

# ILSI-UGL FSNTC NEWSLETTER

INTERNATIONAL LIFE SCIENCES INSTITUTE—UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON (ILSI-UGL) FOOD SAFETY & NUTRITION TRAINING CENTRE (FSNTC)



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No. 3



## KEEPING IN TOUCH: The Year in Review

Dear Alumni and Food Safety Ambassadors, on behalf of the ILSI-UGL FSNTC, I wish to wish you all a Happy New Year in advance.

In 2015, the ILSI-UGL FSNTC successfully organized three (3) short courses: Two training courses on the Food Safety for Nutritionists and Other Health Professionals modules and one training course on the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point System (HACCP) modules. The beauty of it was that, one of the trainings was, for the first time in the history of the Centre, done in Nigeria, in line with the Centre's vision of developing the Centre into a sub-regional centre for the Sub-Sahara African region. In all, 82 participants were trained, to become Food Safety Ambassadors; bringing the number of participants trained so far to 384.

The relevance of the mission and vision of the Centre has increasingly become more prominent over the years since the Centre was established in 2008, and it owes to the increased incidence of food-borne diseases globally. The WHO's 2015 World Health Day message reported that "unsafe food is linked to the deaths of an estimated 2 million people annually – including many children". The WHO recognizes that "food containing harmful bacteria, viruses, parasites or chemical substances is responsible for more than 200 diseases, ranging from diarrhoea to cancers". The changing trends in agriculture and food production methods, world trade practices, lifestyle, climate, human geography, diagnostics, technologies, etc., are creating

emerging situations where known pathogens are assuming more importance and new ones are being detected. With these developments however, we could still derive the best from food if we are able to process, prepare and handle foods properly or appropriately. This is where the focus of ILSI-UGL has been: Training participants to become champions of food safety in their homes and workplaces, to lead the assurance of food safety, with a global focus. Food safety assurance is indeed a collective responsibility with high eminence.

In the last part of 2015, the Centre started a survey on its alumni, to track them and have them share their experiences. Our initial contacts illustrate the impacts the training programmes are having on participants and their career development; which indirectly suggests the impacts on society. Through the surveys and our newsletter, the Centre shall always desire to keep in touch to coordinate our efforts to achieve our common goal of advocating for food safety assurance.

On behalf of the Centre, I wish you a prosperous new year, a leap year of success that will bring joy and happiness. Let us continue to keep in touch.

### STAY IN TOUCH WITH US...

#### ILSI-UGL FSNTC

Department of Nutrition & Food Science,  
University of Ghana. Box LG 134, Legon,  
Accra, Ghana.

+233 (0) 244713963 / 244675705 / 242143278

ilsiu@ug.edu.gh

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**Prof. K. Tano-Debrah**  
(Program Manager)



## FEATURED EVENTS—MARK YOUR CALENDARS

### ILSI-UGL FSNTC's Short Courses

- Food Safety for Nutritionists and other Health Professionals (FSN) - July 2016, UG, Accra Ghana.
- Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) System - July/August 2016, UG, Accra Ghana.
- FSN and/or HACCP - Pending, FUNAAB, Nigeria.

## REPORT ON ILSI-UGL FSNTC's 2015 SHORT COURSES

The 2015 set of training courses are over and done with. One word to describe them: informative. For ten consecutive weekdays in July, the Centre bubbled with activity as it once again set out to work towards giving participants a richly insightful experience. Prior to this engagement, the Centre organized a similar course outside the borders of Ghana for the very first time. More and more, the Centre is gaining grounds in its quest to equip individuals to handle food and manage the environment in which the food is processed in a safe manner. Our training programs have over the years proved beneficial to people of diverse occupational backgrounds, all of which have some bearing on food and health. As Ghana goes through this period of grappling with the aftermath of excessive flooding in parts of the capital city which occurred in June 2015, coupled with unrestrained nationwide power cuts, we hope our alumni bring their knowledge and experience to bear, especially since these two issues are major contributors to food safety issues in most parts of Africa.

### ILSI-UGL-FUNAAB's 1st Food Safety for Nutritionists and other Health Professionals (FSN) Course:

For the very first time, and as part of the Centre's attempts to bolster up ILSI Global's efforts to strengthen her presence in Africa, a FSN short course was held in Abeokuta, Ogun state of Nigeria. After eight (8) years of existence in Ghana, the Centre took a giant step of disseminating knowledge on food safety and nutrition in a somewhat different territory from Ghana. Held at the campus of the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB), this 5-day course was made possible by a partnership between the Centre and FUNAAB's College of Food Science and Human Ecology (COLFEC). Through the combined efforts of Professor F.O. Henshaw of FUNAAB, who was the Local Program Coordinator, and her auxiliaries, the course was a huge success.

In his opening address, the chair for the opening session, Prof. Oyewole (the Vice Chancellor of FUNAAB) represented by Prof. Sanni (Dean COLFHEC) said the food safety course/partnership was in line with the university's tripod mandate of teaching, research and extension. Prof. Henshaw later pledged her unwavering support for the partnership between FUNAAB and the ILSI-UGL in disseminating knowledge on food safety and nutrition in a subsequent address. A representative of the Executive Governor of Ogun State highlighted the upsurge of food-borne diseases due mainly to ignorance of, and the failure to adhere to basic principles of hygiene. The program manager, Prof. Tano-Debrah, also touched on the essence of setting up a network of food safety ambassadors in the sub-region.

Not only was the program well coordinated; attendance was commendable as more than thirty-five (35) participants shared in the experience. As an essential component, the course culminated in a visit to a nearby local street food vending site (popularly referred to as Camp market), to observe the food handling practices of vendors, judging (with reasons/ based on the knowledge acquired from the course) the CCPs (critical control points) for each food considered and finally judged whether street foods are safe.

Most notable comments from participants primarily focused on the frequency of organizing similar courses.

### ILSI-UGL's 7th Food Safety for Nutritionists and other Health Professionals (FSN) Course:

The FSN short course, usually the first among our two courses organized annually, took place in the third week of July at the University of Ghana campus. A formal opening session for the courses was held on the early morning of July 13.

Gracing the opening session was Prof. Ebenezer O. Owusu, Provost of the College of Basic and Applied Sciences who chaired the session. In his address he showed much concern about the positive association between the environment, health and food safety. Additionally, the Provost stated that, "we can never develop as a country/continent if we lose sight of the very things that give us the energy to grow healthy." The program manager followed up with a brief address which focused primarily on the importance of food safety and the plans of the Centre for the future. Unlike the usual practice since the existence of the course in Ghana, the duration was shortened

from eight to five weekdays. Participants were from hospitals/ the health services, food industry, vocational institutions, and the research/academia field. For the field activity, participants visited local street food vending sites, in Madina - Accra, to observe the food handling practices of vendors, judging (with reasons/ based on the GHP and HACCP knowledge acquired from the course) whether street foods are safe.

Popular opinion among participants suggested continuity of the course and intensifying publicity to attract more participants to attend.

### ILSI-UGL's 10th Course on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) Systems:

This year's HACCP course marked the 8th anniversary of holding the course for 10 consecutive times in Ghana. Touching on this at the opening session, Prof. Tano-Debrah further informed participants of ILSI's intentions of re-orienting the minds of food handlers and thereby transforming societies in the sub-region. He further stressed on the need for both food industry/ service management and staff to dedicate time and resources in focusing on preventing hazards from reaching the consumer.

Attendees came from food processing industries, academia or research fields, hospitality, health care, etc. In a detailed lecture (power point presentation) on their HACCP plan, a selected expert staff of Ghana's Cocoa Processing Company Limited took participants through the GHPs and HACCP practices put in place for their chocolate line at the company premise, complimenting the lecture with samples of raw materials (bean), intermediate, and finished products. Participants generally found the course to be both impactful and insightful and pledged to utilize the acquired knowledge in transforming their industries or occupations. The program manager, in his closing remarks, assured participants of the Centre's unwavering support for them in their bid to apply themselves in ensuring safety of food.

On average fewer foreign participation was recorded for this year's FNS and HACCP courses.

## ALUMNI SUCCESS STORIES

I enrolled in ILSI-UGL's famously acclaimed courses (FSN & HACCP) way back in 2011 when I had just taken up a role in Supply Chain Quality with a transnational food and beverage company in Ghana. As this role was the first of its kind, so much was expected of me. The task was a little overwhelming at first but, while allowing me to network with others in my field, participating in the courses afforded me knowledge to initiate and implement quality measures, especially relating to international requirements. They contributed immensely to my performance for the year. There is therefore no other way to put it than to say this was indeed a choice opportunity and I benefited more than I had expected to.

- Rhoda Acheba-Sam

In 2010, I participated in the HACCP Training programme while finalizing my Master Degree thesis in Food Safety. It was rather interesting to find that the programme was structured to allow all aspects of HACCP to be *communicated* (not merely talked about) effectively. By combining group exercises, involvement of highly qualified facilitators, and a participatory approach to knowledge transfer, a practical and interesting learning experience was evident. The training offered a view into the wider world of food safety and heightened my interest in the field. I have subsequently worked on various Food Safety issues including a consultancy work on the Fish Value Chain in Egypt through WorldFish and International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), a multi-country study on food safety in informal markets in Sub-Saharan Africa, and other exciting ventures. The knowledge gained will continue to be an essential part of the principles underpinning my work and study in Food Safety.

- Kennedy Bonfeli

**The courses allowed me to network with others in my field... and afforded me knowledge to initiate and implement quality measures...!**

- Rhoda

**The training offered a view into the wider world of food safety and heightened my interest in the field...!**

- Kennedy

## ILSI ASSOCIATE, Nine others Honoured — RECIPIENTS OF MALASPINA AWARD



Dr. A. Malaspina

The ILSI Associate of the ILSI-UGL FSNTC of the Department of Nutrition and Food Science, University of Ghana, Mr. Benjamin K. Mintah (M.Sc., M.ED, PGDE), was among ten (10) young scientists from around the world to receive the ILSI Malaspina International Scholars Travel Award to participate in the 2015 ILSI annual meeting in Phoenix, Arizona, USA – a scientific forum.

The award which was established by Coca-Cola to honor the passion/ heritage of Dr. Alex Malaspina, former Scientific and Regulatory Affairs leader of Coca-Cola and founder of the International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI) supports travel for early-career academic scientists (in the areas of Nutrition, Food Safety, Toxicology, Risk Assessment or the Environment) to the ILSI meeting held yearly. Visit [www.ilsi.org/](http://www.ilsi.org/) for more information on ILSI.

The 2015 award was unique as it was the inaugural. Nominations from ILSI branches by region were invited and Mr Benjamin Mintah was nominated by ILSI South Africa as its candidate for the award. Reviews of nominations by representatives of the ILSI Board of Trustees and Coca-Cola took place. The other 9 award recipients were:

- Bani Tamber Aeri, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, University of Delhi, India
- Clinton Allred, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Nutrition & Food Science, Texas A&M University, U.S.
- Marisa Armeno, M.D., Pediatrician in the Nutrition Department, National Pediatric Hospital, Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- Graham Finlayson, Ph.D., Associate Professor, University of Leeds, U.K.
- Siti Muslimatun, Ph.D., Faculty Member and Researcher, The Indonesia International Institute for Life Sciences, Indonesia.
- Yukiko Nakanishi, Ph.D., Professor, Department of Health and Nutrition, University of Human Arts and Sciences, Japan.
- Zvonimir Šatalić, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Faculty of Food Technology and Biotechnology, University of Zagreb, Croatia.
- Anderson de Souza Sant'Ana, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Food Science, University of Campinas, Sao Paulo, Brazil.
- Krista Varady, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Kinesiology & Nutrition, University of Illinois at Chicago, U.S.



Benjamin K. Mintah (ILSI Associate)

### How about 2016 awardees?

Among the 2016 recipients of the Malaspina award who would be honored/recognized in the January 2016 ILSI meeting in Florida (USA) is Janetta Harbron (PhD). Like the ILSI Associate, Janetta was nominated by the ILSI South Africa branch. Janetta is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Cape Town, South Africa, and has present research interest in areas such as 'weight management interventions with dietary, physical activity and behavior change components for obesity, diabetes and other non-communicable diseases'. *Read more on the award in our next edition.*



Some awardees with Dr. A. Malaspina



### ILSI-UGL FSNTC Food Safety Tips For Keeping Food Safe During Power Cuts

In this issue, the Centre would like to offer food safety recommendations for those who may be impacted by the frequent and unrestrained power outages occurring in Ghana currently and in the sub-region. Adapted from <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/ffsis/newsroom/news-releases-statements-transcripts/news-release-archives-by-year/archive/2015/nr-082815-01>

- Avoid buying perishable foods or high moisture content fresh foods in bulk when very well aware of a long period of power outage. Buy and use (or store for short periods) as and when needed.
- Safe refrigerating temperature is 4°C or lower, -18°C or lower for freezing temperature. In ideal situations, a thermometer can be kept in the appliance to help monitoring. Since this is not a typical practice, appliance doors must be kept tightly shut at all time. As much as possible, opening and closing of door must be limited to a few times to ensure a cool temperature is maintained, especially during a power outage.
- When power is available, freeze water in transparent several plastic storage bags that can cool stored food in the refrigerating compartment during a long period of power loss. Otherwise, know where to purchase block ice or ice cubes.
- If possible, consume any refrigerated perishables or leftovers if power will be out for more than three (3) hours. If impossible, it is better to move fresh meat/ fish/ poultry that may not have immediate use, and leftover or opened cans/ cartons/ bottles/ gallons of milk/ fruit juice from the refrigerating compartment to the freezing compartment to help in keeping safe for longer. Additionally, ensure adequate packaging, where necessary, to avert cross-contamination.
- In the freezer, avoid spacing up packs of food. Grouping them closer together helps them stay cool for longer during an outage.
- Meat, poultry, fish and many other fresh foods drip excessively during thawing. Separate them to one side of the compartment or place on trays to prevent the exudates from contaminating other foods.

### ILSI-UGL ALUMNI SURVEY

ILSI-UGL FSNTC is excited to announce to the entire alumni body of a new electronic survey underway. Why should you care to fill the form? By doing your part, you help the Centre to update its database of all course participants dating back to the inception year: 2008. Confidentiality in handling your details is assured. Check your email inbox for your questionnaire now.

### FOOD SAFETY UPDATES

#### Codex Adopts New Food Standards

The main objective of the Codex Alimentarius Commission's 38<sup>th</sup> session, held from July 6 to 11 in Geneva, was for member countries to adopt new food safety and quality standards, including limits on use of drugs in food-producing animals. Twelve (12) nations from the West African sub-region, including Ghana's neighbouring countries: Togo, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Benin and Nigeria made it for the event. Ghana was well represented by stakeholders in the industry including Ghana Standards Authority, Food and Drugs Authority, Quality Control Company of Ghana Cocoa board, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Ghana Revenue Authority (Customs Division), and Ministry of Trade and Industry. 141 member countries and the European Union discussed and adopted new food safety and quality standards. Primarily, the mission of the Codex Alimentarius Commission is to ensure safe, good food for everyone, everywhere. Get the summary of the final report at: <http://www.codexalimentarius.org/roster/detail/en/c/318164/>



## Q&A with the ILSI ASSOCIATE

This Newsletter is special not only because it carries with it the warmth of the festive season but it introduces the Centre's new section, specially set up to answer questions from our numerous alumni and subscribers. Remember, your questions should be related to food safety issues. Please send your questions and concerns to [ilsiu@ug.edu.gh](mailto:ilsiu@ug.edu.gh).

### Q (Esi in Accra, Ghana):

I have always wondered which of these two food products is likely to contain the most bacteria: frozen raw chicken OR freshly cooked chicken?

### A (ILSI Associate):

Hello Esi. It is the frozen raw chicken, provided that the freshly cooked chicken is not cross-contaminated after cooking.

### Q (Eric, from Takoradi, Ghana):

I agree that we must dry our hands after washing with soap and water. What I do not know is the principle/ reason for taking such an action. Also, why is it not recommended to use cotton towels for the drying?

### A (ILSI Associate):

Hello Eric! The reason is that bacteria spread easily with wet hands. The concern about cotton towels is that when damp, they can harbor bacteria and consequently cause cross-contamination. Let me also add that warm air dryers are also sometimes used, but they may not do the job efficiently as all the water on

your hands may not be removed. It is therefore recommended, as best, that paper towels are used due to the ability to absorb all water and also by the fact that they can be disposed right away.

### Q (Samuel Djimesah, 2013 alumnus):

What would you say is the Centre's role in tackling the widespread food adulteration practices as recently found by the Food and Drugs Authority (FDA) and the KNUST researchers that hit the headlines?

### A (ILSI Associate):

Dear Djimesah, I believe you can testify that one of the major focus of the Centre is to train participants to effectively tackle both existing and emerging food-related safety issues. The recent findings have shaken the nation to its core and, although we are not a regulating agency, by using various media, we hope to reach out not only to our alumni but many others with our constant campaign for them to exist as ambassadors of food safety both in their institutions and everywhere they find

themselves. Such a collaborative effort from us all can help curb this menace and also aid in the work of the mandated regulatory agencies as they set out to put control measures in place.

### Q (Sylvia Baah-Atuahene, 2014 alumnus):

As a developing country, are there lessons Ghana can learn from the way some developed nations use legislation to ensure food safety for consumer protection?

### A (ILSI Associate):

Hello, Sylvia! The answer is YES, there are more lessons to glean from the experiences of countries that may be doing better at managing food safety issues and consequently protecting their consumers. Food legislation in the European Union, for example, employs two different approaches — hazard-based and risk-based — in dealing with matters concerning food safety. To get a deeper appreciation of how these two approaches are used and the underlying challenges, we are happy to refer you to an article by Barlow, S.M., et al. (2015), that can be read on and/or downloaded from the ILSI Europe page at <http://goo.gl/IPqUv7>.

## SNAPSHOTS FROM 2015 ARCHIVES



Group Picture at the ILSI-UGL-FUNAAB Training in Nigeria



Group Picture: FSN Course in July, 2015



Group Picture: HACCP Course in July, 2015

## FEATURED EVENTS—MARK YOUR CALENDARS

### 2016 ILSI Annual Meeting

January 22 – 27, 2016

The Vinoy Renaissance St. Petersburg Resort, St. Petersburg, Florida, USA.

Read more at <http://www.ilsio.org/Pages/2016-Annual-Meeting.aspx>.

### ILSI Europe's 2016 General Assembly and Annual Symposium

March 9 – 10, 2016

Brussels, Belgium. Get more information at <http://goo.gl/xHNhH9>

### ILSI's 2<sup>nd</sup> Workshop on Nutrition for the Ageing Brain

June 30 – July 1, 2016

Copenhagen, Denmark

For more information on this event, please contact Mr Jeroen Schuermans, Scientific Project Manager ([jschuermans@ilsieurope.be](mailto:jschuermans@ilsieurope.be)). Read more at <http://goo.gl/K1ijZW>.

### ILSI Southeast Asia (SEA) Region and Southeast Asia Association of Food Protection will jointly organize the:

- 4<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific International Conference on Food Safety, and
- 7<sup>th</sup> Asian Conference on Food and Nutrition Safety

September 12-14, 2016

Penang, Malaysia.

Stay tuned for more details at <http://goo.gl/OZRJUa>

### ILSI Europe is pleased to organize the 6<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on Food Packaging: Scientific Developments Supporting Safety and Innovation.

November 16-18, 2016

Barcelona, Spain

Visit the event website for detailed information: <http://goo.gl/NMPtnX>

## CONTACT US

The ILSI Associate

ILSI-UGL Food Safety & Nutrition Training Centre

Department of Nutrition and Food Science, University of Ghana

P.O. Box LG 134, Legon, Accra, Ghana.

phone: +233 285147141 / 244713963 / 244675705 / 242143278



e-mail: [ilsiu@ug.edu.gh](mailto:ilsiu@ug.edu.gh)