



AACC Members Agree on Definition of Whole Grain

Many studies cite the health benefits associated with the consumption of whole grain foods, emphasizing its ability to reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes and some forms of cancer. But what constitutes “whole grain”? Until recently, this was a gray area in the food industry.

To add consistency and clarity to the issue, a special ad hoc committee of experts from the American Association of Cereal Chemists (AACC) was formed under the leadership of Carl Hosenev to create a useful, scientifically valid definition for “whole grain” when used as an ingredient. Obtaining scientific input from the broad community of analysts, health professionals, nutritionists, regulatory professionals, and whole grain researchers was deemed a high priority.

The AACC Committee to Define Whole Grain was made up of:

Carl Hosenev, chair (R&R Research Services)
Don Bechtel (USGMRL)
Teresa Cogswell (Interstate Brands Corp.)
Jim Dexter (Canadian Grain Commission)
Alta Engstrom (General Mills, Inc.)
Jon Faubion (AACC)

R. Gary Fulcher (Univ. of Minnesota)
Wayne Moore (ConAgra Trading & Processing)
Maureen Olewnik (American Institute of Baking)
Scott Seibert (Ralston Foods Inc.)
Brian Walker (Cargill Flour Milling)

The committee crafted the following consensus definition applicable to the naked caryopsis cereals as well as oat and rice, after removal of the hull and the AACC Board of Directors approved the definition June 1, 2000:

“Whole grains shall consist of the intact, ground, cracked or flaked caryopsis, whose principal anatomical components — the starchy endosperm, germ and bran — are present in the same relative proportions as they exist in the intact caryopsis.”

“The benefit of keeping the whole grain components in proportion is that it provides a balance of nutrients and non-nutrients (such as phytochemicals) that may work together to reduce the risk of chronic disease,” says Len Marquart, AACC member, General Mills, Minneapolis.

“This new definition will require specific analytical details to be useful in an operational sense,” says Dr. Carl Hosenev, ad hoc committee chair. “AACC technical committees plan to provide this data and supporting documentation over the next 12 months.”

The American Association of Cereal Chemists is a member-driven organization of nearly 4,000 professionals focused on advancing grain sciences and related technologies.

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