

Communication and Engagement Key

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Changing demographics and increasing consumer awareness about health and nutrition have led to an influx of nutritious products in the marketplace. The emerging concept of “food for health” has led health advocates to promote food as medicine and not just for growth and energy. The lifestyle trend today has shifted from reactively curing disease to proactively promoting health and disease prevention. This changing market scenario has led “Health and Nutrition” to be one of the

key scientific initiatives for AACC Intl. This is also a great time for food scientists and nutritionists to develop innovative, nutritious foods and to enhance consumer understanding of these products. There has also never been a better time for and a better recognition of nutrition professionals.

In this changing market scenario, it is a great honor for me to be chairing the Nutrition Division of AACC Intl. After a few quiet years, the AACC Intl. Nutrition Division started again with a lot of renewed enthusiasm at the last annual meeting in Honolulu, HI, U.S.A. At the last business meeting, I presented the goals and objectives for the division to the attendees. We also had the privilege of having Rob Hamer, chair of the AACC Board of Directors, present his research on satiety.

Continuing with the momentum created at the last annual meeting, the Nutrition Division is planning a number of activities in 2009. Earlier this year, we amended our bylaws to define a mission and assign more accountability for the executive officers. The new goal of the Nutrition Division is to be a vibrant body of food and grain professionals committed to “gathering, compiling, and communicating current trends, thoughts, issues, and research needs, regarding health and nutrition of grain-based foods and related products.” Going forward, our key words are communication and engagement.

The AACC Intl. Nutrition Division is also committed to widening the knowledge of grain-based foods in the scientific and technical communities. With this broad goal in mind, the Nutrition Division is sponsoring a two-day pre-annual meeting short course on Dietary Fiber in Food Systems on September 12–13, 2009, in Baltimore, MD, U.S.A. Over the last year, more than 650 new fiber-enriched, grain-based products have been launched in the United States and around the world. As can be imagined, there is also a mushrooming of fiber ingredients in the marketplace, thus causing confusion and a number of challenges for product developers. This short course on dietary fiber is intended to provide food and nutrition scientists, product developers, and R&D personnel up-to-date information on different fiber ingredients, their functionality in food systems, and the nutritional, analytical, and regulatory aspects of different classes of fibers.

The short course will start with a general session on fiber definitions, analytical methods, and a brief overview of health benefits. This will be followed by in-depth presentations on the chemistry, functionality, and application of different classes of fibers, such as cereal brans, bran extracts and purified plant-based fibers, beta glucans, resistant starches and maltodextrins, soluble fibers, inulins and oligosaccharides, celluloses and cell wall polysaccharides, polydextroses, and hydrocolloids, to name a few.

We are also planning a division luncheon and business meeting during the annual meeting. The division cannot function effectively without the support of its members. We are a truly global group with members from 23 countries and five continents. As chair, my vision is to make the division a forum for addressing the nutritional needs of our members and I welcome your thoughts and suggestions for future activities. I look forward to your support for the short course and hope to see you all at the AACC Intl. Annual Meeting in Baltimore.