
*Student Voice Report*¹

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AS *STUDENT VOICE AT NABC 22* PARTICIPANTS, WE WERE ASKED TO DISCUSS OUR views in terms of what we got out of the conference, what we felt was missing, and some needs that we can address as young scientists. Our backgrounds included food science, nutrition, plant science, animal science, and applied economics.

Overall, our view of the meeting was very positive. We were inspired by many of the high-quality talks and discussion sessions. We identified key strengths and aspects that we especially appreciated:

- Incorporating a variety of speakers with diverse perspectives and opinions.
- Showcasing specific examples and case studies with potential applications. Such as the BioCassava-Plus program and the mammalian milk genome project.
- Addressing problems related to the diet in the United States and Canada as well as in developing countries.

¹To increase graduate-student participation at NABC conferences, the *Student Voice at NABC* program was launched ahead of NABC 19. Feedback from those involved was positive, therefore the program was continued for NABC 20, 21 and 22. Grants of up to \$750 are offered to graduate students at NABC-member institutions (one per non-host institution) to assist with travel and lodging expenses. In some cases, travel and lodging expenses were paid by the home university for a second student. Registration fees are waived for the SV participants. NABC-member institutions are listed on page v.

Student Voice delegates are expected to attend all of the plenary sessions as well as the breakout workshops then to meet as a group to identify current and emerging issues relevant to the conference subject matter. Information on the *Student Voice* at NABC 23 will be available in due course at <http://nabc.cals.cornell.edu/studentvoice/>.

²The *Student Voice* report was presented verbally at NABC 22 by Rosalee Hellberg. This report was assembled by Ms. Hellberg and Watchareeya Kuldamrong, with input from the other students.

- Referring to scientific studies and the use of specific details or data from these studies to support presentation points.
- Discourse that connected nutrition science and regulation policy.
- An overall excellent flow of the meeting.

As young scientists, we identified several messages and needs to address in the area of agriculture, food, and health, including:

- The importance of consumer education and awareness.
- Because human behaviour is very difficult to change, we will need to consider improving the quality of foods that are already a part of the consumers' diets in addition to promoting behavioural changes.
- The application of science, especially biotechnology, to address the need for healthy food among poverty-level populations.
- Development of solutions at the community level, such as *Farm2School* and the *Old Grove Orange Program*, are valid approach to incorporating healthy foods into children's diets.
- Clinical trials on the health benefits of specific foods must be conducted in order to obtain valid health claims.

Finally, we discussed suggestions that could be incorporated into future meetings:

- A greater emphasis on the potential solutions when discussing the problems associated with human health.
- An additional session focused on social science including:
 - Linking healthful advances in biotechnology to consumer acceptance.
 - How to address public perceptions of biotechnology.
 - Consumer behaviour studies focused on incorporation of healthy foods into the diet.
 - The effect of the media on consumer behavior.
- More information on agriculture, farming and the economics behind incorporating genetically engineered crops and biotechnological food products.
- More details on scientific studies, specific case studies, and examples rather than broad, all-inclusive talks.
- We would have liked more time to talk with the speakers either individually or in small groups. Perhaps, speakers could have either been available in designated areas after their talks or incorporated into the breakout-session discussions.
- A debate on the topics addressed, including ones with potential for controversy, would have been beneficial.

In conclusion, human health can be promoted by linking agriculture, food and nutrition; as Hippocrates once said, "Let food be thy medicine, thy medicine shall be thy food." NABC 22 was an enriching experience that has inspired us to ask questions and to work to find solutions that improve human health through science. We greatly thank the organizers for giving us this opportunity to attend.