



Agilent Profile: Institute for Global Food Security (IGFS)

## IGFS aims to address one of our greatest global challenges

The Institute for Global Food Security (IGFS) was established within the School of Biological Sciences at Queen's University Belfast almost a decade ago by Professor Chris Elliott, OBE. IGFS aims to address one of our greatest global challenges: how do we ensure the integrity of our food and feed a soaring world population amid challenges like climate change, food fraud, and increasingly complex food supply chains?

The Institute is one of four interdisciplinary Global Research Institutes at Queen's University Belfast established to address key international challenges. Within IGFS is the ASSET Technology Centre, also founded by Elliott. The UN International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has designated IGFS as an IAEA Collaborating Centre, recognizing its global reach in food safety, authenticity, and traceability. ASSET also hosts the Centre for Excellence in Agriculture and Food Integrity, in partnership with the UK National Measurement Laboratory. IGFS is also listed as a Centre of Expertise by the Food Authenticity Network, a UK DEFRA (Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) initiative. The major focus of the work is around the global challenges of food safety, and fraud – with wide expertise across chemical contaminant detection, food microbiology, and food systems traceability and transparency. IGFS and the ASSET Centre are anchored within the School of Biological Sciences but include many researchers from other schools and institutions.



The Institute for Global Food Security (IGFS)

Queen's University Belfast  
Belfast

Comprising a large number of academic staff, post-doctoral research fellows, and Ph.D. students, the ASSET Centre team addresses challenges at each point of the food chain, from farm to fork. They also investigate the health risks posed by contamination and seek to develop novel approaches to pre-emptively mitigate risk. In recent years, this team has undergone significant expansion, particularly by increasing capacity in mass spectrometry, thus strengthening the ability to develop innovative approaches. The Centre has also been awarded industry accreditation ISO/IEC 17025 for authenticity testing of herbs and spices and will expand this to detection of feed contaminants in 2023.

Institute members have demonstrated major industrial, economic, and societal impact. Following the aftermath of the 2013 horsemeat scandal, Professor Chris Elliott conducted the UK Government review (the Elliott Report) leading to a rapid expansion of food authenticity activity at IGFS, and indeed, across the UK. Since then, this team has worked closely with industry leaders to develop risk-management tools and traceability systems to help improve food integrity both nationally and internationally.

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