

SVETOVNI DAN VARNOSTI HRANE 2023



WORLD FOOD SAFETY DAY 2023

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Communication Challenges in food domain / KOMUNIKACIJSKI IZZIVI NA PODROČJU HRANE

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Reliable information on social media platforms

- Social media are fast-growing platforms that connect millions of people and enable the rapid sharing of diverse content. They are easily accessible, short and very user-friendly, and they can be used for different purposes.
- Various aspects of food production and consumption, as well as food safety and food waste issues, are frequently discussed on social media around the world. Used properly, social media can be considered an effective communication tool for food safety due to its speed, accessibility, interactivity, and ability to gather information.
- They were successfully used for the communication during an outbreak of *Salmonella typhimurium* in peanut butter in USA, in 2009. Also, Facebook's SafeEat initiative has improved young consumer knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to food safety. In China, WeMedia has been used in disseminating food safety awareness in public.
- Social media could be used as a complementary information channel in addition to traditional and online media to find food safety information.



Reliable information on social media platforms

- In addition to the positive social aspects, there is also a negative side to social media, including the spread of misinformation. Misinformation is false, inaccurate, or misleading information that is spread regardless of an intent to deceive.
- Some results indicated that more than 40% of the most frequently shared links in social media contained misinformation and were shared more than 400,000 times.
- To control the reliability of information on social media platform it is important to have a multi-faced approach involving government agencies, regulatory bodies, educational institutions and cooperation with social media platforms.



Reliable information on social media platforms

- Establish guidelines/standards or regulations for the dissemination of food information on social media, emphasizing accuracy, credibility and transparency in providing information. Regulators should monitor compliance with standards and take appropriate action against those who violate them.
- Provide public awareness campaigns to educate general population about the importance of critically evaluating social media information.
- Government should collaborate with food experts and institutions to provide accurate and up-to-date information on specific topic through social media.
- Develop a monitoring and reporting mechanism to track and evaluate the reliability of food information on social media. Hire dedicated team to identify and evaluate content, flag misinformation and report violations on social media platforms.
- It is crucial to balance reliability with freedom of speech and avoiding censorship.



Reliable information on social media platforms

- Social media is also being used to promote and sell food products, especially those produced by small food producers. Our results indicated that 28% of small dairy producers in Serbia have been using social media platforms for selling their products (USAID, PEER, Cov-183 project).
- Despite the great opportunity to reach new customers, there is a risk that some of food sellers are not registered, which means they are also not inspected and compliance with basic food safety legislation remains unknown.
- To protect public health food safety regulations must be strictly enforced, online sellers must be properly trained, and consumers made aware.

