

Durst to Lead Food Science & Technology Department at Geneva into Next Millennium

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by John Zakour

GENEVA, NY: Richard A. Durst has been appointed chairman of the department of Food Science and Technology at Cornell, at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva. Durst replaced outgoing chairman, Mark McLellan who accepted a position as Director of the Institute of Food Science & Engineering at Texas A&M University. Durst has been at the Station for almost 10 years as a Professor of Chemistry and Director of the Cornell Analytical Chemistry Laboratories and IR-4 Northeast Regional Laboratory in Geneva. His appointment was effective July 1.

"I am pleased that Dr. Durst has agreed to assume the chairmanship of the department," said James E. Hunter, director of the Geneva Station. "He has an excellent appreciation of high quality research. His prior experience with the federal government and the knowledge he has gained since becoming a member of the faculty at Geneva will serve him well as he carries out this important assignment."

"As I embark on my new appointment, I do so with considerable anticipation and some trepidation," said Durst. "I look forward to this as a challenging learning experience and an opportunity to expand my food science horizons. On the downside, while I shall continue my research program, it will, of necessity, have to be reduced owing to time constraints. This will be the most difficult change since research to me is extremely stimulating and also is my main contact with students."

Durst plans to expand upon the initiatives of his predecessor, Mark McLellan. High on his list is the completion and inauguration in March 2000 of the Cornell Vinification and Brewing Technology Laboratory at Geneva. "With doctors Thomas Henick-Kling and Karl Siebert as the program leaders, this project will provide a premier site for collaborative research and development in winemaking and brewing," Durst said.



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Durst also went on to state: "The Cornell Institute of Food Science and its Associates Program are key to the advancement of food science at Cornell, and this institute provides a unified focus for the programs in Ithaca and Geneva. The quality and breadth of these programs is one reason that the nation's food science administrators recently voted food science at Cornell number one in the country. I will continue to do all that I can to maintain this level of recognition for our department and institute."

Chairing an academic department will be a new experience for Durst, yet not a dramatic change from that of his former position in the federal government.

"Coming from the National Institute of Standards and Technology nine years ago, where I had served in a number of positions from research scientist to Deputy Director of the Analytical Chemistry Division, I had the opportunity to experience all levels of science and administration," said Durst. "That experience should serve me well in dealing with the complexities of an academic department."

Durst received his B.S. in chemistry from the University of Rhode Island in 1960. He received his Ph.D. in analytical chemistry with a minor in biophysics in 1963 from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He has extensive academic, industry, and government experience. His research interests include the application of biological recognition (antibodies and nucleic acid probes) and liposome amplification strategies to the development of novel biosensing devices for extra-laboratory screening of clinical analytes, environmental pollutants, and food contaminants. He has numerous patents and professional publications.

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