

## World Food Day addresses global hunger crisis



As Vice President of Packaging Research and Development for the Heinz Innovation Center, Dr. Michael Okoroafor's view on food spans much further than a bottle of ketchup or a bag of steamed potatoes. Okoroafor shared his experiences within the realm of food research during the College of Agriculture and Human Sciences World Food Day event.

The CAHS event was held in conjunction with annual internationally recognized World Food Day, under the auspices of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Held each year on October 16<sup>th</sup>, the goal of the international World Food Day program is to bring awareness to the hunger problem felt globally.

Attacking world hunger calls for a focus on the cause, according to Okoroafor. "It's not just about producing the food. That's just one little piece of it," he said. "It's about preserving the food and making sure that it endures in the supply chain. That is what is lacking today."

Okoroafor said part of reason famine there is famine in India, China and Africa is because there is no way to preserve food. Addressing the problem will call for action in food preservation. "Our function is to make sure that we preserve food not just longer, but that we have packaging that will allow it to go through abuse in the supply chain and still make it for a long, long time," he said.

Unpreserved food not only causes health concerns. Once unpreserved food is rotten, Okoroafor said it is discarded in the environment, spurring an environmental threat.

In light of the problem, Okoroafor said the opportunity is present for schools such as Prairie View A&M University to play a part in devising a solution through research. He stressed that possible research in obesity, immunity and reduced sodium.

While Okoroafor's keynote address focused on the global hunger crisis, he also took the opportunity to share a bit of his personal journey. The youngest child of a single-parent household, Okoroafor, who has enjoyed a notable career in polymer science, noted that anyone can succeed. "It really doesn't matter where you start. What matters is where you end up," he said.