

Spotlight on Stuart Craig

AACC International 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 AACCI.



Stuart Craig
DuPont Nutrition & Health
Member for 33 years

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

A: I lead the North America Regulatory & Scientific Affairs team for DuPont Nutrition & Health, ensuring the safety, physiological benefits, and regulatory status of our food ingredients. I'm also a member of the Technical Fellows Program, where my curiosity about the role of nutrients in maintaining health focuses on the gut microbiome (dietary fiber and prebiotics), methyl metabolism (betaine), and personalized nutrition.

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

A: I pursued my passion for nutritional biochemistry first as an undergraduate student and then worked on cereal grains (sorghum and wheat) as a Ph.D. student under the guidance of Roger Stark at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh.

Q: How have you been involved with AACCI? How has your involvement with AACCI enriched your career?

A: I joined the Department of Grain Science & Industry at Kansas State University in 1984 and attended the AACC meeting (and Starch Roundtable) in Orlando that year. I recall experiencing a warm welcome and sense of camaraderie from all levels of the organization—from fellow researchers, experienced professionals, and engaged staff. Over the years, I was encouraged by AACC leaders to volunteer, which led me to give a presentation, chair a technical session, organize a symposium, chair the Carbohydrate Division, chair several committees, become an AACC Director, and ultimately serve as AACCI president in 2006. This was important over the years in helping me gain experience and confidence that I could apply in my career and personal life.

Q: In what ways do you see health and nutrition affecting how cereal-based foods are processed? How are health issues affecting cereal science and the cereal grain industry overall?

A: A significant body of research has already demonstrated the health and nutrition benefits of nutrients from cereals, particularly from the bran and germ. Recent work highlights the heterogenous response of people to both refined and whole grains, leading to the potential to "personalize" diets based on these individual differences in genetics, epigenetics, and gut microbiome. This creates both a challenge and an opportunity as consumers continue to look for personalized solutions to their dietary needs.

Q: This issue of *Cereal Foods World* focuses on "processing for health." Do you have any perspectives on this topic?

A: In the past, "quality" of grains focused more on agronomic and processing aspects, such as yield, disease resistance, and milling quality (physicochemical, functional, and rheological). We now have better ways to measure the health effects of grains and their fractions that can lead to improved physiological responses.

Q: What's next for you?

A: I'm part of a new Microbiome Venture team at DuPont and am really enjoying contributing to the effort to bring differentiated products to the market (particularly for digestive health). It's strange to realize that I will retire within the next 7 years! As I pause to reflect, I'm able to do more mentoring of younger colleagues on their career paths, provide input on innovation culture, and offer strategic insights to find novel technical solutions. Finally, my wife (Mhairi) and I started a new company (Double Spiral Chocolate) with a view to sharing a creative activity together in retirement. At the moment, however, it means we both have two jobs!