Acrylamide (AA) is known as a neurotoxin in humans and it is classified as a probable human carcinogen by the International Agency of Research on Cancer. AA is produced as by-product of the Maillard reaction in starchy foods processed at high temperatures (>120 °C). This review includes the investigation of AA precursors, mechanisms of AA formation and AA mitigation technologies in potato, cereal and coffee products. Additionally, most relevant issues of AA risk assessment are discussed. New technologies tested from laboratory to industrial scale face, as a major challenge, the reduction of AA content of browned food, while still maintaining its attractive organoleptic properties. Reducing sugars such as glucose and fructose are the major contributors to AA in potato-based products. On the other hand, the limiting substrate of AA formation in cereals and coffee is the free amino acid asparagine. For some products the addition of glycine or asparaginase reduces AA formation during baking. Since, for potatoes, the limiting substrate is reducing sugars, increases in sugar content in potatoes during storage then introduce some difficulties and potentially quite large variations in the AA content of the final product. Sugars in potatoes may be reduced by blanching. Levels of AA in different foods show large variations and no general upper limit is easily applicable, since some formation will always occur. Current policy is that practical measures should be taken voluntarily to reduce AA formation in vulnerable foods since AA is considered a health risk at the concentrations found in foods. © 2013 Society of Chemical Industry.