

Invited & Keynote Speakers



Mr. Michael Bell is an Automation/Controls Development Specialist for Stork Food Systems. Over the last 13 years with Stork, one of the world's leading poultry processing equipment manufacturers, he has served in lead roles on various equipment and system development projects significant to the poultry processing industry, including the coordination of automated processing system development with national and international companies in North America, Latin America, and Europe. His administrative and hands-on experience has included responsibility for all development, programming, construction, implementation, purchasing negotiations and support of Stork Gamco electrical control systems. Mike is currently the project manager of a Stork R&D team working with USDA research laboratories to develop and test a vision inspection system for automated inspection tasks on poultry processing lines.

Dr. Thomas Burks is currently an Associate Professor in Ag and Bio Engineering at the University of Florida with an appointment in machine systems and robotics. He has ten years of manufacturing industry experience in agricultural structures, machinery design, industrial control systems, and food industry robotics. He received his MS and PhD degrees from the University of Kentucky with his PhD in Biosystems Engineering in 1997. He also did a Post-Doctorate at the University of Kentucky from 1997 to 2000. Dr. Burks has conducted research in applications using robotics, machine vision, neural networks, systems modeling, man/machine time & motion studies, instrumentation and controls. His current research emphasis is in the development of robotic harvesting systems for citrus, autonomous vehicles, and citrus disease detection both in the packinghouse and in the field.



Dr. David E. Gombas provides technical, food safety, regulatory and public policy assistance for the fresh and fresh-cut produce industry, and was co-editor of the Commodity Specific Food Safety Guidelines for the Lettuce and Leafy Greens Supply Chain. Previously, David was with the National Food Processors Association, where he served as Vice President of NFPA's laboratories for microbiology, chemistry and processing research and technical assistance in Washington D.C. Later, David served as Vice President of NFPA-SAFE, the Association's auditing program for the food industry. Prior to NFPA, David served in Microbiology and Food Safety departments at Campbell Soup Company and Kraft Foods. In 1993, he was Research Professor of Food Safety at the National Center for Food Safety and Technology, working with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to develop HACCP training courses for FDA investigators. David received his Bachelor and Master degrees in Food Science from Rutgers University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, respectively, and his Ph.D. in Food Microbiology from University of Massachusetts.

Dr. Jean-Pierre Emond is a Professor with the Packaging Science Program at the University of Florida and the Co-Director of the UF/IFAS Center for Food Distribution and Retailing. He is currently the Principal Scientific Advisor for the Cool Chain Association (CCA) and Scientific Advisor for perishable and pharmaceutical products with the International Air Transport Association (IATA). He is a member of the steering committee of the Parental Drug Association Pharmaceutical Cold Chain Interest Group. He is a founding member of the Global RF Lab Alliance (GRFLA) and member of the editing board of the International Journal of RF Technologies: Research and Applications. His main research sectors are in Food and Pharmaceutical Packaging, and Handling and Transportation as well as the use of RFID in the cold chain management. He has over 250 technical communications and 5 patents (or pending) in packaging. He has done more than 50 research projects since 1993, most of them related to packaging, transport and distribution.



Dr. Naoshi Kondo graduated from Kyoto University with B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. degrees in Agricultural Engineering, with the completion of his Ph. D. dissertation entitled "Agricultural visual sensor attached to manipulator end" in 1988. His previous experience includes employment with Okayama University, Ishii Industry Co. Ltd., and Ehime University. He is currently a professor at Kyoto University and leads the Laboratory of Agricultural Process Engineering in the Division of Environmental Science and Technology at the Graduate School of Agriculture.

Dr. Daniel Schmoltdt is the National Program Leader for instrumentation and sensors in Cooperative State Research, Education & Extension Service (CSREES) of United State Department of Agriculture (USDA). He provides national leadership to develop, coordinate, and manage research, education and extension programs in the areas of sensors, and automation in food and agricultural applications. Dan engages land-grant universities, national laboratories, industrial partners, and other federal agencies to mine sensor and instrumentation technology advancements along with decision support systems for processing of agricultural/forest products, precision agriculture/forestry, and environmental quality; provides leadership to identify and develop those technologies, wherever they exist, and serves as a liaison between those organizations and the agricultural/forestry agencies best suited to develop and demonstrate benefits.



Dr. K.C. Ting graduated from the National Taiwan University with a B.S. degree, the University of Kentucky with an M.S., and the University of Illinois with his Ph.D. All three degrees are in agricultural engineering. He is currently Professor and Head of the Ag and Bio Engineering Department at the University of Illinois. He is a NASULGC Food Systems Leadership Institute fellow during 2006-2008. He teaches and conducts research on automation, systems analysis, alternative energy and thermal control, and computerized simulation, optimization and decision support for bio-production and bio-processing systems. He currently leads a BP Energy Biosciences Institute program on "Engineering Solutions for Biomass Feedstock Production." He served as the leader of the Systems Studies & Modeling Team within the New Jersey NASA Specialized Center of Research and Training during 1996-2000. He served as the editor of the Information and Electrical Technologies Division of ASABE during 1996-2000. He is currently an Editor-in-Chief for Computers and Electronics in Agriculture and co-Honorary Theme Editor for UNESCO Encyclopedia of Life Support Systems, Theme 5.17. "Systems Analysis and Modeling in Food and Agriculture."