

A/Prof Alison Coates- Australian Nutrition Trust Fund (ANTF) Visiting Travelling Fellowship Report- Nov 2018

My name is Alison Coates and I am a Registered Nutritionist with the Nutrition Society of Australia and an academic who teaches and conducts research in nutritional physiology at the University of South Australia. This year I had the opportunity to experience an academic sabbatical from July to December and spent this time focussed on my research and working closely with industry partners.

I was fortunate to receive an Australian Nutrition Trust Fund (ANTF) Visiting Travelling Fellowship to spend one month in the US comprising two weeks at The Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging (HNRCA) at Tufts University in Boston Massachusetts and two weeks in Northern California visiting the Almond Board of California, University of California-Davis (UC Davis) and University of California-Merced (UC Merced).

In Boston, I spent most of my visit working with Professor Jeff Blumberg in the Antioxidants Research Laboratory focused on techniques to assess Vitamin E and its metabolites and discussing approaches to determine compliance in dietary intervention trials. The HNRCA is a fantastic facility and I had the opportunity to meet with a wide range of researchers interested in the link between nutrition and heart health, nutrition and cognition and changes in metabolic profiles related to timing of food consumption.



I also had the opportunity to meet with A/Prof Megan McCrory from Boston University and discuss mutual interests in energy metabolism and novel methods of assessing energy intake.

Boston is a stunning city- I walked part of The Freedom Trail to work each day and on the weekend toured the North End and Boston Harbour. There were lots of great New England culinary experiences including lobster rolls, clam chowder and cannolis!



In California, I spent most of my time at the Almond Board of California with Dr Swati Kalgaonkar. This was such a great way to gain a better understanding of the almond industry. I had the opportunity to meet with team members from a broad range of departments and discuss the importance of translating nutrition research to consumers.

One of the highlights, was the chance to tour an almond orchard and processing plant. California producers approximately 80% of all almonds and the logistics associated with such a large industry was fascinating. I was also treated to exploring California vineyards and the coast on weekend adventures!



At UC Merced, I was hosted by Prof Rudy Ortiz in the Department of Physiology. It was great to meet with his team and discuss our mutual interests looking at health benefits associated with nuts and challenges with running dietary clinical trials. I gave a departmental seminar and then was treated to the most spectacular dinner overlooking an almond orchard in Merced.

At UC Davis, I was hosted by Dr Nancy Keim from the USDA Western Human Nutrition Research Center and met with several scientists from both this facility and faculty from the Nutrition Department, toured their clinical trials facility and laboratories and presented a departmental seminar. It was a wonderful experience to see these facilities first-hand and to understand the breadth of capabilities they have, to then be able to consider future joint projects.



I am very grateful for the opportunities I had during this trip to share my research findings, to network with international colleagues and friends and to acquire knowledge from experts. I gained a wealth of knowledge to take with me back to Adelaide that I am sure will help me continue to develop my career. I strongly encourage others to take up this opportunity. I extend my sincere thanks to the ANTF for their financial support of this visit and to all the wonderful hosts I met along the way for welcoming me and the amazing experience.