



Chicago Section IFT the First Section



September 10, 2012 Dinner Meeting Speaker

IFT President John Ruff: In Defense of Processed Food

It is fashionable to use the phrase "processed food" as a pejorative term with a concurrent negativity about the role that food scientists play. We should be concerned about the impact this has on our profession, both in our ability to influence consumers and regulators, as well as the impact on recruiting the brightest and the best students for the future.

Yet food processing is thousands of years old and virtually everything we eat or drink has been processed in some way. Food science and technology will become increasingly important to feed the world to increase the availability, safety and quality of our food supply in the future, yet the benefits are not recognized by many.

What can we do about this dilemma?

John Ruff is currently President of IFT (Institute of Food Technologists). During his prior 36-year career with Kraft and the former General Foods, he headed R&D for International and North American businesses where he successfully integrated the technical operations of numerous acquisitions, established global centers of expertise and led a worldwide advisory council consisting of external experts who have helped guide Kraft's health and wellness initiatives.

John recently served on the Institute of Medicine (IOM) committee on strategies to reduce sodium intake. He is a past president of the International Life Sciences Institute, past chair of the Food Processors Association (NFPA) and a fellow of the Institute of Food Science and Technology in the United Kingdom.

John received his M.A. in Biochemistry and a B.A. in Natural Sciences from Cambridge University in the United Kingdom.