

REPORT OF THE 2023 EWFC CONGRES IN VIENNA

The EWFC held a congress in Vienna on the 12th and 13th of October 2023. The speakers were a star studded group of international experts. The theme of the meeting was, "What will our food of tomorrow look like? Nutrition in change as a challenge for Official Food Control"

The two co-chairpersons were Gunter Fruhwirth the president of the Austrian food inspectors association and Mag. Andrea Leutgob-Ozlberger president of the Austrian association of veterinarians.

The meeting began with a live video message from Johannes Rauch, the Austrian minister of health, then Dr. Ulrich Hertzog, a senior member of the Austrian health ministry, underlining the importance of food inspection.

He was followed by Claire Bury the Deputy Director of DG SANTE. She stressed the Commission's desire to move towards a more sustainable system of food production in.

This theme was followed by the next speaker, Univ-Prof. Dr. med. Vet. Martin Wagner.

Then Dr. Florian Fiebelkorn really ceased the attention of the whole congress with his fascinating paper on insects and cell-based meat as a source of food. He had carried out extensive investigation into the willingness of consumers to accept such food and found substantial resistance to it. At this point the very interesting idea emerged that growing plant food to feed insects, then feed the insects to reluctant humans was a waste of time. It seemed a far better idea for the humans to cut out the insect stage and grow crops such as soya, which could be made into tofu amongst other highly nourishing plant based food.

EWFC's own Gunter Fruhwirth was the next to speak bringing everyone up to date with the excellent work carried out by the Lorence Akademie, of which he is a director.

Next we returned to insects as a source of nutrients presented by Prof. Dr. Jurgen Konig. The real lesson from his work was also why feed insects, why not use the land needed to grow their food to grow food for humans, which also avoided the resistance to eating what many people regard as very unpalatable ingredients.

Dr. Marco Beaumont then presented a very interesting paper on packaging materials made from aquatic plant material.

Dr. Michael Sulzner, Austrian ministry of health, now presented a very interesting view of how the Commission sees the Farm to Fork strategy developing to move the EU to a sustainable food system. A real insight was his revelation that the Union would try to create a legal definition of, "Sustainable", which they hoped to take to the, "World Trade Organisation" (WTO), for acceptance.

And that was the end of day 1.

Day two started with a fascinating and entertaining paper on fermenting, preserving and desiccating by Dipl. Ing. Wolfgang Zemanek.

He was followed by Dr. Stephanie Mittermaier talking about the alternatives to meat and dairy products that could be made from plants, algae and fungi.

The penultimate speaker was Mag. Markus Zsivkovits who examined whether humans would need food supplement to replace nutrients that may be missing in our diet of tomorrow.

Last but certainly not least came Jan Homma, EWFC's web master and recently retired food inspector from the Netherlands. He detailed his work hunting illegal food and drugs sold via the internet. We learnt of an exciting and sometimes stressful time involving dangerous, sometimes lethal substances, sold on the web and the necessity to involve the police in many situations including actual physical entries with police officers to some premises.