1st ImpARAS Training School

September 19th-20th, 2016 Warsaw, Poland

ImpARAS (Improving Allergy Risk Assessment Strategy for New Food Proteins) is a COST Action (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) supported for 4 years (December 2014 – December 2018) and involves more than 210 scientists from 29 countries. ImpARAS aims to build an interdisciplinary network of scientists with a broad range of expertise to develop new ideas and more predictive models and approaches to improve the current allergenicity risk assessment strategy. The networks focusses on different topics related to food proteins and potential allergenicity including: physical/chemical properties, in vitro methods to predict sensitization, in vivo methods to predict sensitization and finally incorporating all results in the overall allergenicity risk assessment.

As part of the COST Action network, training schools are provided for Early Career Investigators (ECI) from universities, public and private research institutions, as well as to NGO and the industry. The 1st ImpARAS Training School in Warsaw, Poland on September 19-20, 2016 saw 18 ECI trainees from 12 COST participating countries attend a 2-day program focused on the novel food dossiers and allergen risk assessment strategies. Presentations, parallel sessions, and case studies were run by 6 trainers from the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), the food industry, biotech and university/research based risk assessors. Trainees participated in interactive sessions related to general novel foods dossier overview and submission, an introduction to EFSA and their allergen risk assessment overview, the evolution of biotech risk assessment capabilities and case studies related to novel food submissions approved for use in the EU. Trainees were challenged to apply the knowledge gained during these training sessions in a number of exercises to prepare and submit their own novel food dossiers with a focus on the allergenicity risk assessment sections. The first training dossier required trainees to recommend a testing strategy for a protein isolated from an allergenic source organism to be included in a wide variety of products to provide enhanced functionality. The second training dossier related to a novel insect being introduced into the EU market. For both dossiers, groups of trainees were placed in different roles within the hypothetical company (product developers, regulatory affairs, quality & safety) and had to propose a unified, company-wide allergenicity testing strategy to management. The submitted allergenicity testing strategies were then critically reviewed by all trainers in a highly interactive, informative environment with spirited discussions between all participants. The 1st ImpARAS Training School was deemed a success after extremely positive feedback from both trainees and trainers.

We are looking to continue the success with a 2nd, laboratory-based ImpARAS Training School in 2017. See www.Imparas.eu for more information on our future meetings and training schools.

Ben Remington

ImpARAS

Improving Allergy Risk Assessment Strategy for new food proteins

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