



## DEPARTMENT NEWS

Updates from the Department of Food Science and Technology  
and The Food Processing Center



### From the Desk of Dr. Martini

I hope you all had a great Spring break! I am sure it went faster than we all wished!

I'd like to use this space to remind everybody about the importance of lab safety... We have had several issues related to lab safety lately and I wanted to remind everyone that it is everybody's responsibility (undergraduate and graduate students, TAs, Instructors, etc.) to keep our workspace clean and safe. The lab work ends when we finish cleaning and when we double check that everything is clean and safe to use by somebody else. Please be proactive and help us work in a safe environment. We have the luxury of having somebody like Angie that cares about us and that can help us with this; but it is not her responsibility to clean after the labs. She can help us get organized, answer questions that we may have, and troubleshoot when something happens, but each one of us is expected to clean after ourselves. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns about this issue.

On a happier note, I want to thank everybody who helped with the FFA event this year. We had another successful event thanks to everyone who helped.

I also wanted to update you on the Technical Support position (Graye's position). A candidate has been identified, and we are in the process of making an offer. Thanks to Susie and the selection committee for all the efforts on this!

As you already know, we had a few recently promoted and tenured faculty. Congratulations to Kurt for being promoted to Associate Professor with Tenure and to Andreia and Hyun-Seob for being promoted to Full Professors! We are very proud of you and very happy to have you in our department!

In addition, help me congratulate Amanda Ramer-Tait and Andreia Bianchini for being the recipients of the **Outstanding Undergraduate Research Mentor Award** and the **College Distinguished Teaching Award**, respectively! Well-deserved awards!

Finally, I wanted to highlight the papers that were published this last month:

F Alavi, K Majumder, ON Ciftci. 2025. Designing Curcumin Particles with Improved Bioactivity and Bioavailability Using Aerogels and Supercritical Fluid Technology. *ACS Applied Materials & Interfaces*, 17:19236-19275 (<https://doi.org/10.1021/acsami.4c17001>).

APR Charles, B Rajasekaran, N Awasti, P Choudhary, Anandu Chandra Khanashyam, Kaustav Majumder, Ying Wu, Ravi Pandiselvam, Tony Z. Jin. 2025. Emerging chitosan systems incorporated with polyphenols: Their applications in intelligent packaging, active packaging, and nutraceutical systems - A comprehensive review. *International Journal of Biological Macromolecules*. Volume 308, Part 3, May 2025, 142714 (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijbiomac.2025.142714>).

L Skrabal, H Basma, K Dhar, X Shi, A Ramer-Tait, BD Lowes. 2025. Gut microbial extracts modulate IPSC-cardiomyocyte electrical activity and expression of genes involved in dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM). *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*. 85 (12\_Supplement) 1371 ([https://doi.org/10.1016/S0735-1097\(25\)01855-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0735-1097(25)01855-8)).

Congratulations to all on getting your work published!



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## New Hire Josh Russo Joins the team

We are thrilled to announce the latest addition to our department. His background and skills will undoubtedly contribute to our continued success. Let's get to know him a bit better.

Position: *Grad Coordinator*

Background: *Bachelors degree from Chadron State, Masters Degree from Done University, and a certificate in HR Management. UNMC College of Dentistry, UNMC Department of Neurological Sciences.*

Role in the Department: *In his new role, Josh will be working with both the Grad Programs and the Curriculum Committee.*

Fun Facts: *He enjoys activities with his two little girls, anything Husker, fantasy sports, he follows current events and reads at least one book a month, he has lived in either Nebraska Communities.*

*We are confident that Josh will make a significant contribution to our department. Please join us in welcoming him and supporting him as he settles into his new role.*



## **Congratulations are in order!**



Please congratulate grad student David Fabian Gomez Quintero on being nominated and receiving the **Graduate Student Excellence in Mentoring Award**. David will be attending a luncheon on April 14th to receive his award. Congrats and well done!

Congratulations are also in order to grad student Prabhashis Bose who's master's thesis was awarded the **Distinguished Thesis Award**. He will also be attending the luncheon on April 14th to accept his award. Well done Prabhashis.





## Tour the Osborne Legacy Complex

You have been invited by the Nebraska Athletic department to tour the **Osborne Legacy Complex (OLC) main floor on Tuesday, April 15 or Wednesday, April 16. Tours will begin at 2:00 pm and end at 4:30 pm.** The tour will last approximately 30 minutes and will **start at the main entrance that leads into the Hall of Champions.** (This tour will not include either of the football only floors.) Please click this link (<https://forms.office.com/r/GPZ4RVVBnd>) to RSVP for the date you will attend the tour.

## Stay Safe During Tornado Season

As tornado season approaches, it's crucial to be prepared and know what to do when a tornado strikes. Here are some essential safety guidelines to help you stay safe during a tornado:

1. *Stay informed and keep an eye on the weather.*
2. *If a tornado siren goes off, take shelter immediately. If you are outside or in a vehicle, seek shelter in a study building or lie flat in a low-lying area.*
3. *Avoid Windows*
4. *Protect yourself: you can use jackets or blankets to protect your head and body.*
5. *Stay alert: listen to local news for updates and instructions.*
6. *Check for Injuries: provide first aid to anyone in need.*
7. *Inspect for damage: Before walking around, be sure there aren't any exposed electrical wires, structural damage or water damage.*

By following these guidelines, you can reduce the risks and ensure everyone's safety.

For locations of tornado shelters please click the link below and scroll to your location. Tornado shelters are located on the first floors. **Do not** use the elevators in the event of a tornado.

[Tornado%20Drill%20Memo.pdf](#)



**EXPLORE**

**FOOD SCIENCE**

**SUMMER CAMPS**



**2025**



**3 DAY CAMP**



**The STEM in Your Apple**

**JUNE**  
**04-06**  
8:30 am - 4:30 p

**1 DAY CAMPS**



**Behind the Scoop:  
The Science of Ice Cream**

**MAY**  
**29**  
8:30 am - 4:30 p



**Pizza, The Rise of the Dough**

**JUNE**  
**19**  
8:30 am - 4:30 p



**Bean to Bar:  
The Science of Chocolate**

**JULY**  
**22**  
8:30 am - 4:30 p



**N**  
DEPARTMENT OF  
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

**N**  
FOOD PROCESSING CENTER  
Department of Food Science  
and Technology

**IDEA**  
**EPSCOR**  
NEBRASKA

**KimmeL**  
RICHARD P. KIMMEL & LAURINE  
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

# The Business Brief: Updates from the Business Center

Need Travel training or a refresher?

Training opportunities are available in the Bridge tile located in Firefly.



The next training opportunity will be Thursday April 24, 2025 on zoom. You must register through Bridge to receive the zoom link to attend



## PROMOTED FACULTY

Congratulations to the following faculty on being promoted.

Kurt Piepenbrink– Associated Professor with Tenure

Andreia Bianchini– Full Professor

Hyun-Seob– Full Professor

*Exciting News!*

## AWARDS

- \* Congratulations to Andreia for being selected as the recipient of the **College Distinguished Teaching Award**. What a great recognition!



- \* Congratulation to Amanda for being selected as this year's recipient of the **Outstanding Undergraduate Research Mentor Award**. Your mentorship and support of our students is unmeasurable.



- \* **2025 IAFNS Emerging Leader Award- Food Safety**

Congratulations to Byron Chaves on being selected as a winner in the 2025 Emerging Leaders Award in food safety. Byron will be given a slot to present at the IAFNS Summer Annual Science Symposium in June. Byron will be allowed to present in a dedicated session for award winners. Each awardee is asked to give a 20-minute talk on one aspect of their research. A plaque in recognition of this accomplishment will be presented to him at the symposium, which will be held at the National Press Club in Washington D.C. Again, congratulations to Byron on his award.

<https://ianrnews.unl.edu/article/unl-food-safety-expert-receives-national-emerging-leader-award>



## THE FACULTY FORUM: HIGHLIGHTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### The World Mycotoxin Forum® – 15th Conference

Dr. Andreia Bianchini presented at the World Mycotoxin Forum in Salzburg Austria on April 7th. This forum is the leading international meeting series on mycotoxins, bringing together a holistic program covering the latest issues with mycotoxin management.

Dr. Bianchini's presentation was entitled "Mycotoxin Awareness: Paving the Way to Food Safety and Security in Central America"



She was very excited to be presenting as we celebrate 65 years of research in mycotoxins.

### *Exciting News!*

#### Book Citation

Congratulations to Joe Baumert and Shyamali Jayasena for working on a book chapter which was recently published. The citation is below.

**Baumert, J. L., & Jayasena, S. (2025). Lateral flow devices for detecting allergens in food. In *Handbook of food allergen detection and control* (pp. 191-202). Woodhead Publishing.**

<https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-821733-7.00005-7>

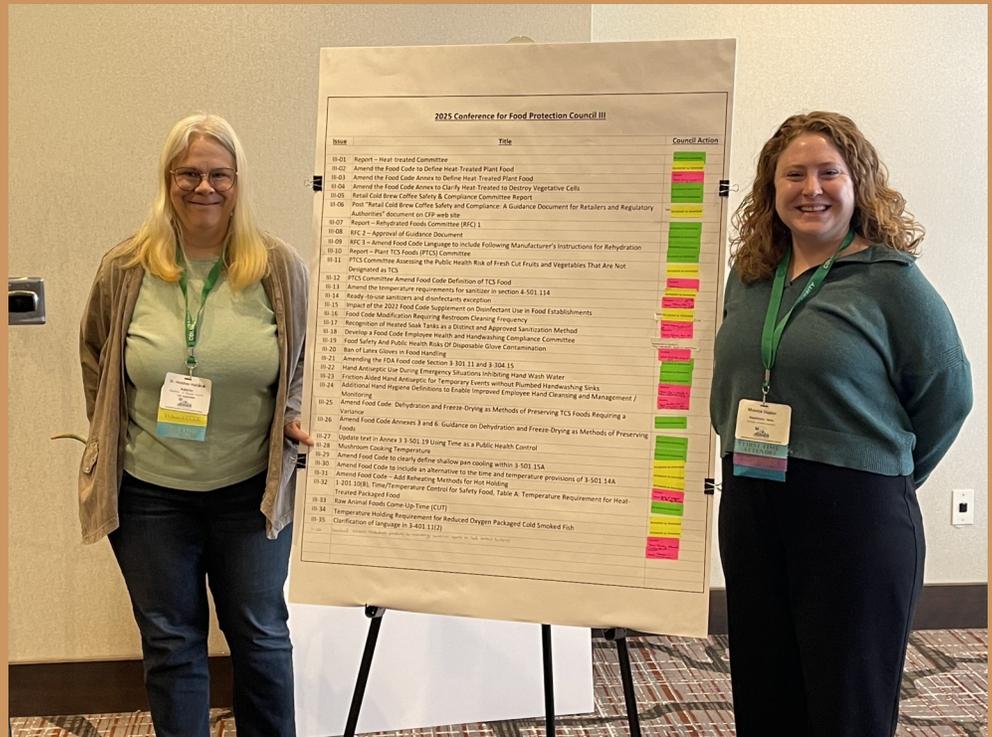


## THE FACULTY FORUM: HIGHLIGHTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Conference for Food Protection

Professor **Heather Hallen-Adams** attended the Conference for Food Protection in Denver, March 24-27, where she and Monica Dupler of the Colorado Department of Public Health presented a proposal to include mushroom cooking guidelines in the FDA Food Code, following several recent outbreaks due to uncooked or undercooked mushrooms. The proposal was accepted with amendment, and Dr. Hallen-Adams will serve on a committee to develop specific guidelines for different mushroom species of interest.

*Exciting News!*



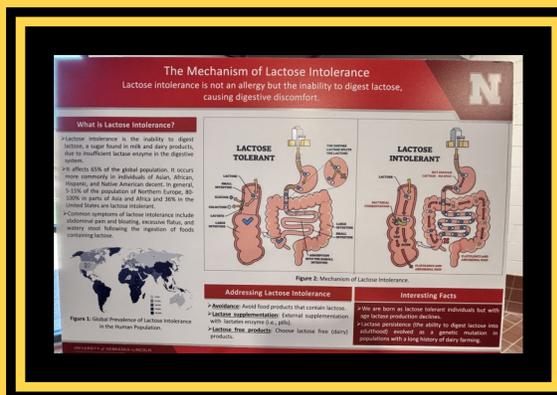
# RECRUITING ROUNDUP: UPDATES AND INSIGHTS

## Thank You to All

Thank you, again, to all who helped with FFA this year. It is a huge undertaking and it's success depends on many hands. From extra clean up to vacating your spaces to waking up before the crow caws, your help is greatly appreciated!

Recruiting season continues with some recurring events like Discovering Engineering Days, FCCLA Baking Competition, Omaha high school visits (E Campus), and Science & Engineering Fairs, to name a few. From a basic recruiting standpoint, we look to inform about Food Science, share a great, engaging activity with students, and become a friendly, inviting face of FDST. Additional goals include continuing to offer amazing Food Science camps, expanding/increasing our exposure, and creating new and varied engagement activities.

A few new activities we've added to our offerings include 'It's Crunch Time: Unlocking the Magic of Freeze-Dried Foods' developed by Grace Danao, 'The Science of Lactose Free Milk' developed by Dr. Bianchini, Dr. Stratton, and Ram Shrestha and 'Beverage Creation Station' developed by Rossana Villa-Rojas. Here are a few photos from some of the new activities.



## I Heart NU Day:

We are thrilled to share the success of our recent **I Heart NU Cookies Project**. This initiative, in collaboration with Food Science & Technology students, resulted in the creation of uniquely Nebraskan cookies for the Nebraska Unicameral. The cookies were developed in our Product Development lab and baked and packaged with love in our Pilot Plant!

### Project Highlights Include:

- **Local Ingredients:** Our cookies feature popped sorghum and sorghum flour, celebrating Nebraska's rich agricultural heritage.
- **Innovative Trends:** We introduced a sugar-free cookie using monk fruit concentrate and natural sweeteners, along with a Scarlet and Cream cookie that uses natural red food coloring.

**Collaborative Effort:** This project brought together our product development team, student workers, and the entire Food Science & Technology department, showcasing the power of community and teamwork.

We are incredibly proud of the dedication and hard work that went into this project and are excited to share these delicious creations with our Nebraska legislature.

Check out our I Heart NU Cookie video: <https://mediahub.unl.edu/media/24471>

## New Ice Cream Flavor Honoring Nebraska State FFA:

We are excited to announce the launch of our latest ice cream flavor, **Corduroy Candy Cookie**, in honor of the Nebraska State FFA Convention. This delightful new flavor was featured at the CASNR Signing Day event held at the Coliseum on City Campus.

**Corduroy Candy Cookie** is a rich peanut butter ice cream with delicious inclusions of cookie dough, chocolate chunks, and vibrant blue and yellow chocolate candies. This unique combination celebrates the spirit and dedication of FFA members and their contributions to agriculture and leadership.

We unveiled this flavor at the Dairy Store on Thursday afternoon following the CASNR Signing Day event. We are thrilled to share that the Dairy Store achieved approximately \$10,000 in net sales over the three-day period of the state FFA convention.

We invite you to visit the Dairy Store and indulge in this delicious new flavor!



# Food Processing



# NFHC



N E B R A S K A  
**FOOD FOR HEALTH**  
C E N T E R *at the University of Nebraska*

The Nebraska Food for Health Center (NFHC) will be undergoing its Center Performance Review April 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>.

The center's performance is being reviewed by an outstanding external review team that includes Dr. David Threadgill (Tom and Jean McMullin Chair of Genetics, Texas A&M University), Dr. Sharon Donovan (Melissa E. Noel Endowed Chair in Nutrition and Health, University of Illinois), and Dr. Michael Grusak (USDA National Program Leader in Nutrition and Food Quality and Professor in the Children's Nutrition Center, Baylor College of Medicine).

NFHC began preparing for the review at its 2024 Fall retreat and the different self-study sections of the review document were developed by Dr. Devin Rose (Research Directions), Dr. Amanda Ramer-Tait (Strategic Relationships), Dr. Kaustav Majumder (Financial Sustainability), Dr. Jennifer Auchtung (Training and Outreach) along with NFHC staff (Sharon Czarnek and Jill Hochstein).