TRUST AND FOOD SAFETY

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Public perception of food risks and risk management

- Food sensitivities
  - Direct incorporation
  - Mix of familiar and unfamiliar risks
  - Institutional management and control necessary

- Key characteristics (unfamiliar risks)
  - Long delay between exposure and effect, such as cancer
  - No possibility to detect the danger by human senses
  - Reliability on information from third parties

- Key variable trust:
  - If yes: risk-benefit balancing accepted
  - If no: request for zero risk (no benefits considered)
  - If maybe: orientation on external criteria
Example: Genetically Modified Organisms

• Characteristics
  – Complex risks and benefits
  – Scientific uncertainty about long-term effects
  – Benefit for consumer contested
  – Perceived as “unnatural” and human “hubris”

• Problems
  – Risks socially amplified
  – Threat to traditional food knowledge and authority
  – Potential for high social mobilization