I joined AACC International in 1986 as a graduate student at Kansas State University. Since then AACC Intl. has become my family. Through this professional association, I have made friends (lots of them!) and gained mentors. AACC Intl. has been my primary means of keeping abreast of advancements in food science in general and grain science in particular. Resources available from AACC Intl., such as books and journals, as well as participation in annual meetings, involvement in activities such as reviewing papers, and informal interactions with fellow members, have helped me deal with the technical challenges of my day-to-day professional duties. The largest part of my professional network is within AACC Intl. I can’t imagine myself being cut off from the association.

As chair of the AACC Intl. Professional Development Panel, I know that membership in AACC Intl. offers grain scientists the many opportunities and benefits I have experienced and more. It is these resources and sense of community I ask you to share with your colleagues.

Research has shown that the number one reason members join our association is because a colleague recommended it to them. Think of when you joined the association. Perhaps you had an advisor as a post-grad who was a member of AACC Intl. and encouraged you to join, or you joined as a student to take advantage of one of the great student competitions. Maybe it was a mentor at the first company you worked at who suggested you join. Or, perhaps you joined recently under the advisement of a new boss. Whoever shared the association with you did so to help you further your career. This is what the Professional Development Panel was developed to do as well, and we want to encourage you to share AACC Intl. with others, so they can experience the research, networking, and knowledge firsthand.

I want to offer a thank you to all of the members who have done just that and recruited new members through a recent membership effort. Let’s keep up the momentum! It is up to you to help the next generation of AACC Intl. members discover where they belong. Please share the value of membership in AACC Intl. with fellow scientists and help the association grow. Increasing the number of members in AACC Intl. enables us to create new products and services that meet member needs and tackle important issues in the grain-based foods industry.

All current members who successfully bring in new members through May 31, 2011, will receive a “Grain Brains Unite” t-shirt. Members who successfully recruit five or more new members will receive free membership dues for one year. Visit www.grainbrains.org/share to learn more and access special membership applications. Remember, your name must appear in the member referral area of the application. You can also complete the online referral form, and an e-mail will be sent directly to your colleague. Contact the AACC Intl. membership department at +1.651.454.7250 or aaccinfo@scisoc.org if you would like to receive applications via mail, or if you would like them to contact your colleague directly.

Thank you for your involvement in this special campaign to help grow our unique community. Please continue to share the value of membership with your colleagues!

Pierre Faa is a principal scientist with Frito-Lay Inc., a division of PepsiCo, where he has been doing research and development for 11 years on snack foods. He holds both M.S. (1988) and Ph.D. (1996) degrees in grain science and industry from Kansas State University. AACC Intl. member Faa can be reached at faapierre@yahoo.com.