

# LOUISE WICKER

## Now:

Director and Professor  
School of Nutrition & Food Science  
LSU AgCenter, Louisiana State Univ



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Louise Wicker began life as Director of the School of Nutrition and Food Sciences (SNFS) in July, 2015 at Louisiana State University after 26 years as a professor at University of Georgia. The merger of the food science and human nutrition programs, the inclusion of family and consumer sciences and the Food Incubator positions the LSU SNFS to promote health and wellness programs and economic development. The knowledge I gained as a grad student on thermal transitions and structural changes of proteins gained me a position at the University of Florida, Citrus Research and Education Center, studying thermostability of pectinmethylesterase. From there, I became a pectin chemist and still dabbled in muscle foods. I continued to work in poultry, seafood, and fisheries, but I am most known for my pectin and enzymology work. More recently, I moved into pectin and health related research. Pectin – it is more than jams and jellies!

## Then:

Ph.D. in Food Science  
1981-1985  
North Carolina State University



I started at NCSU in 1981 and graduated in 1985. Ming Wu, David Green, Brian Himmelbloom, Jane Burgerella and I were in a cohort, advised by Dr. Lanier and Dr. Hamann. I have no idea of my dissertation title anymore, but my role in the above group was to identify thermal transitions in myosin that could be related to 'setting' of surimi.

I learned the discipline of perseverance through proteases, loss of yield, timeline battles with short shelf life protein and working in the cold room. I think we published three papers from that work. I learned the value of great colleagues who were there to listen and offer perspective.

I spent a lot of hours on the Instron downstairs and in the fluorometer room in Dr. Knopp's lab in biochemistry. WooBear, pictured left was an honorary grad student. He accompanied me on many nights to alert me when someone was near. (I remain hopeful that the statute of limitations is past on the ban on animals in the buildings.)