



Purdue University  
**FOOD  
SCIENCE**



SUMMER 2025



**PURDUE**  
UNIVERSITY®

Food Science

# SENAV'S SYNOPSIS



Dear Alumni and Friends,

I hope this note finds you enjoying a well-deserved summer break and taking time to recharge and reflect. As we wrap up another exciting and impactful year in the Department of Food Science at Purdue, I want to share some highlights — and to thank you for being such an important part of our extended community.

This academic year was filled with innovation, discovery and momentum. Our faculty continue to lead high-impact research efforts addressing global food challenges — from advancing gut health through dietary fiber innovations to producing sustainable ingredients through fermentation and exploring the future of food packaging and safety. Their work is shaping the scientific community and informing industry and policy. Scientific curiosity and excellence remain a cornerstone of who we are.

Our Class of 2025 walked across the stage with an average GPA of 3.54 and are launching their careers at companies like PepsiCo, Nestlé, E. & J. Gallo Winery and Kerry, or pursuing advanced degrees at leading institutions, such as Cornell, Wageningen and Purdue. Their accomplishments reflect their talent, hard work and the incredible mentorship they receive from our faculty and staff.

Another bright spot has been the growth and strength of our partnerships. Whether through our Industrial

Associates Program, collaborative research initiatives, alumni engagement or Spring Fest sponsors, we are continually reminded that partnership is the true spirit of Purdue Food Science.

We launched our first fully online certificate program — an exciting new step that extends Purdue Food Science expertise to learners around the world and supports workforce development in a rapidly evolving industry.

I hope you feel as inspired as I do. Every story, achievement and milestone is a reflection of our shared commitment to advancing food science and preparing the next generation of leaders. You are an integral part of our success and our future.

With sincere gratitude and enthusiasm for what's to come

Senay Simsek  
Department Head

*Cover photo: Student teams work on their Soybean Innovation Competition products in the Skidmore lab.*

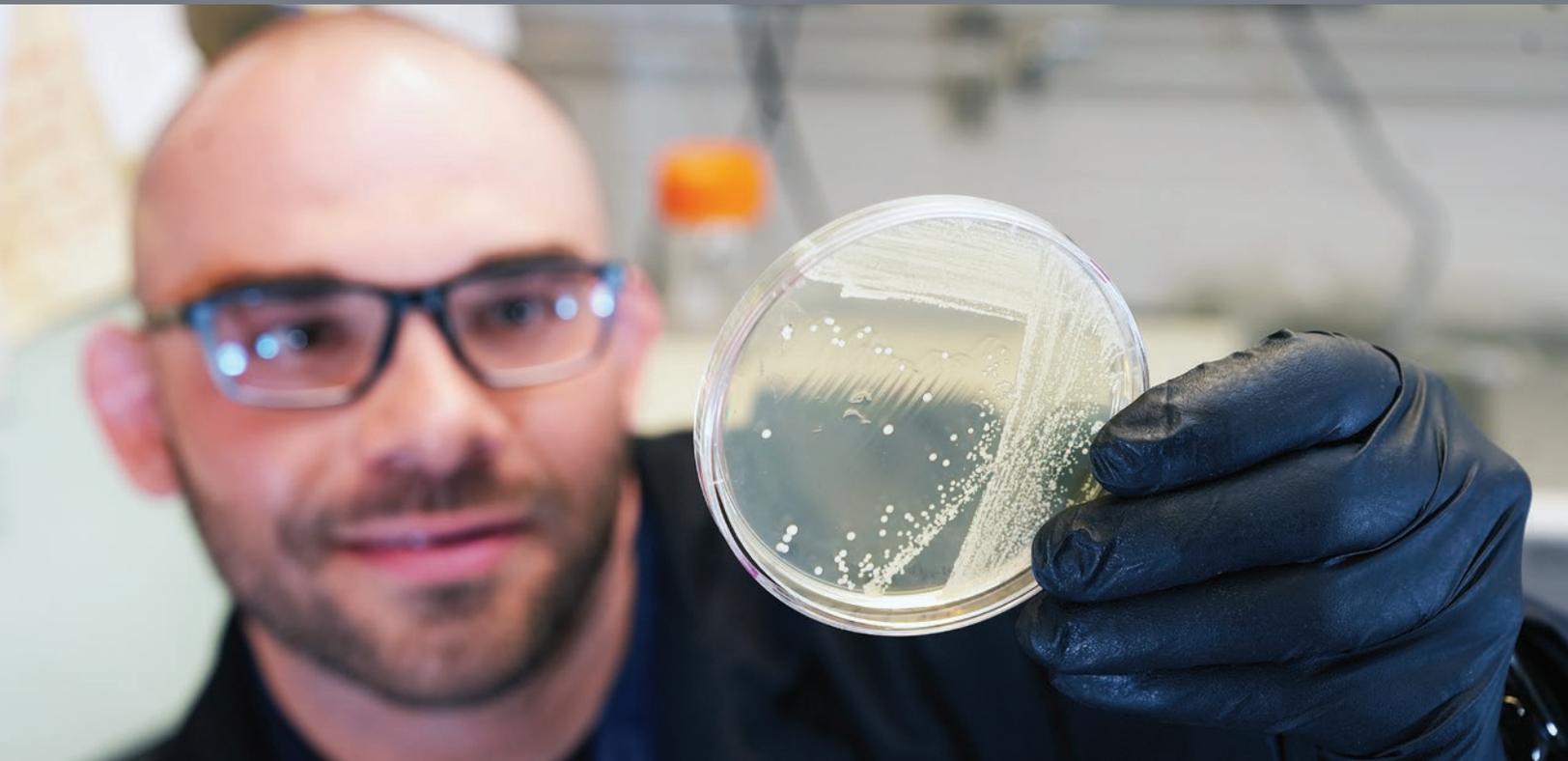
## FOOD SCIENCE BY THE *NUMBERS*

**\$190,000+**  
SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED  
FOR 2024-2025

PURDUE COLLEGE OF  
AGRICULTURE RANKED  
**#3** NATIONALLY,  
**#6** IN THE WORLD

**25**  
FOOD SCIENCE INDUSTRIAL  
ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

OVER  
**\$4.53M**  
IN GRANTS AWARDED  
IN 2024



## OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

PURDUE FOOD SCIENCE LAUNCHES

# FIRST ONLINE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

VIA PURDUE UNIVERSITY ONLINE



FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
[PURDUE.BIZ/FOODGA](https://PURDUE.BIZ/FOODGA)

We're excited to announce that the [Food Science Online Academy website](#) is officially live! Explore the site today to learn more about our new initiative dedicated to professional growth and career advancement in food science.

Registration is open for our inaugural professional certificate: [Food Safety & Quality Assurance Online Professional Certificate](#).

### WHY THIS CERTIFICATE?

This comprehensive certificate provides professionals with a strong foundation in critical areas, such as Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs), Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP), FSMA preventive controls, effective food safety management plans, and compliance with U.S. food safety laws and labeling regulations. The fully online, self-paced curriculum — developed by Purdue faculty and industry experts — offers practical tools, case studies and actionable insights designed for immediate application in your organization.

### PARTNER PERKS

As a valued friend and supporter of Purdue Food Science, enjoy an exclusive **15% discount** on registration. Use code **FSFRIENDS15** at checkout.

*Stay tuned — we have more exciting certificates and courses coming soon!*

# PURDUE STUDENTS 'SOY-PRIZE' ALL

WITH INNOVATIVE SOY-BASED CREATIONS

Written by: Devyn Ashlea Raver



On March 26, the Purdue Memorial Union ballroom buzzed with excitement as Purdue University faculty, students, alumni, family and friends witnessed the unveiling of innovations made from soybeans — all developed by Purdue students. The award ceremony recognized the winners of two competitions: the Department of Food Science's first-ever Soybean Innovation Competition: Version Salty Snacks, and the 31st Student Soybean Innovation Competition, hosted by the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering (ABE).

These contests, a collaboration between the university and the Indiana Soybean Alliance (ISA), showcase the exceptional talent at Purdue that continue to drive the future of agriculture entrepreneurship and food science far beyond the classroom.

The first-place award of \$5,000 in the Soybean Innovation Competition: Version, Salty Snacks was presented to Team Edemamas for their product, Soy Straws. "The idea comes from my personal experience because it is a common snack in Asia," says Rong Yang, co-creator of Soy Straws and a senior in food science.

## FROM BITE-SIZE IDEAS TO FULLY CRAFTED SNACKS

Food science students who participated in the inaugural Soybean Innovation Competition: Version Salty Snacks

were tasked with creating savory snacks that packed 12 grams of protein per serving while ensuring the product remained shelf-stable for at least two weeks.

## ***What makes soy a rising star in the food science industry?***

Elise Whitley, research assistant in the food science department and competition organizer, explained that the human body cannot synthesize nine of the 20 common amino acids that make up proteins in living organisms and must consume them from outside sources. Soy is not only a plant-based protein but is also an essential protein, having all nine essential amino acids.

“

We wanted to create a snack that a lot of Americans have access to. We were thinking it would be great if they were in vending machines, so people can have nutritional snacks right there. These crispy round snacks aren't available on the market, so we were excited to pull from international inspirations.”

— Anna Hicks, co-creator of Soy Straws and a senior in food science

"There's not that many plant-based foods that have all nine essential amino acids like soy," says Whitley.

During the product development phase, students experimented with a range of ingredients, including whole beans, powder, isolate, concentrate, flour and edamame, pouring their creativity into their snacks. As Whitley roamed the Skidmore Food Product Development Laboratory, overseeing the teams — each consisting of two to four food science students — she couldn't hide her excitement, anticipating seeing and tasting the final products.

**EE**  
**Managing the taste with the freeze dryer was a challenge. Our first attempt was weird because our product was too raw. Once we established a good base, our second challenge was deciding the product's flavor. It was challenging thinking about what flavor would be the most appealing in this competition."**

—Alice Duarte, co-creator of Soy Cluster and a doctoral student in food science

Although the competition criteria were fairly flexible, students had their fair share of trials and errors. Teams experimented with seasonings and spices to create snacks jam-packed with protein and also appetizing. After all, while protein content is important, a snack needs to be delicious and savory to attract customers.

Despite the challenges, several teams found the experience to be fulfilling.

"Working with soy so far has been really interesting, especially seeing how it performs on a textural basis," says Hayley Wong Liong, co-creator of Bagel Boom Chips and a senior in food science.

Using processes such as frying, baking and freeze-drying, students perfected their snacks, creating final products and preparing marketing campaigns to present to judges on March 10. The judging panel consisted of Purdue staff, ISA representatives and industry experts.

The final results: **Soy Straws (1st place), SenBae (2nd place), Tempehrados (3rd place), NutriSoy (4th place tie), Puff 'n' Mellow (4th place tie), Bagel Boom Chips, Chicha Chips, Cruncubes, Dippity-Duos, Mame' Mia, Puff 'n' Mellow, Soy Crunch, Soy Clusters and Umami Honey Crackers.**

For some, the experience went beyond the contest itself, as teams drew inspiration from their cultural and personal backgrounds.

"I'm from Nigeria, and my other team members are from India and the U.S., so there's a various group of people involved in developing our product. In Nigeria, there's a type of product called Chin Chin, made from wheat flour, so we wanted to incorporate soybeans into this traditional snack. Another reason I went into this competition is I'm a mom to a 7-month-old. I wanted to create something with proteins that's choke-free, suitable for children and enjoyable to adults as well," says Mary Busayo Oluyemi, co-creator of Cruncubes and a doctoral student in food science.

Looking ahead, Whitley believes that this competition will not only help students develop stronger teamwork skills but enhance their career opportunities and contribute to overall professional growth.

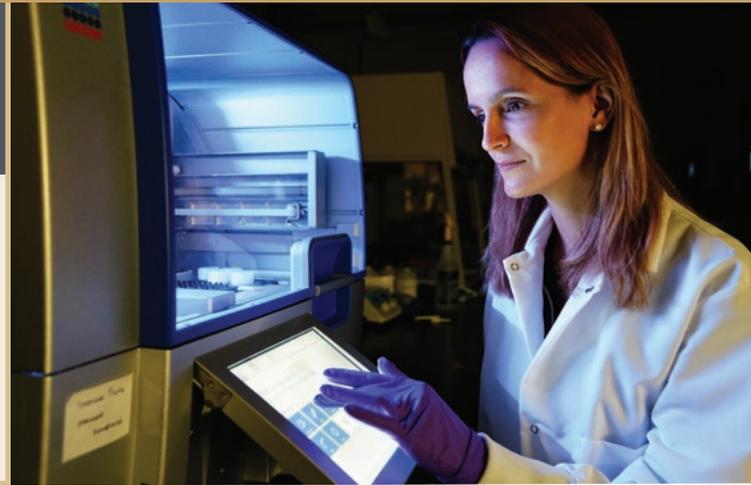
Ben Forsythe, director for sustainability and value creation innovation for Indiana Soybean Alliance, agreed: "We approached this year as a pilot to explore how the idea could take shape, and the results were outstanding. The students developed highly innovative solutions to the challenge, showcasing creativity and setting a strong precedent for the future."



# RESEARCH & DISCOVERY

## MIXING FIBERS FOR GUT HEALTH

Written by: Emily Matchar



### NEW PURDUE RESEARCH SUGGESTS STRONGER HEALTH BENEFITS FOR PREBIOTICS WITH MULTIPLE FIBER TYPES

Scientists have long known that fiber feeds beneficial bacteria in the human gut. Now, Purdue researchers have discovered that combining specific fibers can have a synergistic effect, producing a greater-than-expected number of anti-inflammatory substances. This work has the potential to transform how prebiotics are used to promote health.

Thaisa Cantu-Jungles, a research assistant professor in food science, and Bruce Hamaker, a distinguished professor of food science, recently published their findings in the journal *Gut Microbes*.

“In the gut, there are so many bacteria related to health,” says Cantu-Jungles. “We selected fibers that promote complementary groups of these beneficial microbes.”

Cantu-Jungles and Hamaker have been working for years on using fibers to promote specific gut bacteria. But they didn’t know how combining fibers would change their efficiency. The 16 fibers they selected for the study were known to promote the growth of bacteria with known health benefits, and to support production of anti-inflammatory short-chain fatty acids. These fibers included pectin, from fruit, and glucomannan, from the root of the konjac plant. The mixture was tested on fecal samples from healthy human adults. The number of beneficial bacteria and metabolites produced was measured and compared to samples using single types of fiber.

“We understood that we can align or match fibers to the requirements that bacteria have for food,” Hamaker says. “But what we found was that when fibers were put together in certain ways, we saw some unexpected things happen.”

These unexpected things can be boiled down to three main findings. First, the fiber mixture generated a higher level of short-chain fatty acids than the sum of the fibers used individually. Second, the mixture produced more beneficial

bacteria than expected. And third, the mixture produced a consistent response across individual fecal samples, suggesting it would be effective in individuals with different gut microbiomes.

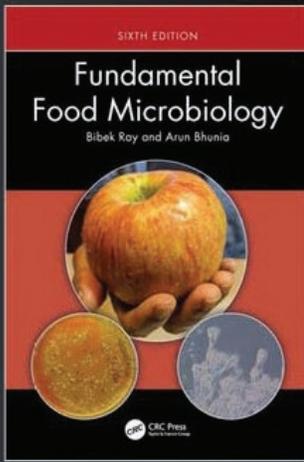
More beneficial bacteria in the gut can translate into better health.

**“About 60 percent of our immune system is in the gut, and if things go badly out of balance, the gut tends to get inflamed, and the inflammation goes into the bloodstream,” Hamaker says. “Over time, inflammation is related to chronic systemic diseases like diabetes, Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s.”**

Reducing gut inflammation can reduce systemic inflammation and — potentially — prevent or treat disease. Some of Cantu-Jungles and Hamaker’s recent work has shown evidence of these positive benefits. One study showed that a specific fiber mixture can be designed to suppress *C. diff*, a bacterium that can cause life-threatening diarrhea. A clinical trial on patients with Parkinson’s disease showed reduced levels of biomarkers for gut and brain inflammation after treatment with a fiber mixture designed for gut-brain axis health. The results were published in the journal *Nature Communications*. Cantu-Jungles and Hamaker are continuing to conduct research on fiber’s impact on IBS, PTSD and diabetes.

Cantu-Jungles and Hamaker plan to continue experimenting with fiber mixtures to optimize results. Next, they hope to move on to clinical trials with the optimized mixtures. Eventually, they’d like to bring prebiotic supplements to market.

“What we’re looking for in a commercial product would be a prebiotic that acts in a targeted, predictable way, that can make something happen fast,” Hamaker says.



**ARUN BHUNIA**



*IN PRINT*

## *'FUNDAMENTAL FOOD MICROBIOLOGY'*

**PUBLICATION TITLE: FUNDAMENTAL FOOD MICROBIOLOGY**

**AUTHORS: ARUN BHUNIA, BIBEK RAY**

**PUBLISHER: CRC PRESS**

**PUBLICATION DATE: JAN. 21, 2025**

### **FROM THE PUBLISHER**

Food microbiology has seen enormous growth in the last decade, fueled by the global pandemic of COVID-19 and continual routine outbreaks with traditional foodborne pathogens. In addition, climate change and global warming also affect agriculture and food production, in turn shifting microbial ecology. Such changes will affect pathogen behavior, spoilage, and microbial growth, impacting food safety and quality. Health-conscious consumers are also looking for foods with alternative protein sources from plants and insects, such as fermented, antioxidant, and micronutrient-rich superfoods. All three areas of food microbiology — beneficial, spoilage, and pathogenic microbiology — are expanding and progressing incredibly. What was once a simple process of counting colonies has become a sophisticated process of sequencing complete genomes, gene editing and biotechnology for starter cultures and probiotics improvement and application of sophisticated analytical tools for microbial analysis.

“Fundamental Food Microbiology, Sixth Edition” captures these developments and broadens coverage of foodborne disease mechanisms, spoilage microbes and microbial inactivation strategies. Written by experts with approximately 60 years of combined experience, the book provides

an in-depth understanding of how to reduce microbial food spoilage, improve intervention technologies and develop effective control methods for different types of foods.

### **ABOUT THE PURDUE AUTHOR**

Arun Bhunia is a professor of food microbiology and comparative pathobiology (courtesy) at Purdue University. His expertise includes microbial pathogenesis, probiotic bioengineering, and foodborne pathogen detection. Bhunia has served on the USDA National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods and is the editor-in-chief of Foods and associate editor for Frontiers in Microbiology, PLoS One, Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems, and BMC Microbiology.

## GOOD NEWS



### **INNOVATION** **IS AT THE HEART** **OF FOOD SCIENCE**

We're thrilled to announce that our product development team was named a finalist in the IFTSA & MARS Product Development Competition! This prestigious international competition, hosted by the Institute of Food Technologists Student Association (IFTSA), challenges student teams to develop innovative, market-ready food products — and our Boilermakers delivered!

The team's creation, PB Jems, earned them a coveted spot as one of six finalist teams who will present their product at IFT FIRST in Chicago this July. They'll be proudly representing Purdue and showcasing their creativity, scientific expertise, and Boilermaker spirit on a global stage.

According to IFT's press release, "PB Jems are a bite-size, vegan, and gluten-free frozen dessert that embrace the nostalgic childhood memory of a peanut butter and jelly (PB&J) sandwich while capitalizing on the health benefits and positive environmental impact of a vegan product. Through the peanut butter coating, creamy oat base, and raspberry and date swirl, PB Jems boast a classic PB&J taste with additional nutritional benefits including being high in fiber and low in added sugar."

Meet the team: Back row: Brady Blay ('28), Dom Iannelli ('27), Samuel Weber ('26), Siddharth Kumar ('25). Front row: Laura Harriss ('25 – team captain), Ashley Mohammed ('25), Jenna Marks ('27), Anastasia Crane ('27). Team advisor: Dr. Hanyu Chen

We wish them luck as they prepare to compete this summer!



### **INDUSTRIAL** **ASSOCIATES** **GATHER FOR SPRING MEETING**

The mission of the Industrial Associates Program is to foster a relationship between the food sciences department and industry, to facilitate the exchange of ideas between academia and industry, and to explore research collaboration and employment opportunities for our graduates. A record number of our Industrial Associates gathered at our spring meeting, where they heard from several of our faculty and staff members about exciting research and Extension happening in the department. Attendees were also invited to celebrate our 2025 outstanding food science alumni at a dinner and awards ceremony.

Industrial Associates members also served as judges for the annual Food Science research poster competition. Food Science junior Shams Adigozalzade brought home first prize, while PhD candidate Halak Mehta's poster earned second place. Thank you to Conagra Brands for sponsoring this contest.

Thank you to our members who helped make this meeting another success! If your company is interested in joining the Industrial Associates program, please contact Jessica Weller at [wellerj@purdue.edu](mailto:wellerj@purdue.edu).

# HER NEXT GIANT LEAP

## MEET EMELIA ASHBY

### SMALL STEPS

I got into food science because I've always loved food. It's a cliché answer, but it's how I learned about the world growing up! I grew up in a rural, small community, and there wasn't a lot of outside cultural influence. So, one of the ways my mom would teach us about different cultures was to cook meals from all around the world. That's how I started appreciating food, and I see it as an adventure, trying new things. It's a powerful tool to connect with people, because everybody's got to eat. Connecting with others is important to me. I also always enjoyed the sciences in high school, so it was a no-brainer to marry those two passions of mine!

When I studied at Purdue, it was clear to me I couldn't have chosen a better career path than food science. I also continued my language learning by minoring in Spanish, and I had great Spanish professors who pushed me out of my comfort zone. I am a student contributor to the [Food Entrepreneurship and Manufacturing Institute](#), which has taught me valuable lessons about working on a team. All of these experiences led to where I want to go next, and I hope I can use these experiences to help others succeed.

### MY NEXT GIANT LEAP

After graduation, I'll go on to work for [Lactalis](#), a dairy operation based in France. I chose Lactalis because throughout the interview process, it was evident that they are committed to investing in the next generation of food scientists. I was one of five students nationwide selected to represent my company abroad, and this aligned with my commitment to furthering my education and living globally. Lactalis sponsors a program called I2FA, in which I'll go to grad school for two years in France to study agricultural engineering. At the same time, I'll be getting real-world experience in their dairy factories. I'll also be learning French! I feel like I'm continuing what always interested me in food — how science and culture are intertwined.



### THE FUTURE OF FOOD SCIENCE

After I get my degree, I'll take all this knowledge and cultural skills back to the United States. Lactalis has placed me in Casa Grande, Arizona, in a mid-tier management role. I'm excited to see how I'll like being in a leadership position. I'll bring a unique experience to the table, having that experience living, working and studying abroad, and seeing how different cultures structure leadership will help me become an innovative and creative leader.

My biggest strength that will help me be a leader in agriculture will be being able to speak to people in their native language. There's a huge French influence at Lactalis, and many working at their Casa Grande location speak Spanish. Food is perhaps the most global industry. Our common denominator is food, and however that ties into culture is significant. I think what makes me shine is being able to connect with people on a deeper level, whether that be through culture, food or language, and that's going to change the industry for the better. Learning food science and a new language throughout college prepared me for my future.



## GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

### SPOTLIGHT

*Written by: Emily Matchar*

# HAN CHEN

Not everyone gets to live their childhood dreams, but Han Chen is living hers.

When Chen was a girl in Guangzhou, China, her scientist father would bring her to his university lab and show her the equipment, demonstrating the use of pH strips and doing other small experiments.

To Chen, it was magical.

“When people asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up, I always said ‘a scientist,’” she says.

Today, Chen is a PhD candidate in food science, working on food safety.

“I’m really lucky to have grown up surrounded by academia,” she says. Her mother also works at a university. She began her undergraduate studies in food science in China, then transferred to Purdue her sophomore year.

“I’m a person who wants to explore new environments,” she says. “I wanted to get exposed to other worlds.”

In her junior year, she met Betty Feng, an associate professor of food science leading the food safety human factor lab, who had just arrived at Purdue herself. Feng became Chen’s advisor and sparked her interest in studying human factors in food safety, a field she previously knew little about.

“She is the one who really brought me into this field,” Chen says.

She’s never looked back, continuing at Purdue for her master’s and now her PhD, working in Feng’s lab.

#### THE RESEARCH

Chen studies food safety culture and education — exploring strategies to strengthen the culture of food safety in the

food supply chain to improve their performance and reduce the risks of foodborne illness.

“People are really critical in the food supply chain from farm to fork,” she says. “We have farmers, processors, manufacturers, restaurant workers, all the way to consumers. People are the frontline defenders of foodborne illness.” Chen looks at understanding people’s needs and gaps in food safety, and exploring how these gaps might be filled with better knowledge or resources.

Her research focuses on the low-moisture food industry — think dried products like nuts and flours, which aren’t traditionally considered risky. But these foods are not exempt. Two major outbreaks of salmonellosis were associated with raw California almonds in the early 2000s, which triggered a major transformation in food safety management and culture in the almond industry. Chen’s current work focuses on understanding how these changes happened, the factors driving the evolution of food safety in the industry, and how similar reforms could be implemented in other sectors. She also participates in Extension work, interacting directly with stakeholders.

“I see my role and our lab’s role as the bridge between wet-lab research and real-world needs,” Chen says.

### OPPORTUNITIES

When Chen started at Purdue, she considered herself very introverted. But, with Feng’s encouragement, she grew more confident interacting with human participants. Feng shared her own techniques, recommended books and role-played as both interviewer and interviewee to help her prepare. Now she shares her techniques with newer graduate students and mentors undergraduate student researchers.

“We’re a really collaborative lab,” Chen says. “We support each other, and we’re willing to provide feedback.”

She also appreciates the resources provided by the wider Purdue community. “I enjoy going to the writing lab, and we have a great library,” she says. “I also like the environment here at Purdue. It’s a peaceful little town and beautiful in the fall.”

Chen’s work has earned her a Bilsland Dissertation Fellowship, which supports outstanding PhD candidates during their final year.

### FUTURE PLANS

Chen will graduate this spring, and plans to remain in the field of food safety. Whether that’s in academia or industry, she’s “still exploring.”

When she’s not working, Chen enjoys food — no, her work doesn’t put her off eating! She’s especially fond of hot pot and loves exploring Chicago’s Chinatown.



# WELCOME TO PURDUE FOOD SCIENCE!

Please join us in welcoming the newest Purdue Food Science faculty and staff members!

### *New staff in 2024-2025*

- **George Nyomba** — laboratory operations specialist, FEMI
- **Jessica Weller** — external relations and career services specialist
- **Allison Wells** — fermentation science specialist
- **Anna Catherine Yerian** — research operations administrator, When Blue Is Green project

NAVIGATING THE

# WINE WORLD

NANCIE OXLEY'S PATH FROM PURDUE TO HEAD WINEMAKER

Written by: Ericka Bethel



## A LOVE OF SCIENCE AND MATH IS WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

What started as a love of science and math has led Nancie Oxley to the largest winery in Michigan. The vice president and head winemaker at St. Julian Winery and Distillery traces her start in the industry back to her love of science and something more — "a deep love for creating products for others to enjoy. Products that would be a part of special moments and memories."

Unsure of how to apply her interests in college, Oxley recalls her older sister bringing home information about the new food science major being offered at Purdue. She met with Phil Nelson, the first head of the department, and learned about the range of opportunities. Oxley decided to major in food manufacturing operations, a combination of food science, engineering and management.



## FINDING HER FIT: FROM WASHING GLASSWARE TO BECOMING A VP

Through her early coursework, she discovered different food science careers but didn't know which direction to take. She started working in former department head and professor emerita Suzanne Nielsen's lab, washing glassware at night after students had completed their lab work. Oxley laughs now, looking back: "Every step has been a learning moment."

The summer before her junior year she landed a job with the Indy International Wine Competition. "At the time, I didn't know much about wine. Sally Linton was the marketing director, and Richard Vine ran the competition. They were both wonderful in helping me gain exposure to various areas that would benefit me," she said.

She credits that role as introducing her to the wine industry. "That initial experience gave me the encouragement I needed to explore further if the wine industry was a fit for me. I can't thank the faculty and staff at Purdue enough for helping me find my way in the industry."

After the Indy International Wine Competition, Vine, now professor emeritus of enology, helped Oxley schedule five tours at California vineyards he had connections with.

"I toured each winery in California in the fall of 2000. And when I returned, Dr. Vine said that any of the five vineyards I had toured would accept me as an intern."

With plenty of options, Oxley selected Geyser Peak Winery in Sonoma and interned under the tutelage of Daryl Groom, a well-respected winemaker not only in the United States but in Australia as well. He was making Grange for Penfolds before being recruited to the United States.

This hands-on learning experience solidified for Oxley that this was the industry she belonged in. "We worked crazy hours — most days from 6 a.m. to 8 or 9 p.m. — in that

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**I could not be more thankful for the job I get to do every day. I love my job and get to take science and make it creative. I become an artist every day by creating new wines.**

**This is a dream come true!"**

*—Nancie Oxley, St. Julian Winery and Distillery*

internship. We worked whatever time it took to get the grapes in the door and do what we needed daily to produce our product." Oxley came to realize that she wanted to be involved in the production aspect of winemaking.

She returned to Purdue to finish her last semester and sent out her resume in search of a full-time role in the wine industry. The applications went out and the job offers came in. "I had three offers upon graduation, and I remember talking with Dr. Vine. We went through the pros and cons of each of them, and he said, 'You know you're going to learn the most at St. Julian. If that's what you want, learn about wine from grape to the bottle. You're going to get the whole picture at that winery.' So I accepted the job here in Michigan and have never looked back," she said.

### **23 YEARS OF GROWTH, INNOVATION AND ACCOLADES**

Oxley joined St. Julian in 2002 as the assistant winemaker, moved to head winemaker in 2010, and became vice president in 2017. One thing that drew her to St. Julian was the founder and owners' philosophy that to be an actual Michigan winery, they desire to support local agriculture and to make wine from the fruit grown in their backyard.

"We are very committed to Michigan agriculture. I'm proud to say that," Oxley said. "We have some other large wineries in our state that are outsourcing from other regions in the United States or even outside of our country, but we are committed to Michigan agriculture."

Oxley is proud of the products she and her St. Julian team produce, many of which have been award-winning. They work with 53 grape varieties, and their average harvest is about 4,200 tons of grapes. Additionally, they work with nearly 300 tons of Montmorency tart cherries annually.

While the wines have received recognition throughout the years, Oxley has also experienced professional success. She has earned a master's degree in agribusiness management from Purdue University and an MBA from Indiana University's Kelley School of Business. Oxley also received Purdue University's Food Science Outstanding Alumna Award and the Distinguished Agriculture Alumni Award, and was included in the Fruit + Vegetable 40 Under 40 Class of 2019 by Fruit Growers News and Vegetable Growers News for making substantial strides in the industry.

Oxley looks back with gratitude for each step that led her to where she is today and to those who helped her along the way.



# AWARDS

Congratulations to our faculty, staff and students who received awards this spring!

## Faculty



- **Amanda Deering:** Rising Star Award, Office of Engagement; Student Impact Award, Learning Communities
- **Bruce Hamaker:** Harris Award, FST — Ohio State University
- **Jen-yi Huang** — promoted to full professor

## Graduate Students

- **Alice Duarte:** Honey Competition — 2nd place, National Honey Board
- **Amadeep Singh:** Conference of Food Engineering Travel Award, SoFE; Charles Stumbo Paper Competition, Honorable Mention, Institute for Thermal Processing Specialists
- **Busayo Oluyemi:** Dr. Rodolfo Pinal People's Choice Award, Student Soybean Innovation Competition; Oral Research Review Competition, 3rd place, MANRRS; Social Justice Award, Black Graduate Student Association at Purdue; Purdue University Say It In 6 competition, 2nd place; Humanitarian Award, Black Graduate Student Association at Purdue
- **Dahye Lee:** Honey Competition — 4th place, National Honey Board
- **Dalne Sinclair:** Honey Competition — 3rd place, National Honey Board
- **Felicitas Tuku Ewunsoh:** Engagement Leadership Award, Black Graduate Student Association at Purdue
- **Fransheska Semidey:** Honey Competition — 4th place, National Honey Board
- **Jathya Karunathilaka:** Honey Competition — 3rd place, National Honey Board
- **Lauren Sofia Yepes Fernandez:** 1st place poster winner, Fermentation Frenzy
- **Luping Xu:** Honey Competition — 4th place, National Honey Board
- **Manoj Sawale:** Travel Award, NSF; Charles Stumbo Paper Competition, 2nd place
- **Narakorn Tanasupawimon:** Honey Competition — 3rd place, National Honey Board
- **Nicholas Gallina:** Bilsland Fellowship
- **Rahul Kamath:** Beverage Scholarship, ISBT
- **Sarah Eckrote:** Travel Award, PGSG
- **Victory Igwe:** 2025 ICMC Gary Lamie Graduate Assistantship, ICMC



## FOOD SCIENCE DEPARTMENT HONORS OUTSTANDING ALUMNI

The Food Science department is extremely proud of those we count as our alumni family. In April, we honored our 2025 recipients of the Outstanding Food Science Award and the Food Science Early Career Award. Congratulations to our outstanding alumni!

### Outstanding Food Science Award

- **Carrie Burbrink** — ITQ manager, integrated product solutions, General Mills
- **Hui Hui Chong** — director, research applications, E. & J. Gallo
- **Neal Clark** — principal food scientist, Schwan's Company
- **Rodney Green** — senior director of R&D, Conagra Brands
- **Ashley Maners** — senior manager of corporate quality, Red Gold
- **Dianne Ripberger** — senior director of external innovation, PepsiCo
- **Sasha Ilyukhin** (2019 recipient) — senior vice president, global processing services, Tetra Pak

### Food Science Early Career Award

- **Chris Cheng** — associate principal scientist, PepsiCo
- **Jonathan Kershaw** — associate professor of food science, Brigham Young University

## Undergraduate Students

- **Bethany Champley:** Outstanding freshman
- **Grace Samra:** Outstanding sophomore
- **Galit Beraja:** Outstanding junior
- **Ava Ralston:** Outstanding senior
- **Ann Marie Uhlmansiek:** Honey Competition — 1st place, National Honey Board
- **Anna Hicks:** Student Soy Food Competition — Innovation track, ISA
- **Antonella Vargas:** Honey Competition — 2nd place, National Honey Board
- **Claudia Guillen:** Honey Competition — 5th place, National Honey Board; Student Soy Food Competition — innovation track, 3rd place, ISA
- **Kai Tran:** Honey Competition — 4th place National Honey Board
- **Karn Phureesitr:** Soybean Competition — 2nd place, ISA
- **Natcha Ngaosuphanvongs:** Soybean Competition — 2nd place, ISA; Honey Competition — 3rd place, National Honey Board
- **Nicolas Rosy:** Honey Competition — 5th place, National Honey Board; Student Soy Food Competition — innovation track, 3rd place, ISA
- **Rong Yang:** Student Soy Food Competition — innovation track, ISA
- **Samuel Webber:** Honey Competition — 1st place, National Honey Board
- **Sara Thomason:** Student Soy Food Competition — innovation track, ISA
- **Shams Adigozalzade:** Student Soy Food Competition — innovation track, 3rd place, ISA; Honey Competition — 5th place, National Honey Board
- **Thanh Vo:** Honey Competition — 2nd place, National Honey Board



2024-2025 Outstanding Undergraduate Student award winners



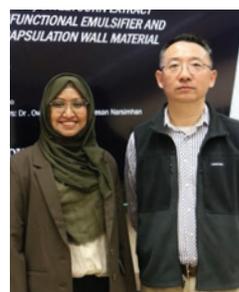
## PURDUE FOOD SCIENCE SPRING GRADUATES

Congratulations to the Class of 2025!

### PhD

Han Chen  
Jose Antonio Haro Reyes

### Master of Science



Kamrun Nahar  
Kevin Rodriguez  
Maldonado  
Maxwell Voorn

### Bachelor of Science

Hunter Adams  
Kazi Ahmed  
Matthew Aloj  
Emelia Ashby  
Maya Brudz  
Hannah Conklin  
Alexandra Darnell  
Gregory Demopulos  
Amanda Dziedzic

Audrey Eppert  
Allison Greig  
Jenna Hall  
Laura Harriss  
Natalie Haynes  
Minghao He  
Johanna Hicks  
Leah Keesling  
Teresa King  
Katherine Maciejewski  
Ashley Mohammed  
Kathryn Moran  
Anna Morgan  
Linh Le Tra Nghiem  
Antonella Vargas Odio  
William Petrusson  
Ashley Qubain  
Ava Ralston  
Lillian Stone  
Sara Thomason  
Thanh Vo  
Lauren Vollmer  
Bailey Williams  
Hayley Wong Liong  
Stephen Wong  
Rong Yang  
Elizabeth Zhang  
Bachelor of Science  
Richard Zhang



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EA/EO

**SUMMER 2025**

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*The Class of 2025 took their next giant leap when they received their diplomas on May 18. While balancing the challenging course load of a food science student and maintaining an average GPA of 3.54, these individuals served in multiple leadership positions, secured competitive internships and jobs and made lifelong connections. Our graduates have already begun their careers with such companies as PepsiCo, Conagra, Kerry, Nestle, E. & J. Gallo, Dairy Farmers of America and more. Others have chosen to continue their education by attending graduate school at institutions including Cornell University, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Wageningen University and Purdue University. Congratulations, Class of 2025!*

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TODAY!**

