

ASSOCIATION OF APPLIED BIOLOGISTS

ASPECTS OF APPLIED BIOLOGY 87

Greening the Food Chain, 3 and 4

3. Traceability: Tracking and tracing in the food chain

**4. Supplying sustainable and innovative food and
drink solutions**

at the Central Science Laboratory, York

on 15 October and 4 November 2008, respectively

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Greening the Food Chain, 3 and 4

Includes papers from the following conferences:

3. Traceability: Tracking and tracing in the food chain

4. Supplying sustainable and innovative food and drink solutions

INTRODUCTION

Aspects of Applied Biology 87 contains a number of papers given as oral presentations at the conferences outlined above, held on 15 October 2008 and 4 November 2008, respectively.

The need to trace the origin and history of products in the food chain has assumed great importance recently, with an increased awareness by consumers and food retailers in relation to food safety. This applies to food production systems across the world, as increasing volumes of food are transported around the globe to satisfy consumer demand. Not only does the food need to meet food safety standards, but it should also be produced in a manner that is safe for workers and also minimises environmental impact. For example, GlobalGAP is a private sector body that sets voluntary standards for the certification of agricultural products around the globe, through an equal partnership of agricultural producers and retailers to establish certification standards and procedures for Good Agricultural Practices.

Advances in technology now allow records to be set up through electronic tagging and use of bar codes to provide information relating to the use of pesticides, fertilisers etc. used on individual crops in the field. The information can be used to identify who carried out particular tasks, when they were done, and details of the equipment used. In this way food produce from the grower can be traced through the supply chain ensuring that standards of quality have been met up to the point of sale to the consumer. Retailers and enforcement agencies can interrogate the records to follow up any suspicions of bad practice or fraud. All sectors of the food industry have an interest in the topic, ranging from the automated recording of pesticide use on farm through to packaging and the point of sale at retail outlets, using some of the developing software packages on the market. Today's food system tells us much about what is achievable commercially and what is sustainable.

The innovative food conference provided demonstrations of sustainable food supply across an increasingly complex industrial, health, safety and resource efficiency arena. Food knowledge, science and technology are key interventions we can use to provide sustainable production and consumption. Clearly, food production capacities are not limitless. This conference analysed where the knowledge, production and supply gaps are. Then, using demonstrations of resource efficiency methods such as the 'carbon and water footprint' showed how delivery of innovative products can be maintained. The subject agenda was broad but our focus was to demonstrate innovative solutions that provide sustainable food production and consumption at regional, national and international levels. Speakers included industrial (New Product Development, energy management), research (health and carbon management) and policy (safety and assurance) experts. Sustainability is a 'now' issue the food and beverage industry has responded to. The papers provided a basis to develop knowledge transfer mechanisms, and how the new Food System Group within the AAB can provide a forum to develop ideas on the ability for the food knowledge, science and technology sectors to deliver sustainability and innovation according to the following three caveats:

1. The ability to deploy novel and established technologies
2. Sensing regulatory environments that enable and stimulate innovation
3. Delivery of innovative multidisciplinary approaches to product development that provide consumers with high impact health and ethical information.

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