



e-newsletter of the International Society of Mycotoxicology 01/2021

Foreword by the ISM president:

Dear ISM-member,

After having served as ISM president for the last 4 years (a period during which the number of our members has increased from 465 to 605), it is now with great pleasure to announce **the next executive committee of the International Society for Mycotoxicology**. During the General Assembly Meeting on October 21st, 2020 which took place as a virtual meeting as part of the MycoKey-Conference, the following colleagues have been nominated to serve the ISM as executive board members for the period January 2021 to January 2025 (4 years):

President: Sarah De Saeger (Belgium)

1st Vice-President: Sheila Okoth (Kenya)

2nd Vice-President: Isabelle Oswald (France)

Secretary: Antonio Moretti (Italy)

Treasurer: Giancarlo Perrone (Italy)

Past presidents: Rudolf Krska (Austria), Antonio Logrieco (Italy), Deepak Bhatnagar (USA)



Photo: Our new president Sarah De Saeger and the new Secretary Antonio Moretti sitting next to the past president Rudolf Krska (at the 2nd AFRICAN SYMPOSIUM on MYCOTOXICOLOGY in Mombasa 2018)

Since no additional nominations have been received by January 15th 2020, these slate of officers have been elected by acclamation. Please, note that the executive board does also closely collaborate with the ISM continental representatives in order to organise meetings, trainings and conferences in various parts of the world!

Congratulations to all executive board members who are internationally recognised scientists and this is particularly true for our new and **first female president Sarah De Saeger** who is Director of the Center of Excellence in Mycotoxicology and Public Health, full professor at the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences at Ghent University and visiting professor at the University of Johannesburg. Sarah is also well known as Coordinator of the MYTOX and MYTOX-SOUTH networks. Good luck Sarah and team and thanks for taking on this huge responsibility!

As a mycotoxin researcher and analytical chemist, it has been particularly interesting to watch the scientific developments during the **COVID-19** crisis. Besides the availability of mRNA-based COVID-19 vaccines, the spot tests developed by Fritz Feigl in the 1920s have become highly relevant in 2020. These forerunners of disposable test strips with visual readout are now known to be relevant for both the rapid determination of contaminants, such as mycotoxins and for the rapid detection of the new type Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 (“antigen-test”). And all of a sudden, antibody tests and polymer chain reaction, but also the uncertainty of the obtained measurement results, are hot public debate topics.

Apart from the devastating health crisis, the pandemic has also tremendously impacted on the world's economy. In the context of both issues, exposure to **immunotoxic mycotoxins** via consumption of contaminated foods will quite probably further exacerbate the COVID-19 crisis in many regions of the world. This is why research on mycotoxins, their prevention, detection and control, is more actual than ever and especially in **developing countries**. Let us, however, not forget, that in the European Union, grain and foods based on these grain still account for the largest contribution to **mycotoxin exposure** in all age classes of the **EU population**, in particular due to the mycotoxins produced by *Fusarium* spp. (deoxynivalenol, T-2/HT-2 toxins, zearalenone, ochratoxin A and fumonisins). Despite huge efforts, prevention and control of these toxic secondary metabolites remain difficult and the agriculture and food industries continue to be vulnerable to problems of contamination. Consequently, in 2016 the European Commission has funded the large scale projects, **MycoKey** (www.mycokey.eu) and **MytoolBox** (www.mytoolbox.eu) which were coordinated by ISM Past President Dr. Antonio Logrieco and current ISM President Prof. Rudolf Krska, respectively, to develop integrated mycotoxin management strategies to mitigate the mycotoxin issue in food and feed chains. In 2020, both projects have successfully been completed. **Please, see NEWS section** below for further info on the results and impact achieved by both consortia and especially in cooperation within their **EU-China-partnerships**.

Complementary to these activities, the **International Society of Mycotoxicology** (ISM- www.mycotox-society.org) has always been aiming to increase scientific knowledge concerning biology, chemistry and any sciences/disciplines related to mycotoxins and toxigenic fungi, through membership networking, scientific meetings, symposia, discussions, technical courses and publications. Active participation of food chemists and technologists, plant pathologists and breeders, mycologists and fungal biologists, toxicologists and nutritionists, veterinarians and medical doctors has always been highly welcome. **ISM's mission** is to promote research on mycotoxins and toxigenic fungi thereby leading to prevention and reduction in exposure to mycotoxins, enhanced food safety and a greater public awareness of this area. Hence, all suppliers, participants and beneficiaries of the food supply chain, including farmers, consumers, stakeholders, researchers, members of civil society and government, are invited to become member of the International Society of Mycotoxicology and to support our vision of a world providing secure and safe food for everyone.

Our ISM e-newsletters aim to ensure that our members stay up-to-date with latest activities, new trends and challenges in mycotoxin research and mitigation strategies – in a world of increasing globalization and climate change! If you are not a member yet, please use the link http://www.mycotox-society.org/?page_id=6 to sign up on-line! We would be more than glad if you'd consider joining us!

Best wishes, have a happy and healthy new year and let's stay in touch!



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After four years of research and extensive programming and modelling, the EU-funded project **MyToolBox – the smart way to tackle mycotoxins along the food- and feed chain** (www.mytoolbox.eu/) has been successfully completed in March 2020. The final results were presented during a stakeholder at Cranfield University, UK in February 2020. During the entire project period, the stakeholders' feedback was vital to understand the usability of developed mitigation strategies and the MyToolBox e-platform which also includes a prediction tools for mycotoxin

formation on the field and during storage. Please, visit the cordis-webpage to obtain full info on the obtained results and their impact: <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/678012/reporting>.



The **MycoKey** concluded its project's life last October 2020, through the final international Conference, unfortunately held only on-line due to Coronavirus outbreak. The MycoKey partners presented the main result of the scientific research performed in Europe and China, Argentina and Nigeria, and a group of key exploitable results, as practical solutions obtained through an efficient cooperation with industries and stakeholders. Please see <http://www.mycokey.eu/results/> for further info and/or contact antonio.logrieco@ispa.cnr.it

As the ISM-MycoKey conference aim was to present the advances in mycotoxin research and feed the ISM-MycoKey networking, the scientific committee has re-scheduled from **9 to 12 November 2021**, in **Bari, Italy**. The registrations made for the original event scheduled in March 2020 are still valid. Updates will be available at the conference's website url: <https://bari2020.mycokey.eu/>



In May 2020, a **collaboration agreement** has been signed between MYTOX-SOUTH®, MYCOKEY and the EUROPEAN COMMISSION, JOINT RESEARCH CENTRE (JRC), Directorate Sustainable Resources (Ispra), Food Security Unit. The overall objective of this collaboration is to facilitate the circulation, visibility, dissemination and collection of valuable scientific based information and improve its use for decision making in global food and nutrition security. This will be done through the Knowledge Centre for Food and Nutrition of the JRC. Two **virtual webinars** were organized in the context of this collaboration: "Mycotoxins predictive modelling in Africa" of October 26, 2020 and "How to improve knowledge on mycotoxins and food security. A Europe-Africa dialogue" of November 27, 2020.

COVID-19 had a major impact on MYTOX-SOUTH® physical activities. Only one physical seminar could take place in South-Africa. The Department of Biotechnology and Food Technology, University of Johannesburg (UJ) and partners under the Long term EU-Africa Research and Innovation Partnership on Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (**LEAP-Agri**), **MycoSafe South** organised the MYCOTOXIN WORKSHOP and the IZINDABA ZOKUDLA FARMER'S LAB in Johannesburg (February 13-15, 2020).

Due to COVID-19, physical training through **MYTOX-SOUTH® scholarships was postponed**. We will be happy to welcome Olabisi Adeola Lanlokun (Nigeria) and Kgomotso Galian Setsetse (Northwest University, South-Africa) in August 2021. A new call for Autumn-Winter 2021 scholarships will be open soon.

More information can be found at <https://mytoxsouth.org/>.

CONFERENCE News

The African Society of Mycotoxicology (ASM) together with MYTOX-SOUTH is proud to announce the **3rd African Symposium on Mycotoxicology joint MYTOX-SOUTH conference**. Due to COVID19 the conference will be **postponed to April 2022** in Stellenbosch, South Africa. This high-level conference will be a platform for academic exchange between researchers, government & industry. It aims to strengthen the global knowledge on mycotoxins, extend the cooperative network, promote the sharing & development of mycotoxin management technologies & strategies. Therefore, on behalf of ASM and MYTOX-SOUTH, we welcome all delegates and look forward to your participation in the upcoming conference. More information can be found on <https://africansocietyofmycotoxicology.org/MYTOX-SOUTH-Conference/>.

This e-Newsletter is supported by:

