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NCFST PATS PROCESS WINS 2009 IFT FOOD EXPO INNOVATION AWARD

*Award recognizes pioneering food safety process as a technology
"with significant scientific merit and representing a major technical advancement"*

(ANAHEIM, CA) June 7, 2009 – The National Center for Food Safety and Technology (NCFST), Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT), is pleased to announce that the consortium's pressure-assisted thermal sterilization (PATS) process, won an **IFT Food Expo Innovation Award** at the 2009 Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) Annual Meeting & Food Expo in Anaheim today.

PATS is a promising new food sterilization process that utilizes high pressure to produce temperatures that ensure the production of commercially sterile low-acid food products while significantly improving food quality attributes. The novel process, developed under a Dual Use Science and Technology (DUST) contract, was accepted in February by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) as a new alternative to commercial sterilization under the low-acid canned food regulations.

Incoming IFT President **Marianne Gillette** presented the IFT Innovation Award crystal sculpture at the Sunday morning keynote session to **C. Patrick Dunne, Ph.D.**, Senior Advisor in Advanced Processing and Nutritional Biochemistry for the DoD Combat Feeding Directorate of the U.S. Army Natick Soldier Research Development and Engineering Center of the Army RDE Command, on behalf of NCFST's DUST team.

The 2009 IFT Food Expo Innovation Awards program honors outstanding innovation in products, equipment, instrumentation, technology and services. A panel of eight jurors from industry, academia and government reviewed 49 entries based on degree of innovation, technical advancement, benefit to food manufacturers and/or consumers, and scientific merit. Four entries were selected for this year's award.

"The PATS technology promises to deliver a tremendous step-change in the way low-acid

food product manufacturers assure the safety and enhance the quality attributes of their products,” said NCFST Director **Martin Cole, PhD**, “and NCFST is truly honored to have been involved with this work.”

Cole nominated the DUST team for the award because its members’ hard work exemplifies how a successful cross-disciplinary, collaborative effort can bring about a major step change in processing innovation. “It is also very fitting that the team is recognized by IFT,” Cole added, “the leading professional group for food technologists worldwide, as it is a great example of how the organization can play a role in technology development.”

The seven-year multimillion dollar collaborative effort to develop PATS included scientists and engineers from Avure Technologies, U.S. Army Natick Soldier Research, Development and Engineering Center (RDEC), Baxter Health Care, ConAgra Foods, Hormel Foods, General Mills, Basic American Foods, Unilever, and Mars Co. The successful FDA filing allows NCFST to proceed with the production of demonstration products using the PATS process.

In awarding the honor to NCFST’s PATS process, IFT’s Innovation Award jurors noted that PATS is “an innovative combination of technologies to produce new products with benefits to manufacturers and consumers, with significant scientific merit and representing a major technical advancement.” Jurors also described the technology as “an FDA accepted system [that] uses mild heat with high pressure to produce shelf-life stable food with better quality. This breakthrough technology is important to ensure the safety and quality of low-acid foods.”

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The National Center for Food Safety and Technology (NCFST) is a unique research consortium located at the Illinois Institute of Technology's Moffett Campus (near Chicago) in Summit-Argo, IL, composed of scientists from the FDA Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN), Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) and the food industry. NCFST’s research addresses the food safety implications of emerging technologies in food processing and packaging and supports the development of safe food with health-promoting properties from farm to fork. **For more, visit [IFT Booth #608](#) or www.ncfst.iit.edu**

Founded in 1939, the **Institute of Food Technologists (IFT)** is a nonprofit scientific society with more than 20,000 individual members working in food science, food technology, and related professions in industry, academia, and government. IFT serves as a conduit for multidisciplinary science thought leadership, championing the use of sound science through knowledge sharing, education, and advocacy. **For more, visit www.ift.org.**