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WTI to Present at 2026 Research Chef Association Annual Conference on Using Natural Antioxidants to Ensure Freshness

February 5, 2026
Jefferson, GA

WTI, Inc.'s Dr. Bob Johnson, Vice President of Technical Business Development, and Amber Beckett, Ph.D., Vice President of Product Management, will present a breakout session at the Research Chefs Association (RCA) Annual Meeting and Culinology Expo. Their session, "Using Natural Antioxidants to Ensure Freshness and Customer Satisfaction," will take place on March 11 from 9-10am MT.

As demand continues to rise for delicious, nutritious prepared meals that deliver convenience, shelf-life has become more critical than ever. Historically, shelf-life evaluation has focused primarily on microbial spoilage and pathogen control. While these remain essential, they represent only part of the picture. Chemical degradation driven by oxidation also plays a significant role in determining product acceptability, influencing flavor stability, appearance, and overall freshness.

Johnson and Beckett will present a more complete approach to shelf-life, emphasizing the combined impact of microbial spoilage and oxidative degradation. Attendees will learn how to identify key markers of oxidation and how familiar, clean label ingredients can be used strategically to address both challenges. The session will highlight how natural antioxidants, such as rosemary extract, can slow the oxidation cascade, helping protect products from rancidity and color fading while preserving flavor and label integrity.

"Nature presents challenges that impact shelf-life and consumer satisfaction, but it also provides many of the solutions," said Johnson. "By understanding how natural antioxidants work within food systems, manufacturers can achieve protection and performance without relying on chemical preservatives."

Beckett added, "When antioxidants work in harmony with the product from a scientific and flavor perspective, they support both shelf-life and consumer satisfaction. This session is about making informed choices that protect quality without compromise."

The RCA Annual Conference brings together chefs, product developers, and food science professionals from across the industry to explore innovation at the intersection of culinary arts and food science.

About the Speakers

Dr. Bob Johnson is Vice President of Technical Business Development at WTI, where he supports customers with ingredient solutions that enhance performance, quality, and shelf-life. Johnson is a classically trained meat scientist with degrees from Purdue, Kansas State, and Iowa State Universities (B.S., M.S., Ph.D., respectively). With more than four decades of experience bridging academia and industry, he has led advancements in food safety, shelf-life, sensory quality, and nutrition for meat

products. Johnson was an early pioneer in alternative curing solutions, helping shape today's clean label standards through innovations like vinegar-based pathogen control. He has also held leadership roles in R&D, Technical Service, and Food Safety during the critical development of HACCP and Zero Pathogen Tolerance practices. At WTI, he partners with customers to share best practices and deliver technical expertise that supports the consistent production of safe, high quality food while protecting both people and brands.

Amber Beckett, Ph.D. is Vice President of Product Management at WTI, leading product strategy and development with a focus on delivering customer driven, market ready solutions. Beckett is a microbiologist with extensive experience in research and development of clean label functional ingredients. She earned her Ph.D. in Microbiology from Vanderbilt University and her B.S. in Microbiology from Miami University in Ohio. Amber has specialized in antimicrobial and antioxidant solutions, with a strong focus on rosemary-based ingredients to combat rancidity and extend shelf-life. Throughout her career, she has worked closely with leading meat and poultry producers to design clean label solutions that balance safety, quality, and sustainability. At WTI, she bridges science and application to help companies bring innovative, cleaner products to market.

About WTI, Inc.
WTI is a leading provider of natural, clean label ingredient solutions that help food manufacturers protect product quality, extend shelf-life, ensure food safety, and meet evolving consumer expectations. With deep expertise in oxidation control, natural antioxidants, and natural antimicrobials, WTI partners closely with customers to address challenges related to freshness, flavor stability, and product performance. Grounded in science and real world application, the company develops naturally-derived solutions that work in harmony with food systems to preserve appearance, taste, and overall quality. Through technical leadership, collaborative innovation, and a strong customer first approach, WTI helps food companies deliver products that perform consistently and earn consumer trust. Learn more at www.wtiinc.com.

For more information about the RCA Annual Conference and Culinology Expo, visit https://www.culinology.org/connect/rca-conference.

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