Letter from the President

Dear SOT-FS³ members,

Greetings! It was nice seeing everyone in San Antonio in March! We had another great 2018 SOT Annual Meeting this year. The Food Safety Specialty Section (FS³) endorsed and sponsored various scientific sessions at the Annual Meeting, all of which were very well attended. Thanks to our diligent officers, generous sponsors, and all of you who attended. Our FS³ annual business meeting and reception was a remarkable success. At the reception on March 13 6-7:30pm, we presented the FS³ business report, financial report, mentoring event; announced the newly elected officers; and presented our prestigious awards, the Burdock Student Award and the Frank Lu Student Endowment Award, to our awardees. The quizzes were fun, by which you could win a ticket to a drink if your answer was right or the closest to the right one. Come and join the reception next year in Baltimore! It is a great networking opportunity.

A big THANK YOU to our outgoing officers for serving on the FS³ leadership team, and their great contributions to the success of FS³, Drs. Laurie Dolan (Past President), Lisa Navarro (Secretary/Treasurer), René Viñas (Councilor), and Palma Marone (Councilor). Welcome to the newly elected officers: Drs. Chester E. Rodriguez (VP-elect), Sharon Meyer (Secretary/Treasurer), William H. Tolleson (Councilor), and Logeswari Ponnusamy (Councilor). Together with Drs. Mansi Krishan (Vice President), Cody Wilson (Councilor), Michael Bolger (Councilor), Gopi Gadipudi (Postdoctoral Representative), and Suresh Nagumalli (Graduate Student Representative), we have a very strong team for the year 2018-2019, and we will continue to make our specialty section a strong scientific community to better serve your needs. We encourage members to consider to nominate yourself or others for officers!

To prepare for the 2019 SOT Annual Meeting, the FS³ leadership team has completed reviewing scientific proposals seeking sponsorship from FS³. The approved proposals are of great interest to food safety and represent state-of-the-art in Toxicology. Stay tuned for our spring newsletter with a list of food safety-sponsored sessions in Baltimore in 2019!

If you have any thoughts and suggestions, or would like to share your scientific and career achievements, please do not hesitate to contact me, any of the current officers, or directly email to sotfoodsafty@gmail.com.

Sincerely yours,

Karin Ke, PhD, DABT, ERT
President of FS³
**Vice President Elect**

**Chester Rodriguez, PhD, DABT, ERT**  
*Manager: Ingredient Safety at The Coca-Cola Company*

Chester is excited to learn the ropes for leadership of this specialty session. Food chemical safety assessment is becoming increasingly important and it is critical for all of us to stay up-to-date with the latest research breakthroughs and regulatory implications. His career started in 2006 at the EPA's National Center for Computational Toxicology when the notion of in vitro and in silico approaches were beginning to gain traction. He then spent four years at the Office of Pesticides Programs in Washington DC, where day-to-day activities involve assessing the risk of new and existing pesticides. Currently, his responsibilities at the Coca-Cola Company revolve around ingredient safety issues. Although the process has been slow, he believes we will see significant breakthroughs in methodologies for improving human health chemical risk assessment. From a food chemical safety perspective, these developments will impact those substances intentionally and unintentionally present. As FS3 VP-elect, Chester hopes to find ways to motivate and challenge us to stay informed so we can have more engaging and productive communications and thus build a greater network of new and existing members.

**Counselor**

**Logeswari Ponnusamy, DVM, MVSc, PhD**  
*Principal Scientist: Regulatory Toxicology, Safety Sciences, Metabolism and Safety Division, Veterinary Medicine Research and Development in Zoetics, MI*

Dr. Ponnusamy's scientific background includes a DVM, Masters in Pharmacology and Toxicology, and PhD in Toxicology. In her current role, Dr. Ponnusamy provides subject matter expertise that integrates toxicology, human food safety, target animal safety, and user safety assessments for veterinary medicinal products regulatory submission. She also involves in toxicological assessments for residual solvents, excipients, etc. in the manufacturing process. In addition, she also serves as study director/sponsor representative for GLP/ non-GLP studies. Dr. Ponnusamy has authored / co-authored 11 peer reviewed research papers, and contributes to the toxicology community as a peer-reviewer for various scientific journals including Food and Chemical Toxicology. Dr. Ponnusamy has been an active member of the SOT since 2013 and served on various leadership roles within SOT including student representative for CRAD, Carcinogenesis SS, Comparative and Veterinary SS, GSLC and K-12 outreach committees. She has received various research grants, fellowships, and multiple awards including SOT SS awards and outstanding leadership award from GSLC. In addition to holding positions of increasing responsibilities within the industry, Dr. Ponnusamy has been actively promoting toxicological sciences from K-12 to undergraduate level and STEM mentoring through the New York Academy of Sciences. She has recently been awarded International ToxScholar outreach grant to visit developing country institutions to create awareness and promote toxicology. In addition to SOT, Dr. Ponnusamy has been an active member in American Association for Cancer Research (AACR), European Society of Toxicology In Vitro, and has served on AACR-Associate Member Council.

**Secretary/Treasurer**

**Sharon A. Meyer, PhD**  
*Associate Professor: University of Louisiana at Monroe*

Sharon A. Meyer is a Professor of Toxicology at the College of Pharmacy, University of Louisiana-Monroe (ULM). At ULM, Dr. Meyer has taught fundamental toxicology to junior and senior undergraduate B.S., Toxicology majors, graduate students seeking the Ph.D., Pharmacy, degree and professional PharmD. students. She received her doctorate in Physiology from Cornell University in 1984. She did post-doctoral research at Harvard Medical School and University of N. Carolina-Chapel Hill from 1983-6 with support of an F32 fellowship, then held Research Assistant Professorships at Duke University Medical School and N. Carolina State University, Dept. Toxicology. In 2000, she joined ULM as an Associate Professor and was awarded tenure 2003. Her professional service includes NIH, DoD and Med. Res. Council grant review, technical review of hazardous chemical toxicity for EPA and ASTDR and scientific advisor for NIEHS/NTP and FDA/CFSAN. She has been funded for research in pesticides, munitions, and herbal supplements by LA Board of Regents, DoD and USDA. She has published >40 peer-review journal articles and 18 book chapters. Her current professional membership includes Academy of Toxicological Sciences, American Association of Cancer Research, American Chemical Society, International Society for the Study of Xenobiotics, and SOT (since 1994). She has served the SOT through the leadership chains of the South Central Chapter and of the In Vitro and Alternatives Methods (IVAM) specialty section and on the Membership Committee.

**Counselor**

**William H. Tolleson, PhD**  
*Team Leader: Division of Biochemical Toxicology at the FDA*

Dr. Tolleson is a Research Chemist at the FDA’s National Center for Toxicological Research. Some topics of his current and past food safety research include microbial and plant protein toxins, the biochemical toxicology of melamine cyanurate, and the carcinogenic mycotoxin fumonisin B1. He received his doctorate in Chemistry and Biochemistry in 1990 from the University of South Carolina and was a postdoctoral fellow at the University of South Carolina, School of Medicine prior to joining the FDA. Dr. Tolleson has been a member of the SOT since 2006 and a member of the Food Safety Specialty Section since 2008. He has served the SOT as a Chair of a Food Safety Specialty Section poster session at an annual meeting of the SOT. He is an associate editor of the Journal of Environmental Science and Health, Part C and he serves on the editorial board of the Journal of Food Protection. He is a member of the American Chemical Society, the Institute of Food Technologists, the International Association for Food Protection, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Dr. Tolleson has served on USDA Food Science and Nutrition Program SBIR Grant Review Panels, as a grant reviewer for the National Science Council of Poland, and as lead author for a WHO background paper on the chemistry of melamine. Dr. Tolleson is an author of over 50 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters.

**Treasury Report**

Based upon the 11-month interim financials for 2018 and projecting from last year’s May to June 2018 Revenues and Expenses, my projection for end-of-year 2018 shows an increase of asset balance of approximately $2200 over 2017 to give an estimated total of ~$19,000. This appears largely due to an increase in industry contributions of $2300 in 2018. Also, membership appears to be up adding another ~$500 increase. Decreases of $513 were incurred due to fewer members attending the 2018 annual meeting and increased reception costs of $750.

Thus, 2018 financials appear to be improved by ~12% from last year due from judicious management of expenses, increased contributions and comparable member engagement.
First Mentoring Event of The Food Safety Specialty Section
Career Paths for Toxicologists in the World of Food Safety
Monday 12 March 4:45pm to 5:45pm, Grand Hyatt Lone Star E

The SOT Food Safety Specialty Section (FS3) held its first mentoring event at the 2018 SOT Annual Meeting in San Antonio, TX. FS3 is an emerging specialty section within SOT and one of main our goal is to stimulate interest in food safety as it relates to the science of toxicology. This mentoring event provided toxicology trainees in their early career, an opportunity to have a round robin style interactive and networking session with expert mentors from different sectors of government, industry, CRO/ non-profit organization and explore the different career paths in food safety.

It was a successful event attended by 31 mentees (undergraduate and graduate students; and post docs) and 9 mentors (list provided below). The mentees had the opportunity to share questions for the mentors in advance of the event. Through this event, the mentees gained insights into various job prospects in different sectors and better understanding of the benefits, opportunities and challenges of working in each sector in the world of food safety. There was a good discussion around communication and soft skills which the trainees should focus on developing to help them prepare well for the interview process and future career in any of the sectors.

Mentors
Kevin Boyd, PhD, DABT, Hershey Company
Alex Eapen, PhD, DABT, Cargill
Goncalo Gamboa da-Costa, MSc, PhD
Jiang Hu, PhD, Herbalife
Sandra James Yi, DVM, PhD, DABT, DABVT, Mary Kay Inc.
Logeswari Ponnusamy, DVM, MVSc, PhD, Zoetis Inc
George Pugh, PhD, DABT, Coca-Cola
Pheona Radcliffe, PhD, DABT, Mondelez International
Donna Webster, PhD, Herbalife
Janet Zang, PhD, DABT, FDA

Organizing Committee
Mansi Krishan, PhD, Organizing Committee Chair and FS3 Vice President
Gopi Gadupudi, MS, PhD, FS3 Post Doc Representative
Suresh Nagumalli, FS3 Graduate Student Representative

Sponsors
Food Safety Specialty Section
SOT Career Resource and Development (CRAD)
GMA Science and Education Foundation

Successfully endorsed proposals by FS3

Workshop Session: Safety Evaluation of Plant-Based Color Additives Used in Foods

- Janet Zang
  US FDA; College Park, MD
- Maria Bastaki
  International Association of Color Manufacturers (IACM); Washington, DC

Informational Session: Moving Beyond Theory to the Use of Systematic Review to Support Regulatory Decision Making for Evidence-Based Risk Assessment

- Daniele Wikoff
  ToxStrategies; Asheville, NC
- Katya Tsaioum
  Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health Evidence Based Toxicology Collaboration; Watertown, MA
FS members Janet Zang and George Pugh contributed to a workshop session at the 2018 SOT 57th Annual Meeting. This workshop, entitled “Safety Evaluation of Plant-based Color Additives Used in Foods,” was co-endorsed by SOT Food Safety SS (primary), Mixtures SS, and Regulatory and Safety Evaluation SS.

With the increasing consumer interest in foods with “clean labels,” the market demand for “natural colors” from plant sources has recently been rising significantly. Currently, global regulatory agencies do not have a harmonized viewpoint as to the definition of color additives from botanical sources and their use requirements. This workshop covered a broad range of topics pertaining to the safety of plant-based food colors. Dr. Maria Bastaki, the co-chair of the session and the Scientific Director for the International Association of Color Manufacturers (IACM) started the session by giving an overview of the use pattern, characteristics and safety data package of the plant-based colors. Following the introduction, Dr. George Pugh, Director of Ingredient Safety in Global Scientific and Regulatory Affairs at the Coca-Cola Company, provided the industry viewpoints and experiences on the safety considerations of using these color additives. The workshop continued with cases of quality issues of the plant-based food colors resulted from both inherent characteristics (such as stability and potential microbial contamination) and the lack of a consistent industrial safety standards by Dr. Steve Talcott, Professor of Food Chemistry at Texas A&M University. Some successful examples and experiences in establishing identity and conducting safety evaluation of natural extracts used as dietary supplements were presented by SOT member Dr. Hellen Oketch-Rabah, a Senior Toxicologists at United States Pharmacopeia. The workshop also included two regulatory pieces. Dr. Janet Zang (chair of the session), a toxicological reviewer at Food and Drug Administration, presented the agency’s color additive evaluation process and some special considerations in the safety assessment of the plant-based food colors compared to the synthetic food colors; Dr. Sue Ann McAvoy, a Senior Regulatory Scientist for Sensient Food Colors LLC, provided an overview of global regulations for plant-based food colors, including an comparison between the current US and EU regulations as well as some examples of FAO/WHO evaluations. The workshop ended with a panel discussion with all speakers and questions from the audience regarding issues and challenges in the safe use of plant-based colors in foods.

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Burdock Group Travel Award
Jalissa Nguyen, PhD
Toxicologist for the State of Texas

At time of award, Jalissa was a 2017 International Life Science Institute (ILSI) Summer Fellow and Graduate Research Assistant at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where she evaluated the applicability of read-across tools and high throughput screening data for food relevant chemicals in ToxCast. Currently as a state Toxicologist, she works with a team of health assessors, epidemiologists, and information specialists to conduct toxicological investigations of hazardous waste sites.

During her early childhood, Jalissa grew up in a fence-line community due to its proximity to a petroleum corporation. She fondly remembers visiting the neighborhood playground, with her siblings, that was located just a few feet away from the town’s chemical plant. There was much talk among the residents that the emissions and random explosions from the chemical plant were making many people sick. Over time, many activists nicknamed this area “Cancer Alley”. This experience was her first introduction to environmental toxicology and the reason why she chose to pursue a career as a Toxicologist.

Jalissa plans to pursue a career as a Public Health Toxicologist. In this role, she will be the “voice” for individuals who come from small neighborhoods like hers, both locally and abroad.

“This award means a great deal to me. It provided me the inspiration to continue doing what I am doing. The results from this study are a direct result of collaborative efforts from ILSI North America, researchers in industry, government, and academia. This travel award helped me pursue my research by covering the costs associated with travel to the 2018 SOT Annual Meeting while also showcasing work relevant to the field of Food Safety and Toxicology. Attendance at the 2018 SOT Annual Meeting was an invaluable experience for me as it helped me share my research with leaders in the field of Toxicology.”

Frank C. Lu Student Award
Sumira Phatak
USDA NIFA AFRI Predoctoral Research Fellow

At time of award, Sumira was a Doctoral Candidate in Toxicology at Utah State University. As a graduate student in the Benninghoff Laboratory, her work explores the connection between nutrition, colon cancer, and epigenetic modifications. Immediately after arriving at USU, she began a multi-generational rodent study; having completed the preclinical portion, Sumira recently moved on to a molecular investigation of mechanisms. The findings from this project will answer her questions about how the standard American diet influences the health outcome of grand-offspring, despite never being directly exposed themselves.

Sumira’s interest in diet and health is deeply rooted in her experience growing up as an athlete, having practiced a healthy lifestyle for as long as she can remember. Currently an avid outdoor enthusiast and self-taught chef, eating and living healthfully are my easily her favorite pastimes. She initially pursued a career in wildlife biology and environmental conservation, but was eager to explore human health and nutrition in graduate school. Making the transition hasn’t always been easy but it has definitely been fulfilling!

After graduation, she will pursue a post-doctoral appointment that builds upon her current area of interest. Ultimately, she sees herself running a research program answering essential questions about how diet impacts disease states while optimizing dietary intervention strategies, and training the next generation of young scientists.

“I was both honored and humbled to be selected for such a prestigious award that greatly facilitated my attendance at the 2018 SOT Annual Meeting. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting other members of FS3 and networking with leaders in my field. This award made my first SOT a memorable and delightful experience that has opened new doors. As a young scientist in training, I am enthusiastic about making my own mark on the world and am beyond thrilled to have the support of this group.”
Fall Newsletter  
October 13, 2018

Fundraising Campaign

Donate to your scientific community and see immediate returns!

The SOT Postdoctoral Assembly (PDA) and Graduate Student Leadership Committee (GSLC), with the support of Endowment Fund Board, have come together to raise a fund that will be used towards the benefit of the student and postdoctoral members of SOT. Please consider donating the suggested $20 by December 2018. The funds collected will be used to buy an annual subscription to the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Career Development Courses (March 2019 - 2020). Early career trainees will be given access to seats, depending upon the amount collected. Joining together, we can do more than we can do alone! Links below:

Endowment Fund page
scroll down to the Rising Star Annual Fund section

For more details
Thank you,
SOT PDA

Member News

November 2017
Professional Certifications: Vijay Kannappan, PhD; Georgia Pacific LLC. European Registered Toxicologist (ERT)

January 2018
Grants/Funding: Logeswari Ponnusamy, DVM, MVSc, PhD; Zoetis Inc, MI SOT International ToxScholar Outreach Grant

February/March 2018
Earned Degree: Jalissa L. Nguyen
PhD in Molecular and Environmental Toxicology, University of Wisconsin-Madison
New Position: Toxicologist for the state of Texas

April 2018
Grants/Funding: Sumira Phatak, PhD candidate; Utah State University USDA NIFA AFRI Predoctoral Fellowship

August/October 2018
Earned Degree: Suresh Nagumalli
PhD in Toxicology, University of Louisiana at Monroe
New Position: ORISE Postdoctoral Fellow NCTR, FDA

Click here for more information on how to apply for the following awards:

Burdock Group Travel Award

Frank C. Lu Student Award

Save the date!
when: March 10-14, 2019
where: Baltimore, MD
abstract submission: 08.15.2018 - 10.19.2018

SOT FS3

58TH ANNUAL MEETING & ToxExpo • MARCH 10-14, 2019