

South Eastern Meeting (SEIFT) February 19, 2025

Despite the cold weather on the morning of February 19, 2025, the members of the Institute of Food Technologists Students Association (IFTSA) at Alabama A&M University, along with faculty and staff from the Food Science Department, traveled to Atlanta for the Southeastern Section of the IFT (SEIFT) Suppliers/Food Industry EXPO and Educational Program at the Cobb Galleria.

The IFTSA Alabama A&M University Chapter participated in the Product Development (PD) and Three Minute Thesis (3MT) competitions. The IFTSA chapter had two teams competing in the PD competition. In preparation for the main competition on the 19th, both teams submitted written proposals last year and were selected as top finalists. The topic for the PD competition was "Development of Innovative Food Products Using Upcycled Food Waste: Enhancing Sustainability and Nutrition through Circular Economy Approaches." The competition required that the new products developed contain more than 51% upcycled food waste and provide a good source of nutrients, containing 10% or more of the daily value per reference amount. Our students began brainstorming and developed two teams.

Team 1: Product: Rindastic Revive

Team Lead: Karthik Medabalimi

Members: Vanessa Njoku, Karyn Rose, Maria Martinez, Kristan Gooden, Manideep Busarapu

Team 2: Product: Hemp-based Bar

Team Lead: Harpreet Singh

Members: Tejasri Thatipamula, Madison Wright, Lauryn Strong, Katelyn Boyle

At the competition on February 19th, 2025, the finalists were required to present in person to the judges and bring their products for the judges to taste. After the competition, the Rindastic Revive team, led by PhD candidate Karthik Medabalimi, won the first prize of \$1,000, while the Hemp-based Bar team, led by PhD candidate Harpreet Singh, came in second with \$750.

Students from Alabama A&M's Food Science program also participated in the 3MT competition, where they presented their research schematically in 3 minutes. Six students from Alabama A&M took part in the 3MT:

1. Tejasri Thatipamula: Selected Synergistic Health Benefits of Spices, Ginger, and Turmeric
2. Vanessa Njoku: Antioxidant Potential of Pigmented Rice: Black and Red Rice Using Different Processing Methods
3. Madison Wright: Consumer Perception of Natural and Synthetic Colors and Flavors: The Development of a Functional Mint-Based Beverage
4. Harpreet Singh: Antioxidant Activity and Cytotoxic Effects of Date Seed Extracts on Colon Cancer Cells (HT-29)

5. Karthik Medabalimi: Effect of Processing on Selected Antioxidant Activities and Metabolizing Enzyme Inhibition by *M. koneigii* (Curry Leaves) Extracts
6. Katelyn Boyle: Development of a Functional Food Snack Product Utilizing Antioxidant-Rich Spirulina Microalgae and Bilberry

After the 3MT, Madison Wright, who presented on "Consumer Perception of Natural and Synthetic Colors and Flavors: The Development of a Functional Mint-Based Beverage," won third place with a \$200 prize.

It was a fantastic time at the expo! The students also had the opportunity to network with industry professionals and attend educational lectures. The Food Science department continues to make AAMU proud. Kudos to Dr. Martha Verghese for her unrelenting service, research, and student support.

Go Bulldogs!