

Bartoshuk on ‘What Makes Food Good’

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The Nobel Conference is the first ongoing academic conference in the United States to have the official authorization from the Nobel Foundation in Stockholm, Sweden. Since 1965, the annual meetings, held at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota, have linked a general audience with the world’s foremost scholars and researchers in conversations centered on contemporary issues related to the natural and social sciences. The Nobel Conference aims to bring cutting-edge **science** issues to the attention of an audience of students and interested adults; and to engage the panelists and the audience in a discussion of the moral and societal impact of these issues.

Nobel Conference 46 “Making Food Good” addressed the question, “What makes food good?” and included a variety of perspectives including ethical, physiological, economic, and aesthetic conceptions of “good” that sometimes intertwine and clash. APS Immediate Past President Linda M. **Bartoshuk** of the University of Florida, was a featured speaker at the conference. “I interpreted the question, ‘What makes food good,’ as an opportunity to talk about the pleasure we experience from food,” said **Bartoshuk** “how that pleasure changes with sensory variation (genetic and pathological), and how **psychological science** can contribute to improving the tastes of healthy foods.”

Bartoshuk reported that foods do not taste the same to all of us. Some of this variation is genetic while some is due to common pathologies. Understanding these variations has eluded scientists for many years, due to limitations in the psychophysical tools used to measure sensory intensity. Now psychophysical advances let us see the variation and link it to behaviors which impact health. “The conference was one of the most interesting I have ever attended” commented **Bartoshuk**. “The topic choice recognized how central food is to the world and the speakers interpreted “good food” in very different ways. Gustavus Adolphus has created a superb environment for discussing topics of general importance.”

For more information on Linda Bartoshuk’s talk, “Variation in Sensation and Affect: We Live in ‘Different Taste Worlds,’” and other Nobel Conference 46 talks visit the [Nobel Conference 46 website](#).

The Nobel Conference 47 will be held on October 4-5, **2011**, with the theme of “The Brain and Being Human.” This conference will discuss the intricate complexity and the unifying mechanisms underlying human behavior, and lay out a path for future exploration. For more information, [click here](#).