.);
The press and food safety (food-bashing, investigations, whistle-blowers, etc.), doctors' speeches.
Leagues and associations (milk league, etc.) ;
Geo-climatic issues and production of healthy food ...

REGULATION FROM LOCAL TO GLOBAL

Regulations on food products (public, municipal, regional, national policies ; food safety control and regulation institutions (ANSES, Inserm, WHO, Codex Alimentarius, Efsa, etc.) ; criminalization of food deception ; financing food safety

RESISTANCE, REVERSALS, TEMPORALITIES

Beyond food fraud and times of major crises, obstacles and resistance exist throughout the food security chain, from farmer to consumer. Who decides? In whose name? Furthermore, processes that were initially laudable turn out to be dangerous for public health. These resistances and reversals have specific temporalities: what are the rhythms of the history of food safety?

Please submit your abstract (up to 300 words), together with a short CV (max 250 words) to the ICREFH Committee (icrefh@gmail.com) at the latest by October 1st 2024.

Registration Fee: 300 euros for each speaker; 250 euros for young scholars (persons currently enrolled in a PhD/postgraduate doctoral

students/persons who have been awarded a PhD/postdoctoral students, without paid posts).

The fee includes 3 nights hotel accommodation with meals. Travel expenses to Paris and extra nights are not included.

Please note that in case of cancellation or no-show, the fee will not be refunded.

The ICREFH

(<https://icrefh.hypotheses.org/>) has a tradition of short presentations (20 minutes) and a long discussion.

Participants are asked to stay for the full three days of the conference.

A maximum of 25 proposals will be accepted. The proposals will also be selected by taking into account the need to ensure the widest participation of scholars from different countries.

A selection of papers will be published (after double peer review).

Official Language: English.

Timetable

- October 1st, 2024: deadline for the online proposals submission to icrefh@gmail.com
- November 1st, 2024: notification of acceptance.
- June 15th, 2025: deadline for registration (fee payment) through the conference website and for extended abstract submission through the conference website.

Registration and all exchange of information and documents will take place through the conference website that will be communicated at the beginning of 2022.

Application Form ICREFH

ICREFH Conference - PARIS - Monday 1 September / Thursday 4 September 2025

NAME:

TITLE:

INSTITUTION:

ADDRESS:

PHONE:

E-MAIL :

Provisional title of paper:

Theme:

Summary of Topic (max. 300 words):