This was a well attended meeting. Nine papers were presented with only one 'no show' paper. Presenters represented both the developed and developing world, and covered both temperate and tropical food commodities.

Despite the numerous studies that have been undertaken on this topic over the years, mycotoxin contamination of food commodities continues to be a serious problem worldwide, with over 25% of the world's food supply affected. Not only does fungal growth cause tainting, off odours and nutritional losses, but their mycotoxins pose serious health risks to both human and animal consumers, because of their carcinogenic, nephrotoxic and neurotoxic effects.

The most serious problems are in the developing countries among subsistence farming communities. Unquestionably, prevention is the best method of controlling mycotoxin contamination, but preharvest invasion of moulds and their subsequent mycotoxin production is still unavoidable. Furthermore, in some developing countries agricultural practices are often based on traditional rather than sound scientific approaches. For example, crops may be sown and/or harvested on particular days, regardless of the prevailing weather.

So, what is the way forward?

• One way in which developing countries could improve the quality of their grain would be to introduce higher price incentives or bonus payments to the farmer for better quality (mycotoxin-free) produce.

• Biotransformation to give solid substrate fermentations using microorganisms to degrade mycotoxins.

• Plant breeding for development of resistant cereal varieties by either preventing initial penetration by the fungus or quantitatively inhibiting colonisation.

• Introduction of biological control systems for example by using replacement non-toxicogenic fungi. Preliminary studies in cotton seed have shown significant reductions of aflatoxins.

Data are still lacking on many plants. This includes, for example, exposure or risk assessment for setting tolerable daily intake indices, and the establishment of proper national and international (Codex Alimentarius) food standards, safeguarding the health of the consumer.

Much work still needs to be done.