



**IN OUR GRIT,
OUR GLORY.**

DEPARTMENT NEWS

Updates from the Department of Food Science and Technology



FROM THE DESK OF DR. MARTINI

Well! I can't believe that January is over! This past month has gone by so quickly! And I have so many things that I want to share with you that I don't know where to start!

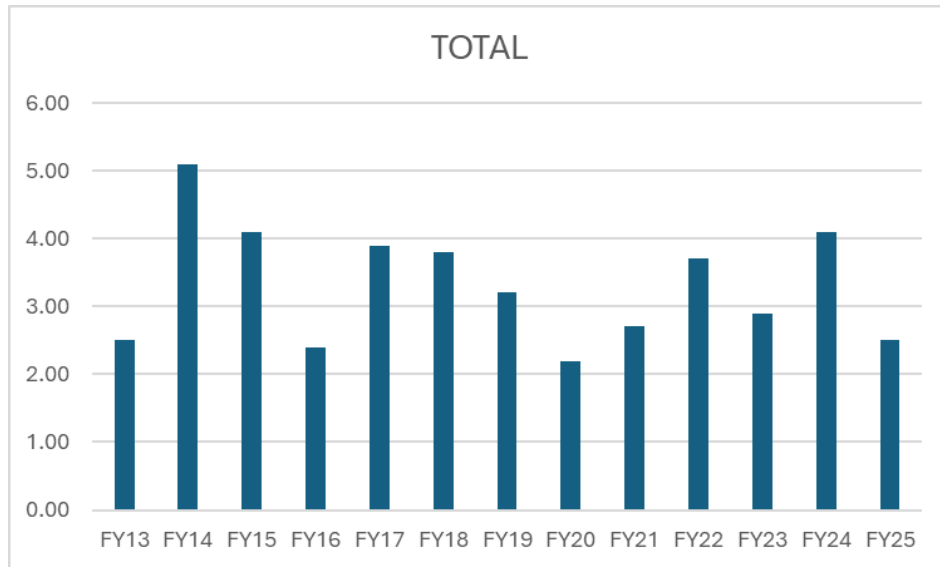
Retreat: As you all know, we had a retreat on January 13th. I am very happy about the things that we accomplished and learned during the retreat, and even though I was excited to see so many students join us for lunch, I wish they would have stayed for the afternoon sessions! They were a lot of fun, and we learned a lot of new things! Thanks to all that came and participated! I also wanted to share with you the results from the survey that Susie sent a out regarding the retreat... It is hard to summarize everybody's opinion, but I'll do my best here... Out of the 16 responses that we received 56% rated their level of satisfaction for the retreat with a 4 (out of 5) and 31% rated it with a 3. Approximately 44% and 31% of the participants were either somewhat or very satisfied with the choice of outside speakers and 31% were somewhat satisfied with the materials provided; however, 50% of the respondents were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the materials provided (something to work on!). About 75% and 19% of the people were either somewhat or very satisfied with the relevance of the topics covered and 56% and 12% were somewhat and very satisfied with the overall content of the retreat. Participants were very satisfied (50%) or neither satisfied or dissatisfied (25%) with time management and some specific comments included that the retreat was too long... Overall, people thought that the retreat met their expectations (75%). Highlights of the event included the morning discussions, the DEI speaker, and Gallup information. Although some people didn't like the Gallup strength talk... So, it is difficult to have an overall perspective about this topic... Many people felt that they were too tired in the afternoon and that the talks were not very helpful. One of the comments that caught my attention (and that I was glad to read) is that staff members would like to learn more about the strategic plan of the Department. Sharing the strategic plan and its implementation is part of my plan. However, we need to finish it up first. I am hoping to have this finished by March/April and be assured that I will share it with everybody when the time comes. We also had great input from the participants for the next retreat in August. We will send another survey later in the Spring or in the Summer to pick your brain about this again!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Dept. Head	1 & 2
HR Insights.	3
Business Center.....	4
Faculty Highlights	5
Faculty Highlights.....	6
Phi Tau Sigma-UNL.....	7
Recruitment Roundup	8
NFHC.....	9
NGMP.....	10
FST Events.....	11
Winter Weather Alerts.....	12



Faculty Annual Evaluations: I enjoy meeting with all faculty, research associates, and post-docs to perform their annual evaluations. I am using these meetings not only to evaluate faculty, but also to collect a lot of information (papers published, awards, etc). I am hoping to share that information with everybody once the evaluation period is over (March 15th). But I can give you some insights into the department's performance on awards received as collected by NuRamp. The Figure below shows funding awarded to the Department as a function of FY. We are a little bit over half of the year, so it looks like we are in good shape to keep the funding trend. Keep up the great work and let's try to match last year's funding!



Dairy Proposals: I am happy to announce that we had three excellent submissions. A review panel has been identified, and we are hoping to make a decision by mid-February.

Publications: The last section of my message is to highlight recently published papers by our faculty! (If you published a paper in January/February and I don't have you listed here, please let me know).

Romero, H.M., Rose, D. 2025. Inorganic contaminants of cereal grains: Heavy metals.

Food Safety. Pages 107-143. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-819340-2.00011-0>

Auchtung T.A., Lerma, A.I., Schuchart, K., Auchtung, J. M. 2025. Evaluating effects of antibiotics across preclinical models of the human gastrointestinal microbiota. *bioRxiv*. <https://doi.org/10.1101/2025.01.23.634623>

Goodman, R.E., Baumert, J.L., Amnuaycheewa P. 2025. Allergens and gluten associated with cereal grains. *Food Safety*. Pages 145-161. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-819340-2.00015-8>

Congratulations to Jennifer, Devin, and Joe! Well done!

Thanks everybody for the extraordinary work that you do for the department!

Silvana



BUILDING BETTER TEAMS: HR INSIGHTS

Important Notice: President's Day and Floating Holiday Leave Information and Personal Address Information

Holiday Leave Information:

As we approach the upcoming months, it's important to note that President's Day is not an observed holiday for UNL. However, it is designated for use during the December Holiday shutdown. Employees should plan to work on President's Day or request leave in advance to ensure their schedules are managed accordingly.

Additionally, employees who are eligible for floating holiday benefits should review their leave balances. Please be aware that up to 40 hours of floating holiday time can be carried over into the next calendar year. If an employee's floating holiday leave balance exceeds 40 hours, the excess will be deducted from their floating holiday leave balance.

This is a great time to verify your leave balances and plan ahead to make the most of your floating holiday benefits. Ensuring that your leave is properly managed will help maintain a smooth and efficient workflow throughout the year.



Personal Address Information:

Individuals who leave the employment of the University should log into Firefly before their last day in office to update their permanent address in the United States. The day after your last day in office, UNL IT will remove access to Firefly. It is the individual's responsibility to ensure the information in Firefly is accurate.

All documents, including the W-2, are mailed to your last permanent address listed in SAP. If you move after you have separated from the University, it is advised you submit a "Change Of Address" card with the USPS.

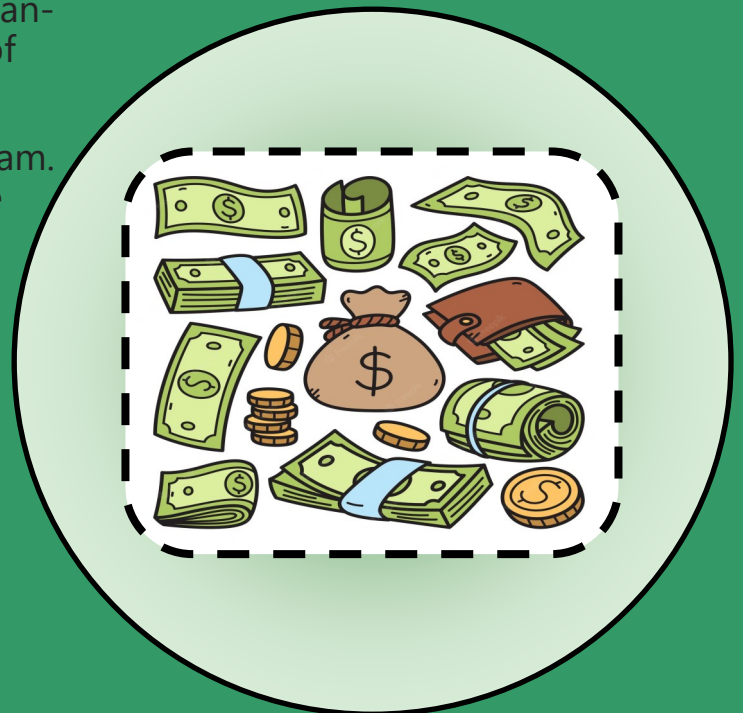


The Business Brief: Updates from the Business Center

We are thrilled to announce the newest addition to our Business Center team, Delaney May. Delaney brings a fresh perspective and a dynamic approach to our operations.

In her new role, Delaney will be responsible for invoicing, travel policy review and other financial transactions. She will be working out of FIC 236.

Please join us in welcoming Delaney to the team. We look forward to the positive impact she will undoubtedly make and the new ideas she will bring to the table.



THE FACULTY FORUM: HIGHLIGHTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

We are thrilled to announce the publication of “**Food Safety: Grain Based Foods**”, edited by our esteemed faculty members, Andrea Bianchini Huebner and Jayne Stratton. This remarkable volume *describes food safety as it relates to different hazards that may be associated with grain-based products, such as chemical, physical, radiological and microbiological hazards, and how to reduce those risks. This reference provides a fresh look at the issues faced by the grain industry and proposes solutions potentially useful to those working in industry, including food technologists, food processing or quality management workers, production supervisors, quality assurance managers, product developers, and those working in academia. Students in cereal technology, food safety, and product development courses will benefit from topics discussed in this publication. (Bookpeople.com)*

This is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our faculty in advancing knowledge and fostering academic excellence. Congratulations to Andrea and Jayne and all contributors for their outstanding efforts in making this publication a reality.

Exciting News!

Additional contributors:

Faculty contributing a chapter to the publication:

Joseph L. Baumert,
Byron D. Chaves,
Richard E. Goodman,
Devin Rose,
Bing Wang,

Current graduate students that co-authored chapters:

La Fontaine Bahatsi,
Karen Nieto-Flores,
Ram Kumar Shrestha
Juan D. Villegas-Posada,

Former FST graduate students that contributed to the publication and are now affiliated with other institutions:

Carmen Cano,
Janak Dhakal,
Onay Burak Dogan,
Samantha Fischer,
Manirul Haque
Jose Rodrigo Mendoza Jimenez,
Hollman Motta Romero,
Luis Sabillon,
Yangjunna Zhang,

Food Safety: Grain Based Foods

Edited by
Andrea Bianchini and Jayne Stratton



CEREALS
& GRAINS
ASSOCIATION

WP
WORLDWIDE
PUBLISHED

THE FACULTY FORUM: HIGHLIGHTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Exciting News!

We are thrilled to share that Bing Wang and Andrew Stiven Ortiz Balsero were recently interviewed by Fox News for a newly published study that found widespread microplastic contamination in the edible tissue of seafood from the U.S. West Coast.

What an incredible opportunity to be interviewed and to discuss these findings with a wider audience.

The exposure not only brings attention to the Department of Food Science and Technology at UNL, but also underscores the importance of research and collaboration within the scientific community and beyond.

If you would like to view the article, the link is listed below.

[Fox News: Seafood Samples Contain High Levels of Microplastics](#)

THE BATTLE OF THE FOOD SCIENTISTS

"FLAVORS OF THE WORLD"



Are you ready to showcase your culinary skills by creating a product that embraces the flavors of the world?

Sign up here!



March 13th

5 PM

Free entry

Can't make it? No problem! Watch a live stream of the competition from your laptops and TVs!

The University of Nebraska does not discriminate based on race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, and/or political affiliation in its programs, activities, or employment.

UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Lincoln



FOOD SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources

ΦΤΣ

The Honor Society of
Food Science and Technology

RECRUITING ROUNDUP: UPDATES AND INSIGHTS

January and February recruiting brings more OPS schools, follow up with our FDST admits, events with UNL Engineering, and continued LPS Culinary Student trips!

Currently, we have 19 FDST admits for fall '25. This is exciting news and we hope to get each one of them here. I continue to visit with them about their needs, questions, and plans as commitment time draws near. Specifically, we are offering them scholarships if they join us in the fall. It is an exciting time, for sure!

I brought our 'Science of Popcorn' activity to Elkhorn to share with 100+ Engineering interested students this month. They were an exceptionally focused group with great questions and observations. They also know about Food Science as an amazing career path now. Omaha Public Schools continue to visit us via East Campus. These high schoolers learned about insects as a protein source and trend in food science as well as Food Sci as a major. In January I was able to share this with 80+ students. The Omaha visits will continue throughout the spring semester.

Lastly, the LPS Culinary II students will continue to visit FIC for a tour and Food Science presentation. This is a great time for anyone of you to pop in and introduce yourself as a Food Scientist (see the Student Newsletter each week for these opportunities). Additionally, our final phase of FDST-LPS Culinary partnership will result in a special field trip this month. This will be a Culinary III class enjoying a product development inspired immersion activity and visit with our own Adel Summers! This will continue each year for all Culinary III classes.

Thank you for your continued support via tours, activity design, suggestions and connections. I couldn't do it without you!



Your recruiter and #1 fan - Sarah





Seminar Series speaker coming March 7th.

Our first Food for Health Seminar Series speaker will be Dr. Emily Noble from the University of Georgia and she was invited by our Trainee Council. The title for her seminar is "Adolescent western diet consumption and the developing brain". The summary is below.



Adolescence is a critical period for brain development and dietary patterns during this time can have a long term impact on cognitive function later in life. For example, a Western Diet, high in saturated fat and added sugars, has been shown to negatively impact the development of a region of the brain called the hippocampus, which is an important brain region for learning and memory. In this seminar I will discuss potential mechanisms through which adolescent nutrition impacts the hippocampus, with a focus on the gut microbiome as a potential mechanistic link between diet and neurocognitive dysfunction.

Mouse Monthly: Gnotobiotic Mouse Program News

The Nebraska Gnotobiotic Mouse Program (NGMP) helps researchers investigate how the gut microbiota influences human health and disease. Derived from the Greek words “gnotos” for known and “bios” for life, gnotobiotic animals are maintained under strictly controlled environmental conditions that allow scientists to know exactly what microbial life is present. Gnotobiotic mice can be raised germ-free and then colonized with either select species or defined communities of microbes. They can also be given complex microbiotas from other mice or humans to study various aspects of host-microbiota interactions. The NGMP is particularly excited to support researchers in Food Science and the Nebraska Food for Health Center who want to understand how the gut microbiota can improve health through dietary interventions. The NGMP also provides training to graduate students and offers job opportunities for undergraduates. Researchers and students interested in learning more about the NGMP can contact Drs. Amanda Ramer-Tait or Jeffrey Price at ngmp@unl.edu.



Lunar New Year Celebration



We are delighted to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who attended our Lunar New Year celebration and contributed to the potluck. Your participation made the event a resounding success.

The afternoon was filled with vibrant decorations, delicious traditional cuisine, and a wonderful sense of community. The potluck was a highlight, showcasing an incredible variety of dishes that reflected our diverse team. It was a pleasure to see so many of you come together to celebrate the Year of the Snake.

We would like to express our special appreciation to Sumin, the volunteers, and dumpling makers, who dedicated their time and effort to make this event possible. Your contributions were invaluable.

We hope you enjoyed the festivities and wish you all a prosperous, happy, and healthy new year.



WINTER WEATHER IS HERE— BE ‘ALERT’



When winter weather strikes, it can impact University of Nebraska–Lincoln operations in a number of ways. When inclement weather is in the forecast, students, faculty and staff should be prepared to complete assignments and/or work remotely. Here are a few things to help you navigate the Nebraska winters.

Be ‘alert’

UNL Alert — the same system that announces campus emergencies — will issue emails and text messages conveying weather-related closings. Faculty, staff and students are encouraged to opt in to the service, which is free and available [here](#).

Trusted sources

The university announces official weather-related announcements (and schedule adjustments) in several ways beyond [UNL Alert](#):

They will be posted to the [university’s homepage](<https://www.unl.edu/>), as well as to the university’s social media channels such as [Twitter/X](#) and [Facebook](#).

- Ideally, local radio and TV stations will be notified about closures by 6 a.m. for day classes and 2 p.m. for night classes; and
- Closings of university sites outside of Lincoln will be made by a responsible administrator and communicated locally.