



COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND LIFE SCIENCES  
FOOD SCIENCE  
AND TECHNOLOGY  
VIRGINIA TECH.

# Food Digest

Summer 2020



## **Renee Boyer appointed as interim department head of Food Science and Technology**

Following a thorough selection process, the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences has named Renee Boyer as the interim head of Virginia Tech's Department of Food Science and Technology. She formally assumed her new role on August 10. Boyer has been with the food science faculty as professor and extension specialist since earning her doctoral degree from the department in 2006, during which time she has led a variety of extension initiatives to bolster food safety awareness among food producers and consumers, published countless research publications on foodborne illness prevention, and mentored numerous food science students through their graduate educations.

## FST in the news



### Fluent in flavor: Using machine learning to build a flavor language for whiskey

Smoke. Coal dust. Fine leather. Dark berry fruit. Coffee grounds. These are just a few of the things that whiskey drinkers experience when taking a sip of their favorite spirit.

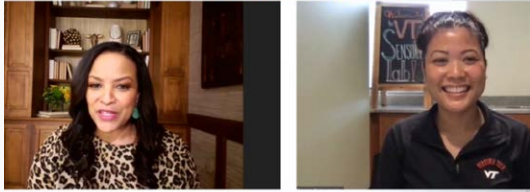
Describing whiskey has long been a difficult thing to pin down, which is why FST sensory researchers Jacob Lahne and Leah Hamilton and Virginia Tech Libraries data consultants Chreston Miller, and Michael Stamper have set out to create a tool to find a common language of whiskey words in a data set of 6,500 published whiskey reviews.

### Virginia Tech food sensory lab helps researchers read emotions

WFXR News spoke to Kat Phetxumphou about how the Sensory Evaluation Laboratory studies how consumers respond to the taste, smell, sight and feel of different foods, and how YOU can help them out by volunteering to taste delicious foods for science! Follow

## **VIRGINIA TECH**

### **SENSORY EVALUATION LABORATORY**



them @VTSensory on Facebook for new volunteer opportunities.

### **Beer science for the senses with Sean O'Keefe**

FST brewmeister Sean O'Keefe hosted a virtual happy hour hangout in June, and over 160 Hokies tuned in to learn all about the science of beer while enjoying their favorite brew. It may not be live, but you can still grab a pint and watch the lecture!



## **HOW HAS CONSUMER FOOD CHANGED SINCE THE PANDEMIC**



### **WFXR - How has consumer food changed since the pandemic?**

**Other COVID-19 news:**

**Video** - Tech on Tap: Food in the time of COVID-19



**Video** - Tech on Tap: Food safety and preservation during COVID-19

**NYT** - Russians eat burgers in gloves. Should everyone?

Virginia Tech COVID-19 Info and Resources

## FST holds its annual awards banquet virtually



### **Welcome to the 2020 FST Awards!**

The ongoing pandemic made it impossible to host our traditional annual awards banquet this year, but our Foodies still deserve to have their accomplishments recognized, so we decided to move the awards announcements online! Check out our 2020 FST Awards site to see a special message from Dr. Joe Marcy, our student scholarship award winners, faculty/staff awards, alumni accomplishments, our class of 2020 and more. [See our 2020 awardees](#)

#### **Related:**

[2020 Research Competition Winners Announced](#)

[Check out the FST 2020 Commencement page](#)

## Sending off our class of 2020 grad students



A little message to our class of 2020 graduate students from their advisors before graduation. It's been an honor working with you, and though we will miss you, we know the world will be a better place once you're out there in it, doing GREAT THINGS! You inspire us.

## Are you a Foodie alum?

**Join the VT Food Science Alumni Facebook group!**



**Learn to preserve your own food at home!**

# HOME FOOD PRESERVATION

## VIRTUAL PROGRAM

More people than ever are growing their own food at home. This self-paced virtual course will teach you how to safely preserve your fresh foods for year-round enjoyment using techniques such as canning, freezing, dehydration and fermentation.

You'll learn the science behind these techniques and receive step by step guidance on how to do them at home. After registering, you can complete the course at your own pace until December 31.

**For more info and to register, go to:**

**<https://bit.ly/2MrcY8G>**



## Enroll

starting July 17.  
Registration deadline  
October 15, 2020



## Course fee

**\$15**

*If you have any questions,  
please contact Dr. Renee  
Boyer at [rrboyer@vt.edu](mailto:rrboyer@vt.edu).*

Preserving your own food means delicious meals and fewer trips to the grocery store! We're teaming up with Virginia Cooperative Extension to offer this self-paced online course that will teach you everything you need to know about home food preservation techniques such as canning, freezing, dehydration and fermentation, and the science behind them.

Click the flyer to register!

## On Social Media

**CALS Employee of the Year: Kim Waterman**





## Virginia Tech Food Science & Technology Department

August 14 at 2:25 PM · 🌐

We had some stiff competition from the other [Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences](#) departments, but we're incredibly pleased to announce that our Lab Manager [Kim McKissack Waterman](#) won Employee of the Year at today's CALS 2020 Faculty and Staff Awards! Kim has been with us for over 20 years doing everything from reformulating dairy products to conducting microbiological evaluations of foods to managing our Sensory Evaluation Laboratory. Everyone in FST feels super lucky to have her, so please join us in wishing her a huge congratulations! You are awesome, Kim! 🏆👏🎉

Watch Kim receive her award from Dean Grant 📺



👍❤️ 39

5 Comments

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**Juneteenth: Celebrating Black American food scientists**



## In Other News



### Proximity of nonalcoholic 'near' beer widens

Because of new technology and yeast strains, the gap between non-alcoholic and alcoholic beer is smaller than ever! Sean O'Keefe spoke to the The Roanoke Times about the rise of "near beer."

### Bourbon vs. Rye: Science Says Everything You Know Is Wrong

Alcohol Professor spoke to distillers, scientists and whiskey industry professionals about Jacob Lahne's recent research indicating people can't taste the difference between bourbon and rye whiskey based on the grain content and got some spirited reactions!

