A New, “Centennial” Year: Goals, Opportunities, and Responsibilities

Gerard Downey, AACC International President

It’s that time of the year again when we start afresh, take stock of our accomplishments during the previous year, and set out our goals for the upcoming year. As president of AACCI, I would like to take this opportunity to lay out some of the goals I have set myself for my presidency to develop the association and make sure that AACCI remains the global authority in cereal science we all believe and want it to be.

First, I want to remind all of us that this is an association that is based largely on individual members, although corporate contributions also are important and highly valued. The challenge facing us all in 2015 is to ask, “How can I make a contribution to the development of AACCI and to the achievement of its strategic goals?” As I stated in my address at the closing ceremony of our 2014 AACCI Annual Meeting, we all need to be actively involved in some way to ensure its continued development, whether through service on a committee, contributions to regional or annual meetings, or publishing in our flagship journals Cereal Foods World (CFW) and Cereal Chemistry. To help provide a new impetus for member engagement, the AACCI Board of Directors has re-energized the AACCI Division structure through the creation of a new Division Leadership Council that is charged with the provision of clear and dynamic leadership for the divisions. Do not wait to be asked—find a committee or group you are interested in and contact the officers! For those of you who are already officers, spend a little more effort to find and engage young, active members and give them some real responsibility. I am confident they will surprise!

A major initiative, which recently formally commenced, involves an intensive and focused interaction with the International Association for Cereal Chemistry and Technology (ICC) to determine how our two organizations may better serve the global cereal science community in the future. There are no predetermined outcomes envisaged for this interchange of ideas, but there is a fair wind behind us, and I am optimistic we will see significant developments in this area. Given the global economic conditions and the general business environment, there is a strong interest in achieving real change.

At this time, AACCI is also renewing its efforts at real engagement with Asia in general and China in particular. At the recent AACCI Annual Meeting, significant time and energy was devoted to identifying strategies to achieve real engagement, and I now feel we have a clear direction and an impetus to achieve real gains in China.

Finally, 2015 is a significant milestone for AACCI as it reaches its 100th year as an association. Our Centennial Committee has been hard at work devising an appropriate range of celebrations: a new historical timeline of cereal science progress is available on our website at www.aaccnet.org/about/history; CFW is continuing its series of articles highlighting key areas of development in cereal science; the European Section (Cereals&Europe) is holding a Spring Meeting focused on the AACCI Centennial; and we will hold our major celebration in Minneapolis, MN, October 18–21, as part of the 2015 AACCI Annual Meeting.

Let me conclude by wishing you all a Happy New Year—one which sees our member involvement, our scientific leadership, and AACCI grow significantly toward the next 100 years.