

# The Food Safety Response Center

Responding to the needs of the food safety community

In 2010, Thermo Fisher Scientific established a new laboratory dedicated to rapid analytical method development during incidents of chemical contamination in food. The Food Safety Response Center, located near Frankfurt, Germany, is a fully-equipped sample preparation and instrumentation laboratory staffed with experts in analytical method development for complex food matrices. The first activation and response came just weeks after opening the Center, when the group rapidly developed methods to address potential seafood contamination from the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

Since then, the Center has continued to respond to contamination incidents. However, in the past few years, it has also evolved into a valuable resource for the food safety community. As the food supply becomes more global and new issues arise, there is greater demand for resources across the spectrum of food analysis. Scientists looking to partner on research projects, customers interested in the application of new technologies in their labs, and individuals from emerging markets seeking training are a few examples of groups who have approached the Center for collaboration and assistance. Through their engagement with a variety of professionals in the industry, the Center has developed a global reputation for providing competent, scientific expertise to address analytical challenges in food testing.



# In the chemistry lab

with Klaus Mittendorf, Manager of the Food Safety Response Center

## Q: What makes the Food Safety Response Center a unique resource?

First, the Center is unique because of its incredible flexibility; it is not tied to an outside institution nor was it established to focus on a limited area of research. Therefore, we can establish our own agenda and determine how we can be most effective for those requesting our help. In terms of the projects that we undertake, we are open to ideas generated within the food safety community, which includes many of our customers.

In addition, because Thermo Fisher Scientific has such a vast product portfolio, we have access to many different technologies. Instead of having to deliver a solution based on an available instrument, we deliver solutions by matching the best technology to the analytical requirements. If an application is best suited for gas chromatography, we have that option. If it could be done more effectively with liquid chromatography, we have that as well. In the complex world of food analysis, having all of these options means that we aren't compromising from the start when we begin working on a method.

## Q: What are some of the products utilized in the Center?

Nearly all of the products in the Center are from Thermo Fisher Scientific. From pipettes, chemicals, and consumables to balances and scientific instruments, we are using the whole portfolio of Fisher Scientific and Thermo Scientific products. We have a variety of instruments for automated sample preparation, chromatography, mass spectrometry, and elemental analysis.

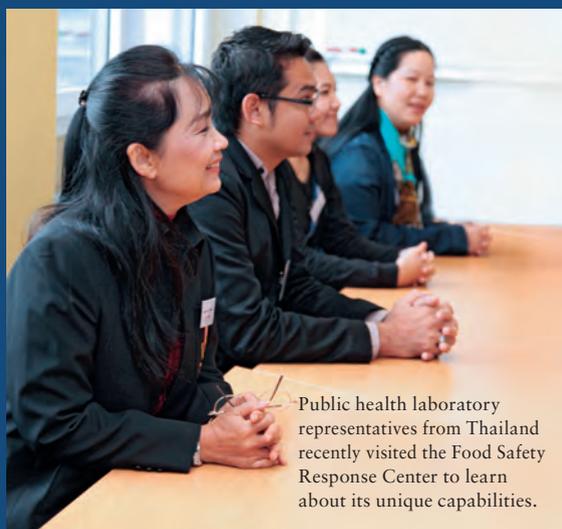


## Q: Are you currently collaborating with outside organizations?

Oh yes, we are in discussions with food safety specialists around the world and collaborating with authorities and food industry partners to work on the development of new analytical methods. For example, there is a broad range of regulated and unregulated mycotoxins in the EU. Due to climate change, experts are forecasting an increased incidence of mycotoxins in areas where these compounds were not seen before. So, there is a strong need for new methods to screen and to quantify many different mycotoxins. Together with European organizations, we are working on new analytical methods for screening and quantification with our Orbitrap™ technology

## Q: When visitors come to the Center, what are they most surprised to see or learn?

Visitors are surprised about our strong scientific approach to analytical challenges as well as our deep understanding of method development in the area of food safety. Because we are suppliers, they may think that we are going to spend all of our time walking around the lab and showing them specific features on all of the instruments. But once they are here, they quickly understand that we are focused on issues around food safety and how we can contribute to solutions. And, our scientists are very enthusiastic to interact with the food safety community to learn from others as well as to share their ideas for new analytical approaches.



Public health laboratory representatives from Thailand recently visited the Food Safety Response Center to learn about its unique capabilities.