

From Editor-in-Chief

Since ancient times, enormous efforts have been devoted to supplying sufficient foods, providing safe foods, and preventing food-borne illnesses. In recent years, such efforts have been directed particularly toward improvement of food supply through innovation and development of agricultural chemicals and food additives, food manufacturing and processing techniques, and food distribution systems. In parallel with the development of science and technology related to the food supply, systems and methods for securing food safety have also progressed markedly in the past decades.

Nevertheless, recent changes in the environment and circumstances surrounding the food supply have continuously raised concerns about food safety. Global warming is anticipated to cause environmental changes, accompanied by changes in distribution of pathogenic and toxigenic microorganisms, and impairment of crop, livestock and fisheries yields, consequently to cause an increase in health risks through more frequent intake of marine toxins, mycotoxins, food-borne pathogens and other hazardous agents. The growth and expansion of the trade and distribution of food, including industrially produced and processed foods, are anticipated to cause large outbreaks of food poisoning and food-borne infections. Novel foods and foods produced by newly developed techniques may also raise concerns for food safety. In view of this situation surrounding the food supply, it is more important than ever to develop the science and technology that focuses on food safety.

Science and technology for food safety involve a large number of research fields of different disciplines, and the research outcomes have been disseminated over a wide range of scientific journals devoted to microbiology, biochemistry, toxicology, and epidemiology, and also agricultural, environmental, and public health science. However, to achieve further development of science and technology for food safety, it is necessary to construct a data and knowledge bank in which research outcomes are gathered and available for anyone requiring them. Taking into account the need for such a bank, we have decided to launch a peer-reviewed open-access electronic online journal in English named *Food Safety - The Official Journal of the Food Safety Commission of Japan*.

The journal publishes original articles, short communications, and reviews covering broad areas of food safety related to the risk assessment of foods as well as risk assessments conducted by the Food Safety Commission of Japan. Papers dealing with the following areas are particularly welcome: (1) pathogenicity or toxicity of biological, physical, and chemical agents concerning food safety; (2) occurrence of biological, physical, and chemical agents in the food chain with emphasis on food safety; (3) epidemiology or control of food-borne illnesses; and (4) safety evaluation of novel foods, including, among many others, nano-materials and genetically modified organisms. We hope that this new journal will be successful in improving the levels of science and technology for food safety, and that it will contribute to the growth of an integrated research field specifically focusing on food safety.

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