BOARD OF FOOD TECHNOLOGISTS

National Council of the Board of Food Technologists

Food Technologies in favour of health

The Italian Food Technologists, as represented in the Regional Boards and in the National Council, intend to draw the attention of the Institutions, Companies and Professionals operating in the food sector, to a specific in-depth study about the our role as operators on behalf of quality, safety and health.

Quality

We know that no uniform definition of quality is possible, since it is always relative to the object one wants to represent, whence the need felt by the ***Food Technologist*** to **enjoin a substantial, visible and sustainable quality**, one which is open to every possibility within a "range" culminating in excellence, keep check of the energies spent, contemplate the **retrieval** of the by-products beyond the obligations prescribed by the legal rules, and actualize methods for a **sure technological innovation**.

Safety

It is our domain and the domain of many other professionals. We mean it here in the sense of hygienic safety. The **safety of the productive process** falls under our exclusive prerogative, inasmuch as we have been trained expressly for it.
Safety takes also the form of the traceability of constituent elements of products, choice of the raw materials, of the technologies to apply, and of **verification exercises conducted both online and offline**.

Health

It is necessary to valorize the importance of a good **product formulation** so as to ensure the necessary **nutritional balance** (salts, sugar, fats etc),of a good **packaging** which can guarantee conservation, of a **correct labelling** for the sake of a clear, simple and certain information, and a good marketing to facilitate information to consumers.

The ***Food Technologist*** is likewise a guarantee of an outdoor eating able to dialogue with **food education** and with **taste**, so as to facilitate a careful consumption and a healthy and active lifestyle.

It is precisely from the **effects on health** that we would like to begin!
The recent **WHO** document (2013-2020 global action plan for the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases) strictly evinces our leading role in proposing balanced foods at home and outside.
"Unhealthy" diet, in fact, is shown to be one of the four factors of behavioural risk (along with tobacco, inactivity and alcohol).
We accordingly offer our contribution as active role-players in the promotion of a healthy diet, by operating within our sphere of competence, by for instance **reducing the amount of salt/sodium** in food preparations, by **avoiding salt and sugar additives** wherever they are not strictly necessary, and by encouraging balanced formulations aimed at combating **diabetes**, **obesity** and **hypertension**.

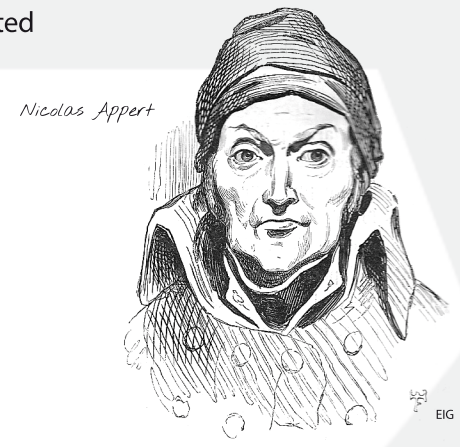
We deem *it important that the* ***Health Care Structures*** *should act as promoters of the following set of needs:*

- *The* ***Food Technologist*** *should "****license****", "****validate****" and "****warrant****" the final food product as the best possible one from a* ***health perspective****;*
- *The health care professions attached to both public and private institutions should* ***request the presence*** *of a* ***Food Technologist*** *within the* ***structures dealing with the production of foods and meals*** *for the community;*
- *The study of product and process should be entrusted to our care, together with* ***the obligation of asseveration/validation*** *of a prospective project as evidenced by the* ***Food Technologist****'s stamp and signature;*
- *He should, jointly* ***but on an equal footing with other professionals****, be involved in the field of food hygiene and safety.*

The WHO additionally stresses the need to:

- *Develop National Guidelines;*
- *Formulate recommendations or policy measures for companies, commercial operators and consumers;*
- *Reduce the level of added salt;*
- *Increase the accessibility and consumption of fruit and vegetables;*
- *Reduce sugar levels even in non-alcoholic drinks;*
- *Pay attention to the portions and to the energy density of the portions.*

Each one of the aforesaid is one of the **subjects** we are engaged with, concerning which we would like, with deliberateness and specific competence, to deepen understanding and to make a powerful contribution as active role-players/professionals acknowledged to be carriers of **science and technology**, while always paying careful heed to the **social context** and **economic sustainability**. In the examples of multi-sector involvement, we can see that the **WHO** also includes, among many others, the Catering sector as one called upon to join the fray. One might think in this regard of the **study of portions**, the **fight against waste**, the **sustainability of the food service**, the **choice of foodstuffs** and their affiliation **chains**.
How much can one accomplish within a collective ambit so as to **educate, train, energize the markets, promote the territory, develop tradition, introduce innovations in the cooking and service processes, take care of the fragilities** through products which are specifically formulated in deference to **sensory gratification** and the need to facilitate the **cultural miscegenation** of the diverse affiliations.

No one can call himself out; nay, we would like to be called "in"!

Food sciences and technologies date from a distant past, from a time when salt, sugar, alcohol, vinegar, fats and smoke were resorted to in order to **increase the lifespan of a product** (the equivalent of what is today called Shelf Life!).
However, one person **who certainly marked a turning point in the field of research and technological applications** was the Frenchman ***Nicolas Appert***, who has successfully managed to use colouring, in the early 1800's, for the sake of food conservation: He was possibly **the first modern *Food Technologist***, who made a strong social contribution to the discoveries and applications of this discipline.