

International Confectionery Association global food-safety communications

The International Confectionery Association (ICA) is developing communications systems for emerging issues. This has become important over the years as food-safety issues (such the melamine contamination in September 2008), have an increasing global impact.

ICA's global membership allows it to communicate directly with each region to gain a better understanding and perspective of the specific problems felt within that market.

The ICA comprises the major confectionery industry associations around the world, working collaboratively on issues affecting the sweet snacking businesses. The ICA has more than 4,000 member companies in nearly 40 countries throughout Europe, the Americas, Australasia and the Far East. All sectors of the confectionery industry from sugar confectionery,

chocolate, gum to fine bakery products. This equals 80 percent of world confectionery production and comprising a \$100 billion industry. The ICA works with its member associations to coordinate and communicate international scientific, regulatory, public affairs and trade-related matters while promoting and representing the interests of the confectionery industry in a cooperative and responsible manner at a global level.

There seven member associations are:

- Confectionery Manufacturers of Australasia (CMA)
- Association of the Chocolate, Biscuit and Confectionery Industries of the EU (CAOBISCO)
- National Confectioners Association USA (NCA)
- Brazilian Association of Cocoa, Chocolate, Candy and By-product Industries (ABICAB)
- The Mexican National Association of Chocolate and Sweets (ASCHOCO)
- Chocolate and Cocoa Association of Japan (CCAJ)
- Confectionery Manufacturers Association of Canada (CMAC)

Three main areas of focus through the working groups are as follows:

- technical and regulatory affairs
- communications
- international trade

In 2008, the ICA went through a significant organizational change when the Executive Council chose to have a full-time operational office in North America. The association now has both EU and North American offices, with **Christopher Mahony** as executive director in Toronto and **Paula Byrne** as assistant secretariat in Brussels. This change has allowed

ICA to refocus its efforts on its three standing committees and take a more proactive approach in managing international confectionery issues.



Christopher Mahony

The ICA's Technical Working Group continues to be the core of function on the international platform. An example is ICA's recent involvement in CODEX. The ICA participated in the 41st General Standards for Food Additives session in China earlier this year, resulting in the allowance of several additives and increased prescribed additive levels. This work will continue as ICA collaborates on behalf of the global confectionery industry going into the 2009–2010 CODEX sessions.

In addition, the ICA held Technical Product Safety and Free Fatty Acids sessions during the ISM show in Cologne, Germany. The meetings, the first of their kind for ICA, brought together confectionery manufacturers from around the globe along with other NGOs and interested stakeholders to review regulatory issues pertaining to confectionery.

In May 2009 ICA will release its Industry Global Profile. This brochure showcases the diversity, strength and responsible nature of the global confectionery industry though the representation of industry history, commodities and supply chain data, global confectionery data, myths versus facts and info resource links.

