

At AIFST one of our key strategic pillars is 'Champion' and we recognise the need for advocacy of the importance of food scientists and technologists – making them heroes! So, we asked some young food scientists to respond to our question:



**Q: Why are food scientists and technologists heroes?**

**Anna Sparks**

*Product Developer, Kellogg (Aust.)*

It is nothing short of heroic to develop safe and nourishing food for the general population. Food scientists have changed the way we feed the world, from the preservation powers of fermentation to the magic of popping candy. I know that so many of my favourite foods on the supermarket shelves are due to food scientists using their superpower (curiosity) to ask: how can we make this food healthier, taste better or feed more people? With the focus now directed towards improving the health of people and saving our planet, I see food scientists as heroes more than ever.

**Dr Koentadi Hadinoto**

*Graduate Implementation Specialist, Foods Connected*

Food scientists and technologists play a crucial role in ensuring the food we consume is nutritious, safe, sustainable and available at all times. Their tireless efforts have revolutionised the way we produce, distribute and consume food, reshaping our entire food system. Through their expertise, they foster food innovation and tackle the complex challenges that our food systems face. These professionals are invaluable in discovering new ingredients and designing food structures that are tailored to the diverse geographical and environmental factors. By embracing digitalisation, they have harnessed transformative technologies, such as AI, augmented and virtual reality and blockchain. These tools have revolutionised the management of the entire food chain, guaranteeing quality, sustainability and traceability. In a world where food security and sustainability are paramount, the work of food

scientists and technologies cannot be overstated. Their unwavering dedication and constant innovation ensure a prosperous future for generations to come.

**Agnes Mukurumbira**

*PhD candidate at the CASS Food Research Centre at Deakin University*

Throughout history we have always acknowledged that doctors, teachers and firefighters are heroes, and understandably so. However, if we dare reflect on the role that food scientists play in our society, we can inarguably agree they are unsung heroes. Well, imagine a world where food was just produced without safety checks, nutritional labelling, allergen labelling and there was never any new food product development. Pretty bleak and daunting right?

In a world where there are perpetual threats to food safety, food technologists help detect, control and eliminate threats, thus safeguarding public health. Food scientists are responsible for analysing the nutritional profile of food, new product development and development of innovative processing techniques thus playing a crucial role in addressing malnutrition, food security and promoting health. Food scientists also help foster food sustainability and resilient food systems through research on alternative food sources and value addition of food waste.

**Wenkang Huang**

*PhD candidate in the School of Agriculture and Food Sciences at the University of Queensland. Recipient of the 2023 AIFST John Christian Young Food Microbiologist Award*

Food scientists and technologists are heroes as they serve as an important defensive line to ensure that the food we consume daily is safe. They

devote themselves to overcoming global food-related crises such as food shortages and food waste. With their expertise and dedication to food sciences, they create new techniques to optimise the efficiency of food production and distribution. These professionals develop innovative strategies to improve the quality of food products, promoting sustainability and exploring alternative ingredients. That is to say, food scientists and technologists are heroes because they are advocates for consumer health and contribute to the betterment of people around the world.

**Brigette Snell**

*Assistant Product Developer, Coles*

Food scientists and technologists are heroes because they use their great expertise and problem solving to ensure the food we consume is safe. Beyond that, however, they also make food fun and help offer a wide range of products so that no matter your dietary requirements or time restraints, you can have something to enjoy. I love that I can pick up anything off the supermarket shelf and feel confident it is safe to eat. Thanks to technological advancements, food that once could only be consumed in small parts of the world can now be safely transported and consumed worldwide. Thank you food scientists!

