



## ***the First Section***

### **September 9, 2013 Kickoff Meeting Recap**

#### **Food and Nutrition Labeling: What are we really looking for?**

Janet E. Collins, Ph.D., R.D., CFS, IFT President

I was very pleased to see everyone at the 2013-2014 Kickoff Meeting of the Chicago Section IFT. The Section is happy to announce that we had approximately 110 people attend and we wish to extend a warm welcome to the 20+ first-time CSIFT Dinner Meeting attendees.

We were very fortunate to have Dr. Janet Collins, President of IFT, as our guest speaker for the dinner meeting held at Rosewood Restaurant in Rosemont, IL. Janet is a food scientist and nutritionist with over 35-years of international experience and is relied on as a subject matter expert in food science and nutrition dietary guidance. Janet has expertise in meat science, food safety, food labeling and claims, food regulations and international food trade.

As a scientific spokesperson for the Meat Board and American Meat Institute, she has effectively communicated scientifically complicated and controversial issues. She has experience in academic institutions teaching and conducting primary research, industry project and program management and leading scientific affairs. Her interest areas include food composition, chemistry and technology, nutrition and health, and global food policy development

Janet gave a very informative update on nutritional labeling. She began with the history and background of food labeling where she explained the role of food regulators and the US food labeling policy. She then provided an overview of US labeling requirements with a comparison to the Australian food label. The nutrition facts were explained – what is needed on the Nutrition Facts Panel and the Facts Up Front.

Janet had an entertaining example that it would be fun to have some of the Facts Up Front on our vending machines – so consumers could read this information prior to the purchase. Janet discussed the role of product marketing on the label, how this can influence a potential customer, provided several examples including considerations about instances when there is too much marketing information being communicated through the label.

As expected with a discussion on nutritional labeling, examples of misinformation or mislabeled products were provided. Examples included when certain labels state GMO free when, in fact, the GMO containing ingredients are not commercially available. In addition, she provided examples of organic food labels that would be consistent with labeling regulations, but would seem to go against the spirit of organic foods. Some interesting examples of international food labels were provided that contain truthful information for regulators but would seem unnecessary, if not confusing, for consumers.



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In summary, Janet stated that food labeling is intended to provide information to consumers about what is in the food that they purchase; food labeling must be truthful and not misleading; cultural considerations affect consumer messaging and communication about food globally, “Right to know” labeling begs the question—Know what?; and what is it that consumers want to know - mandatory elements and voluntary elements/claims.

Janet’s full presentation complete with auditory recording is available in this newsletter and in the members-only section of the CSIFT website.

*John Budin, Ph.D.*

*Program Committee Chair, and Chair Elect CSIFT*

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