

# The Power of AACC International to Connect

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AACC International is a progressive association that is aware of your unique needs as a member. We recognize that grain science is constantly evolving and intertwines with many other areas. As a board member, I am working on developing a new set of communities within AACC Intl. *Communities* are the lifeblood of AACC Intl. A number of existing communities are currently available, including divisions, technical communities, and sections. These are just a few of

the more formal communities in operation. These communities have functioned well for many years and continue to serve the needs of our members but currently we are working to develop a new style of community. Interest groups will soon be launching, providing a new way to build your connections with others who hold the same interests.

Why are communities so important to AACC Intl.? Because the efforts and creativity of individuals working together produce great synergies! Why try to solve a problem alone when you can work/interact cooperatively with other who share similar needs? AACC Intl. already has two interest groups—the Whole Grains Working Group and the Audit Task Force. Both grew from a small pocket of members interested in the topic and have grown into dynamic discussions with positive outcomes.

Science, technology, and society continue to evolve. Our membership and their needs keep evolving, too. That's why AACC Intl. has charged two groups of volunteers to help peer into the crystal ball of the future and make that future a reality. The Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP), lead by Bill Atwell, Cargill, is charged with continually evaluating the environment and identifying emerging issues of importance to cereal-related industries. On the other end of the spectrum is the Strategic Implementation Team, led by Gene Wisakowsky, CF Chefs Inc. This committee assists

the AACC Intl. Board to work with committees such as SAP to execute strategy in relation to the association's goals.

To help monitor the pulse of the scientific challenges facing the cereal-grains industry, SAP has created a database of issues that they use to monitor the environment. They recently coordinated a survey asking members to indicate what emerging issues and trends were affecting their work so they could ensure their database is as comprehensive as possible. A few of the many top concerns of the membership were allergens, digestibility indices, food safety, and sodium reduction. As a next step, SAP is developing a list of products and services that could be built to provide the membership with as much information as possible on these topics. The board will be reviewing these recommendations during their May mid-year meeting.

From this list of scientific challenges, the Strategic Implementation Team will be building new interest groups under the leadership of myself and Jodi A. Engleson, PhD, LLC. Some groups may be more long term, while others may only meet to tackle a problem in one month's time. Are you interested in allergens, digestibility indices, food safety, or sodium reduction? If so, contact Susan Kohn, skohn@scisoc.org, to learn about an interest group on that topic. Other topics that have been put forth are fiber and wheat genetics. Do you have another idea for an interest group? We're interested in learning about these as well.

With current technology, the barriers of time and space are diminished. Interest groups will be outfitted with the necessary tools such as a website, listserve, and conference calls to help them connect. However, there's nothing like face-to-face interaction and discussion. AACC Intl. will also help facilitate small interest group meetings during our annual meeting in Savannah this October.

AACC Intl. is all about making connections, and we would like to connect you with colleagues of similar interests. Look over the list of potential interest groups, give it some reflection, and then drop us a line.