Objective of FoodPIC

The objective of FoodPIC is to assist companies in developing new food products efficiently, economically, and with high probability of success.

Advisory Council Members:

Tom Childers
Darlene Cowart
Patricia DeMark
Robert Dickey
Mike Giles
Horace Hamilton
Steve Hayden
Robert Karn
David Luckie
Charlie Moon
Camp Neel
Chris Paulk
Lucy Reid

A Word from the Director

These are exciting times for FoodPIC. Of course, the approval of a new FoodPIC facility on the Griffin Campus is the major news. We are extremely grateful to UGA and members of the Board of Regents, civic and political leaders who recognize the potential of the FoodPIC Center and the new building for enhancing Georgia’s food businesses and creating jobs across the state. In addition, two new positions within the Center have been approved – one for a Pilot Plant Technician who will work with other personnel to conduct industry projects, and another for a Project Manager to assist the Director in managing our services to food companies from inquiry through completion of projects.

While the new building will transform our ability to work with food companies, we are able today to conduct a wide range of activities in our existing facilities. Our main pilot plant has been refurbished and contains a significant amount of processing equipment from wet and dry mills to ovens, dryers, and shelf-life testing equipment. Our new culinary lab-shared kitchen is equipped for preparing a range of foods at various scales to allow consumer evaluation. Efforts are underway to have both of these spaces certified by the Georgia Department of Agriculture to accommodate commercial enterprises – clients will be able to produce foods for sale in them.

FoodPIC’s inquiries for assistance from entrepreneurs and established companies are increasing in number. Discussions have been held with about 30 individuals and companies since last year, with a number of projects in various stages from inquiry to completion. These range from peaches to bottled water and from pet food to premium syrups.

We anticipate more developments in the coming months, so stay tuned.

When Governor Nathan Deal signed the FY 2013 budget, he approved $3.5 million dollars for the new Food Product Innovation & Commercialization Center facility on the UGA Griffin Campus. President Michael Adams committed $1 million dollars and the Griffin-Spalding Development Authority will match that with $1 million dollars for a total of $5.5 million dollars to building this state-of-the-art facility.

Wishing you a Happy New Year,

Dick Phillips
Meet Tony Toby, FoodPIC Project Manager

Tony Toby became Project Manager in Food Sciences at the UGA Griffin Campus in October, 2012. Prior to his move to Georgia, Tony worked at a spice and seasoning company in Texas. His experience also includes working with large poultry producers such as Pilgrim’s Pride and Tyson. In addition, he has expertise in product development, including sauces, condiments, spices, marinades, beverages and flavorings.

A native of the Indiana/Louisville, Kentucky area, Tony graduated from Purdue University with a degree in Food Science. His journey to UGA began with making the acquaintance of Dr. Rakesh Singh, currently head of the Department of Food Science and Technology at UGA, when he was a professor at Purdue. “We kept in touch through the years, and when an opening became available in Food Science here on the Griffin Campus, Dr. Singh let me know about it.”

As Project Manager, Tony serves as the “front door” to the UGA Griffin Campus Food Science and Technology Department. In addition to answering client questions about fees, nondisclosure agreements and organizing projects, he also may put together taste panels for products and assists with taking a private recipe through the steps needed to make it a commercial product.

In his private time, Tony is an avid outdoorsman and enjoys biking, gardening and hiking.

Congressman Lynn Westmoreland visits

Assistant Dean Jerry Arkin, along with faculty and staff of the University of Georgia's Food Innovation and Commercialization (FoodPIC) Center, welcomed Congressman Lynn Westmoreland, Board of Regents member Dr. Tommy Hopkins, and Griffin City Commissioner Dick Morrow to the new Test Kitchen located in the Melton Building on the Griffin Campus. The group discussed the importance of the Center's mission to assist food entrepreneurs and companies in developing new food products and improving processing, packaging, and branding. It is anticipated that some of the Center's clients may locate food-related businesses in the nearby Lakes at Green Valley Industrial Park to take advantage of FoodPIC expertise and assistance. In addition to the test kitchen, the Center offers pilot plant facilities for processing foods up to the test marketing scale and laboratories for measuring product quality.