

AOAC India Section Focuses on Emerging Trends in Food Analysis; Partnership Key to Finding Analytical Solutions

The AOAC India Section's 2-day conference on collaborative leadership to ensure food safety brought together over 300 leading specialists from government, industry, academia, contract research organizations, and instrument manufacturers engaged in food safety testing in the country and around the world. The Section's 6th annual conference, held on February 28–March 1, 2019, at The Park Hotel in New Delhi, aimed to further communication and collaboration in food safety and quality detection standards. Participants examined emerging trends in food analysis, food safety regulations, and how AOAC and the India Section can play a role in food testing.

"This year's conference displayed a wealth of scientific content and high-quality research," said **Palmer Orlandi**, deputy executive director and chief science officer, AOAC INTERNATIONAL. "There were a number of young scientists who were fully engaged, which is promising for the future of the Section." (During the meeting, the India Section announced plans to provide need-based aid for students to pursue higher education in food safety.)

A strategic goal of AOAC is to sustain, grow, and develop successful Sections.

Orlandi stressed AOAC's commitment to support and promote Sections. He also advocated the need and opportunity for collaboration among regulators, industry, nongovernmental organizations like AOAC, technology providers, academia, and others to support capacity building.

"To maintain our global recognition in analytical excellence, AOAC INTERNATIONAL, including its Sections, must continue to foster and expand collaborations," Orlandi said. "Together we can focus on regional outreach activities, develop programs to meet stakeholders' needs, and establish valuable public-private partnerships, such as that between AOAC INTERNATIONAL and the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), to support food safety programs regionally and internationally."

In his presidential address, **Ranjan Mitra**, Dabur India Ltd, highlighted the Section's milestones since 2018, which includes completing a collaborative study on vitamin B₁₂, webcasting lectures to support FSSAI's Junior Food Analyst Examination, and editing analytical manuals for the FSSAI-Methods Review Group. The Section also designed need-based e-learning modules for laboratory personnel and



(left to right) Ranjan Mitra, president, AOAC India Section; Paul Young, member of World Bank-led Global Food Safety Partnership; S.K. Saxena, Export Inspection Council of India; Shri Pawan Kumar Agarwal, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India; Samuel Godefroy, Université Laval; Palmer A. Orlandi, Jr., AOAC INTERNATIONAL

researchers. Looking to the future, Mitra reported that the India Section plans to set up chapters in various areas across the country to encourage further engagement.

In the keynote address, **Pawan Kumar Agarwal**, FSSAI, focused on the importance of food safety in the interest of public health and the nation's economic development. He reiterated the need for partnership between government regulators and the private sector for building a robust analytical ecosystem in the country.

Sushil Kumar Saxena, Export Inspection Council of India, also emphasized the importance of partnerships and noted that the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between AOAC and FSSAI to find fit-for-purpose analytical methods will help improve

effectiveness and efficiency of the export control system for maintaining regulatory compliance, as well as resolving disputes related to international trade.

N. Bhaskar, FSSAI, focused on the significance of reliable, validated methods and their implementation in food testing through appropriate instrumentation techniques and the need for trained analysts.

High-quality technical sessions highlighted topics such as:

- National Referral Laboratory (Pune, India) activities, including implementation of web-based pesticide residues monitoring plan through harmonizing residue analysis methods; overall improvement of method

- performance (**Kaushik Banerjee**, National Research Center for Grapes, president of AOAC India Section)
- Fit-for-purpose tests and specifications for botanical traceability and integrity (**Amit Chandra**, AMWAY, and **Kavitha Kulkarni**, 3M India)
 - Rapid microbiology methods, including standard reference materials, traceability, development of proficiency testing material, and accreditation requirements (**Natarajan Venkateswaran**, National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories)
 - Emerging food safety issues and key challenges from a global perspective on veterinary drugs/antibiotic residues; screening and confirmatory approaches for multiclass, multiresidue analysis of contaminants for regulatory compliance (Saxena)
 - Challenges faced by official control laboratories in India to meet changing regulations in antibiotics/veterinary drugs
 - Emerging challenges in microbiological food safety, AOAC activities on microbiological method validation and verification (**DeAnn Benesh**, 3M, past-president of AOAC)
 - Importance of quality, safety, and authenticity for food integrity (**Vasudevappa**, National Institute of Food Technology Entrepreneurship and Management)
 - Global perspective on food fraud management (**Samuel Godefroy**, Université Laval, AOAC Board of Directors)
 - Innovative applications of various tools and techniques, including NMR and mass spectrometry for identification of food fraud and emerging contamination issues
 - Food industry operations and role of the analytical sciences
 - Key elements of Good Laboratory Practices
 - Management systems and technical requirements according to ISO/IEC 17025
 - Laboratory safety
- The conference featured an exhibition by global instrument companies on novel technologies and trends in analytical instrumentations.
- Organized in collaboration with the Royal Society of Chemistry, UK, this year's poster session featured innovative topics ranging from food safety to food authenticity, metabolomics to mycotoxin control study, and plant-based natural products to nutraceutical analysis. Eight finalists received awards for "Best Poster."
- The AOAC India Section congratulates **Niladri Chatterjee**, Indian Agricultural Research Institute, who was the recipient of this year's "Young Scientist Award." In addition, **Zareen Khan**, National Research Center for Grapes, received the new award, "Women in Analytical Sciences."
- During the conference, the AOAC India Section launched a new publication, "Handbook of Key Analytical Tools," by **Lalitha R. Gowda**, CSIR-Central Food Technological Research Institute, India, which covers the basics of food analysis and best practices in regulatory testing. The book should be of interest to academia and laboratory personnel.
- India Section meetings continue to further strengthen the country's communication and exchange with international organizations in the field of food safety, effectively advance India's food safety standards worldwide, and provide a platform for integration and alignment with international standards.
- For more information on AOAC Sections, contact **May Jones**, AOAC director of membership, at mjones@aoac.org. ■

Inaugural AOAC Analytical Methods Week Features 12 ERPs

The first AOAC Analytical Methods Week (AMW) on July 8–12, 2019, features a week of virtual AOAC expert review panel (ERP) meetings to evaluate candidate methods for First Action *Official Methods of Analysis*SM status, modifications, or First Action status to Final Action status. Twelve ERPs are scheduled to focus on methods in the areas of food, infant formula, and microbiology.

AMW will feature the following ERPs (tentative and subject to change):

- (1) ERP for Antioxidant Methods
 - (2) ERP for Bisphenol A Methods
 - (3) ERP for Ethanol in Tea (Kombucha) Methods
 - (4) ERP for Flavanol Methods
 - (5) ERP for St. John's Wort Methods
 - (6) ERP for Proanthocyanidins in Cranberries Methods
 - (7) ERP for Sugars and Fructans Methods
 - (8) ERP for SPIFAN Nutrient Methods
 - (9) ERP for Dietary Starch and Fiber Methods
 - (10) ERP for Gluten Assays
 - (11) ERP for Microbiology Methods for Foods and Environmental Surfaces
 - (12) ERP for Solids in Syrups Methods
- Methods adopted as AOAC First Action *Official Methods of Analysis* by the ERPs will be published by AOAC INTERNATIONAL.

For more information, contact **Deborah McKenzie**, senior director for Standards and *Official Methods*SM, at dmckenzie@aoac.org. ■