



2022 Food Evolution Student Competition Manual

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Research Chefs Association & the Food Evolution Student Competition:

The Research Chefs Association (RCA) is the leading professional community for food research and development. As such, RCA is the premier source of culinary and technical information for the food industry and is committed to the advancement of Culinology® –the integration of culinary arts and food science. Founded in 1996, RCA has rapidly grown over the years and includes chefs, food scientists, technologists, writers, nutritionists, academicians, researchers, consultants, sales and marketing professionals, suppliers, co-packers, distributors, and students. Since 2007, RCA has sponsored the Student Culinology Competition to highlight student talent and achievement through competition.

To meet the demands of the evolving food industry, RCA has created the Food Evolution Student Competition in 2016. Established by the RCA Student Committee, the Food Evolution Competition challenges student teams to create and formulate commercializable food products while repurposing byproduct ingredients historically considered food waste.

During the annual Research Chef's Association Convention in Atlanta, Georgia RCA will hold the final portion of Food Evolution Student Competition.

Purpose

The purpose of the competition is to:

- Encourage students to develop a food product(s) using waste byproducts, sustainable agricultural products or upcycled ingredients commonly produced within the industry.
- Understand food waste commercialization and its ecological impact in the food industry; carbon footprint calculation and the benefits associated in the creation of products for a circular economy.
- Encourage students to develop a food product that describes the evolution of food within the industry.
- Challenge students to apply Culinology concepts to answer industry questions regarding Food Evolution. Examples: Can we find ways to repurpose byproduct ingredients? Can we meet demands through innovative new processing? What types of specialized equipment or manufacturing processes aid in a circular economy?
- Promote student talent and develop connections within the industry to provide a platform that will allow students to spotlight their food science and culinary skill set.
- Provide a creative opportunity for students to network with food industry professionals and peers.



Eligibility

- All contestants must be current active RCA Student members. The annual student membership fee is \$35. [Click here](#) to join RCA.
- Competitors selected as a finalist must register to attend the RCA Annual Conference in March 2022 (please see page 8 for exceptions).
- No more than two (2) students are permitted per team (strictly enforced), or a competitor can enter the competition independently as a team of one.
- Students graduating in December 2020 and not continuing study are not eligible to compete.
- A faculty sponsor is required for the verification of the students' eligibility and originality of the work submitted. This faculty member may sponsor all competitors from one school.
- Each individual competitor or team of two must have a faculty sponsor.
- One faculty member may sponsor all competitors from one school.
- Faculty and other industry sources may be consulted, and those sources must be documented in the proposal's bibliography; consultants cannot be a major contributor to the actual work.
- For a team of two, an individual "team leader" must be designated to represent the team.
- Each winning competitor is eligible to receive only one (1) prize.
- The proposed product entered in the competition must be an original concept that has not have been submitted in any previous contest; in addition, the entry must not be a commercial product or in the process of becoming a commercial product.

Competition Timetable

Phase I: LETTER OF INTENT

By **November 22, 2021** – Competitors will submit a letter of intent, stating their intention to participate in the competition, to Chip Potter at cpotter@culinology.org

Phase II: PROPOSAL

By **February 4, 2022** – Competitors will submit a written proposal for their concept. The concept, idea and formulation must be unique and developed exclusively for this competition.

Phase III: FINAL COMPETITION AND PRESENTATION

By **February 25, 2022**, individual competitors, and team leaders (for teams of two), will be informed if their team has been selected for the final competition. Up to three (3) finalists/teams will be chosen to advance to the final competition. The finalists will have the opportunity to present their concept to judges, following the protocol outlined on page 8 in this manual.



PHASE I: LETTER OF INTENT

Competitors will submit their Letter of Intent to Chip Potter at cpotter@culinology.org no later than November 22, 2021. The Letter of Intent must include the following:

1. Name of University
2. Competitor or team name
3. Competitor(s) contact information
4. For two-person teams – Name the designated team leader
5. Graduation date
6. Faculty sponsor name and contact information
7. One address to send sponsored ingredients (no P.O. boxes)

Please send all questions regarding the Letter of Intent to Chip Potter at cpotter@culinology.org no later than Thursday, **November 18**. Questions submitted after that may not be answered in time for the final **November 22** deadline. Once all Letters of Intent are received, RCA will schedule a webinar to outline the next steps in the competition process. Representatives from Griffith Foods, the competition sponsor, will participate in this webinar to help answer questions. Your attendance at this webinar is optional.

PHASE II: PROPOSAL

All competitors must submit their completed proposal no later than **February 4, 2022**. There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this deadline. Incomplete proposals will not be accepted.

Please submit your Proposal for the Food Evolution Student Competition via e-mail to Chip Potter at cpotter@culinology.org. The proposal will include a written description of the concept plus a video no more than five minutes in length that presents and describes the concept.

Proposals will be critiqued by a panel of judges, and finalists will be notified beginning on **February 28, 2022**.

Teams are required to create an innovative commercialized concept featuring Hearts of Palm Powder from competition sponsor Griffith Foods.

Competitors may select additional ingredients from RCA's list of "Optional Food Evolution Ingredients" (see page 7) but will not be given additional points for using these ingredients. For the finalists, RCA will host a webinar to answer questions, and provide instructions to use the virtual presentation platform for their final presentation. Representatives from Griffith Foods will participate in this webinar.

Proposal Background (100 Points)

- **Requirements** - Competitors are required to use Hearts of Palm Powder sponsored by Griffith Foods in their Food Evolution product. Competitors may select additional ingredients from RCA's list of "Optional Food Evolution Ingredients" but will not be given additional points for this. Once the proposal is submitted, competitors may not modify their proposal.



- Written Proposal Format – The written proposal must be formatted using Times New Roman, 12-point font, 1.5 line spacing, and 1” margins. Please number all pages.
- Video Format – The video must not exceed five minutes in length. Competitors may use any video editing platform, but the finished video must be in MP4 format that can be viewed on a typical computer.
- Submissions – To keep competitors anonymous and to prevent bias from judges while evaluating, competitors must submit electronic PDF files in two (2) separate documents:
 - Document 1: Biographical Information
 - Document 2: Proposal

Document 1: Biographical Information

1. Title page with competitor(s) names, faculty advisor name and name of University.
2. Faculty verification letter (see Eligibility section on page 3).
3. One-paragraph biography for each competitor, including the faculty advisor. Biography must include area of study and the competitor’s food “philosophy” regarding Food Loss Commercialization (upcycling) and circular economy (1-page maximum per biography).
4. A digital photograph of the competitor(s) and the faculty advisor.
5. On a separate page, please list the competitor’s home address, telephone number, email address and university/school affiliation.

Document 2: Written Proposal

The written proposal may not exceed a total of twenty (20) single-sided pages. This includes the title page, the page for photographs, and the appendix page(s). Judges will select a maximum of three (3) finalists to move forward to the final competition.

The written proposal will include the following, in this order:

1. Title Page
2. Table of Contents
3. Proposal Body (See “Written Proposal Content” below for components)
4. Appendix
5. Bibliography

Note: To keep teams anonymous and to prevent bias from judges, **please do not include** any information that identifies the competitor or university affiliation, as any proposal containing this information will be returned and considered incomplete.

Written Proposal Content

Complete proposals will be judged on the following seven elements worth a total of 300 points:

- 1. Sell Sheet - A maximum two (2) page document with these elements (25 points):**
 - a. One (1) paragraph executive summary including the name and description of your concept.



- b. Explanation of how your product represents Food Evolution as related to sustainable ecological health and/or nutritional health in the industry.
- c. Carbon footprint calculation as related to a similar product – please refer to this reference for help on carbon footprinting: <https://www.bsigroup.com/LocalFiles/en-GB/standards/BSI-sustainability-guide-product-carbon-footprinting-for-beginners-UK-EN.pdf>
- d. Explanation of target market and basis for potential success of your product
- e. Photo
- f. Ingredient statement, including a list all allergens, if applicable
- g. Packaging
- h. Shelf-life (can use similar/current products in market to approximate shelf life)
- i. Serving options

2. Background and description of commercialized product (40 points):

Provide substantial evidence as to why the product is considered part of Food Evolution and how your product(s) will have a scalable and measurable impact on the environment via food loss commercialization, upcycling, reduced carbon footprint or regenerative agriculture as it pertains to a circular economy model. If evidence does not substantiate the product fits Food Evolution, then the proposal will be disqualified from the competition.

3. Product formulation sheet (40 points):

The sheet will show the formulation for one (1) serving of each commercialized item component (e.g.: An ice cream sandwich should have one (1) formulation sheet for the cookie component and one (1) formulation sheet for the ice cream component). Each formulation sheet should follow format found in Appendix B.

Product Formulation Sheet Elements:

- a. Ingredient/Supplier: All ingredients in the final product and ingredient suppliers should be identified.
- b. Amount (g): The formula should be written in terms of gram weight measurements of each ingredient used to formulate each item component, listed in decreasing order of magnitude with the resulting total equal to the weight of food in one serving of enough of the product to feed one adult.
- c. Percent (%): The formula should also be written in terms of the percentage of each ingredient used to formulate each item component. Percentages should be listed in decreasing order of magnitude with the resulting total equaling 100%.
- d. Wholesale Price Per Pound (\$/LB): A 500,000 limited production run should be used as the volume for purposes of sourcing and pricing ingredients. Price per serving of the total sum of all ingredients used for your concept should be appropriate and justified. The Book of Yields by Francis T. Lynch offers good information for finding yield and portion size, and calculating metric conversions.
- e. Cost of Ingredient in the Formula (\$): Ingredient prices can be found from the sponsor company. Note: Teams may research and document lower competitor prices for the purpose of achieving a desired price point.
- f. Preparation instructions for the commercialized formula.



4. Identification, description, and justification of the Food Evolution ingredients (50 points):

This section covers the commercial production the final product, especially as it impacts successful mass production feasibility:

- a. Describe any specialized equipment and/or processing methods used in the final product as it related to food loss commercialization, health and nutrition and total carbon footprint.
- b. Provide complete manufacturing instructions using a simple flow chart for final product from raw materials to ready to ship.
- c. Explain the safety and handling precautions used in the process of final product, if applicable.

5. Impact of the Food Evolution ingredient (50 points):

This section describes the impact on food evolution of the sponsored ingredient, and how it is effectively utilized in the product concept. Competitors should explain how this product or the process highlights Hearts of Palm Powder and other sustainable products. The concept should also have a projected acceptability as a consumer food product, and its benefit to the correlating sponsor company. A proven measurement or metrics that validates total carbon footprint of proposed concept as compared to similar Market products/concepts.

6. Originality of Concept: Based on expertise and opinion of the judges (50 points)

7. Video Presentation (45 points):

The video is a summary of the elements in the competitor's written proposal. Competitors may also use the video to demonstrate preparation techniques or other elements critical to understanding the concept. The video must not exceed five minutes in length. The video will be judged on clarity of presentation, connectivity to the written proposal, and persuasive qualities.

RCA's List of Optional Food Evolution Ingredients:

Competitors are required to use Hearts of Palm Powder sponsored by Griffith Foods. In an effort to introduce additional upcycled ingredients, Griffith Foods will offer these additional optional ingredients for use, **but these are not required** to be utilized. No points will be given for these extra ingredients. Once your Proposal is submitted you will be given contacts to work with at Griffith Foods who will assist you with questions related to their products and the shipment of materials.

Recommended ingredients:

1. NuBana's [Green Banana Powder](#) (flour)
2. ReGrained [Spent Brewer's Grain](#)
3. Kuli Kuli [Moringa Powder](#)
4. Terova's sustainable and ethically sourced [Spice Portfolio](#)



PHASE III: COMPETITION & PRESENTATION

The Food Evolution Student Competition final presentations will take place in-person during RCA Conference in March 2022.

Finalists are strongly encouraged to attend the Conference in Atlanta. This offers the students an outstanding opportunity to experience the people of RCA, meet a variety of company leaders, and to learn from the different education sessions and the Culinology Expo.

RCA recognizes and respects that schools may have their own rules regarding student travel during this pandemic. If a finalist team is unable to travel to Atlanta, RCA will make arrangements for a virtual presentation during the scheduled presentation time slot. **Teams who cannot travel must notify RCA no later than March 1, 2022.**

Finalists will deliver a ten minute live oral presentation to judges on the assigned date and time during the event. The competitors will use PowerPoint for their presentation.

There will be up to five minutes for questions and answers with the judges after each presentation.

Final Presentation

Teams will submit their PowerPoint presentation no later than **March 11, 2021**. The total points available for the Final Presentation is **125 points**, covering the presentation and the question and answer session.

PowerPoint Presentation (100 Points):

1. A PowerPoint presentation is required. Each competitor will be notified on details concerning file requirements after finalists are chosen.
2. A time clock will be visible and time limits will be enforced. The Competition Chair will keep track of time.
3. Each team has a maximum of ten (10) minutes for the PowerPoint portion.
4. For two-person competitors, one individual must make the presentation.
5. The Oral Presentation should cover the following:
 - a. Product description with pictures
 - b. Food Evolution ingredient(s) used and the functionality in the final product
 - c. Sustainability, food loss commercialization, health and nutrition and total carbon footprint.
 - d. Target market
 - e. Profitability
 - f. Feasibility
6. Competitors will be judged based on clarity of speech, potential impact on sustainability, use of sponsored ingredient, organization, professionalism, quality, interest generated by audience, and ability to sell the product idea to consumers and professionals alike.



Answers/Responses (25 points):

After competitors deliver their presentations, judges will begin a five (5) minute question and answer session, which allows competitors to discuss any topic concerning the formulation and novelty of their product. For two-person teams, both competitors will participate in this session. Competitors will be judged based on the quality of their answers/responses to questions and feedback.

JUDGING INDEMNITY & AWARDS

Judging Evaluation:

An expert panel of up to five (5) RCA professional members representing the food industry in the fields of the culinary arts, R&D, food science, retail and flavor/ingredients will judge the proposals, and render a decision by the date of the competition based on the Proposal elements outlined above. All competitors will receive a record of their scores following the Competition. Please see Appendix A “Scoring Sheet.” These criteria are set by RCA Education Committee, whose decisions are final and binding on matters related to this contest. Competitors will be given an average of the judges’ scores per category, their ranking per category, and the Competition high score per category after the Competition.

Indemnity:

All decisions of RCA and RCA judges are final. Application and interpretation of Competition rules are solely within the discretion of RCA. The Competition may be postponed, cancelled, or rescheduled, and prizes withheld, at the discretion of RCA. No warranties, express or implied, are given by RCA or the competition venue in connection with the Competition. Each Entrant releases RCA and the competition venue from, and waives all claims against RCA and the competition venue for, any loss, damage, expense, cost, claim, or injury to person or property arising directly or indirectly from the Competition. Each Entrant also shall indemnify, defend, and hold RCA and the competition venue harmless with respect to any claim, demand, or cause of action against RCA or the competition venue arising from any act or omission of the Entrant. Entrants consent to the use of their name, picture, and likeness by RCA for publicity purposes and irrevocably license to RCA the right to reproduce, distribute, publish, display, and otherwise use the proposals and other materials submitted in connection with the Competition, in any form and via any media. Void where prohibited by law. This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Illinois, and the sole forum for any legal action related to the Competition shall be State or federal court within Cook County, Illinois.

RCA retains the rights to the submitted application content.



Awards

A \$1,500 award will be presented for first place.

- Finalists are required to be present in order to be eligible to receive an award.
- Applicable taxes are the sole responsibilities of winners.
- Award will be distributed by the faculty sponsor.
- The winner will receive national recognition through coverage in RCA media.
- If the combined proposal and on-site scores result in a tie between two competitors, judges will further question the competitors on any of the areas related to their participation in the Competition to determine the final place.

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APPENDIX A

SCORING SHEET

Proposal (300 points total)

- A two-page (max) Sell Sheet with required elements. (25 Points)
- Background/description of commercialized product. (40 points)
- The application formulation sheet for one serving of each commercialized item component. (40 points)
- Identification, description, and justification of the Food Evolution ingredient used. (50 points)
- Impact of the Food Evolution Ingredient used and how it is utilized effectively in this product. (50 Points)
- Originality of concept (based on expertise of judges). (50 Points)
- Video presentation (45 Points)

Final Presentation (125 points total)

- Oral PowerPoint Presentation (100 Points)
- Q&A Session (25 Points)



