LANGUAL FOOD INDEXING SOFTWARE
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Rationale and objective
One of the recommendations of the 2nd International Food Data Conference (Lahti, Finland, 1995) was the use of a language-independent food identification system with structured food description and controlled vocabulary, encompassing parallel, complementary schemes and suitable for use in numeric databases.

Methods
Originally developed by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), LanguaL (http://www.langual.org) is a multilingual, faceted thesaurus for describing foods in a systematic way. However, in the past, the LanguaL thesaurus, with more than 5000 descriptors, was considered too cumbersome for common use in food composition databases.

In order to assist compilers index foods in their databases, EuroFIR (European Food Information Resource Network) therefore provided the Food Product Indexer software incorporating the LanguaL thesaurus and a number of already indexed data sets. Between 2005 and 2009, several short (one or two-day) food indexing courses were organized for food composition data compilers from all European countries, for the European Food Safety Agency, for LATINFOODS and for US FDA and USDA.

Conclusions
A short demonstration of the use of the LanguaL FPI software will be given at the 8th International Food Data Conference, in order to allow other compilers to use this tool to document foods in their databases. It is hoped that this initiative will be a step towards standardized food description and allow foods to be linked and compared across borders and language barriers.