

FALL 2025

IMPACT:

THE DEPARTMENT OF FOOD SCIENCE NEWSLETTER



Greetings from the Chair

Dear Food Science Colleagues, Alumni, and Friends,

I'm sure you recall the rhythm of the Fall semester - the final exam schedule, the welcome quiet that follows, and the anticipation of restful time with family and friends. Here in Food Science, we wish each of you a wonderful holiday season and the chance to reflect on what has been a most eventful year. I'd like to share a few thoughts about how our department, and higher education more broadly, have been navigating through this challenging climate.

As we move through another academic year, I find myself reflecting on how much has changed within higher education and within our own community. It has been, by all measures, a challenging season. Shifts in enrollment patterns, financial pressures across campus, and the growing complexity of our teaching and research missions have required all of us to rethink long-standing assumptions about how we work and what our students need. These trends are real, and they have asked a great deal of everyone.

And yet, even in this climate, I remain encouraged by the resilience and character of our department and the forward-facing optimism to build new paths to achieve our goal. Faculty and staff continue to secure competitive grants, publish impactful scholarships, and redesign courses for accessibility and content. Our dedicated staff have kept our operations steady despite heavier workloads and shifting expectations. Our undergraduate and graduate students remain curious adaptable, and deeply engaged in the work that brought them here in the first place.

The challenges before us are not small. We are navigating budget constraints, evolving workforce demands, and national conversations that sometimes undervalue the role of higher education. In response, I see colleagues leaning into collaborations, identifying shared priorities, and thinking more intentionally about the future we want to create. Our hiring initiatives, interdisciplinary teaching efforts, and renewed partnerships across campus and with industry are meaningful signs of resilience in an uncertain time.

Most importantly, we remain anchored by a simple truth: our work matters. Preparing the next generation of leaders, producing research that advances knowledge and improved lives, and serving our communities are purposes that endure well beyond the headlines. Thank you for your continued commitment, creativity, and openness to change. I am genuinely optimistic about where we are headed and grateful for the people who are helping shape a brighter future. Please don't hesitate to reach out or even drop in should your travels bring you back to Madison this coming year.

Warm regards,



Scott Rankin, Professor and Chair of Food Science

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Community

Galasys, UW-Madison spinoff Company, First Place in Governor's Business Plan Contests

Galasys, a University of Wisconsin-Madison based spinoff company, took first place in the Advanced Manufacturing category of the 22nd annual Wisconsin Governor's Business Plan Contest. The contest was developed to encourage entrepreneurs in the startup stage of tech-enabled businesses. The contest links up-and-coming entrepreneurs with a statewide network of community resources, expert judges, mentors and possible sources of capital.

The manufacturing technology developed by Galasys, which has been patented through WARF, involves converting a dairy food processing byproduct into tagatose, a natural, low-calorie sweetener. As shared by the Galasys team, tagatose has 63% fewer calories and a 95% lower glycemic index than table sugar, while delivering 92% of the sweetness. It also offers anti-cariogenic benefits (helps prevent tooth decay) and prebiotic effects that support gut and immune health. This provides the dairy industry with a high-value revenue stream and adds a new sustainable solution for dairy waste disposal while addressing food industry gaps. More than other currently available sugar alternatives, tagatose tastes and functions like real sugar, giving food companies a better option to create reduced-sugar products.

Community Cont.

The Science behind Ice Cream



Professor & Chair of Food Science, Scott Rankin, explores the science behind ice cream with Larry Meiller on the Larry Meiller Show at WPR. Professor Rankin explains how science is involved in making this sweet treat, along with learning the technical differences between ice cream, custard, sorbet and gelato. This episode offers listeners a fun glimpse into the world of frozen desserts and what makes these frozen treats so delicious!

Seminar Speaker

The Graduate Student Representative Committee hosted guest speaker, Brittany Towers Lewis, on October 6th, at Babcock Hall.

Brittany Towers Lewis, MS, is an industry food scientist currently working at Kraft-Heinz. She has experience at several companies within food science, and beyond that, she is a food science educator! Brittany shares food science knowledge to 500k+ followers on TikTok and Instagram through her channel [@theblackfoodscientist](#).



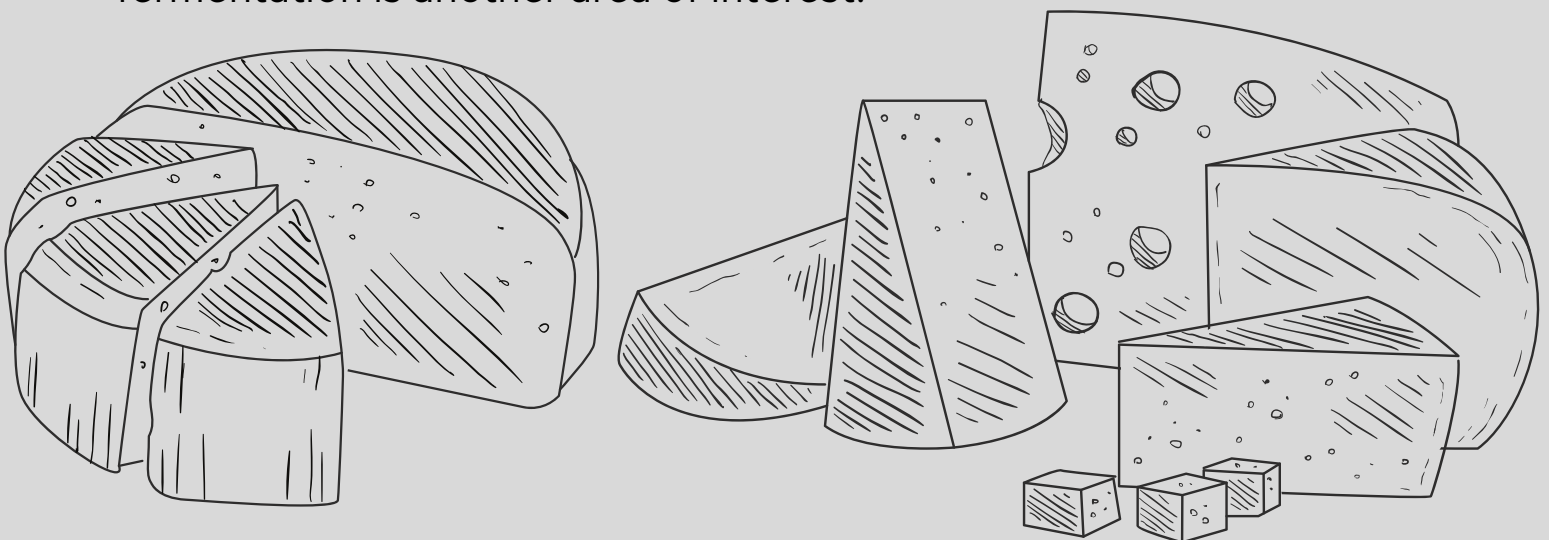
Community Cont.

Inventor Profile



Dr. John Lucey, Professor of Food Science, collaborates with researchers at the Center for Dairy Research on a variety of dairy science and technology projects. Milk protein functionality, and the critical role for calcium phosphate crosslinking for casein properties, are part of the Lucey research group's core expertise and themes underpinning various projects.

Extending the shelf-life of various types of cheeses is studied, to aid in their export to distant markets. The lab is also interested in the stability of sterilized dairy beverages (both neutral pH and acidic drinks). Adding value to dairy coproducts through separation or fermentation is another area of interest.



Student Interns



Kenneth Patten was a Quality/R&D Intern at Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery. He created nutrition labels, participated in trails for producing new products, created in-house sensory trails, assisted in the analytical lab, performed daily environmental monitoring, and did internal plant audits.

Elsie Hyppa was a Quality Intern at the Lactalis American Group over the summer. She validated the proficiency of the Clean-in-Place systems for the raw milk, pasteurized milk and whey lines, which are used in the process of making Brie and feta cheese.



Additionally, she worked as a lab tech to perform salt, fat and protein analysis of final products.

Student Interns



Sophia Delgado was a R&D Intern at Hershey's. She innovated Dot's Pretzels, collaborated with suppliers, and gained hands-on product development experience. Furthermore, she learned about the Hershey company, their products and community.



Joel Sufianto was a QC Lab Analyst Intern at Indofood. He assisted in conducting quality control testing on Indomie instant noodles, supporting lab analysis and field inspections at Indonesia's largest noodle factory.



Student Spotlight



Name: Owen Falconer
Year: Junior
Hometown: Oak Park, IL

Why Food Science?

I chose to pursue food science because I've always been interested in food, as well as fermentation, and the idea of being able to have a career in that space.

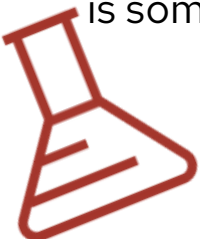
Having a major where I'm able to blend those interests with the science was an exciting opportunity, and I'm excited to see what I'm able to accomplish in my time here at UW-Madison.

What is your Major and/or certificate?

My major is Food Science with a certificate in Fermented Foods and Beverages.

Favorite Class?

My favorite class is the Food Microbiology Lab. I really enjoyed the lab portion of my microbiology course last semester, so getting the chance to continue to be in the lab again and be hands-on with the material I'm learning, now tying even more directly into food science, is something I really enjoy.



Celebration

Morgridge Fellows

Congratulations to Andrea Noll, Researcher in the Bolling Research Group! Andrea is one of the handful of faculty, staff and/or graduate students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison who have been named Morgridge Fellows.

The Morgridge Fellows program is a unique opportunity for individuals to learn and explore ways to further weave community engagement into the core functions of the university.

Andrea has always felt a strong connection to nature, which led her to study the natural sciences. Along the way, she gained hands-on experience doing research in different areas and currently focuses on how food affects our health. As she continued her journey and earned a master's in public health, she began to see the bigger picture - how health is shaped by our communities, cultures, environments and everyday lives. Now, she balances research and working directly with communities, especially around building healthier and more sustainable food systems. She's passionate about listening, learning and collaborating with Tribal Nations, non-profits and local organizations that are already leading the way. Her goal is to support and strengthen these efforts through respectful partnerships and shared knowledge.



Celebration Cont.

WiSys SPARK Symposium

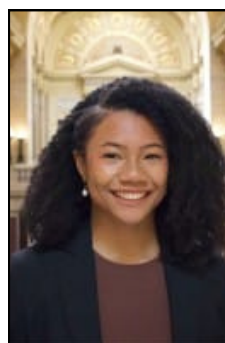
Congratulations to Dr. Bradley Bolling for being one of the 2025 Innovation Champions! Innovation Champions are leaders in the community who have played an integral role in building a culture of innovation. Dr. Bolling won for his leadership of the use-inspired R&D driver of the Forward Agriculture Initiative.



Furthermore, Luis McDougall, an undergraduate in Dr. Gulustan Ozturk's lab, one second place in the poster competition. There were over 100 undergraduate and graduate students who presented their research findings and innovations during the conference.

Successful Defense!

Congratulations to graduate students Sean Baker, Tayana Roark, McKenna Helder, Grace Cassidy, and Kelden Cook for successfully defending their thesis! The Department of Food Science wishes these students the best in their next endeavors, and we are proud to see how much they have grown over the years.



Celebration Cont.



Campbell-Bascom Professorship

Scott Rankin, professor, extension specialist and chair of the Department of Food Science, has been appointed to the Campbell-Bascom Professorship. The award was established by the Campbell Soup Company and is awarded to faculty in CALS who have made outstanding contributions in the field of agriculture. Rankin is also serving as the interim chair of the Department of Nutritional Sciences, and his research focuses on the characterization of dairy food flavor with sensory and instrumental techniques.



As an extension specialist, he offers numerous programs and short courses in support of the dairy foods processing industry with topics such as milk pasteurization and dairy chemistry.

Celebration Cont.

2025 Distinguished Faculty & Staff Postdoc Mentoring Award

Congratulations to Professor Audrey Girard, recipient of the 2025 Distinguished Faculty and Staff Postdoc Mentoring Award presented by the UW-Madison Postdoc Association (UWPA). This award recognize faculty on the UW-Madison campus that contribute their time, knowledge, energy, and enthusiasm to mentoring and advancing postdocs in their lab.

Faculty are nominated by current or former postdocs, and each year the UWPA receive numerous nominations from postdocs seeking to recognize the outstanding mentoring they receive. Each year, only a select few of the outstanding nominations receive this award.



Career Paths

What are our students doing after graduation? 😊

Our students are prepared for a wide variety of careers with corporations, government agencies, and nonprofits in product development, quality assurance and control, processing and engineering, technical sales, management, research, sensory analysis, and food law and regulations. Here are a few examples of what our food science graduates are doing with their careers:

In Food & Beverage:

| What CALS alumni do: | Where CALS alumni work: |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Food Scientist | Octopi Brewing |
| Food Technologist | PepsiCo |
| Quality Supervisor | General Mills |
| Applications Scientist | Nature's Fynd |
| Food Safety Director | Johnsonville |
| Beverage Technician | Tribe 9 Foods |
| Brewer | The Kraft Heinz Company |

In Research:

| What CALS alumni do: | Where CALS alumni work: |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Product Development Scientist | Kerry |
| Product Development Manager | Wild Type Foods |
| Food Technologist | Cargill |
| Continuous Improvement Manager | General Mill |
| Analytical Chemist | PepsiCo |

In Consumer Packaged Goods:

| What CALS alumni do: | Where CALS alumni work: |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Food Scientist | Clasen Quality Chocolate |
| Food Technologist | Mars |
| Quality Supervisor | Agropur |
| Applications Scientist | Lindt |
| Food Safety Director | ConAgra |
| Beverage Technician | Wrigley Company |