

Spotlight on Vicky Solah

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.



Vicky Solah
Curtin University
AACCI Nutrition Division
Chair

Q: What is your current position and what are you currently working on?

A: I am an associate professor in the Food, Nutrition and Health Team, School of Public Health at Curtin University, Perth, Western Australia. I am a researcher, Ph.D. student supervisor, and lecturer in the undergraduate and postgraduate programs. My research interests include the role of dietary fiber and grain-based foods, especially whole grain foods, oats, noodles, and pasta, in health and quality and sensory evaluation of Asian foods.

Q: How do you link nutrition to cereal grain science?

A: I strongly believe grain-based and whole grain foods can reduce the risk of developing diseases. My work on viscous dietary fiber, resistant carbohydrates, and nonstarch polysaccharides and satiety allows me to work across food science and nutrition.

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

A: I was very lucky to start my career in the Rice Division of the NSW Department of Agriculture 36 years ago with Tony Blakeney. I worked on milling quality and the selection of rice for the breeding program. I studied by correspondence while working and moved to the Bread Research Institute, then to the NSW Department of Agriculture, Sydney, where I worked on starch with Trevor Gibson and Barry McCleary. I am a food technologist and a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Food Science and Technology, but cereal science is my main interest.

Q: When did you first join AACCI and why?

A: I attended my first AACCI meeting in 1999 in Seattle. There was an offer for new members to join AACCI with their meeting registration, so I joined. Over the years the AACCI meetings have provided an opportunity to meet many great people from all over the world and to develop new friendships. I try

to attend as many sessions as possible during these meetings and always discover something new I can use to update my lectures and use in my research, but the people are high on the list of reasons for coming back each year from the other side of the world.

Q: Why did you decide to volunteer with AACCI? How did you get involved with the Nutrition Division?

A: I am currently involved in the Nutrition Division, Division Leadership Council, and Asian Products Technical Committee. The Nutrition and Health special sessions during the annual meeting in Baltimore were a help in my research on satiety, protein, and dietary fiber, so I joined the Nutrition Division to learn more and hopefully contribute something back. Volunteers such as Anne Birkett, David Hahn, Art Bettge, and Mary Ellen Camire were instrumental in my decision to volunteer.

Q: What do you see as important nutrition issues and evolving science that affect cereal science and the cereal grains industry?

A: New research on the individual, genetics and what happens in childhood, and differences in individual microbiota and how they work in combination to influence nutrition and appetite is a really exciting area.

Q: What are the hot nutrition topics in your region? How are you addressing them?

A: Appetite and satiety is a really important research area. Research on the consumption of whole grains, resistant and complex carbohydrates, and low-GI foods and decreased health risk is important. I do a lot of reading of newly published papers to try to keep up with new research. I have been working with Deb Kerr and Carol Boushey using their mobile food record app on research on the frequency of eating and dietary choice, which is an exciting area of research.

Q: What's next for you?

A: The most rewarding part of my career has been working with research students, and I know I will learn new, exciting things in the future from our research together.

Do you know someone who has dedicated significant time to AACCI and the field of cereal grain science? Let us know! We will be conducting interviews with members to be featured in future issues of *Cereal Foods World*.

Contact lmcginty@scisoc.org if you or someone you know should be highlighted.