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This project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement No. 312631



SPICED – what is it?

The whole structure of SPICED aims at securing the food supply chain of spices and herbs against major natural, accidental or intentional biological and chemical contaminations and, therefore, at the protection of the European consumers' health as well as protection against economic loss. Securing the food chains from primary production to consumer-ready food against CBRN contaminations is directly related with the safety of food products.

Several EU projects, dealing with different aspects of food safety and security, are currently ongoing. At least one SPICED project partner is partner/coordinator in

one of these projects. The SPICED consortium is composed of eleven experienced institutions from seven European countries: Germany, Austria, Latvia, the Netherlands, Hungary, Ireland and Slovakia. It includes partners from industry, academia and food authorities.



SPICED aims

- to characterize the heterogeneous matrices of spices and herbs and their respective production and supply chains in context with relevant biological and chemical hazards that can lead to major natural, accidental or intentional contaminations in the food supply chain.
- to improve the knowledge on biological hazards properties as well as on-site and high throughput diagnostic methods for appropriate detection.
- to reduce (industrial) chemical adulterations and to ensure authenticity of spices and herbs by evaluation and improvement of non-targeted fingerprinting methods.
- to improve alerting, reporting and decontamination systems as well as techniques to ensure prevention and response on high quality level.



WHO IS WHO...

Prof. Dr. Bernd Appel, Head of the department Biological Safety, Federal Institute for Risk Assessment, Germany, holds a great expertise on food safety and food security.

The coordinator of the SPICED project states “Spices and herbs are small, but powerful ingredients of our daily food. Nevertheless, a safe consumption can only be ensured when the contaminations with microorganisms, toxins and chemical substances can be avoided along the entire supply chain. Therefore, the EU-project SPICED plays a powerful role to gain further knowledge on analyses and assessment of global food chains.”

Besides dealing with one of the oldest trading goods in the world, Prof. Appel and his team are active in numerous national and international research projects dealing with various food chains from “farm to fork”.



Prof. Dr. Bernd Appel, Head of the department Biological Safety, Federal Institute for Risk Assessment, Germany

FACT BOX

Do you know...?

- Spices and herbs are among the oldest trading goods in the world. They caused wars and they were more valuable than gold.
- Europe is one of the biggest markets for spices and herbs.
- Europe is a small producer of spices and herbs, but a large processor and exporter of those products.
- The total import of spices and herbs amounted to 480 thousand tonnes in 2012, 60 % from non-EU countries. The total export amounted to 278 thousand tonnes, about 35 % to non EU-countries.
- Herbs and spices are defined by the European Spice Association as “Culinary herbs and spices that are edible parts of plants, which are traditionally added to foodstuffs for their natural flavouring, aromatic and visual properties”. For more details see the List of Culinary Herbs and Spices at www.esa-spices.org
- The international food standards experts have started to elaborate worldwide standards for spices and culinary herbs. The first session of the Codex Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs (CCSCH) took place in February 2014.

May I introduce Allspice to you?

- Allspice, also called Jamaica pepper, myrtle pepper, pimenta, pimento, English pepper or newspice, is the dried unripe berry of *Pimenta dioica* syn. *Pimenta officinalis*. This evergreen tree is native to the tropical Central America and is now cultivated in many warm parts of the world.
- Allspice was encountered by Christopher Columbus during his second voyage to the New World. He thought that it is black pepper (“pimiento”) and this is the reason for the name equality.
- The allspice tree can be very large with heights between 6 and 13 m. However it can also be grown as a small scrubby tree quite similar to the bay laurel in size and form. The green and unripe fruits are picked and traditionally dried in the sun so they become brown and resemble large black peppercorns.
- Allspice, when ground, releases aromatic notes reminiscent of cloves, cinnamon and nutmeg. This combined flavour can be made responsible for the other common name “allspice”.
- Like numerous other spices, the whole corn has a longer shelf life than the powdered product.
- Allspice is one of the most important ingredients of Caribbean cuisine. In Europe for example it is part of commercial spice mixtures for sausages.



Successful First Annual Meeting

We are happy to announce that the First Annual Meeting of the SPICED Project took place on the 7th and 8th of July 2014 in Innsbruck, Austria.

The first day started with an interesting tour through the world of the Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety (AGES). Sonja Masselter, Karl Schöpf and Rudolf Buttinger explained the work of the various divisions of AGES Innsbruck.

The official meeting started with a great talk on "The global spices and herbs production and quality insurance thereof" and was followed by the presentation and discussion of the first results of all project partners as well as the General Assembly Meeting. After the constructive meeting in the great hall at the Weiherburg the evening finished with a fantastic BBQ at the Botanic Garden.

The second day started with the Steering Committee Meeting. Thereafter all project partners belonging to one of the four R&D-workpackages get further into scientific details in frame of our Meetings of the Work Groups. After the short presentation of the work group results and planned review article the First Annual Meeting was closed after a short outlook to 2014/15.



COMING UP EVENTS

The 2nd Workpackage Meeting will be held in December 2014 or January 2015 in Berlin, Germany.

COMING UP ACTIVITIES

At the FoodMicro2014, 9th Future Security Conference 2014 as well as the 55th Food Hygiene Congress SPICED project partners will present their first results.

CONTACT

This newsletter has been produced by the SPICED Consortium. If you would like to comment on any of the content or unsubscribe to future editions of this newsletter please contact: spiced@bfr.bund.de



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