

Jennifer Cleveland McEntire, Ph.D.

Bachelor of Science in Agriculture, 1999, University of Delaware, Newark, DE

Doctor of Philosophy in Food Science, 2003, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ

Research Scientist, Institute of Food Technologists, 2003-present

As an undergraduate food science student at the University of Delaware, Jennifer Cleveland McEntire became involved with the Institute of Food Technologists (IFT), the not-for-profit scientific and professional society for food scientists and technologists. Through this network she received much needed scholarships, mentoring, and an introduction to the types of career opportunities food scientists and technologists have. Through a mentor, she learned that pursuing an advanced degree would not require her to take additional student loans, and that her undergraduate research on the effect of high hydrostatic pressure on *E. coli* O157:H7 would be a great foundation for graduate research.

During an IFT student event at Rutgers University, Jennifer was introduced to her eventual mentor. The opportunity to gain experience in several academic food safety labs, conduct exploratory research on *Listeria monocytogenes*, and participate in two internships in Washington DC, all as a **USDA National Needs Fellow** in food safety (2000-2003), increased Jennifer's desire, and enabled her financially, to pursue a Ph.D. in Food Science.

Her internships at a food trade association and the Food and Drug Administration, which are an atypical component of a Ph.D. course of study and were specific for her National Needs Fellowship (NNF) program, put her on a path to obtain a position where she interacts with the regulatory agencies and food safety experts on a regular basis.

Jennifer transitioned from a member of IFT to a staff Research Scientist at IFT, based in Washington, DC. There, Jennifer tackles scientific issues that affect food science, and food safety in particular. She led a group of 18 experts: veterinarians, food safety experts, medical doctors and others; to develop a report on the potential impact of antimicrobial resistant microorganisms on food safety. Through this experience, she was invited to co-author a book chapter on antimicrobial resistance for a graduate food safety textbook.

She has also helped develop public comments for regulatory agencies in an effort to increase the safety of the US food supply, and served as a delegate to the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene, which drafts standards for food safety used worldwide.

More recently, Jennifer has led contract work for the Food and Drug Administration and others, identifying and assembling experts to address issues of food defense, produce safety, traceability, and rice fortification.

As a native of Long Island, NY, Jennifer knows first-hand that careers in agriculture are not always front-of-mind, nor are they necessarily promoted to students with an aptitude in science. At IFT, Jennifer was fortunate enough to co-lead a large outreach program with Discovery Education. Through this initiative, every high school in the United States received separate "kits," showing teachers how to use food to teach fundamental science concepts and informing

school counselors about the career opportunities that exist in the area of food science and technology. The project also included the development of a television program that aired on the Discovery Channel, and a web microsite that houses the information, profiling food scientists and providing video clips of food scientists talking about their educational and career paths. She has worked with colleagues to develop interactive programs for Girl Scouts, Adventures in Science, and other K-12 audiences.

Jennifer conceptualized and mobilized “Food Science Ambassadors,” a group of over 350 IFT members willing to speak to students, teachers, and others about food science and technology, that can be searched through a web-based tool. She also coordinates a program to bring high school students, particularly from groups under represented in food science, to the IFT Annual Meeting and Food Expo® to learn about food related careers. She always credits the NNF program with allowing her to achieve beyond what she thought possible, and encourages students to explore educational opportunities through NNF.

Jennifer feels indebted to the USDA NNF program, and the taxpayers who support it. Jennifer has continued her support of food safety education and outreach by representing IFT to the Partnership for Food Safety Education, and developing a web-based video for Monkeysee on safe food handling. She also serves on the Frederick, MD Career and Technology Education Advisory Committee for the public school system. She has served as a panel and ad hoc reviewer for the National Needs Fellowship program as well as other USDA competitive grants programs, and will continue to support these and other worthwhile USDA programs.