

# AOAC Membership Stories: Why AOAC?

To promote the value of AOAC membership and involvement, at the Committee on Membership meeting held in Atlanta, Georgia, USA, it was recommended that ILM publish a series of articles written by each member of the committee focused on the topic, "Why AOAC?" The third installment is written by **Marina Torres**, senior analyst in the Analytical Method Development Department at Laboratorio Tecnológico del Uruguay (LATU), the Uruguayan laboratory in charge of the control of imported food and food for export. She credits AOAC membership for connecting her with colleagues (and now friends) from around the globe. She shares how AOAC membership benefits her both professionally and personally. Here is her story on "Why AOAC?" What will be your story?



Marina Torres

**A**s a member of the AOAC Committee on Membership, I encourage you to make the most of your membership and network with people from around the globe with your same interests. The connections I've made and involvement in AOAC activities have been valuable for me both professionally and personally. It is extremely rewarding for me to help advance AOAC's mission of confidence in analytical results.

Earlier in my career, I was in contact with two experts involved with AOAC activities on vitamins analysis. A training was organized in my laboratory in Uruguay, and I invited both to participate. After the training, one of them, **David Woollard** from Eurofins in New Zealand, invited me to join AOAC. I have been a member since August 2006.

In September 2006 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA, I attended my first AOAC Annual Meeting. Since then, I have participated in all AOAC Annual Meetings and have been involved in many different AOAC activities. I participate because AOAC activities are beneficial for me and my laboratory, but also because it is very gratifying to

help AOAC achieve its goals.

I have been a member of the AOAC Stakeholder Panel on Infant Formula and Adult Nutritionals (SPIFAN) since its inception, and a member of the Stakeholder Panel on Strategic Food Analytical Methods (SPSEAM) since last year. I serve on different AOAC expert review panels (ERPs; Pesticides in Tea, Aloin, Whey Casein) to evaluate candidate methods for possible First Action adoption. I have participated in various nutrient analysis committees. Previously I served on the Editorial Board, and am currently a reviewer for the *Journal of AOAC INTERNATIONAL*.

I am also an active member of the AOAC Latin America and Caribbean Section. During the AOAC Annual Meeting in Dallas, Texas, USA, in 2008, I networked with people from South America who were interested in reinvigorating the Section, which had been inactive for some years. Together, we contacted more AOAC members and, the following year, we held our first Latin America and Caribbean Section meeting. Since then, three annual Section meetings have been organized in Mexico, Chile, and Argentina. This year, the AOAC Latin America and Caribbean Section will host its annual meeting in Mexico.

In addition to serving on vari-

ous committees, ERPs, and the Latin America and Caribbean Section, I participate in several multilaboratory testing studies, which are useful for AOAC to determine reproducibility of a method. Further, these studies help laboratories and analysts gain experience with a new methodology, and they can have the method validated in their own laboratory.

Being a part of AOAC is very important for me. It is a valuable organization to learn about the latest methods and technology, share information, and collaborate with people working on the same topics in which I am interested. I am proud to be part of the work to develop and validate analytical standards. Through my association with AOAC, I have made friends from many different countries.

I strongly urge you to be involved in the important work of AOAC. From submitting papers and methods to setting standards and selecting the best fit-for-purpose methods, there's no shortage of opportunities at AOAC. Choose activities that best fit your interest and needs. You won't be disappointed. ■

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