

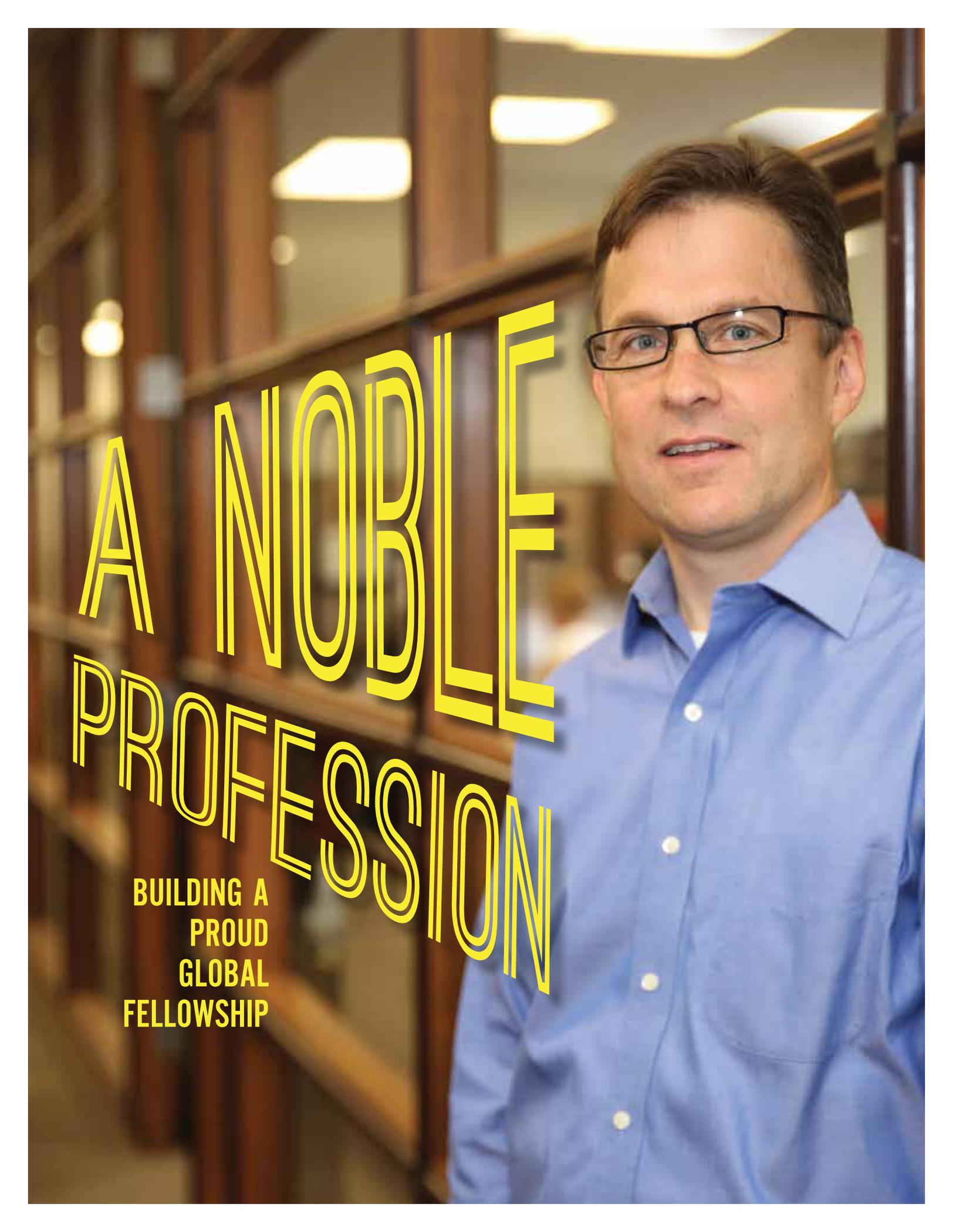
# INTERNATIONAL MILLER

SEABOARD

A MAGAZINE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL GRAIN MILLING COMMUNITY

“Our work is a high calling, and it is important to society. I do not want us to forget that.”





# A NOBLE PROFESSION

BUILDING A  
PROUD  
GLOBAL  
FELLOWSHIP

Milling, Roy Loepp says, is a noble profession.

“If we are doing our job well, it means people are able to live a better quality of life. The safety, quality and availability of food depend on milling. We tend to take these things for granted,” Loepp says. “Our work is a high calling, and it is important to society. I do not want us to forget that.”

As incoming President of the International Association of Operative Millers, Loepp says he plans to stress the

colleague, says Loepp will lend an incredible amount of knowledge and wide-ranging experience to the association.

“Roy brings fresh leadership to the IAOM with an impressive resume that has not been seen in the past. His multi-continent and cultural experiences make him an outstanding representative for the IAOM, which has grown into a global organization,” Montgomery says. “He views industry and operations from a broad lens, and his experience

would be a good fit.

“Working with machines, creating processes and learning how things work all intrigued me,” he says. “To me, it seemed that milling offered a lot of career possibilities. I stuck with it, and it turned out to offer a diverse range of experiences.”

After spending two summers with ADM Milling in Buhler and Inman, Kansas, Loepp graduated from Kansas State in 1989 with a bachelor’s degree in milling science and management. He

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importance of milling in today’s society and reassert a measure of pride in the profession.

Loepp, who is director of quality for Seaboard Overseas and Trading Group, took the reins of the association at the 119th annual conference and expo in Palm Springs, Calif. in May. His presidential theme is “Building a Proud Global Fellowship.”

A veteran miller, Loepp has spent the past 25 years working in mills and other food operations across the United States and abroad, developing a deep sense of the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for the industry.

Scott J. Montgomery, a former

in emerging markets and multiple geographies gives him insight that many do not have.”

#### LEARNING THE TRADE

Raised in rural Kansas, Loepp grew up on his family’s wheat farm in Inman, a small town nestled between Hutchinson and McPherson. Agriculture fascinated him, although he knew little about the milling process or what happened to his family’s wheat after harvest.

In 1985, he enrolled at Kansas State University and decided to study milling science, in part because of the available scholarships. Drawn to engineering and machinery, Loepp thought milling

then joined Cargill, Inc. as a production supervisor in Topeka, Kansas. In addition to his milling duties, Loepp was selected to participate in Cargill’s yearlong training program to study different departments within the factory, including milling, maintenance, laboratory, packaging and grain handling. Loepp was promoted to head miller in 1990.

Montgomery, who hired Loepp at Cargill, recalls, “Roy had an excellent academic record as a starter and came across as a quiet leader, who would have respect for the plant employees and be a great supervisor. He was very organized and presented himself well.”

In 1993, Loepp moved to Cargill’s

plant in Springfield, Illinois, and assumed the role of project engineer. Under Loepp's direction, the company implemented a multi-million dollar mill expansion and redesign to accommodate the production of 40% more premium soft-wheat cake flour for customers such as Pillsbury. Loepp also designed dust control systems which consumed less than half the energy as previously, all while improving the facility's cleanlines.

Gary Chappell, who was mill supervisor at Cargill in Springfield, recalls Loepp's passion for milling and dedication to his work.

"Roy put in everything in everything he did," says Chappell, who is now mill supervisor for Knappen Milling in Michigan. "When he first got to Springfield, you just knew he would stay in the business, work very hard and become very successful, and that is exactly what he has done."

In August 1995, Loepp returned to Kansas, this time as milling technologist for Seaboard Corporation in Shawnee Mission. Ron Graver, who was director of overseas operations in milling for Seaboard at the time, hired Loepp.

"Roy is a hard-working Kansas farm boy as many of us were at Seaboard in the milling division. His work ethic and personality stood out in the community as well as at work," Graver said. "He was an excellent fit for Seaboard and has proven his worth in many fields."

Loepp's duties included operations management, evaluating milling capabilities and deficiencies, investigating potential acquisitions, assisting operators with on-site projects and overseeing capital expenditures.

"So much of milling has to be learned through experience. The work is hands-on and technical," Loepp says. "There is joy in taking a process, analyzing it, changing it, improving it, and then

physically seeing the results of your work in the company's bottom line. It is a very satisfying feeling."

#### A WORLDWIDE VIEW

At Seaboard, Loepp has gained experience in numerous areas of food production.

In 1996, he accepted a position with Seaboard's corporate engineering group



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*"He views industry and operations from a broad lens and his experience in emerging markets and multiple geographies gives him insight that many do not have."*

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and worked largely on engineering projects in the company's pork slaughtering operation in Guymon, Oklahoma, through mid-2000. One of the largest plants in North America, the facility then slaughtered about 16,000

head per day.

"As it is much different than flour milling, I got to learn about a completely different side of the food business," Loepp says. "That knowledge has only helped me be better at what I do today."

Also in 1996, Seaboard acquired a sugar mill and plantation in Argentina, so Loepp spent two weeks attending a sugar technology short course at Louisiana State University. He also informally studied wine making and barley malting and presented a proposal for a bulk grain terminal in Bulgaria to the Bulgarian Transportation Minister.

Loepp earned an MBA from the University of Kansas in 1999, which he said was crucial to his career and improved his ability to contribute at the company. For example, one of Loepp's proudest accomplishments is writing Seaboard's privatization proposal for the flour mill the company acquired in Pointe Noire, Republic of Congo.

In late 2001, Graver, Loepp's former boss, retired, and Loepp assumed many of his duties as quality director, evaluating and selecting wheat for flour mills around the world. His role extends far beyond wheat selection, though.

"It is a large company, but a small organization," Loepp says. "What that means is your official job title does not dictate exactly what you do. You take on as many different roles as are needed."

In 2008, the company devised a plan to build a large industrial bakery in Kinshasa, the Democratic Republic of Congo, to complement its flour mill and maintain market share in the region.

For the next four years, Loepp worked on the design and construction of the bakery, which has the capacity to produce 1.5 million pieces of bread daily. Baguettes are sold exclusively by women known as *mamas*, who carry them in basins on their heads.

Today, Loepp continues to spend a considerable amount of time with the mill and bakery.

As quality director, one of Loepp's primary roles is to study the wheat market and pinpoint opportunities for purchases, uncover trends and create benchmarks. The company operates wheat flour mills in Haiti, Guyana, Brazil, Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Lesotho, Madagascar, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Zambia, Kenya, Uganda, Botswana, and Uruguay. It also owns shares in wheat mills in Colombia, Ecuador and South Africa, but relies on partners to manage.

"A lot of people in North America do not realize how global the wheat market is. Prices are very volatile," Loepp says. "One week, wheat from the Black Sea or South America may be a good bargain, and the very next week it may not be."

Loepp is also involved in the company's other operations, including maize mills in Haiti, Zambia, Lesotho, Kenya and South Africa, and animal feed operations in Ecuador, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Kenya, Ghana, and Zambia.

Jim Gutsch, senior vice president of engineering for Seaboard Corporation and Loepp's boss since 1996, says Loepp has been an invaluable asset for Seaboard who has made numerous contributions, including the development of a corporate intranet system to consolidate global sales and production data, policies and reporting systems. Additionally, he has served as a bridge between commodity traders and milling operators, enhancing communication between the two to make the best wheat purchasing decisions.

"He is a man of integrity. He is

versatile. He wears a lot of hats around here and is a level-headed straight shooter," Gutsch says. "He has good financial sense, good common sense, and is very articulate. Obviously, he is very well-respected."

#### A STEADY CAREER

While the global wheat market can be volatile, Loepp relishes the stability of the milling profession. He recalled the boom



*Seaboard Technical Director Daniel Scheltus and Roy review expansion plans for Seaboard's mill in the DRC.*

**"He's thoughtful, energetic, dedicated and hard working. That's just what the association needs."**

of the 1990s, when communications, engineering and energy firms were sprouting and thriving, providing riches to people in those fields.

"Then suddenly, it all came crashing down," he says. "Milling, which had been less glamorous, suddenly became the envy. Our skills will always be in need. It's a stable field."

To maintain that stability and strength, Loepp says the industry must

recruit and retain young talent, which is a challenge worldwide. As president of IAOM, that will be one of his major goals, along with stressing the importance of the industry in people's lives.

"IAOM has to play a key role in terms of developing the industry and educating people," he says. "In general, the average age of people working in our industry is growing. We need to find ways to bring in new, young talent and help prepare them for the next century. If the global population continues to grow and standards of living increase as expected, we will face massive challenges in meeting the demands of the market."

In coming years, Loepp says, challenges and opportunities abound.

In North America, he says, consolidation is a significant challenge. Fewer companies are providing larger quantities of flour. Consequently, fewer mills employ fewer people, and the responsibilities and duties for each employee has increased.

"More is expected of any given person," he adds.

Fad diets continue to present a challenge, Loepp says. Some critics have blamed health problems in the United States on wheat and gluten, which Loepp says is untrue and ridiculous. Wheat consumption is higher in Europe, Middle East

and Africa, Loepp says, and their citizens do not face growing epidemics such as obesity and diabetes that have become common in the States. Education is key to battle the misconception.

"The gluten-free and wheat-free diets will be relegated to the trash heap of fads in time," Loepp says. "People are looking for good quality food at a low cost, and that is where we come in. We are feeding more people more efficiently, providing

them with better nutrition, and they will have more money in their pockets as a result.”

Globally, maintaining food safety standards is a challenge for the industry, Loepp says. Companies unfamiliar with safety standards are opening mills around the world, and IAOM should be proactive in education efforts, with short courses, conferences and distance learning.

To address such challenges and find solutions, Loepp says he wants to increase the reach of the IAOM, offer more educational opportunities and encourage all millers to take on active roles in the association.

“Being a member of IAOM keeps you sharp,” he says. “You learn so much through casual conversation with fellow millers. You may think something is impossible, and then you discover that someone else is doing the exact same thing successfully. It raises the limit of what you think can be achieved, and it drives the development process. That helps all of us.”

As part of his theme, “Building a Proud Global Fellowship,” Loepp says he will strive to communicate the

association’s message to the far corners of the world.

“Our lives are more than the sum of individual parts,” he says. “We not only can learn from one another through the activities and events of IAOM, but we can also gain personal satisfaction by being a part of something larger than what we may experience on a daily basis.”

#### ‘IN EXCELLENT HANDS’

Under Loepp’s guidance, the IAOM will be well poised to address the coming challenges, says Montgomery, who is now director of the Food Fortification Initiative, an international partnership working to improve health by advocating for fortification in industrial grain mills.

“Roy’s career and success alone is a great contribution to the milling industry: a hard-working bright young man who worked across several continents bringing innovative solutions to his company and the industry as a whole,” Montgomery says.

Chappell adds, “The IAOM is going through a lot of changes, and that’s hard for a traditional organization. Roy might just be the guy who gets things done and brings us out to the other side.

He’s thoughtful, energetic, dedicated and hard working. That’s just what the association needs.”

Loepp also brings a deep belief in helping others and building personal connections, says Troy Anderson, who worked for Cargill in Springfield. Anderson recalls Loepp helping his family get situated after they moved, introducing him to the Baptist church the family joined and making sure the family felt comfortable in the new setting. Although the two only briefly worked together, they remain friends today. Anderson says Loepp is always thinking of ways he can give back to his friends and his community.

“Roy will bring that focus on relationships and strong connections to the IAOM. He has a passion for flour milling and for serving his community,” says Anderson, who is now senior director of operations for Ardent Mills in Denver, Colorado. “Roy has been all over the world for his career, and he has used what he has learned to influence people to be better individuals. He is focused on building relationships. The IAOM will be in excellent hands.” 

## AT A GLANCE

### FAMILY

Wife, Lydee; children, Faith (22), Victoria (19) and Olivia (14)

### EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Seaboard Overseas & Trading Group/Seaboard Corporation, 1995-present; Cargill Inc., 1989 - 95

### EDUCATION

Bachelor’s degree in milling science and management  
Kansas State University (1989), MBA, University of Kansas (1999)

### IAOM SERVICE

Member since 1990  
President (2015 -16)  
Vice President (2014 -15)  
Treasurer (2013 - 14)  
IMEF President (2014 - 15)  
IMEF Vice President (2013 - 14)  
Education Committee (2000 - present)

### HOBBIES

Serves as a volunteer at his church and in the local performing arts community, where his daughters are active. Also leads a monthly worship service at a local retirement community.