

AACC Committee Adopts Oat Bran Definition

In a room crowded by over 50 interested spectators as well as its own 14 members, the AACC Committee on Oat Bran held its third meeting of the year Tuesday morning October 31 in Washington, DC during AACC's annual meeting. One of 24 technical committees forming part of the overall Approved Methods structure, the committee was chaired by Scott Seibert, National Oats Co., who had been appointed by Edith Christensen, chairman of the Approved Methods administrative committee to which all technical committees report.

The committee was formed in response to requests from oat processors for assistance from AACC in establishing a definition for oat bran, in view of confusion among processors as well as industry and home consumers about a uniform identity of the product about which so much was being heard. Reason for the confusion was and is the impossibility by current milling technology of effecting a clean separation of the bran from the endosperm of oat groats (dehulled oat kernels) comparable to separating wheat bran from flour in the milling of wheat. What can be done is to produce an oat bran fraction that is rich in actual oat bran but includes some flour, while leaving some bran in the refined or debranned oat flour. This was never a problem until recent years, because no oat bran was separated and the oat flour of commerce was ground from whole groats or rolled oats.

As a result, it became essential to define in some way what could realistically be called "oat bran." The charges to the committee were 1) to develop such a definition, and 2) to recommend appropriate methodology in support of it.

It was stressed repeatedly that the objective was a definition and not trade standards. This was the reason for including a maximum extraction, despite inability to verify this analytically. The analytical parameters included in the definition were only those needed to back up the word definition, and were not intended to provide a complete specification.

The committee had met twice previous to its public meeting in Washington—in St. Paul in March, and in Chicago in June—and had also sponsored a collaborative study of analytical methods for beta-glucan, for total dietary fiber, and for soluble and insoluble dietary fiber. Samples analyzed by the 14 participating laboratories included oat groats and the

associated oat bran from four processors. Dr. Dennis Gordon, director of the study, discussed the results at the Washington meeting, and expressed satisfaction with each of the methods studied.

After a lengthy discussion that included questions and comments from the audience as well as committee members, the following definition was adopted:

Oat Bran is the food which is produced by grinding clean oat groats or rolled oats and separating the resulting oat flour by sieving bolting, and/or other suitable means into fractions such that the oat bran fraction is not more than 50% of the original starting material, and has a total beta glucan content of at least 5.5% (dry weight basis) and a total dietary fiber content of at least 16.0% (dry weight basis), and such that at least one-third of the total dietary fiber is soluble fiber.

Discussion then turned to methodology, and motions were passed recommending 1) adoption on a first-approval basis of the method used in the collaborative study for beta-glucan, and 2) adoption on a first-approval basis of the method used in the collaborative study for soluble and insoluble dietary fiber.

On the question of the committee's continued existence, it was pointed out the first approval of the methods, if voted by the Approved Methods administrative committee, would result in their appearance in detail in the next supplement to AACC's Approved Methods, but that the recommending committee would be expected to continue surveillance until final approval could be recommended. However, no further action by the committee or by AACC was anticipated on the definition itself.

AACC technical committees report to the Approved Methods administrative committee, the membership of which includes all technical committee chairmen. Accordingly, the oat bran definition and methodology were presented by chairman Seibert the next day to that committee. The definition was concurred in, and the methods were adopted for first approval status as recommended. Details of these actions will appear in the report of the Approved Methods Committee to appear next month with other committee reports from the annual meeting. Dr.

Donald Emery, Emery Associates, has succeeded Edith Christensen as chairman of that committee.

In addition to chairman Seibert, members of the Oat Bran committee or alternates present at the Washington meeting included J.W. DeVries, Patricia Farrar, R.G. Fulcher, D.T. Gordon,

Judith Marlett, J.M. Mills, A.W. Nelson, J.R. Randall, C.S. Rao, D. K. Salisbury, J.J. Wartheson, and P. J. Wood. Staff liaison was provided by E.F. Caldwell, AACC's director of scientific services.