

Draft IRAC FY2022 Annual Report
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Introduction

The Interagency Risk Assessment Consortium (IRAC) is a collaborative network of federal agencies with responsibilities and interests in the conduct and use of food safety risk assessments. It was established in response to Presidential Executive Order 13100, in 1998, to enhance cross-agency coordination of food-safety risk assessment activities and to provide support for the then emerging field of quantitative microbiological risk assessment and application in guiding federal food-safety policies. In 2011, in response to a recommendation from the President's Food Safety Working Group, the IRAC was re-chartered¹ to further enhance coordination and information-sharing among federal agencies.

The Consortium aims to improve risk assessment research, enhance the development and use of risk assessment tools, and serve as a forum for communication about risk assessment and related research issues. IRAC accomplishes many of its goals through the work of its Policy Council and Technical Committee, both of which include representatives from 23 Federal agencies and offices that constitute the consortium's current membership.

Over the past two decades, IRAC has explored a range of issues related to the conduct and use of federal food safety (microbial and chemical) risk assessments. Research topics addressed by IRAC include data quality, peer review, food safety and nutrition, susceptible sub-populations, nanotechnology, microbiomes, genomics, dietary exposure and more recently, rigor and reproducibility in risk assessment. IRAC also has continued to explore evolving approaches to assessing food safety risks and application of risk assessment in decision-making. In addition, IRAC member agencies make their risk assessment tools more easily available on the Consortium's host website: Foodrisk.org

¹ 2011 IRAC Charter available at: <http://foodrisk.org/irac/charter>

IRAC Signatory Agencies:

- **Department of Agriculture (USDA)**
 - ❖ Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)
 - ❖ Agricultural Research Service (ARS)
 - ❖ Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)
 - ❖ Economic Research Service (ERS)
 - ❖ Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)
 - ❖ Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)
 - ❖ National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)
 - ❖ National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)
 - ❖ Office of the Chief Scientist (OCS)
 - ❖ Office of Pest Management Policy (OPP)
 - ❖ Office of Risk Assessment and Cost Benefit Analysis (ORACBA)
 - ❖ U.S. Codex Office (USCO)
- **Department of Commerce (DOC)**
 - ❖ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
- **Department of Defense (DOD)**
 - ❖ Defense Health Agency (DHA)
- **Department of Energy (DOE)**
 - ❖ Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL)
- **Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)**
 - ❖ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
 - National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases (NCEZID)
 - National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)
 - ❖ Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
 - Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER)
 - Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN)
 - Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM)
 - National Center for Toxicological Research (NCTR)
 - ❖ National Institutes of Health (NIH)
 - National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID)
- **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**
 - ❖ Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP)
 - ❖ Office of Water (OW)
- **National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)**
 - ❖ National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
- **U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)**

IRAC FY2022 Objectives

IRAC successfully advanced the three overarching objectives identified in the FY22 Annual Plan:

- *Enhanced Governance and Operation of the IRAC*
- *Strengthen Outreach and Engagement of New and Existing Federal Agencies*
- *Facilitate Information Exchange and Sharing Tools, Data, and Models*

Selected achievements toward these objectives are detailed below.

Enhanced Governance and Operation of the IRAC. In FY 2022, the IRAC Policy Council held 2 meetings (December 2021 and June 2022) to discuss accomplishments and establish an annual plan for the following year. The IRAC created and broadly shared the FY21 end of the year report and an annual plan for FY22 by posting it on the IRAC website and sharing it with signatory Agencies.

Strengthen Outreach and Engagement of Federal Partners. In FY22, to facilitate outreach and engagement with federal partners, IRAC held four Technical Committee meetings (December 2021 and March, June, and September 2022). At the Technical Committee meetings, presentations were given by member agency representatives as outlined below (under quarterly meetings). The meeting minutes, updates, and presentations were posted on the IRAC website. IRAC also completed updates to the website to reflect any changes in the representatives. During FY22, the IRAC developed a workgroup to explore ways to enhance IRAC member engagement, identify IRAC member agency needs, and recruit new agencies.

Facilitate Interagency Coordination and Information-Sharing. To continue enhanced interagency coordination and information sharing, IRAC exchanged information through quarterly meetings and agency presentations.

Quarterly Meetings

The IRAC Technical Committee met on December 15, 2021 and March 16, June 13, and September 13, 2022. Members gave agency updates, and invited guests gave presentations (described below).

The Policy Council met during a separate meeting on December 15, 2021 to discuss FY21 accomplishments, plans for FY 22, and potential workgroup proposals. The Policy Council met again on June 13, 2022 to evaluate mid-year accomplishments.

Presentations at FY22 IRAC Technical Committee Meetings

- Presentation by Conrad Choiniere: "FDA's Closer to Zero Initiative". Conrad Choiniere, FDA-CFSAN. June 13, 2022.
- Leveraging Risk Assessment for Foodborne Outbreak Investigations: The Quantitative Risk Assessment-Epidemic Curve Prediction Model (QRA-EC). Hao Pang, FDA-CFSAN. March 16, 2022.
- Approaches to Determining Interim Screening Levels for PFAS in Animal Feed: Speakers: Barry Hooberman and Ian Edlund, FDA-CVM. December 15, 2021.

All presentations can be accessed on the IRAC tab on foodrisk.org.

Work Group Projects

IRAC workgroups are a means for IRAC member agencies to collaborate and share technical expertise regarding specific topics or issues. Members collaborate on scientific issues, review and synthesize data and information, and convene workshops with experts in the field of risk assessment. Workgroup products can be used by member agencies to inform or make improvements in food safety risk analysis – from enhancing innovation in modeling to improving rigor to garnering enhanced review or input to filling key data gaps. Workgroup products are posted on the IRAC website on its “Events” page (<http://foodrisk.org/irac/quarterly-meeting-minutes/>), and often published as papers in scientific journals and/or presented at national scientific conferences to benefit the larger risk assessment community.

Last year, the IRAC Policy Council requested that a workgroup be formed to gather information from IRAC member participants to evaluate the relevancy of current IRAC activities and identify potential changes to consider for the future. The workgroup issued a survey in May 2022 and then presented the overall findings and recommendations at the Spring Policy Council meeting, held in June. A robust discussion among the Policy Council member representatives took place regarding the survey results, including suggestions to improve communications. The prioritized recommendations in order of decreasing priority from the workgroup are:

1. Form a workgroup to enhance IRAC participation:
 - First, develop a procedure by which member representatives could involve junior staff from their agency in IRAC activities
 - Additionally, develop a strategy to re-engage with IRAC member agencies who do not currently attend the Technical Committee or Policy Council meetings and develop a plan to recruit new agencies to become IRAC members
2. During the winter Technical Committee and Policy Council meeting, review the existing roles and responsibilities of the IRAC member representatives and request any amendments to the current governance memo (see attached) on this topic.
3. Form a workgroup to review the IRAC website and make recommendations to improve it, in consideration of the survey responses on how the website is/is not currently used.

The workgroup will further develop these efforts through FY23.