

AJFAND Guest Editorial

African Food Scientists on the World Stage



Prof. Ken Buckle

The International Union of Food Science and Technology (IUFoST) is a global voice for food science and technology through the national Adhering Bodies that are its members. The first World Congress of Food Science and Technology was held in Washington, DC in 1970, the year that IUFoST was established. It followed two world conferences held in London (1962) and Warsaw (1966). Congresses were held every 4 years (5 years for Kyoto 1979) until Sydney hosted the 10th Congress in 1999, beyond which congresses were held every 2 years (or 3 years for Nantes in 2006).

The Food Science and Technology Institute of Ireland hosted the 18th Congress held in Dublin in August 2016. It was a resounding success, with about 1500 delegates from more than 90 countries, including many students, listening to more than 250 scientific, industry and policy experts across a broad range of topics. Pre-Congress workshops and meetings covered topics such as aflatoxin management, food chemistry, distance-assisted training, fresh produce, religious and ethnic foods and practices, early career development and global food safety. Other features included the Inaugural Global Food Summit and a Food Industry Forum.

Despite ongoing issues of food insecurity and safety in many African countries, it was reassuring to observe that African food scientists and students played an important role in several Congress sessions, and key personnel from this continent are now in prominent positions to enable IUFoST to continue to grow and provide leadership to the world food science and technology community. Some highlights for Africa include:

- Dr Ruth Oniang'o, Editor-in-Chief of *AJFAND*, has assumed the role of Chair of the Executive Council of the International Academy of Food Science and Technology (IAFoST), previously held by Prof Delia Rodriguez-Amaya of Brazil;
- Dr Lucia Anelich of South Africa is now the Chair of the IUFoST Scientific Council, previously held by Dr Daryl Lund of USA;
- 25 African presenters from 8 countries contributed to technical sessions, including microbial safety, nutrition, nanotechnology, food security and accessibility, contaminants, novel ingredients, innovation, food fortification and food properties;
- Rosie Maguire (South Africa) remains a member of the IUFoST Governing Council;

- Early Career Scientists for 2016 included George Ooko Abong (Kenya), who also played a prominent role in the Aflatoxin Management Workshop, Donna Cawthorn and Patrick Njage (South Africa), and Obadina Adewale (Nigeria);
- Global Food Industry Awards:
 - Most Innovative Ingredient: 1st, Banting Boulevard Foods (Pty) Ltd, 3rd KWV (both South Africa)
 - Most Innovative Process: Honourable Mention, Patrysviel Farms (South Africa);
 - Industrialisation of a Traditional Food: 1st, Utsanzi Product Industries P/L (Zimbabwe), 2nd Irvin & Johnson Pty Ltd (South Africa);
 - Packaging Innovation: 1st, Boxmore Packaging (South Africa).
- Undergraduate Product Development Competition: Stellenbosch U (S'coolBeans) and U Pretoria (Shoki-Nwa) were finalists, Stellenbosch U came 2nd, and U Pretoria won the Best Presentation Award.
- Food Safety Without Borders Graduate Student Paper Competition: Oluwafemi Adebo (2nd), Ifeoluwa Adeekoya and Victor Ntuli (South Africa) and Adeola Ayano (3rd, Nigeria) were finalists.
- Dr Daryl Lund, formerly U Wisconsin Madison, USA, was presented with the IUFoST Lifetime Achievement Award for his distinguished international scholarship and leadership, including many visits to Africa and developing the IUFoST Distance Learning activities in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Congratulations to all of the above for their contributions to a successful World Congress. Readers of and contributors to *AJFAND* likewise can aim to represent their country and continent at future international events. Congress 19 will be held in Mumbai, India in 2018, and Congress 2020 in Auckland, New Zealand.

Ken Buckle

Emeritus Professor, UNSW

Former President, IAFoST and AIFST

k.buckle@unsw.edu.au