



The Walter F. Snyder Award for '2000

Presented to

Dr. Friedrich K. Käferstein

At the close of World War II and surrounded by destruction and deprivation, Dr. Käferstein's childhood experiences helped shape his internationalist views and his deep commitment to humanity.

In recognizing Dr. Friedrich (Fritz) K. Käferstein as the recipient of the 2000 Walter F. Snyder Award, we honor a man who has championed food safety in developed and developing countries. He is a man who has had remarkable success in convincing health authorities that food safety is an essential public health service which all governments are expected to provide to assure the health of their citizens.

Dr. Käferstein studied at veterinary schools in Giessen and Berlin, Germany, receiving his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine in 1964 from the University of Giessen. While attending the University, he worked as a research assistant for the Veterinary Faculty and submitted his thesis on the identification and significance of the presence of antibiotic residues in meat.

From 1968 to 1972, he served as a Supervising Veterinarian in the meat industry for the New Zealand Department of Agriculture to modernize their meat inspection services.

Returning to Germany in 1972, Käferstein joined the German Health Office, first as Chief of the Food Safety Unit in the Robert-von-Ostertag-Institut and later as Director of the Center for Monitoring and Health Evaluation of Environmental Chemicals in Food. Acknowledging his expertise in food safety, he was called upon to direct the WHO Collaborating Center for Food Contamination Monitoring, at which time he worked closely with various other groups in WHO.

In 1980, Dr. Käferstein's eighteen-year career with WHO, Geneva, Switzerland, began when he accepted the position as manager of the newly established Food Safety Programme. Käferstein's initial challenge was to overcome preconceived notions and misconceptions about food safety and foodborne diseases in the minds of public health authorities within WHO and the world.

"Recognizing the interdisciplinary nature of food safety," stated a colleague, "he gathered a motivated staff of professionals in different disciplines, including veterinary medicine, food science and technology, food chemistry, food microbiology, nutrition and medicine. This way, [he] gave a signal to the world of the importance of intersectoral collaboration for achieving food safety objectives."

As leader of this team he:

- convened the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Safety in 1983. The report of this Committee is regarded both nationally and internationally as one of the most important policy documents in the area of food safety.
- emphasized the importance of education of consumers and food-handlers for the prevention of foodborne diseases by developing a long list of educational and training materials; one of the most well-known, WHO Golden Rules for Safe Food Preparation.
- promoted the HACCP (Hazard Analysis of Critical Control Points) concept facilitating its implementation in the food industry making WHO a leader in the promotion of the HACCP system.
- promoted the technology and acceptance of food irradiation for the prevention of foodborne diseases such as sal-

monellosis, E. coli infections and food-borne parasitic diseases.

- developed strategies to assess the safety of biotechnology-produced foods.

During his tenure with WHO, Dr. Käferstein served as WHO Joint Secretary of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. He guided the Commission with respect to the health and safety requirements embodied in the Codex standards and guidelines, which gained the recognition of the World Trade Organization. He was instrumental in strengthening the Codex policies and procedures to place greater emphasis on sound scientific risk analysis. As a result, many countries have amended their national legislation to the recommendations of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. To further support his work, he has encouraged the establishment of databases on the epidemiology of foodborne diseases and chemical contaminants in the food supply. "Dr. Käferstein was one of the first advocates of food safety as a *Shared Responsibility* among governments, industry and consumers" writes a WHO colleague. "He strengthened the collaboration of the WHO Food Safety Programme with Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), including consumer organizations and industry associations, such as the Industry Council of Development and International Life Sciences Institute, in a sustainable and balanced manner. The collaboration that he developed with industry is considered a model for other WHO programmes."

Retiring as the Director of the World Health Organization's Programme of Food Safety and Food Aid in 1998, Dr. Käferstein left behind a solid record of achievement in public health that both inspires and instructs.

Currently, Dr. Käferstein is a Distinguished Visiting Scientist for the Food and Drug Administration and the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture in the United States. He also is an Adjunct Fellow at the Center for Food and Nutrition Policy at Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. and lectures on food safety at the School of Public Health, Yale University, New Haven, CN.

Dr. Käferstein has published numerous articles, papers and reports, and has made as many invited presentations and lectures. His dedication has brought him well-earned recognition for his work. His awards include: R. E. Engel Award for outstanding contribution and dedication to food irradiation; invited Lecturer at the Ivan Parkin Lecture of the annual meeting of the International Association of Food Protection (formerly IAMFES); selected as an Honorary Diplomat of the American Veterinary Epidemiological Society; and, is a Founding Fellow of the International Academy of Food Science and Technology.

Although food safety has a long way to go to be formally integrated into public health programs of developing countries, Dr. Käferstein has paved the way for his successors to continue his work and to continue to meet the public health challenges going forward. His integrity and compassion is an inspiration to his colleagues, as well as those in public health and the food industry. He truly fulfills the qualifications of an individual who has upheld a commitment to environmental health as subscribed by the award's namesake.

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