

Draft IRAC FY2023 Annual Report
prepared by Sofia Santillana Farakos (FDA/CFSAN)
Chair, IRAC Technical Committee

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

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)**

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

IRAC FY2023 Objectives

IRAC successfully advanced the three overarching objectives identified in the FY23 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 2023, the IRAC Policy Council held 2 meetings (December 2022 and June 2023) to discuss accomplishments and establish an annual plan for the following year. The IRAC created and broadly shared the FY22 end of the year report and an annual plan for FY23 by posting it on the IRAC website and sharing it with signatory Agencies.

Strengthen Outreach and Engagement of Federal Partners. In FY23, to facilitate outreach and engagement with federal partners, IRAC held four Technical Committee meetings (December 2022 and March, June, and September 2023). 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.

Facilitate Interagency Coordination and Information-Sharing. To continue enhanced interagency coordination and information sharing, IRAC exchanged information through quarterly meetings and agency presentations. Additionally, an interagency review of a USDA/FSIS lead risk assessment took place during FY23.

Quarterly Meetings

The IRAC Technical Committee met on December 12, 2022 and March 21, June 14, and September 12, 2023. Members gave agency updates, and invited guests gave presentations (described below).

The Policy Council met during a separate meeting on December 12, 2022 to discuss FY22 accomplishments, plans for FY23, and potential workgroup proposals. The Policy Council met again on June 14, 2023 to evaluate mid-year accomplishments.

Presentations at FY23 IRAC Technical Committee Meetings

- **Jeff Morris, Director of the Existing Chemicals Risk Assessment Division, Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics (EPA) presented on: “TSCA process for existing chemical prioritization, evaluation, and management.”**
- **Elyssa Arnold, Ecological Risk Assessor, and Julie Van Alstine, Human Health Risk Assessor (OPMP, USDA) presented on: “Risk Assessment in the USDA Office of Pest Management Policy.”**
- **Thomas P. Oscar, Research Food Technologist, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service will be presenting on: “Dances with Chickens: Path to a Proper Diagnosis of the Salmonella Paradigm in Poultry.”**

- **Mark Powell, ORACBA on: “Trends in Reported Illness Due to Poultry- and Non-Poultry Associated Salmonella Serotypes; United States 1996-2019”**
- **Rebecca Khan, SAIC on “Expedited Risk Analysis on Amazon Web Services with GREAT and Brisk.”**
- **Abigail Miller, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, Office of Food Additive Safety, U.S. FDA on: “Calculating and Tracking Pre-market Cumulative Dietary Exposures for Food Contact Substances.”**
- **Greg Paoli, Risk Sciences International, Ottawa, ON, Canada on “The History and Current Use of Probabilistic Exposure Assessment in Dietary Assessments.”**
- **Karlyn Middleton and Heather Schaefer, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, Office of Analytics and Outreach, U.S. FDA: “Cadmium Toxicological Reference Value”**

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

IRAC Technical Risk Assessment Review

IRAC member agencies (8 reviewers from 4 agencies: USDA-ARS, USDA-ERS, FDA-CFSAN, and FDA-NCTC) participated in a review process for two quantitative risk assessments for *Salmonella* in poultry (one for chicken and one for turkey) lead by the United States Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspections Services (USDA/FSIS). Specifically, comments from several scientists and analysts from the FDA National Center for Toxicological Research, FDA Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, USDA Agricultural Research Service, and USDA Economic Research Service. This review provided valuable input, along with the input FSIS received through an independent peer review conducted in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget information quality peer review guidelines, to further enhance the FSIS risk assessment models and corresponding reports. These risk assessments are required under Executive Order 12866 as influential regulatory analyses required to inform major federal food safety policies.