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## **Cornell Food Scientist to Receive Babcock-Hart Award**

by John Zakour

**GENEVA, NY** -- Chang Yong ('Cy') Lee, chairman and professor of Cornell University's department of food science and technology at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station, in Geneva, NY, is the 2003 recipient of the Institute of Food Technologists' (IFT) Babcock-Hart Award. The annual award is given to the IFT member who has made distinguished contributions to food technology resulting in more nutritious foods, or improved public health through some aspect of nutrition, and is among IFT's most prestigious awards.



C.Y. Lee  
Credit: Way/NYSAES/Cornell

Lee will receive the award on Saturday, July 12, 2003, in Chicago, Illinois, during IFT's annual meeting. The award is accompanied by a plaque and a monetary gift furnished by the International Life Sciences Institute of North America and the Institute of Food Technologists.

"Dr. Lee is the consummate food scientist," said Mark McLellan, director of the Institute of Food Science & Engineering at Texas A&M, and president of IFT, which boasts more than 28,000 members. "Dr. Lee's work is characterized by aggressive exploration, intuitive insight, and the joy of discovery. He brings multiple disciplines to bear on a single problem. Dr. Lee is also known for mentoring individual scientists and maximizing people's potential for growth and leadership. Though he is soft-spoken, the impact of his words are never mistaken, thanks to his clarity of thought and a bountiful interest in the success of those around

him."

In a career that spans more than 30 years, Lee has focused on three research areas: basic knowledge of free sugars in fresh fruits and vegetables, understanding provitamin A carotenoids in fresh and processed fruits, and flavonoids and their unique antioxidant activity in fruits and vegetables.

Early in his career as a food chemist at the Station, Lee worked with R.S. Shallenberger and published several papers on the mutarotation of hexoses, the sweetness theory, and sugar in foods. One paper, *Free Sugars in Fruits and Vegetables*, published in 1970, reported on the free individual sugars in 41 vegetables, 15 fruits, and 12 legumes. According to McLellan, that paper still stands as the most comprehensive publication on the subject.

Lee has also made major contributions in the study of provitamin A carotenoids in fruits and vegetables. Lee was one of the first scientists to point out errors in the official analytical methods for provitamin A carotenoids, which had incorrectly led to the over-estimation of the vitamin A value of fruits and vegetables. His landmark studies on carotenoids in vegetables provide the foundation from which clear and appropriate dietary recommendations can be made.

Lee also pioneered the development of higher performance liquid chromatographic (HPLC) techniques and approaches in the analysis of polyphenol compounds in fruits and vegetables. The method Lee and his team developed in 1987 has been one of the most widely used techniques for analysis of flavonoids.

Recently, Lee has concentrated on understanding the composition of flavonoids in apple, grapes, peaches, cherries, and onions, and their long-term health benefits, including possible prevention and reduction of some chronic diseases. His research helps provide evidence to support recommended increases in the daily dietary consumption of fruits and vegetables,

Lee is also a dedicated teacher. He has mentored many graduate students and visiting scientists at Geneva over the years, and been an active professor on the Ithaca campus, where he teaches "Food

Chemistry" (FS409) and "Processing Effects of Nutritional Quality of Foods" (FS301). Lee and his wife, Soo, further interact with Cornell undergraduates by living on the Cornell campus and participating in the faculty-in-residence program in Ithaca, NY.

Lee was born in South Korea and received his Ph.D from Utah State. He became a Cornell faculty member in 1969, and was named full professor in 1982. He was elected a Fellow of the American Chemical Society's Agriculture and Food Chemistry Division in 1992, and named an IFT Fellow, as well as a Fellow of the Korean Academy of Science & Technology, in 1996. He received the USDA Agriculture Secretary's Honor Award for Excellence in 2001, and is a member of the American Chemical Society, IFT, and the International Polyphenol Group. Lee has well over 300 scientific publications related to basic chemistry, food chemistry, food processing, and public health to his credit.

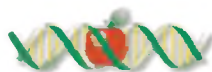
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