

## Getting to Know Felicia Loo

Being employed as a freelance food safety consultant has given Felicia Loo the opportunity to immerse herself in a variety of disciplines, which is one of the reasons she embraces change and continuous learning. “I enjoy the flexibility and diversity with the work that I do with my clients,” she says. “My projects vary—from food safety program development, implementation, training, and internal audit to project management.”

A graduate of the University of British Columbia with a BSc in food science, Loo is currently pursuing a post-graduate certificate in quality management at the Memorial University of Newfoundland. She has been a part of IFT since 2011, when she was a student. Since then, she has served in multiple capacities and is currently the chair for the British Columbia Section. “Through volunteering with IFT, we build trust, common purposes, and a sense of community,” she says. “The connection, ideas exchange[d], and the time that we spend together build an ever-lasting bridge for a global food science community.”

Along with the connections she has forged through IFT, Loo’s work experiences and the opportunities they have brought “have allowed me to learn about myself and also have the freedom to help those who need food safety guidance the most,” she reflects. Looking ahead, this experience will undoubtedly help her assist her clients with the many changes taking place.

“Food wastage has gone up around the world due to COVID-19, as food cannot go through the supply chain soon enough to reach consumers,” she says. “We are seeing consumers starting to shift from foodservice to home-cooked food, and gaining some cooking skills there. Food businesses, regardless of size, have adapted to the ‘essential’ situation at the moment, and there is no evidence whether or not this is temporary or permanent. The overlapping uncertainties make it harder for food companies and the supply chain in general to forecast—or should I say, our forecast is a high-stakes bet that the trend that we see will continue or discontinue.”

Other issues wrought by the pandemic, observes Loo, are a slowing of the regulatory and third-party certification audit process, which is “leaving the food industries to self-regulate,” she says. “I think we will see both challenges and opportunities in the self-regulation situation, especially when the current focus for many food businesses is to survive ....”

In the midst of a global pandemic, the connections we make with others are more important than ever, which is why Loo finds IFT’s core value of Community so fitting. “Food scientists play multiple roles in advancing our food science knowledge, bridging the gap between science and consumers while supporting the food industries,” she says. “It is essential to acknowledge that all of us are doing essential services in building our communities.”

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