

# Our Commitment to Research

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Our association has a long history of presenting breakthrough research in grain science. However, in the past few years, joint meeting with other groups, a switch to tracks at the annual meeting, and changes in the types of research being presented led some members to question the role of science within AACC International. The Board of Directors took such criticism seriously and this year formed a Quality of Science Task Force consisting of President-elect Khalil Khan, Gene Wisakowsky (chair of the Annual Meeting Task Force), Jodi Engleson (2009 Annual Meeting Program chair), Christophe Courtin (2010 Annual Meeting Program chair), Deirdre Ortiz (2011 Annual Meeting Program chair), myself, and several headquarters staff. Through the Task Force's efforts seven scientific initiatives were identified that encompass all types of research conducted by AACC International members in academic, industrial and government laboratories. These initiatives will guide the association's scientific activities including the annual meeting, publications, and short courses. The seven initiatives are:

1. Health and Nutrition – This initiative will encompass topics of and related to health and nutrition of cereals and pulses, alone and in products and ingredients derived from these plant materials. Adjunct topics may also include social impact of health and nutrition initiatives, medical reports, and other related topics.
2. Food Safety and Regulatory –All aspects of food safety, including microbes, toxins, contaminants and hazards and any discussions of regulatory issues and legal challenges will be addressed.
3. Biotechnology and Sustainability – Topics in this initiative will include studies of the impact of breeding (conventional, genetic modification, and other) on cereal plant composition and user traits, interaction effects of environment on gene expression, plant pathology, global climate change, production, agronomics, reducing energy consumption in production and processing, reducing carbon footprints, and the social/political/financial impacts of the above.
4. Cereal and Polymer Chemistry – This initiative to include all fundamental whole cereal, starch, protein, and other grain or pulse chemistry and any related polymer science approaches. Any study of chemical interactions of the component parts of grains is also included.
5. Quality and Analytical Methods – All analytical methods development, changes to methods, information about measuring quality of grain, ingredients or finished foods by chemical, physical or sensory testing are addressed. All aspects of rheology, as related to cereals, flour, dough, batter, extrudates, and cereal-based finished products, are included in this initiative.
6. Ingredients and Cost of Goods Sold – This initiative will cover all aspects of raw materials, new discoveries of novel ingredients, novel applications of ingredients, and ways to reduce ingredient costs.
7. Engineering and Processing – Topics in this initiative will include the physical processing of grains, pulses, and food products, fuels, industrial chemicals and other in-process materials derived from grains and pulses, as well as modeling of these processes. New and more efficient engineering processes and equipment and their impact on the production of both food and non-food products will be addressed.

We have already recruited scientists to focus annual meeting programming in each initiative for the next two years. Our 2009 Annual Meeting in Baltimore will have a fresh, streamlined look. Only six symposia will be scheduled to allow for a greater emphasis on new research in volunteered papers. Additional sessions will be held on research-related topics such as grant funding and collaborations among industrial, academic, and government researchers. In Baltimore, we hope to encourage greater networking and interactions among scientists. Students are the future leaders of our field. Sixty-nine students from several countries received funds through the Manhattan Section to attend the meeting in Honolulu. We will continue to welcome and nurture our future colleagues. I hope that you will consider supporting a student travel grant or participating in our Mentoring Program.

For those of you unable to attend this year's outstanding meeting in Honolulu, many presentations were recorded and will be available on our website next year. Our new Cereal Science Knowledge Database captures the latest science on a variety of topics as well as provides critical overview of controversial subjects. New presentations will continually be added to provide our members with the scientific knowledge they need for their work—without ever having to leave their offices.

Under the capable leadership of Anne Bridges and Paul Wehling, the Approved Methods Committee is preparing a new digital version of the AACC International Approved Methods. Three new technical committees met for the first time in Honolulu, adding to the breadth of analyses now needed by grain scientists. Several new book titles are under preparation as well. Our flagship journal, *Cereal Chemistry*, continues to attract high-quality manuscripts. Recently the Board of Directors discussed the possibility of a new journal to cover topics in grain science and technology that are aligned with our scientific initiatives but not currently addressed in *Cereal Chemistry*.

Another new activity is the formation of a virtual institute for grains and health. The professors organizing this institute have asked AACC International to provide services such as website maintenance, meeting organization, and publications. The Board of Directors has approved the concept of this alliance in general and we will keep you informed of the progress of this partnership.

What do you think of these plans? The board and I solicit your suggestions. Early next year, I am taking a sabbatical leave to focus on my presidency and further explore our efforts to strengthen the quality of science promoted by AACC International. Please tell me your thoughts on our new activities and offer suggestions for refinement (no pun intended!). I sincerely hope that you enjoy the holiday season and have a healthy and prosperous new year.