Abstract

Dedicating a science conference workshop for the first time to the non-science topic of Law and Ethics represents an important recognition by science researchers of their need to learn about and participate as stakeholders in nanotechnology law. This pathbreaking workshop at Nanotextnology 2023 addressed food raising questions about consumer protection, workplace safety and health, and the need for harmonization regarding conflicts of laws as nanoscale materials in food are governed under different regulatory systems in the USA, EU and internationally. In so doing this Inaugural Special Session about Law and Ethics of Nanotechnology at Nanotextnology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in Greece it represents a nod to the crosscutting law and ethics issues that have historically not been as highly valued by the scientific community as the more direct science issues. Our pioneering Workshop, derived from questions posed by research scientists and entrepreneurs themselves, tried to answer from a perspective of law and ethicsthe question: How can benefits of nanotechnology be responsible developed while minimizing risks to workers’ safety, health and well-being? Food touches every human and every other species in the world throughout daily life. Food is therefore the subject of extensive regulation nationally, internationally across trade agreements and under some religious law too. Nanotechnology has been applied to food since the early 21st century with attendant implications for food quality, quantity and distribution. Civil society therefore must maximize the benefits of nanotechnology as applied to food while minimizing the risks to individuals and global health. This small area of interface between these three disciplinary realms ultimately impacts consumers, environmental well being, global health, medical impacts of nutrition from food, and food supply. The results of these deliberations conclude that harmonization of law and outreach to the public is essential to operationalizing nanotechnology goals.