

Spotlight on Filiz Koksel

Cereals & Grains Association members each have their own story, and we want to highlight all of their amazing accomplishments. "Spotlights" is a series of individual and institutional member interviews capturing the unique stories of our many volunteers and their journeys with the Cereals & Grains Association.



Filiz Koksel
University of Manitoba
Member for 10 years

Q: What is your current position and what type of work do you do?

A: I am an assistant professor in food processing, at the Food and Human Nutritional Sciences Department of the University of Manitoba. My research is focused on processing of cereals, pulses, and oilseeds to produce high-quality foods that are safe, nutritious, and palatable. My current research interests include the use of electromagnetic and mechanical waves as tools to investigate changes

in the physical and chemical properties of plant-based foods during various unit process operations. In addition, I teach courses related to food processing and food engineering.

Q: When and how did you first decide you wanted to work in cereal and grain science?

A: My father, Dr. Hamit Koksel, who is a well-known grain scientist, had a great influence during my childhood and early in my career. When I was a young girl, I enjoyed the "take your child to work days." At the time, my father was working in a cereal quality lab in Turkey. I remember with such great fondness that I found the alveograph and how a dough sheet was made almost into a balloon very fascinating.

Q: How have you been involved with the Cereals & Grains Association? How has your involvement with the association enriched your career?

A: My involvement with the Cereals & Grains Association was through my mentor and my former Ph.D. supervisor Dr. Martin Scanlon. Martin supported me to attend and present at the annual Cereals & Grains Association meetings early in my Ph.D. program. He has introduced me to several cereal science legends and encouraged me to network with the grain science community in order to build a strong foundation for future collaborations.

Q: In 2020, Cereal Foods World (CFW) is focusing on the Global Food System (GFS). Please offer your perspective on how global societal and technology trends are affecting cereal science and the cereal grain industry overall? How will cereal scientists need to adapt to these global trends?

A: Global societal and technology trends are driving the changes, developments, and innovations in cereal science and the cereal grain industry overall. With these new rapidly evolving trends, cereal scientists need to be on top of their game and work synergistically with the cereal grain industry to circumvent the erroneous information about cereals and grains that is being fed in abundance to the public through social media channels. In this way, we can make sure that grain science and technology are being used for the benefit of consumers.

Q: In this issue of CFW, we are exploring Meat Alternatives and Processing in the context of the GFS. Do you have any perspectives to offer on the challenges and opportunities associated with the global expansion of the food chain and the dynamic global food trade?

A: I see the sensory quality of meat alternatives as the biggest challenge that the processing industry needs to overcome. While we are improving sensory quality through better process innovations and control, in order for the meat alternatives sector to grow even further we need to be able to simplify ingredient lists, get closer to producing products with clean labels, and search for novel plant proteins that are affordable, are techno-functionally superior, and have low allergenic potential.

Q: What's next for you?

A: I would like to continue expanding my research expertise in cereal and grain science and technology, more specifically in the areas of how the structural and textural quality of plant-based foods is developed during manufacturing. More importantly, I would like to keep training the next generation of cereal and grain scientists.