The Face of AACC International’s Future: Preparing for the Next 100 Years

Jan A. Delcour, Chair of the AACC International Board of Directors

As another year draws to a close, I believe it is important to consider where and how we began 2014 and what has transpired over the course of the year. AACC International’s leadership spent a lot of time this year looking at how we as an association have operated throughout recent decades and looking forward into the future. Like our evolving science, AACC must change and adapt to best meet the needs of our members, remain relevant, and continue to be the leading voice and advocate for the advancement of cereal grain science. As we enter 2015, our centennial year, we must examine our association and consider how to best align our knowledge and resources and the talents of our members in a rapidly changing, ever evolving global environment.

The amount of change the world has witnessed over the last 100 years is beyond staggering. When AACC was established in 1915, the world was deeply immersed in World War I, and the Ford Motor Company had been selling cars for just seven years. It was also the year that witnessed the first transcontinental phone call. Flash forward to the onset of 2015 and the world is a completely different place. We communicate with each other through computers and video screens, we don’t have to leave the house to purchase essential household items, and the technologies we use to practice our science could not have been imagined by the scientists who founded our association.

This begs the question, what changes will the next 100 years yield with respect to cereal grain science and our association? Technology has broken down borders. We are truly a global association, and we must adapt and adopt a comprehensive global strategy. We must do more with our colleagues around the globe.

My main priority as the 2014 AACC president was to help us become a more truly international association that meets the needs of cereal grain scientists everywhere. I am happy to inform you that the AACC Board of Directors has initiated talks with the International Association for Cereal Science and Technology (ICC) to identify opportunities for collaboration. We also wish to explore a common vision for a global cereal science organization. Joint working groups have been established and over the next two years will assess the potential opportunities and challenges of undertaking such an endeavor. I know that ICC’s leaders share our vision. If you attended the closing session of the AACC Annual Meeting in Providence, RI, you heard ICC President Joel Abécassis state, “We are engaging in this process to look for a potential joint future between our two organizations with the aim to better meet the needs of all the members of the cereal family.” I am excited by the conversations that have begun and hope that together with ICC, we can build upon the strengths and offerings that each organization possesses to best meet the needs of our scientific community now and in the years to come.

It has truly been my honor to serve as your president this past year. Thank you for entrusting me with our association. It has been a pleasure to serve our science in this capacity. Our association would not be the association it is today without each and every one of you. With that said, I gladly say a special thank you to the 500 members who volunteered their time this year to furthering the association’s mission and initiatives. I also would like to thank the staff at headquarters. They too are aware of the great challenges ahead of us and are doing their utmost to make sure that AACC will remain relevant in the decades to come. A final word of thanks goes to the whole AACC Board of Directors for their input and commitment. It is thus without any hesitation that, with the whole membership, I look forward to remaining involved in AACC International.