

Preface

1st Special Issue on Mycotoxin risks in Mediterranean countries

*The occurrence of toxigenic fungi and related mycotoxins in plant products which are the base of the Mediterranean diet is one of the most important social and economic concerns in Southern Europe. Production of such toxins may start in the field, or after harvest, during storage or processing. The mild Mediterranean climate and associated crop diversity present an environment that is highly conducive to the development of mycotoxigenic plant pathogens. Increasing levels of contamination by fungal toxins (particularly those produced by *Fusarium*, *Aspergillus* and *Alternaria*) in various Mediterranean crops and their high toxicity have obliged many governmental authorities to impose or consider severe limitations on allowable mycotoxin occurrence in agricultural commodities.*

This special issue represents an overview of the information on the occurrence of toxigenic fungi and mycotoxins in plants, food and feed, in Mediterranean countries and other areas with a similar climate. The growing interest in research in toxigenic fungi and related mycotoxins, particularly in the last decade, has produced a vast body of information on this topic. Differences in environmental conditions, plant cultivation in the various Mediterranean countries, and climate change have significantly influenced the distribution of specific toxigenic fungi and related mycotoxicological problems. It was our goal to provide the reader with an update on the status of this risk with specific emphasis on the knowledge available in the last 5–10 years. This volume provides some significant contributions (peer reviewed reviews and research papers) derived from an International Workshop organized by EU 7FP MycoRed project (www.mycored.eu) with the participation of the Mediterranean Phytopathological Union and International Society for Mycotoxicology on “Mycotoxicological Risks in Mediterranean Countries: Economic Impact, Prevention, Management and Control” held in October 2010 in Cairo (Egypt).

Finally, we are indebted to all authors for their support and kind contribution.

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