

# Nutrition at the Forefront of Emerging Issues

Brinda Govindarajan, AACC Intl. Nutrition Division Chair  
 Kellogg Company, Battle Creek, MI, U.S.A.



The year 2010 is the year of the consumer. Consumers are looking at food differently and have a strong voice in demanding the best for themselves and their families. And this is a global phenomenon. Consumer activist groups as well as the print and digital media play a big role in influencing consumer attitudes and preferences. There is a new food agenda with political backing. Childhood obesity is a major health problem as evidenced by Michelle Obama kicking off the recent

efforts to combat this looming public welfare issue. Child nutrition and obesity have emerged as key issues for the Obama administration. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has indicated that the administration is seeking change when the U.S. Congress reauthorizes the Childhood Nutrition Act this year.

Some hot topics concerning the food industry today include gluten free, sodium reduction, saturated fat and trans-fats, fortification, added sugars, and many more. Bread is considered a major contributor of sodium in the diet. Who would have thought our daily bread would become so notorious! But the hottest topics are food safety and consumerism. Eight out of the top 10 trends are linked to health and nutrition (*New Nutrition Business* 15(3), 2009/2010). The food industry is no longer in the driving seat, the external environment dictates innovation. Despite the challenging environment, there is no lack of new products and “miracle” ingredients in the marketplace. According to the Mintel Global New Products Database (GNPD), there were 2,100 new products launched in the last five years in the breakfast cereal category alone with 177 new products launched between January and August 2009. Nine out of 10 marketing claims in breakfast cereals

had a health and wellness focus. According to Mintel, in the face of economic crisis, the focus is on a balanced checkbook as well as a balanced diet.

AACC International is poised to help the world of grains and grain-based foods in this effort to provide the best to the consumer. We have a very active nutrition division which is geared toward taking the members as well the organization to the forefront of current thoughts and practices in nutrition. AACC Intl. also organized a short course on “Formulating to Attain Health and Wellness Initiatives,” March 16–18, 2010, in Phoenix, AZ, U.S.A., covering macro and functional ingredients as well as the big picture in order to understand global concepts. As in 2009, the 2010 Annual Meeting, to be held October 24–27 in Savannah, GA, U.S.A., has “Health and Wellness” as a key focus, with the Nutrition Division cosponsoring a health symposium. This symposium, entitled “Whole Grains Unraveled,” will have key speakers on current and emerging research on grain components. The presentations will be followed by a round table discussion.

The power of nutrition today cannot be underestimated. We made a good start in 2008 to rejuvenate the AACC Intl. Nutrition Division. The division had a very successful 2009 and is poised to continue that trend in 2010. It is also time to pass on the torch to new people, thoughts, and ideas. The division officer elections will be announced shortly. If you have the knowledge and passion for nutrition and a desire to take our organization to the next level, please nominate yourself or others for election to the executive committee. I have been very involved in AACC Intl. for the last 15 years and I have always received more than I have given to the organization. The time you invest in AACC Intl. will always add value to you, both personally and professionally. Best wishes and see you all in Savannah, Georgia!