



Angela Parry-Hanson
2015 AWARD Fellow

“The community is using the preservation methods I developed during my PhD research. It is great to see my work being put into practice”

Position	Lecturer
Institution	University of Ghana
Country	Ghana
PhD	Food Science, University of Pretoria, 2010
Mentor	Kwaku Tano-Debrah, Professor, Department of Nutrition and Food Science, University of Ghana
Research Area	Improvement of food quality through development of safe products for the food industry in Ghana.

Angela Parry-Hanson was raised in Accra by strict parents who provided a good social and spiritual support system for their four children. She now appreciates this support, as it has seen her through her studies—from undergraduate to PhD—outside of Ghana.

Parry-Hanson switched from Cell Biotechnology, which she studied for her BSc at the University of Alberta in Canada, to Food Science for her MSc and PhD, both of which she undertook at the University of Pretoria. “I took a course in food microbiology as an undergraduate, which made me so scared to eat,” she exclaims. This experience had a huge impact on her, and she decided to switch to food science for her postgraduate research. “I’d always planned to work in Africa, and food safety issues are big here, although most can be solved by simple technologies and policies,” she says.

Parry-Hanson’s PhD research was on goat milk and milk products. The aim of the project was to determine the efficacy of the lactoperoxidase system, naturally found in milk, against acid-adapted pathogen in fresh and fermented goat milk. This project was implemented under a bigger initiative by the South African government to promote consumption of goat milk to improve rural nutrition, as it is more economical to keep goats than cows. Activation of lactoperoxidase system does not require energy, it is cost effective and can be used in rural areas where there is no electricity.

Currently a lecturer at the University of Ghana, Parry-Hanson is on her way to achieving her goal of becoming a professor within the next 10 years. During this period she hopes to continue conducting research on food quality and safety in Ghana with the ultimate aim of eventually being a global authority on this issue.

Parry-Hanson’s work involves lecturing, as well as supervising students who are working on honey quality, fish safety, and food safety systems. The demand for honey in Ghana is high, but the product is mainly artisanal and therefore not regulated. As a result, impurities make their

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way into the market. She is developing ways to improve the quality of the product. She is doing similar work with artisanal fish, looking at the microbial quality from landing to point of sale with the aim of providing consumers with good quality fish.

For the food safety systems research, Parry-Hanson conducted an audit of institutional kitchens and is now assessing the status of implementation of good hygiene practices in these kitchens. “This work is important because microbial quality of food in institutional kitchens is generally poor and I want to determine what the risk factors are so we can mitigate them,” she states.

The research she is currently engaged in will help her achieve her goal of developing cost-effective technologies that agro-processors can use to increase production through enhanced food safety and quality, and therefore improve livelihoods.

The AWARD Fellowship is one among several awards Parry-Hanson has won over the years, including a Young Scientist Award from the International Union of Food Science and Technology and a number of academic achievement awards. She expects AWARD to equip her with the skills she needs to make her the leader in her field that she aspires to be.

Now a mother of two young children—18 and 4 months—Parry-Hanson wonders how women with children manage to find the time to study. “My university supports young mothers by providing a crèche so I can have the children close to me and peace of mind to work,” she explains. She is confident that she will improve her work-life balance, even as she progresses in her career.

Parry-Hanson is happiest when she sees the impact of her work. “The community is using the preservation methods I developed during my PhD research,” she says. “It is great to see my work being put into practice.”