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Features



22

22 Red Meat Report:
Sustainability strides
Processors reigning in operational impact

30 CEO Series: Jim Van Stone
Navigating through a merger and onto success

36 Top 125 Processors:
Winner's circle
Ranking the industry's top processors

62 Small Business Matters:
Duty calls
Alewel's: A Midwest gem rich in tradition

68 Delectable pairings
Fruits and vegetables boost flavor and quality

76 Everything but the squeal
By-product demand enhances bottom line

83 Cleaning passion
Engaged employees shine

84 Reassigning resources
GAO report shows need for single agency

88 KSU's food-safety fortress
Biosecurity Research Institute is one of a kind

98 Packaging under pressure
HPP applications expanding

105 New Product Rollouts
Unveiling ideas
New food products highlight quality, convenience and flexibility



68



88



105

Meat & Poultry's
Digital Edition is
available at
MeatPoultry.com



30



36



62

Departments

8 Commentary
10 Business Notes
20 Washington

108 Labor
109 Names in the News
110 New Product Showcase

116 Classified Ads
121 Advertiser Index
122 The Insider

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(more)

HOME

NEWS

WRITERS

EVENTS

RESOURCES

MAGAZINE

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03/08/2011

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03/08/2011

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03/08/2011

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03/08/2011

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03/08/2011

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03/08/2011

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03/08/2011

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03/07/2011

(more)

Features



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(more)

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2. USDA predicts no relief from rising food prices
3. Tyson Foods returns to investment grade rating
4. Sanderson Farms swings to loss in quarter
5. Poultry industry opposes proposed changes in driver hours
6. Pilgrim's Pride bankruptcy gets poultry growers aid
7. Commodity, input cost hikes hit poultry, meat prices
8. Immigration bill concerns Fieldale president
9. Maple Leaf income down 50% for year
10. Hormel's Ettinger sure of sustainable performance

(more)

Special Reports



Simple solutions save money
The simplest way to save time is to organize tools and materials where they are needed.

(more)

Writers

Jerry Karczewski -
Maintaining welfare

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(more)

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BY JOEL CREWS, EDITOR
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Defense mechanisms

With prices at the pump galloping toward \$4 per gallon, feed prices soaring to historic highs and global food prices topping high-water marks never fathomed, CFOs of meat and poultry processing firms have been forced to sharpen their

pencils and streamline operations to survive. Earlier this month, Smithfield Foods reported record-breaking performance for its fiscal third quarter, which served to sustain cautious optimism in the industry that the worst of the economic recession may be in the rear-view mirror.

Many firms' executives have made some sleep-depriving decisions over the past 24 months in response to stifling market conditions, including Smithfield, which committed to cutting \$125 million in costs by the start of this year. The time and resources dedicated to scanning operations for opportunities to increase a yield percentage here or to save a labor dollar there has undoubtedly dominated the mindshare of leadership teams steered by the Larry Popes, Donnie Smiths and Wesley Batistas of the industry, as well it should. However, it is at times like these, when companies are operating to minimize financial losses that they could be most exposed and vulnerable to less-obvious threats.

Immediately after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, there was outward concern and public discussion for several years about the threat of bioterrorism on the US food supply. That attention seems to have waned as the recession and its impacts have assumed front-burner status.

In 2004, the Rand National Defense Research Institute's Larry Chalk summarized some of the threats and identified areas where the food industry's soft underbelly was most exposed. Chalk cat-

egorized agroterrorism as "the deliberate introduction of a disease agent, either against livestock or into the food chain, to undermine socioeconomic stability and/or generate fear." His report summary went so far as to say: "Food processing and packing plants tend to lack uniform security and safety preparedness measures, particularly the small- and medium-scale facilities."

I hope I'm wrong in my assessment that while the industry's leaders address the most immediate threat (becoming leaner and meaner operations in the face of a recession), they are distracted from what is a much clearer and more present danger: Threats related to food security and bioterrorism. Some companies, including OSI Industries, are quietly raising the bar and setting the standard on this front.

It is heartening to hear about companies that have taken action to address a real issue that is temporarily off the radar of most. Likewise, events like the International Symposium on Agroterrorism, scheduled for April 26-28 in Kansas City, Mo., and initiated by Heart of America Joint Terrorism Task Force and the Kansas City Division of the FBI, is a clear indication that a growing amount of attention is being paid to what is a serious issue domestically and globally. I attended the inaugural ISA event in 2005 (which was held again in 2006 and 2008) and was impressed with the thoroughness of the program and convinced of the many vulnerabilities in the food production chain. My biggest concern at the time was how few of the 1,000-plus attendees were representing companies or trade associations in the meat and poultry processing industry. It is my hope that ISA 2011 will signal a new era of awareness for this industry and a realization that this is no time for its collective guard to be down. For more information on ISA 2011, go to www.fbi-isa.org. ■

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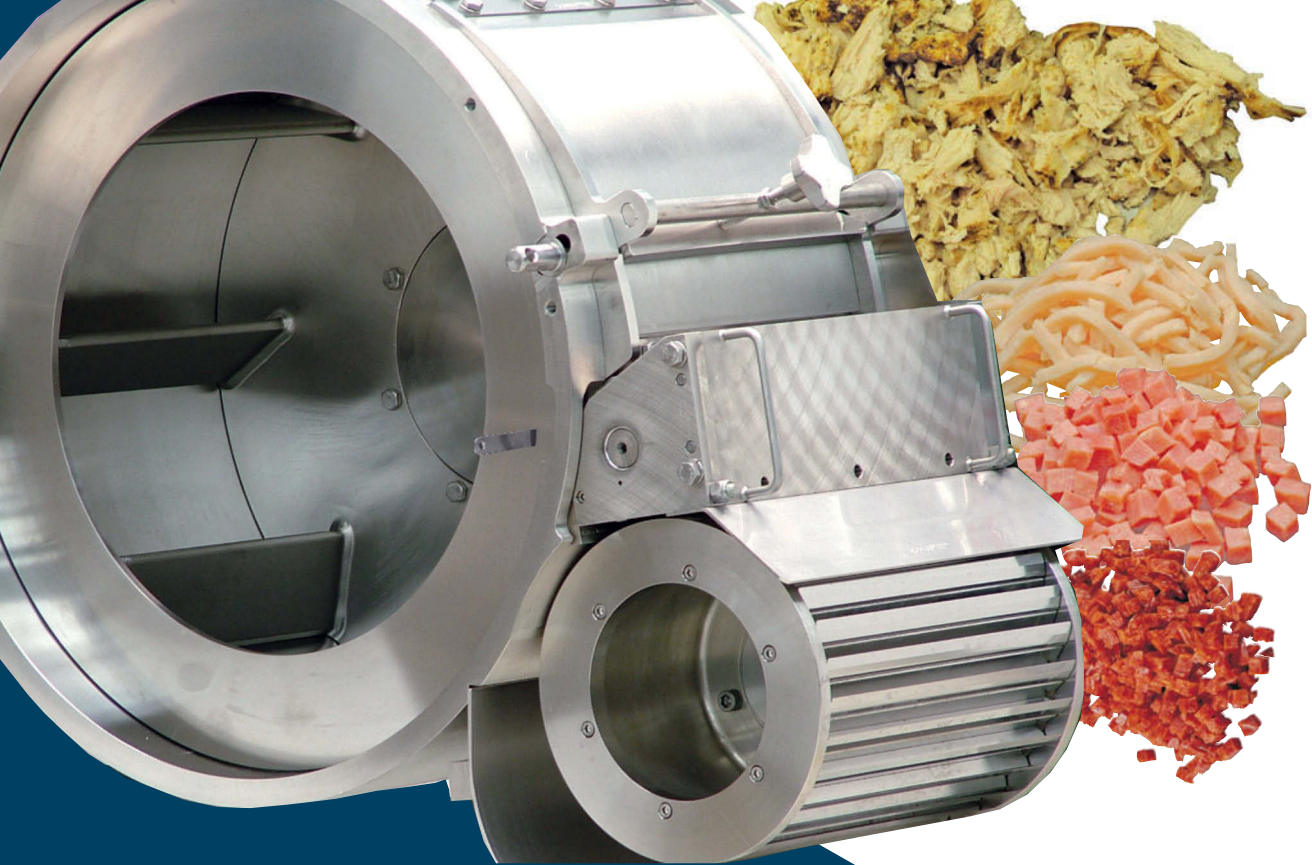
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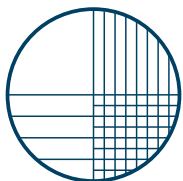
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Hormel earnings up 34 percent in first quarter

Stronger meat and turkey product sales helped propel a 34 percent increase in earnings at Hormel Foods Corp. during its first fiscal quarter, which ended Jan. 30. The company announced earnings of \$148,826,000, equal to 56c per share on the common stock, which compared with earnings of \$111,207,000, or 42c per share, during the same quarter of the previous year. Sales for the quarter were \$1,921,558,000, up 11 percent from \$1,727,447,000 during the same quarter of the previous year.

Hormel's Refrigerated Foods segment reported operating profit 37 percent greater than last year, as favorable spreads between hog costs and primal

values benefited the segment. Sales grew 13 percent during the quarter, on higher sales of Hormel party trays, pepperoni, refrigerated entrees, Hormel Always Tender flavored meats, and aided by the inclusion of Hormel Country Crock side dishes.



Jennie-O Turkey Store experienced a positive quarter, with segment operating profit up 122 percent. Better commodity meat prices and improved efficiencies in the supply chain and operations helped drive results. Sales grew 14 percent for this segment, featuring increased sales of Jennie-O Turkey Store turkey burgers, turkey bacon

and fresh tray-pack items.

However, the Grocery Products segment's operating profit declined 10 percent, due primarily to higher raw material costs. Sales grew 6 percent, led by higher sales of the SPAM family of products, Hormel chili, Hormel flavored bits and Hormel Mary Kitchen hash, and strong sales growth of the MegaMex Foods franchise.

"Due to our strong results in the first quarter, we are raising our full year guidance range from \$1.55 to \$1.60 per share to \$1.62 to \$1.68 per share," said Jeffrey Ettinger, chairman of the board, president and CEO. "We expect to see higher input costs the balance of the year, and our team will continue to tackle the challenge of offsetting these added costs with pricing and efficiency gains." ■



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Business Notes

Cargill introduces Fressure patties

Cargill recently announced a partnership with Milwaukee-based American Pasteurization Company to offer fresh ground-beef patties for foodservice customers that are treated using high-pressure pasteurization technology. The products, marketed under the Fressure brand, offer customers shelf-life that is double that of traditional fresh burgers without effecting flavor or appearance, the company said.



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Fressure ground beef patties are first produced and packaged at Cargill's Columbus, Neb., facility before being HPP treated at APC's facility in Milwaukee. The process does not use high temperatures, chemicals or irradiation, while retaining the nutrient value and freshness of the ground beef, the company said. Cargill focused research efforts on making HPP commercially viable for ground beef patties. Its efforts were inspired by the goal of pushing shelf-life from 21 days to 42 days without any side effects while diminishing bacteria that cause foodborne illness and spoilage.

The HPP process involves placing packaged products in a sealed cylindrical pressure vessel that is filled with water. The vessel contents are then pressurized at up to 87,000 psi, which is sustained for a predetermined period. The pressure interrupts the cellular activities of any pathogens in the products.

"The benefits extend to both fresh and frozen Fressure patties," a company spokesman said. ■

Maple Leaf earnings hit by input costs

As raw material prices increased, earnings for Maple Leaf Foods fell 50 percent for the year despite a 30 percent increase in fourth-quarter earnings.

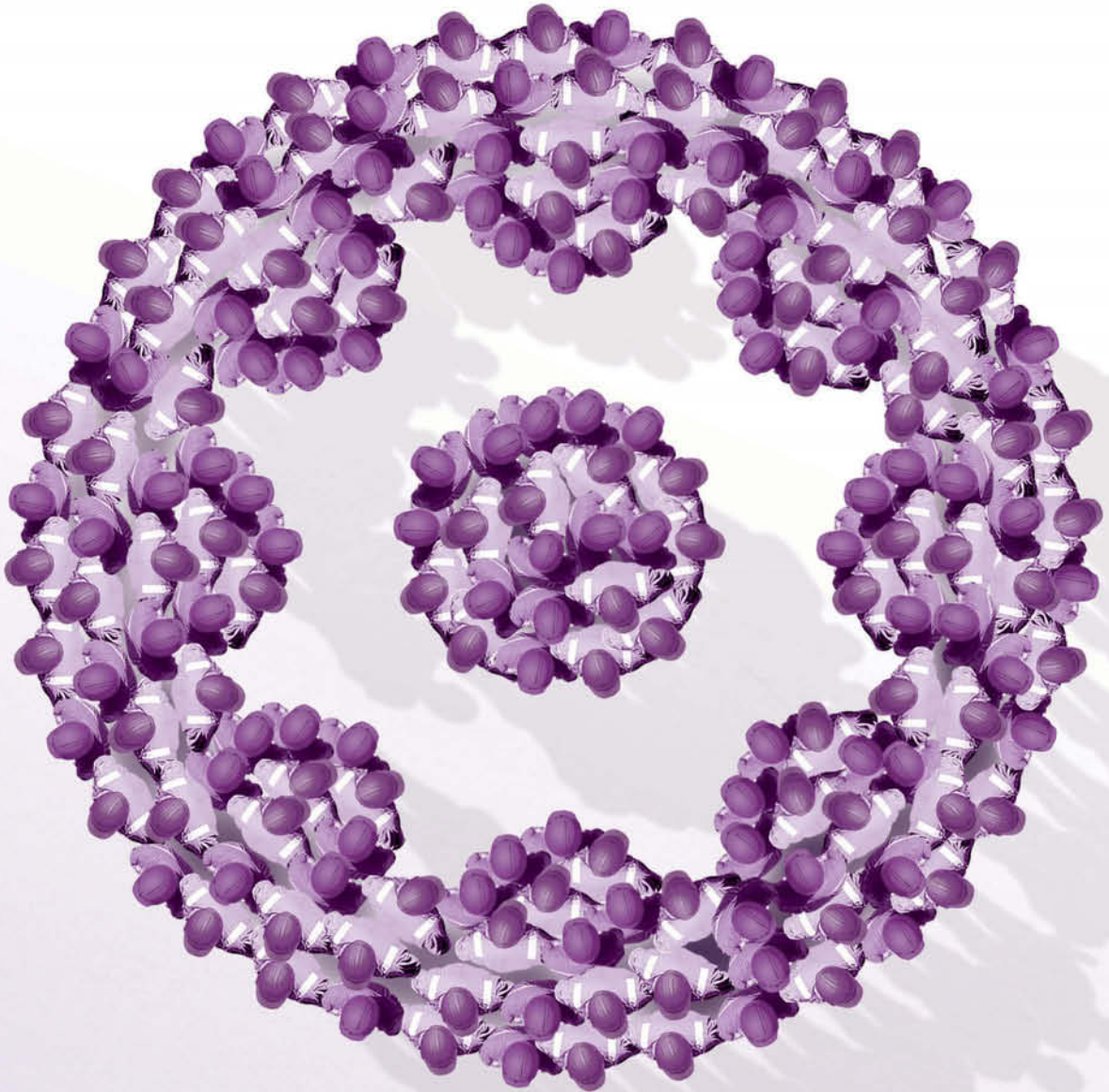
Earnings for the year ended Dec. 31, 2010, were C\$25,822,000 (\$26,288,327), equal to C\$0.19 per share on the common stock, which compared with an income of C\$52,147,000, equal to C\$0.40 per share, during the previous year. Sales for the year were C\$4,968,119,000 (\$5,053,396,925), down 5 percent from C\$5,221,602,000 during the previous year.



For the fourth quarter ended Dec. 31, the company had earnings of C\$30,179,000 (\$30,697,972), equal to C\$0.22 per share, which compared with earnings of C\$21,920,000, equal to C\$0.16 per share, during the same quarter of the previous year. Sales for the quarter were C\$1,212,035,000 (\$1,232,957,236), down 9 percent from C\$1,324,903,000 during the same quarter of the previous year.

"Maple Leaf Foods delivered strong earnings growth in the fourth quarter, despite a sharp increase in raw material prices," said Michael McCain, president and CEO. "These results reflect the benefits of cost reductions and price increases intended to help us keep pace with global food inflation, and some early benefits from the initial execution of our strategic plan. We expect the progress we are making in reducing our cost structure, simplifying our product lines, and streamlining our operations will contribute to earnings throughout 2011." ■

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Sanderson Farms touts record FY2010

In the formal business conducted at the Sanderson Farms Inc. annual meeting of stockholders held Feb. 17 at its home office in Laurel, Miss.,



Sanderson

management reported on the company's record financial performance during fiscal 2010 and stockholders re-elected five directors to three-year terms expiring at the 2014 annual meeting.

"Fiscal 2010 was highlighted by record annual sales of \$1.9 billion, surpassing the previous year's record by over 7 percent," said Joe Sanderson Jr., chairman of the board and CEO of Sanderson Farms. "Our revenue growth reflects the solid execution of our growth strategy to steadily increase our production

capacity, and our net results reflect the quality of our operations. Consumer demand for chicken products at retail grocery stores was steady throughout the year, but we continued to experience reduced demand from food service customers, reflecting the considerable slowdown in restaurant traffic across the country.



"Our operations performed well in our industry in terms of operating efficiencies and profitability as we processed a record 2.6 billion lbs. of dressed poultry in fiscal 2010 compared with 2.4 billion lbs. dur-

ing fiscal 2009," he added. "For fiscal 2010, we were pleased to reward our shareholders with record net income of \$134.8 million, or \$6.07 per share, compared with \$82.3 million, or \$3.94 per share, in fiscal 2009."

Re-elected to three-year terms as directors were Lampkin Butts, president and COO, Sanderson Farms Inc.; Beverly Wade Hogan, president of Tougaloo College; Phil Livingston, retired chairman and CEO, Deposit Guaranty National Bank of Louisiana; Charles Ritter Jr., retired president and director, the Attala Company and Sanderson.

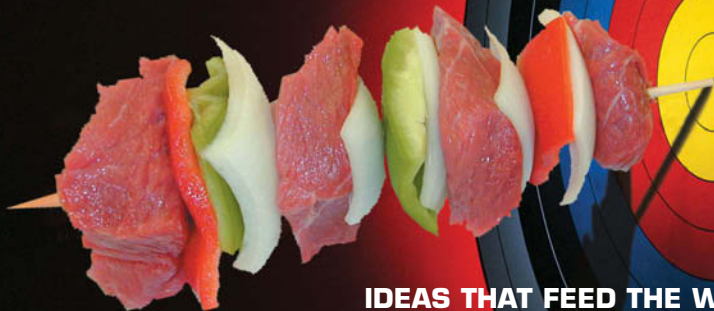
"Fiscal 2010 was a successful year by nearly every measure," Sanderson said. "Our financial and operating performance reflects our successful execution of our strategy to combine steady, manageable growth with superior operations. We continued to make the necessary investments to ensure our future growth and improve shareholder value, as we completed our new Kinston, N.C. complex on schedule and on budget. We began processing chicken at the new complex in January."

As the result of charges and lower poultry market prices, Sanderson Farms, Inc. posted a loss of \$33,556,000 in the first quarter ended Jan. 31, which compared with an income of \$15,817,000, equal to 75c per share on the common stock, during the same quarter of the previous year. Sales for the quarter were \$427,732,000, up 2 percent from \$420,123,000 during the same quarter of the previous year.

"The results for the first quarter of fiscal 2011 were influenced by a number of factors," Sanderson said. "Overall, we experienced lower poultry market prices than the same period a year ago, primarily due to an oversupply of chicken during the first quarter of fiscal 2011. While retail demand for chicken has remained steady, we have continued to see weak food service demand, and we expect this trend will remain until the national unemployment rate improves." ■

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Grant allows XL Foods to double capacity

XL Foods, one of Alberta's largest beef processors, will increase its value-added production capacity while reducing the size of its environmental footprint thanks in part to funding

provided by two Growing Forward grants approved through the Alberta Livestock and Meat Agency. Totalling \$1.6 million, the grants will be distributed over two years and will allow XL

Foods to upgrade its Brooks facility by installing new technology that will enable the plant to double its per-day capacity for ground beef.

"XL appreciates the contribution and support ALMA has provided through the Growing Forward program for our plant competitiveness initiatives," said Brian Nilsson, Co-CEO

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Townsend's poultry ops sold after bankruptcy

Peco Foods Inc. announced plans to acquire Townsend's Inc.'s Arkansas division for \$51.4 million, and Omtron Ltd. has agreed to buy Townsend's North Carolina division, its headquarters in Georgetown and certain other assets for \$24.9 million. The US Bankruptcy Court for the District of Delaware issued its final approval for the transactions on Feb. 17.

Peco Foods is an integrated poultry processor with operations in Alabama and Mississippi. Omtron is a division of Agroholding Avangard, Ukraine's largest producer of eggs and egg products.

Townsend's Inc. filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on Dec. 19, 2010. ■



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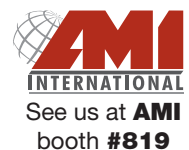
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JBS reports positive results of food-safety technology

In a presentation at the final day of the National Meat Association's annual convention, a food-safety official with JBS USA's beef division discussed the benefits the company has seen after implementing third-party, remote video auditing (RVA) as a food-safety intervention at its Souderton, Pa., plant. Dr. John Ruby, head of technical services

with JBS said the pilot project that began this past June resulted in "drastic" microbiological improvements when comparing positive tests from the first half of 2010 with the second half of the year. One slide shown during Ruby's presentation indicated that by focusing on food-safety compliance of workers in the carcass dressing area

of its Souderton plant, pathogen contamination rates decreased by more than 70 percent.

JBS plans to have its remaining beef plants up and running with RVA by April of this year, ahead of summer,

when *E. coli* contamination is more likely to occur.

This past year, JBS announced it would implement

third-party RVA programs to enhance food-safety compliance among workers at its eight US-based beef processing plants. JBS has partnered with Mt. Kisco, NY-based Arrowsight Inc., a provider of 24-7 auditing and surveillance services, to ensure workers are complying with food-safety practices in areas of the plant where carcass

contamination is most likely to occur. Using a system of strategically placed video cameras and web-based digital video recording software, trained Arrowsight auditors monitor line workers to ensure they are complying with specific food-safety practices. Any non-compliance is identified and plant officials are given electronic notification along with a link to a video clip of the incident. Feedback from the remote audits are used by plant officials to improve the performance of line workers.

Ruby emphasized that cameras alone are not the silver bullet to improving in-plant performance. "You can really focus on where your areas of opportunity are and not waste resources focusing on people who are doing a great job already." ■



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Taco Bell launches new beef image TV ads

New TV commercials are being used by Taco Bell to help reverse damage caused to its image by a lawsuit ques-



tioning its taco filling, The Associated Press stated. The lawsuit filed in a US District Court in California claims Taco Bell's seasoned beef filling did not have enough beef to be called as such.

The Beasley Allen law firm of Montgomery, Ala., that filed the lawsuit in January in California claimed its testing showed the filling was made of only 35 percent beef so it shouldn't be called "beef." Taco Bell has repeatedly said the claim is false. Taco Bell says in its new TV commercials the taco filling contains 88 percent beef and 12 percent "signature recipe" seasonings and other ingredients. ■

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BY BERNARD SHIRE
meatpoultry@sosland.com

Catfish inspection gets political

When Congress passed the 2008 Farm Bill, one of the provisions in the mammoth legislation required the US Dept. of Agriculture to take over inspection of catfish from the Food and Drug Administration. While there's been plenty of criticism of food inspection in the United States for many years, one of the biggest sticking points has been how inspection of various food products has been divvied up among various government inspection agencies.



And while there's been support for ending this inspection confusion by creating one super-size food inspection agency to make sure all products are safe to eat, inspection for the most part has been divided between USDA, FDA and state inspection agencies. USDA inspects meat, poultry and some egg products; states conduct state meat and poultry inspection programs; and FDA inspects seafood and most remaining food products.

So why did Congress decide to take one species of seafood – catfish – and transfer it from infrequent inspection by FDA, to continuous inspection by USDA? Why is only one species of fish going to be looked at by the federal government's meat inspection agency? The answer to this question is: Washington politics.

And the proposed USDA rule-making last month for FSIS catfish inspection will actually delay this inspection. The American catfish industry has actually been trying for quite a while to get its product declared as an amenable species by USDA, so such inspection could

begin. But in the eyes of foreign catfish producers, USDA inspection will protect American catfish from an invasion of catfish from overseas.

In fact, the USDA regulations for inspection of both American and non-American catfish were supposed to be released back in March, 2010. So what Obama Administration officials are saying behind Washington's closed doors is that the long delay in rulemaking took place because of concern about American trade with Vietnam. That country's exports of seafood should total about \$5 billion this year. Even though USDA rule-making is under way, don't expect final regulations anytime soon. USDA will be accepting comments through the end of June about the proposed rules for an inspection program to be implemented in the future – who knows when? The proposed rules allow a “delay” or “transition” period for American and foreign catfish producers. But the overseas producers believe inspection overseas for export to the United States will take a very long time to set up and get underway.

Import war

Back in 2009, there was an intense lobbying campaign between American catfish producers and catfish importers, especially those bringing in catfish from Vietnam. This fight centered on whether Vietnamese catfish poses a health risk to Americans. And that's why the American producers spent millions convincing Congress, as part of its 2008 Farm Bill, to tighten regulation of this single type fish, moving from the light seafood regulation of FDA, to the heavy-handed regulation of FSIS. All other fish remain under the lighter-weight FDA inspection. The battle has resulted in threats of a trade war from Vietnam, which wants its catfish excluded from the regulations. Domestic producers countercharge tougher regulation,

would increase regulation and on-site inspection in Vietnam and force overseas producers to carry out the same standards of safety that American producers do.

The battle over catfish safety actually dates back to 2002, when the previous Farm Bill was passed containing a stipulation preventing Vietnamese fish producers from labeling their catfish as “catfish.” Vietnamese and American catfish come from two different catfish “families,” although the former president of the Catfish Institute representing American producers made a comment the two types of fish are as close to each other as a house cat and a cow. Something that didn't help American producers was that sales of catfish from the domestic family were down, while Vietnamese catfish sales in the US had risen. That's when American producers decided better inspection was needed, including that of the Vietnamese fish.

So Senator Thad Cochran (R-Miss.), whose state is the center of the American catfish industry, and who serves on the Senate Agriculture Committee, inserted language in the 2008 Farm Bill to establish an inspection program, and included a \$16 million earmark. The proposed rules even offer two definitions of catfish – one which includes only the domestic variety, and a second, which would include catfish families raised in Southeast Asia.

Public meetings are expected to be held during the public comment period. No matter what regulation is adopted, another factor stands out: The Obama Administration's proposed budget for 2011-2012 requested no money to fund catfish inspection. ■

Bernard Shire is M&P's Washington correspondent, a contributing editor and a feature writer based in Lancaster, Pa. Shire also works as a food safety consultant and writer for Shire & Associates LLC.

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First you add knowledge...

Sustainability strides

Processors reign in operational impact in response to consumer and customer demand

BY STEVE KAY
meatpoultry@sosland.com

Once merely a buzzword, sustainability has become increasingly central to the way US meat and poultry companies conduct business. Moreover, sustainability initiatives now extend all the way from the farm to the retail store.

The beef industry has attracted the most public attention in recent years, and the most criticism for its environmental impact. Much of this criticism is misinformed but it has forced the industry to become more proactive in addressing key issues from animal welfare to nutrition. The irony is that cattle producers say they have been practicing sustainability for much of the industry's history.

Various segments of the industry have slightly different views as to the key sustainability issues. But everyone agrees that any definition of sustainability must include environmental matters, animal welfare, food safety, nutrition, people and economics. One of the most inclusive definitions comes from Tyson Foods, the nation's largest red

meat and poultry processor. In a 2008 report on its sustainability initiatives, it states:

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Leading the beef pack

The beef industry, responding in large part to critics, focused in 2010 on producing a coherent, coordinated approach among all sectors as to what sustainability means, how to measure it and how to improve it. The focus was on both a US and global basis.

The previous lack of coordination is partly a reflection of the beef industry's multi-layered structure. This has meant that some sectors and individual companies are heavily involved in sustainability initiatives while others are not. Two trade associations, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association and the American Meat Institute, have been instrumental in recent years in getting more participants in the beef marketing chain to be aware of and become involved in sustainability issues.

Global leaders in the beef industry in 2010 sought advancements in sustainable beef production through various initiatives. The World Wildlife Fund, Cargill Inc., Intervet/Schering Plough Animal Health, JBS SA and McDonald's Corporation helped create a Beef Lifecycle Assessment (LCA)

Global leaders in the beef industry in 2010 sought advancements in sustainable beef production through various initiatives.

Working Group. The group met for the first time in June and 60 stakeholders from the global beef system attended. This initiative led to the five entities convening The Global Conference on Sustainable Beef in early November.

One of the LCA group's most important moves was to identify what it called key impacts relating to sustainable beef production. It defined these as any issue with a significant, measurable economic, environmental or social effect (positive or negative) resulting from the production of beef. The group identified the following: air (greenhouse gas, dust and partic-



Increasing media attention on animal-welfare issues cause some consumers to purchase less meat rather than reallocate expenditures across competing meats.

ulate matter); animal health and welfare; contribution to GDP, trade and wealth; contribution to rural economy and rural communities; food security for individuals and nations; land use, productivity, biodiversity; water usage, availability and quality.

Implicit in the list are specific topics that the beef industry regards as highly sensitive and that might need to be closely addressed. These topics include continued negative publicity about the use of antibiotics in animal agriculture, use of certain growth promotants, transportation of cattle, and production practices such as cattle branding, de-horning, tail-docking, and castration of male cattle.

Food safety, animal welfare are keys

Food safety remains a top sustainability issue for a number of reasons. Any illnesses linked to beef undermine the industry's claim that it produces the safest, most wholesome product in the world. Any illnesses continue to be a potential negative for beef demand. In addition, food safety is an ongoing cost to the industry. Cattle producers since 1993 have invested more than \$27 million in food-safety research, says NCBA. The beef industry as a whole spends more than \$350 million annually on food safety.

Regarding animal welfare, a recent university study examined the impact of media attention on beef demand. The joint Kansas State Univ./Purdue Univ. study found that a search of US newspapers and magazines from 1982 to 2008 suggested that media coverage of animal welfare issues did not directly impact beef demand. It did, however, reduce pork and poultry demand. This makes some sense as poultry battery cages and swine gestation stalls have been the focus of much of the animal rights agenda. However, beef is also impacted by any overall reduction in meat expenditures, says the study.

Increasing media attention on animal-welfare issues triggers consumers to purchase less meat rather than reallocate expenditures across competing meats, says the study. It recommends that because of the influence of the media on total meat expenditure, beef, pork and poultry producers may be well served by collaborating in recognizing and responding to changing societal pressures regarding animal well-being.

Industry observers say the study's findings are timely and quantify that the more radical animal rights groups are achieving progress toward their goal of reducing meat demand. Should this be the case, sustainability efforts by the entire beef industry take on a whole new urgency and meaning.

The Secret is Out.

At the producer level, NCBA identifies five key areas regarding the environment and cattle production. These are cattle grazing and the land, positive effects on wildlife, environmental stewardship and water and air quality.

The efficiency of American agriculture is another way in which NCBA examines the industry's sustainability. The increase in productivity over many years is a key way the industry reduces the environmental impact of beef production, says NCBA. Through science-based improvements in breeding and animal nutrition, beef production per cow increased from about 400 lbs. in the mid-1960s to 637 lbs. in 2008, it says.

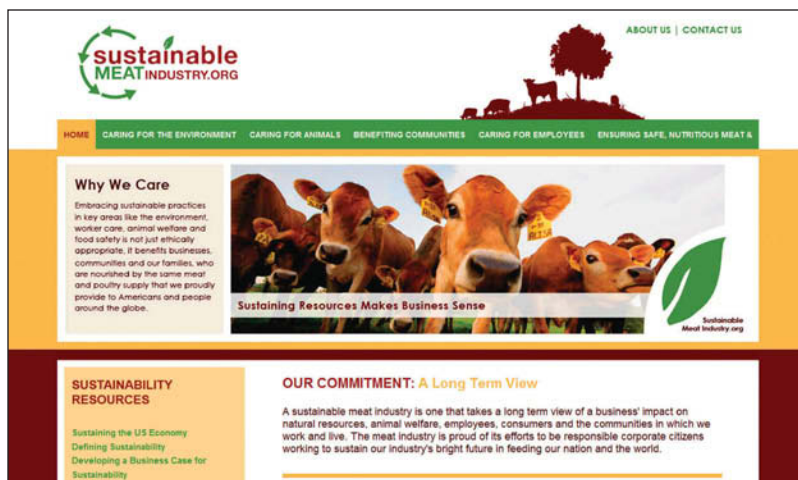
The US calf crop, in the meantime, decreased from 43 million head in 1964 to 36.1 million head in 2008, yet the amount of beef produced increased from 18 billion lbs. to 26.7 billion lbs., says NCBA. It also notes

The increase in productivity over many years is a key way the industry reduces the environmental impact of beef production.

that there are now 29 cuts of beef that meet USDA's criteria for lean, vs. only seven in 1990. Nearly half of all US beef producers generate and/or use some type of alternative energy on their operations, according to a survey of beef producers, it says.

Today's American farmer feeds about 144 people worldwide, says NCBA. In 1960, that number was 25.8, according to the Agriculture Council of America (ACA). If the beef production practices from 1955 were used today, 165 million more acres of land (an area almost the size of Texas) still could not equal today's beef production, it says.

A Washington State Univ. study reinforces the significant improvement in productivity. The study notes that the industry in 2007 produced 11.9 billion kg. of beef from 33.7 million



The American Meat Institute created a special website devoted to explaining where the meat and poultry industry stands on a number of areas that come under the sustainability umbrella. (Photo courtesy of AMI)

head slaughtered, a 28 percent increase in beef yield per animal compared to 1977. Yet, modern agricultural practices are often demonized, with the popular perception that beef production was more environmentally friendly in the "good old days," it says. The study concludes that productivity is a key factor in reducing the environmental impact of US beef production. Improved genetics, nutrition and management have considerably reduced the environmental impact of modern beef production, it says.

Taking the lead

Meanwhile, several major meat and poultry companies have taken the lead in sustainability initiatives because of their public exposure. These companies include Tyson Foods, Cargill Inc., JBS USA and Smithfield Foods. Tyson and Smithfield annually produce sustainability and/or corporate social responsibility reports that exceed 100 pages in length. The American Meat Institute has also played a prominent role. It has created a special website devoted to explaining where the meat and poultry industry stands on a number of areas that come under the sustainability umbrella.

AMI's explanations include the following: caring for the environment; caring for animals; benefiting communities; ensuring safe, nutritious meat

and poultry. AMI says a sustainable meat industry is one that takes a long-term view of a business's impact on natural resources, animal welfare, employees, consumers and the communities in which we work and live.

The association launched its own sustainability initiative in 2009. A key component was an assessment of what sustainability practices were already in place in the industry. By benchmarking the industry's efforts, AMI can measure progress in the future, it says.

AMI also generated a web-based sustainability survey to gather information from the industry. The survey requested specific data on a variety of topics, including water and energy use, recycling, worker safety statistics, food safety, animal welfare practices and community outreach. AMI compiled the data to calculate an industry average, which can now serve as a sustainability benchmark. When the survey is repeated in the future, says AMI, the 2009 information will enable the industry to measure how the industry has changed over time and note progress in the various subject areas.

The American Meat Institute also offers a 12-page sustainability inventory to help meat and poultry companies determine what they are already doing in the various areas of sustainability, what they might do in this area and what practices simply are

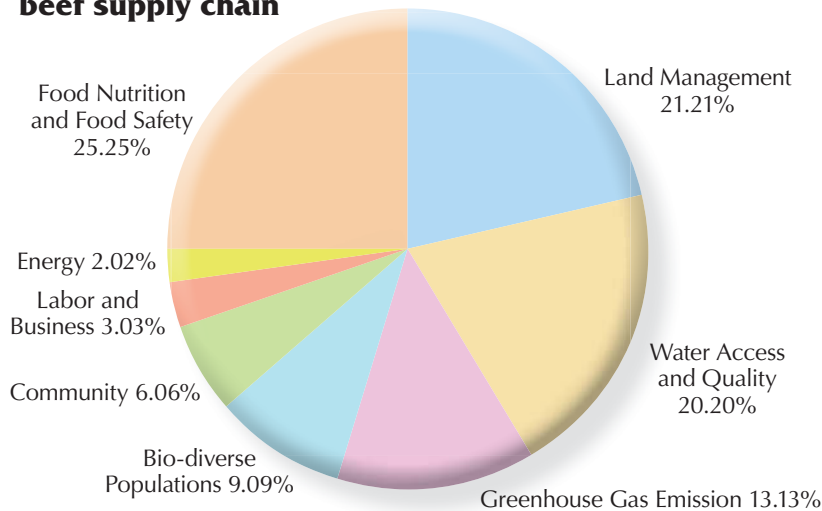
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The most important sustainability issue for the global beef supply chain



Source: *The Global Conference on Sustainable Beef*

not feasible in their operations and communities. Each question includes links to information about potential programs and practices under way within the industry.

Quantifying sustainability

On a broader level, 60 stakeholders from the global beef system gathered in Washington, DC, last June at the first Beef Lifecycle Assessment (LCA) Working Group. As noted earlier, the group identified seven key impacts. It also listed seven key “takeaways” that resulted from its discussions about LCAs. To further their utility, beef LCAs should include all relevant impacts in addition to greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), said the group. LCAs should also be able to access a common database that is unique to the beef supply system and readily accessible to multiple stakeholders. They should have equally transparent input assumptions and sensitivity/confidence level of outputs.

The group offered seven other points about sustainability. Relatively few beef LCAs have been developed and significant variations in LCA methodology exist, it said. So there is a need to identify and close the significant gap in open-sourced data. The identification and prioritization of impacts of beef should be

highlighted in an LCA. A scan of LCAs can provide insights for use by the beef industry to highlight the positive impacts and address negatives. Consistent allocation of impacts across beef and the resulting co-products is needed to provide the users of LCAs with clear expectations of how the output was created. Approximately 80 percent of emissions originate before harvesting the animal. Finally, other tools are avail-

Sustainability has become increasingly central to the way US meat and poultry companies conduct business.

able and may be more appropriate to answer questions, the group said.

The initial meeting set the stage for a tour of the US beef industry by some of the meeting’s participants. The tour included a retail distribution center, a beef processing plant, a cattle feedlot, a gasifier operation and a seedstock ranch. The group listed five key takeaways from the tour, including: understanding the challenges and trade-offs that exist in sustainability efforts (e.g. food safety vs. water use); the drive for improved sustainability

creates opportunities for innovation; pre-competitive collaboration by industry to find solutions; critical nature of the beef system being aligned in its focus; genetic improvements in cattle breeding to improve efficiency, animal health and beef quality take many years and significant investment.

The Global Conference on Sustainable Beef in November convened all elements of the global beef supply chain and a diverse array of other key stakeholders, including academics, scientists and NGO leaders for a dialogue about the current state of sustainability in the beef industry. The conference, according to reports, produced robust feedback centered on the “triple bottom line”, to be environmentally, socially and economically sustainable. At the conference’s conclusion, its hosts challenged participants to incorporate this feedback to develop on-the-ground programs that enhance sustainable beef, driven by new relationships developed at the conference.

One important takeaway was identification of key issues. When participants were asked what is the most important sustainability issue for the global beef supply chain, the responses broke down as follows: food nutrition and food safety, 25 percent; land management, 21 percent; water access and quality, 20 percent; greenhouse gas emission, 13 percent; bio-diverse populations, 9 percent; community, 6 percent; labor and business, 3 percent; and energy, 2 percent.

Three issues thus accounted for two-thirds of the responses. These impact every part of the global beef supply chain and the US meat and poultry industry. The responses provide important guidelines as to what the industry will focus on to further improve its sustainability. ■

Steve Kay is editor and publisher of Petaluma, Calif.-based Cattle Buyers Weekly (www.cattlebuyersweekly.com).

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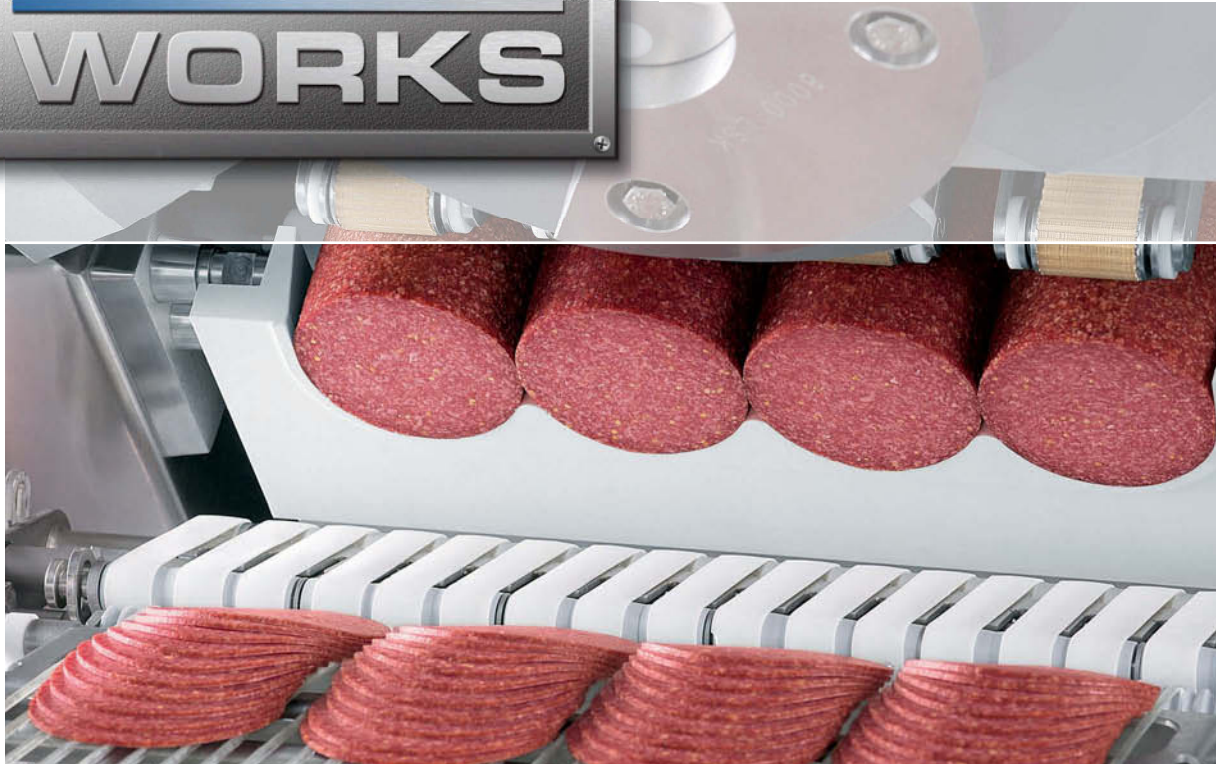
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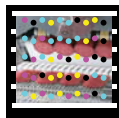
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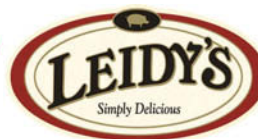
Experience counts

Jim Van Stone navigates Alderfer-Leidy's through a merger and toward success

BY BERNARD SHIRE
meatpoultry@sosland.com

On Nov. 3, 2008, two midsize, family owned and storied meat processing companies in Southeastern Pennsylvania – Alderfer Natural Wood Smoked Meats and Leidy's Inc. – decided to pull together their strengths and merge into one jointly owned company. The name of the corporation is ALL Holding Co. Inc., but the meat company coming from

the merger is still family owned and would still fit the classification of the larger end of small or midsized. And



the company is better known by its two brands – Alderfer and Leidy's. Two of the company's board mem-

bers are original owners, Tom and Terry Leidy. The Longacre family, the previous owners of Alderfer, owns the other half of the company. The remaining board members are from outside the family, including the president and CEO, Jim Van Stone. The Alderfer brand of meat products has existed for more than 87 years, specializing in naturally wood smoked pork, beef and turkey products. The Leidy's brand, which was founded more than 115 years ago, is well known for its high-quality fresh and smoked pork products.

“Given the long history, expertise and complementary products of Alderfer and Leidy's, the merger was a natural fit,” says Van Stone. The merged company is now a single source for more than 1,300 products. “Alderfer was always known for its deli meats and hams; as a further processing company. Leidy's reputation was in slaughter, fresh pork and bacon,” he says.

Van Stone, 62, is a seasoned chief executive in the food industry, and has led a number of companies during the past 40 years. Prior to leading Alderfer Meats and Leidy's almost two-and-a-half years ago, he was vice president of the global beef group at Keystone Foods; chief operating officer at nearby Hatfield Meats; president/CEO at Venice Maid Foods in Vineland, N.J.; and head of Jordan's Foods Inc. in Portland, Maine back in the 1990s. When Van Stone ran Jordan's, the company was doing \$250 million a year in revenues. “We sold the meat division to CBFA, a privately held meat company, and the foodservice division to Sysco,” Van Stone says. Eventually, CBFA was sold to IBP and then became part of Tyson Foods. Tyson closed the plant in Portland about six years ago.

Prior to his involvement in the meat industry, Van Stone was a senior vice president and corporate officer and sector president at Campbell Soup Co., serving for 14 years in the 1980s and 1990s. He



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started his career in sales at Kellogg's, and then moved into the foodservice industry for Pizza Hut and the former Gino Hamburger restaurants. Van Stone graduated from Temple Univ.'s Fox School of Business and Management, and then received his MBA and an advanced degree in finance from Philadelphia's St. Joseph Univ.

"I'm not here because of my meat experience. There are plenty of people around with a lot more experience in the meat industry. I'm here because of my experience in leading teams to suc-

"I'm not here because of my meat experience... I'm here because of my experience in leading teams to success in the food industry."

cess in the food industry," Van Stone says. "And that's what the ownership of Alderfer and Leidy's needed me to do."

In 2004, Alderfer, based in Harleysville, Pa., bought nearby Knauss Meats, a "small" meat processing company based in nearby Quakertown, and well known for making dried beef. A few years later, the owners of the now-enlarged Alderfer Meats and Leidy's, based five miles away in Souderton, Pa., decided they could do better together than separately.

"I was retired at the time, but the owners asked me to come in and help them merge the two companies," Van Stone recalls. "That was the original

discussion – do this and then go back to my retirement. But then, all of a sudden, some talk began [by the new board of directors] about asking me to run the new company. After giving it some thought, the challenge did interest me," Van Stone says. "I decided to accept the company's offer and go ahead and take it on."

Bringing the two firms together made sense to the leaders of each. "Both companies have been in business for a long time, and they both did well in their earlier days, in fact, they competed against each other," Van Stone explains. "But as you know, there's a lot of consolidation taking place in industry – not just the meat and poultry industry, but in industry in general. It's harder to compete today. In the case of Alderfer and Leidy's, one company [Leidy's] is a slaughterer and a producer of fresh pork. The other [Alderfer] is a further processor. Alderfer products include natural wood smoked hams, bologna, ham steaks, pork roll, smoked turkey bacon and Knauss authentic creamed chipped beef. Leidy's products include Andouille sausage, smokehouse grill steaks, antibiotic-free cured bacon and spiral carved hams – plus a complete line of fresh pork products.

"It's much harder to compete today, especially for the small to mid-size firms," he says. "So the idea of the merger here was to play on the companies' strengths. One company would have more together than separately, including more impact on the

marketplace. While the two companies market into a good part of the country, their greatest strengths, where the two brands are well-known, is in the Northeast US. "You could describe our company as small to medium-size, probably at the upper end of 'small,'" he says. Van Stone adds the company, which is privately held, does about \$100 million in revenue each year, with about 350 full-time employees.

A big part of Van Stone's role is to drive growth. "Like most smaller companies, we look for niches as well, areas bigger groups or companies don't pursue," he says. "Since the merger, we now have greater capabilities and flexibility. That significantly improves our capacity to fill various niches."

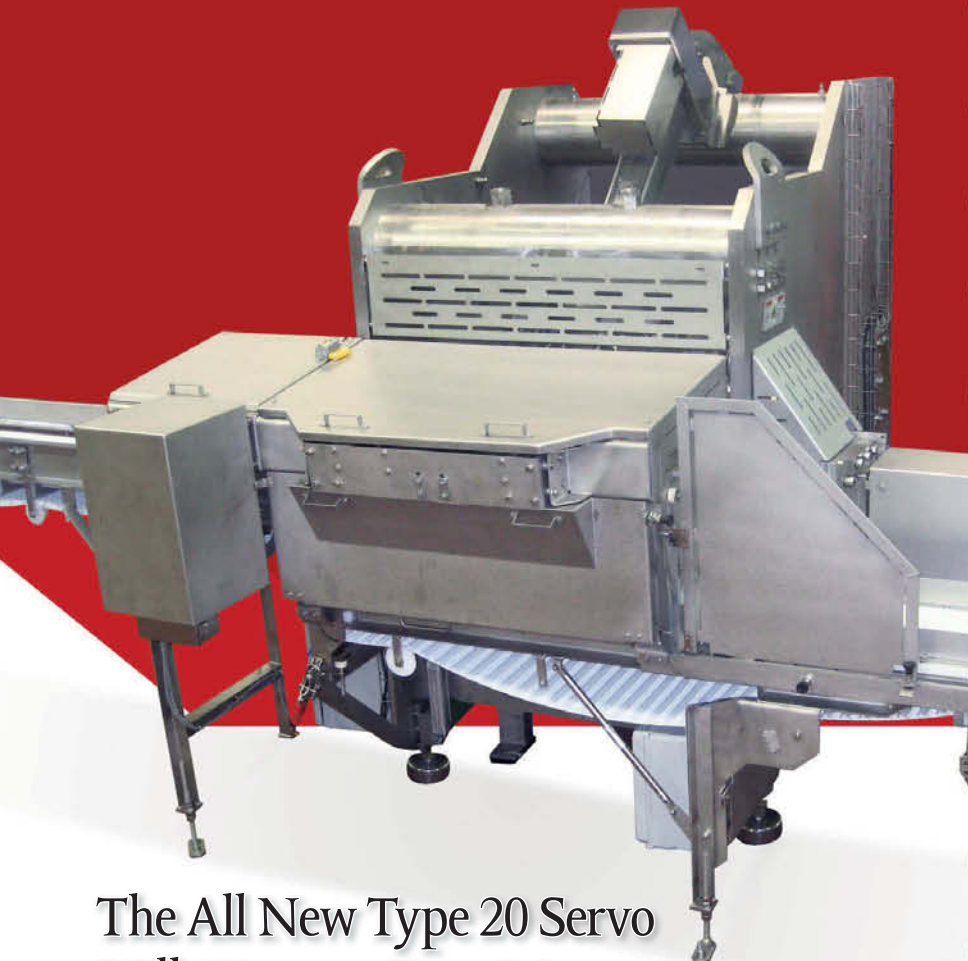
Van Stone points out a few strong and special customer relations have developed since he has been leading the organization. "I can't get into who they are, but with certain customers, we develop and then process new products for them. We serve as their product development arm," he says.

"Customers might inquire about products, and then we develop and commercialize products for them." He says in the meat industry, not that much growth takes place, and many smaller companies have fallen by the wayside. "So for bigger companies, especially publicly held ones, acquisition is the easier way to grow. That's why consolidation takes place. It's difficult to compete with the larger companies, and because factors like food-safety standards rise every year – the

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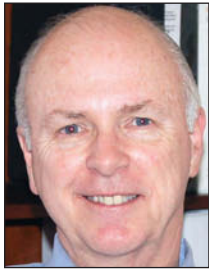
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Throughput

bar keeps rising – it takes more money and qualified people to continue to succeed,” he says.

A good illustration of a critical area Alderfer/Leidy’s as well as other companies their size continue to work on is continuous improvement in the food safety arena. “It’s becoming harder for very small companies to make the changes needed. New equipment and refrigeration is expensive. One of my major responsibilities, as the leader of this company, is to stay ahead of the food-safety curve while continuing to be economically viable,” he says.

Van Stone is quick to divert any credit for the company’s success to the rest of the team. “I know this is going to sound trite and like a well-worn phrase, but it’s true. It’s the people who work for the company. It’s not me, but our senior management team – half from Alder-



Van Stone

fer and Leidy’s, the other half from the outside,” he says. “For example, we have Don Countryman, with 30 years experience in the meat industry, including 18 years with Moyer Packing Co., as the quality assurance expert here.

“I try to create effective senior leadership teams, plus work to have an excellent relationship with our hourly employees and an environment fostering initiative and rewarding success. I want to make people feel good about what they’re doing here,” he adds. “Believe me, I don’t think it’s me. A lot of good people are leading departments and helping people to achieve their goals.”

Van Stone says he brought in an entirely fresh perspective when he became CEO/president of Alderfer/Leidy’s. “We have a nice blend of meat and non-meat people; smart people who are team players,” he says. “The team has blended well, and the team and company come first.” What has also worked for the company, in Van Stone’s view, is a partnership he’s created with his hourly employees. “Our turnover is very low for the meat in-

dustry, and we try to reward them for their service to the company,” he says. Last year, for example, which was a good and prosperous year for the company, every full-time employee received a bonus check.

“Despite the recession, we continue giving raises and providing essentially the same benefits to our employees,” he says. We continually work to establish a partnership with our employees.”

Van Stone also has encouraged the development of private-label and co-packing business for the company. He

“Since the merger, we now have greater capabilities and flexibility. That significantly improves our capacity to fill various niches.”

also takes advantage of the two powerful brands, Alderfer and Leidy’s, which have great equity in the company’s primary market in the Northeast.

“You could really say, ‘It’s the products making the company successful.’ They do make a big difference for the company. But it also takes the right kind of people to create and produce the products that will be successful, that will sell.”

Van Stone says he is trying to make the company ‘customer-centric’. He does this by taking steps to ensure Alderfer/Leidy’s is more flexible. “We are more flexible today than we used to be, and one way we do this is by developing custom products,” he says. “During the past six months, the company commercialized 50 products for one customer. That customer knows it would be extremely difficult to find another supplier to provide the combination of creativity, service, flexibility, quality, location and fair cost we can.”

Van Stone has much strength to bring to the meat industry, including his vast amount of experience in

the food industry, and ability to solve many problems. “I think my experience and intuition about business problems has helped, so we can deal with them quickly and effectively when they arise.”

After assuming the CEO role, Van Stone quickly established a strategy. “My first goal was to integrate as quickly as possible the two companies, in order to get maximum synergies here,” he says. “As one organization, I wanted to learn where the major strengths and weaknesses were in the organization. I wanted to provide clear direction to the people, my leadership team, as quickly as I could.”

Since hatching the plan, the results have not disappointed. “Right now, in March of 2011, we are many magnitudes ahead of where the two companies had been immediately before the merger,” he says. “The two boards of directors of Alderfer and Leidy’s were merged, and the guidance, support and encouragement have been gratifying. There is a lot more happiness in the company workforce right now.

“The company has gone through some tough, very difficult times,” he notes. “Knowing the company is doing well now, and has a bright future, makes a big difference.” Van Stone explains: “We went through a very difficult few years. We had the hog markets – the recession. But everyone stuck together.

“In 2008, the recession hit, oil prices went up and the ethanol release drove corn and hog prices through the roof,” he adds. “At our company, there’s been a reduced ownership in hogs. To a great degree, that’s been given to the experts, the hog producers. We’ve expanded our value-added meat products, plus our foodservice, industrial and retail markets.” ■

Bernard Shire is a contributing editor based in Lancaster, Pa. With a background in editing and writing for daily news publications, he also works as a food safety consultant and writer for Shire & Associates LLC.

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Winner's circle

Ranking the industry's top processors

BY KIMBERLIE CLYMA
kclyma@sosland.com

Ranking the top 125 processors in the meat and poultry industry (including those with operations in North America) is a challenging annual task. Compiling the data requires months of preparation and countless hours of e-mailing, faxing and follow-up phone calls. The goal of this annual listing is to provide an overview of the meat and poultry processing industry's leading companies based on annual sales and to include any changes among them resulting from mergers,

acquisitions or closures. Companies on this year's ranking range from just over \$28 billion in annual sales (Tyson Foods, Inc.) down to \$115 million in sales.

The top 10 spots in the 2011 ranking were occupied by the same 10 companies as 2010. However, Smithfield Foods, Inc. went down from No. 4 in 2010, with annual sales of \$12.48 billion, to No. 5 in 2011, with \$11.20 billion in annual sales. This change resulted in Sysco Corp. moving up to the No. 4 position this year. In a message to its shareholders as part of the company's 2010 annual report, Smithfield President and CEO C. Larry Pope said the decline in sales was intentional. "It reflects the continued rationalization of low-margin business and the reduction in the number of hogs brought to market as a result of the smaller US sow herd."

Some notable industry changes that impacted the 2011 ranking include:

- AdvancePierre Foods, a newly formed company following the merger of Advance Brands, LLC (ranked No. 97 in 2010), Advance Food Co. (ranked No. 53 in 2010) and Pierre Foods (ranked No. 40 in 2010) moved up to the No. 23 spot for 2011. The newly merged company, which was officially formed last October, is being led by Bill Toler, Pierre Foods' former CEO,

while executives from all three companies are on the AdvancePierre Foods management team.

- Agri Beef Co., moved up from No. 60 with \$450 million in annual sales in 2010, to No. 38 based on industry research that indicates the company's annual sales to be closer to \$700 million across its vertically integrated enterprise.

- JBS USA sales figures now include sales from its acquisition of shares of Pilgrim's Pride in 2010.

- Sofina Foods Inc. has now entered the ranking as No. 33 with \$800 million in annual sales following its acquisition of Lilydale, Inc. (ranked No. 63 with \$405 million in sales in 2010).

- Peco Foods recently announced it will be acquiring Townsends Arkansas Division and the Ukraine's Omtron will acquire Townsends North Carolina Division. Townsends filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on Dec. 19, 2010. The 2011 listing does not take into account any new sales figures from this acquisition.

- Sigma Alimentos S.A. de C.V. moved from No. 18 in 2010 to No. 15 this year. In August 2010, Sigma announced it would acquire processed meat manufacturer Bar-S Foods. Bar-S had annual sales of \$540 million in 2010, and ranked No. 51.

As always, processors are encouraged to contact *M&P* to request a survey to ensure this annual list is as accurate as possible. E-mail requests to: meatpoultry@sosland.com. ■

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THE TOP 125 PROCESSORS

Alphabetical listing by company name

* indicates that data is estimated, based on industry research

Page	Company	2011 Rank	2010 Rank	2011 sales (\$M)	2010 sales (\$M)
57	Abbyland Foods, Inc.	93	94	225	220
45	Advance Brands, L.L.C. ¹	—	97	—	190*
45	Advance Food Co. ²	—	53	—	526
45	AdvancePierre Foods ³	23	40	1,300	—
50	AFA Foods*	47	44	600	600
48	Agri Beef Co.	38	60	700*	450*
58	Alberta Beef Packing, Inc.*	107	108	164	164
60	Aliments ASTA, Inc.*	120	121	131	131
52	Allen Family Foods, Inc.*	60	58	468	468
44	American Foods Group, L.L.C.	18	16	2,100	2,100
60	Atlantic Premium Brands, Ltd.	123	126	120	120
58	Aurora Packing Co., Inc.*	97	95	202	202
44	Bar-S Foods Co. ⁴	—	51	—	540
47	Boar's Head Provisions Co., Inc.	32	31	813*	813*
53	Bob Evans Farms, Inc.	70	70	349	349*
46	BPI Technology, Inc.	27	27	1,100	1,000
52	Brakebush Brother's, Inc.	62	61	425*	425*
55	Branding Iron Holdings	78	79	290	290
60	Bridgford Foods Corp.	124	127	117.7	118
46	Butterball, L.L.C.	23	22	1,300	1,300
54	Cagle's, Inc.	75	78	307	293
43	Cargill Meat Solutions	3	3	15,000	15,000
50	Case Foods, Inc.	51	50	578	547
54	Caviness Beef Packers, Ltd.	73	81	310	270
60	Central Beef Industries, L.L.C.	125	128	115	115*
57	Central Valley Meat	93	92	225	221
55	Claxton Poultry Farms	80	80	275*	275
50	Clemens Food Group, Inc.	47	48	600	575
48	Coleman Natural Foods*	41	37	672	672
50	Colorado Boxed Beef Co.*	47	45	600	600
55	Columbus Foods, L.L.C.*	83	84	250	250
44	ConAgra Foods, Inc. ⁵	6	6	8,031	8,031*
53	Cooper Farms	67	74	353	300
52	Creekstone Farms Premium Beef	59	65	475	385
59	Custom Food Products, L.L.C.	111	113	145	145
56	Dakota Turkey Growers, L.L.C. ⁶	89	122	235	130
49	Danish Crown AMBA	45	47	625	580
52	Dietz & Watson, Inc.	64	74	400	300
53	Ed Miniat, Inc.*	68	68	350	350
53	Exceldor Cooperative Avicole	64	66	400	360
58	Farmers Pride, Inc.	98	99	195	182*
49	Fieldale Farms Corp.	43	38	645	645
44	Foster Poultry Farms	17	16	2,400	2,100
54	FPL Food, L.L.C.	77	77	295	295*
47	Fresh Mark, Inc.	35	40	796	635
52	George's, Inc.	63	62	419*	419*
55	Golden State Foods Meat Products Group	78	87	290	242
54	Gold'n Plump Poultry	76	74	300	300
58	Grand River Foods	105	107	165	165
60	Granny's Poultry Cooperative, Ltd.	117	124	135	125
46	Greater Omaha Packing Co., Inc.	27	28	1,100	925
53	Harris Ranch Beef Co.	66	67	363	353



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THE TOP 125 PROCESSORS

Page	Company	2011 Rank	2010 Rank	2011 sales (\$M)	2010 sales (\$M)
58	Harrison Poultry, Inc.	99	99	193	182
44	Hormel Foods Corp.	7	7	7,200	6,750
46	House of Raeford Farms, Inc.	26	24	1,189	1,189*
47	Indiana Packers Corp.	31	32	900	800
46	Industrias Bachoco, S.A.B. de C.V.*	25	23	1,198	1,198
54	Intercarnes, S.A. de C.V.*	72	71	319	319
60	J H Routh Packing Co.	115	122	140	130*
43	JBS USA* ⁷	2	2	20,900	20,900
60	John Soules Foods, Inc.	115	108	140	164
48	Johnsonville Sausage, L.L.C.	38	36	700	700
58	Kayem Foods, Inc.	109	110	150*	150*
49	Kenosha Beef International, Ltd.	46	42	615	632
44	Keystone Foods, L.L.C.	8	8	6,300*	6,300
45	Koch Foods	20	19	1,900	1,900
44	Kraft Foods/Oscar Mayer	9	9	6,200*	6,200
60	Kunzler & Co., Inc.	125	117	115	143
54	L&H Packing/Surlean Foods	73	72	310	310
56	Land O'Frost, Inc.*	83	84	250	250
58	Les Viandes duBreton, Inc.	96	101	210	180
47	Lilydale, Inc. ⁸	—	63	—	405*
48	Link Snacks, Inc. ⁹	37	35	705*	705*
56	Lone Star Beef Processors	83	96	250	200
50	Lopez Foods	53	51	540	540*
59	Maple Leaf Farms, Inc.	111	113	145*	145*
44	Maple Leaf Foods, Inc.*	13	13	3,303	3,303
51	Maple Lodge Farms, Ltd.*	55	54	504	504
56	Mar-Jac Poultry, Inc.	83	84	250	250
57	Marshall Durbin Co.	92	91	226	226
53	Meyer Natural Foods	68	69	350	350
58	Michigan Turkey Producers	108	118	162	141
57	Mountain City Meat*	90	89	230	230
58	Mountain States Rosen, L.L.C.	105	110	165	150
45	Mountaire Farms	22	25	1,303	1,186
58	Murry's, Inc.	102	104	170	170
44	National Beef Packing Co., L.L.C.	11	11	5,700	5,700
47	Nebraska Beef*	33	32	800	800
50	O.K. Industries, Inc.*	47	46	600	600
58	Odom's Tennessee Pride Sausage, Inc.	100	101	180	180*
44	Olymel L.P.*	16	15	2,500	2,500
52	Omaha Steaks International, Inc.	61	59	457	457*
44	OSI Industries, L.L.C.* ¹⁰	10	10	5,814	5,814
56	Overhill Farms*	88	88	239	239
48	Peco Foods, Inc. ¹¹	38	43	700	616
44	Perdue, Inc.	12	12	4,600	4,600
45	Pierre Foods ¹²	—	40	—	635
60	Pinty's Delicious Foods, Inc.*	117	119	135	135
54	PM Beef Holdings	71	73	347	301*
59	Premium Brands Holdings Corp.*	111	113	145*	145
59	Prestage Foods, Inc.*	109	110	150	150
51	Quantum Foods, L.L.C. ¹³	56	64	500	400*
49	Rastelli Foods Group	44	39	640*	640
56	Request Foods, Inc.	87	98	242	185

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25

THE TOP 125 PROCESSORS

Page	Company	2011 Rank	2010 Rank	2011 sales (\$M)	2010 sales (\$M)
58	Rose Packing Co., Inc.	104	106	166	166*
51	Sam Kane Beef Processors	54	55	525	500
45	Sanderson Farms, Inc.	19	20	1,925	1,720
44	Sara Lee Corp. ¹⁴	14	14	2,767*	2,767*
46	Seaboard Foods	29	26	1,065.3	1,126
44	Sigma Alimentos S.A. de C.V. ¹⁵	15	18	2,541	2,001
60	Simeus Foods International, Inc.*	122	124	125	125
48	Simmons Foods, Inc.	36	32	710	800
60	Sioux-Preme Packing Co.	117	119	135	135
43	Smithfield Foods, Inc.	5	4	11,202.6	12,488
47	Sofina Foods Inc. ¹⁶	33	—	800	—
55	Specialty Foods Group, Inc.*	82	83	258	258
57	Stampede Meat, Inc.	90	89	230	230
60	Strauss Brands, Inc.	121	125	130	121
55	Sugar Creek Packing Co. *	81	81	270	270
57	Superior Farms ¹⁷	95	92	221*	221
43	Sysco Corp.*	4	5	11,800	11,800
58	Tip Top Poultry, Inc.	102	104	170	170
51	Townsend's, Inc. ¹⁸	56	55	500	500
58	Triumph Foods, L.L.C.	100	101	180	180
43	Tyson Foods, Inc.	1	1	28,430	26,700
51	United Food Group, L.L.C.*	56	55	500	500
45	Wayne Farms, L.L.C.	21	21	1,355.2	1,368
49	West Liberty Foods, L.L.C.	42	30	650	837
47	Wolverine Packing Co.	30	29	934	894
50	XL Four Star Beef, Inc.	52	48	575	575*
59	Zacky Farms, L.L.C.	111	113	145	145*

1. Merged with Advance Food and Pierre Foods to form AdvancePierre Foods

2. Merged with Advance Brands and Pierre Foods to form AdvancePierre Foods

3. Formerly Pierre Foods, Advance Brands and Advance Food

4. Acquired by Sigma Alimentos S.A. de C.V.

5. Consumer Foods Segment

6. Dakota Provisions

7. Pilgrim's Pride Included

8. Acquired by Sofina Foods Inc.

9. Jack Link's Beef Jerky

10. Includes Amick Farms and Fair Oaks Farms

11. To acquire Townsends Arkansas Division

12. Merged with Advance Brands and Advance Food to form AdvancePierre Foods

13. Acquired North Star Foods, Inc.

14. North American Retail

15. Acquired Bar-S Food Co.

16. Acquired Lilydale, Inc.

17. T.H.C.I.

18. Peco Foods to acquire Arkansas Division and Omtron to acquire North Carolina Division



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Tyson Foods, Inc.

1 Annual sales (\$M): 28,430

Employees: 115,000

Plants: 84

Species: Beef, chicken, pork

Products: Bacon, battered/breaded products, canned meats, cured/cooked beef, cured/cooked pork, cured/cooked poultry, ham, luncheon meats/loaves, prepared meals, rendering/by-products, sausage-cooked

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Chief officer: Donnie Smith

JBS USA*

(Pilgrim's Pride Included)

2 Annual sales (\$M): 20,900*

Employees: 27,556

Plants: 60

Species: Beef, chicken, lamb, pork

Products: Bacon, ham, rendering/by-products, sausage-cooked, sausage-fresh, sausage-traditional,

skinless/boneless poultry, whole fresh chicken, chicken parts

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Chief officer: Wesley Batista

Cargill Meat Solutions

3 Annual sales (\$M): 15,000

Employees: 35,000

Plants: 28

Species: Beef, pork, turkey

Products: Bacon, cured/cooked beef, cured/cooked pork, ham, luncheon meats/loaves, sausage-cooked, sausage-fresh, skinless/boneless poultry

Headquarters: Wichita, KS (316) 291-2500

www.cargillmeatsolutions.com

Chief officer: Jody Horner

Sysco Corp.*

4 Annual sales (\$M): 11,800*

Employees: NR **Plants:** NR

Species: Beef, chicken, pork, seafood

Products: Battered/breaded products, cured/cooked beef, cured/cooked pork, cured/cooked poultry, ham, luncheon meats/loaves, sausage-cooked, sausage-fresh, sausage-traditional, skinless/boneless poultry

Headquarters: Houston, TX (281) 584-1390 www.sysco.com

Chief officer: Richard J. Schnieders

Smithfield Foods, Inc.

5 Annual sales (\$M): 11,202

Employees: 48,000

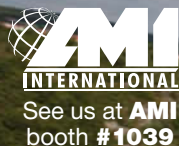
Plants: 25 **Species:** Pork

Products: Bacon, canned meats, cured/cooked pork, ham, luncheon meats/loaves, prepared meals, rendering/by-products, sausage-cooked, sausage-fresh, sausage-traditional

Headquarters: Smithfield, VA (757) 365-3000

www.smithfieldfoods.com

Chief officer: C. Larry Pope



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www.buschusa.com



25 THE TOP 125 PROCESSORS

ConAgra Foods, Inc.

(Consumer Foods Segment)

6 Annual sales (\$M): 8,031

Employees: NR **Plants:** NR

Species: Beef, chicken, pork, turkey

Products: Battered/breaded products, cured/cooked beef, cured/cooked pork, cured/cooked poultry, luncheon meats/loaves, prepared meals, sausage-cooked, sausage-fresh, sausage-traditional

Headquarters: Omaha, NE
(402) 595-4000 www.conagra.com

Chief officer: Gary M. Rodkin

Hormel Foods Corp.

7 Annual sales (\$M): 7,200

Employees: 19,500

Plants: 42

Species: Beef, pork, turkey

Products: Bacon, canned meats, cured/cooked beef, cured/cooked pork, cured/cooked poultry, ham, luncheon meats/loaves, prepared meals, rendering/by-products, sausage-cooked, sausage-fresh, sausage-traditional, skinless/boneless poultry

Headquarters: Austin, MN
(507) 437-5345

www.hormelfoods.com

Chief officer: Jeffrey M. Ettinger

Keystone Foods, L.L.C.

8 Annual sales (\$M): 6,300*

Employees: 7,075 **Plants:** 13

Species: Beef, chicken, seafood
Products: Battered/breaded products, cured/cooked poultry, skinless/boneless poultry

Headquarters: West Conshohocken, PA (610) 667-6700
www.keystonefoods.com

Chief officer: Jerry Dean

Kraft Foods/ Oscar Mayer

9 Annual sales (\$M): 6,200*

Employees: NR **Plants:** 7

Species: Beef, chicken, pork, turkey

Products: Bacon, luncheon meats/loaves

Headquarters: Kraft Foods - Northfield, IL Oscar Mayer - Madison, MN (608) 241-3311
www.kraft.com;

www.oscarmayer.com

Chief officer: Nick Meriggioli

OSI Industries, L.L.C.*

(Includes Amick Farms and Fair Oaks Farms)

10 Annual sales (\$M): 5,814*

Employees: 8,472

Plants: 14 **Species:** Beef, pork

Products: Bacon, ham, prepared meals, sausage-cooked, sausage-fresh

Headquarters: Aurora, IL

(630) 851-6600 www.osigroup.com

Chief officer: Sheldon Lavin

National Beef Packing Co., L.L.C.

11 Annual sales (\$M): 5,700

Employees: 9,000

Plants: 6 **Species:** Beef

Products: NR

Headquarters: Kansas City, MO

(800) 449-2333

www.nationalbeef.com

Chief officer: Tim Klein

Perdue, Inc.

12 Annual sales (\$M): 4,600

Employees: 21,000

Plants: 15

Species: Chicken, turkey

Products: Cured/cooked poultry, prepared meals, rendering/by-products, skinless/boneless poultry

Headquarters: Salisbury, MD

(410) 543-3000

www.perdue.com

Chief officer: James A. Perdue

Maple Leaf Foods, Inc.*

13 Annual sales (\$M): 3,303*

Employees: NR

Plants: NR

Species: Chicken, pork

Products: Bacon, ham, skinless/boneless poultry

Headquarters: Toronto, ON,

Canada (416) 926-2000

www.mapleleaf.ca

Chief officer: G. Wallace F. McCain

Sara Lee Corp.

(North American Retail)

14 Annual sales (\$M): 2,767*

Employees: NR

Plants: NR

Species: Beef, chicken, pork, turkey

Products: Bacon, battered/breaded products, cured/cooked pork, cured/cooked poultry, ham,

luncheon meats/loaves, sausage-cooked, sausage-traditional, skinless/boneless poultry

Headquarters: Downer's Grove, IL

(630) 598-8100

www.saralee.com

Chief officer: Marcel Smits

Sigma Alimentos S.A. de C.V.*

(acquired Bar-S Food Co.)

15 Annual sales (\$M): 2,541*

Employees: NR

Plants: NR **Species:** Pork

Products: Bacon, luncheon meats/loaves, prepared meals, sausage-cooked, sausage-fresh, sausage-traditional

Headquarters: Nuevo León,

Mexico (52) 81-8748-9000

www.sigma-alimentos.com

Chief officer: Dionisio Garza Medina

Olymel L.P.*

16 Annual sales (\$M): 2,500*

Employees: 10,000

Plants: 18

Species: Chicken, pork, turkey

Products: Bacon, ham, luncheon meats/loaves, prepared meals, sausage-cooked, sausage-fresh, sausage-traditional

Headquarters: Saint-Hyacinther,

QB, Canada (450) 771-0400

www.olymel.ca

Chief officer: Réjean Nadeau

Foster Poultry Farms

17 Annual sales (\$M): 2,400

Employees: 12,500

Plants: 13 **Species:** Chicken, turkey

Products: Battered/breaded products, cured/cooked poultry, luncheon meats/loaves, prepared meals, rendering/by-products, sausage-cooked, skinless/boneless poultry

Headquarters: Livingston, CA

(209) 394-7901

www.fosterfarms.com

Chief officer: Ron Foster

American Foods Group, L.L.C.

18 Annual sales (\$M): 2,100

Employees: NR **Plants:** 11

Species: Beef

Products: Cured/cooked beef, luncheon meats/loaves, rendering/by-products, sausage-fresh
Headquarters: Alexandria, MN (320) 759-5900
www.americanfoodsgroup.com
Chief officer: Tom Rosen

Sanderson Farms, Inc.

19 Annual sales (\$M): 1,925
Employees: 10,000
Plants: 10 **Species:** Chicken
Products: Battered/breaded products, skinless/boneless poultry
Headquarters: Laurel, MS (601) 649-4030
www.sandersonfarms.com
Chief officer: Joe F. Sanderson Jr.

Koch Foods

20 Annual sales (\$M): 1,900
Employees: 13,000
Plants: 15 **Species:** Chicken
Products: Cured/cooked poultry, skinless/boneless poultry, value added poultry
Headquarters: Park Ridge, IL (847) 384-5940
www.kochfoods.com
Chief officer: Joseph C. Grendys

Wayne Farms, L.L.C.

21 Annual sales (\$M): 1,355
Employees: 8,920
Plants: 11 **Species:** Chicken
Products: Battered/breaded products, cured/cooked beef, cured/cooked pork, cured/cooked poultry, skinless/boneless poultry
Headquarters: Oakwood, GA (770) 538-2120
www.waynefarms.com
Chief officer: Elton Maddox

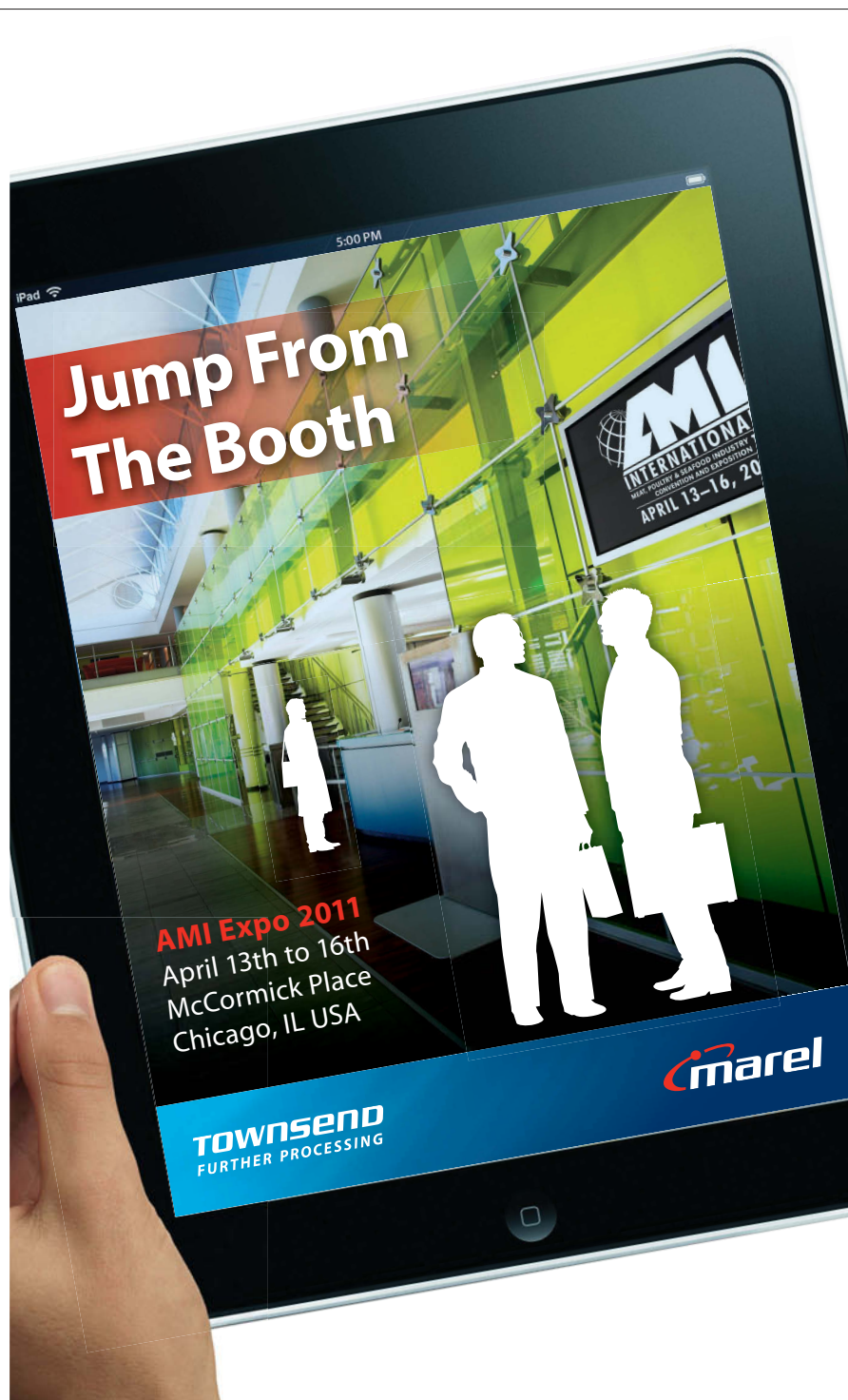
Mountaire Farms

22 Annual sales (\$M): 1,303
Employees: 6,000
Plants: 3 **Species:** Chicken
Products: Rendering/by-products, skinless/boneless poultry
Headquarters: Little Rock, AR (302) 934-1100
www.mountaire.com
Chief officer: Paul Downes

AdvancePierre Foods

(formerly Pierre Foods, Advance Brands and Advance Food)
23 Annual sales (\$M): 1,300
Employees: 4,000
Plants: 4 **Species:** Beef, chicken, pork, turkey, veal
Products: Battered/breaded

products, cured/cooked beef, cured/cooked pork, cured/cooked poultry, sausage-cooked, skinless/boneless poultry
Headquarters: Cincinnati, OH (513) 874-8741
www.advancepierre.com
Chief officer: William D. Toler



25

THE TOP 125 PROCESSORS

Butterball, L.L.C.

23 Annual sales (\$M): 1,300
Employees: 5,800
Plants: 7 **Species:** Chicken, turkey
Products: Bacon, cured/cooked poultry, luncheon meats/loaves, skinless/boneless poultry
Headquarters: Garner, NC (919) 255-7900 www.butterball.com
Chief officer: B. Keith Shoemaker

Industrias Bachoco, S.A.B. de C.V.*

25 Annual sales (\$M): 1,198*
Employees: 19,300
Plants: 9 **Species:** Beef, chicken, pork, turkey
Products: Battered/breaded products, prepared meals, sausage-cooked, skinless/boneless poultry
Headquarters: Guanajuato, Mexico (52) 461-618-3500 www.bachoco.com.mx
Chief officer: Francisco Javier R. Bours Castelo

House of Raeford Farms, Inc.

26 Annual sales (\$M): 1,189
Employees: 6,500
Plants: 8 **Species:** Chicken, turkey
Products: Bacon, battered/breaded products, cured/cooked poultry, ham, luncheon meats/loaves, rendering/by-products, sausage-cooked, sausage-fresh, sausage-traditional, skinless/boneless poultry
Headquarters: Raeford, NC (800) 888-7539 www.houseofraeford.com
Chief officer: E. Marvin Johnson

BPI Technology, Inc.

27 Annual sales (\$M): 1,100
Employees: 1,500
Plants: 4 **Species:** Beef, lamb, pork
Products: NR
Headquarters: Dakota Dunes, SD (605) 217-8000 www.beefproducts.com;

www.bpicertifiedtender.com
Chief officer: Eldon Roth

Greater Omaha Packing Co., Inc.

27 Annual sales (\$M): 1,100
Employees: 800 **Plants:** 1
Species: Beef **Products:** NR
Headquarters: Omaha, NE (402) 731-1700 www.greateromaha.com
Chief officer: Henry Davis

Seaboard Foods

29 Annual sales (\$M): 1,065.3
Employees: 4,200
Plants: 3 **Species:** Pork
Products: Bacon, cured/cooked pork, ham, rendering/by-products, sausage-cooked, sausage-fresh
Headquarters: Shawnee Mission, KS (800) 262-7907 www.seaboardfoods.com
Chief officer: Rod K. Brenneman

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Wolverine Packing Co.

30 Annual sales (\$M): 934
Employees: 375 Plants: 3
Species: Beef, chicken, lamb, pork, seafood, turkey, veal
Products: NR
Headquarters: Detroit, MI
(313) 259-7500 www.wolverinepacking.com
Chief officer: Jim Bonahoom

Indiana Packers Corp.

31 Annual sales (\$M): 900
Employees: 1,650 Plants: 1
Species: Pork Products: Bacon, ham, sausage-cooked
Headquarters: Delphi, IN
(765) 564-3680
www.indianakitchen.com
Chief officer: Shinichiro Suzuki

Boar's Head Provisions Co., Inc.

32 Annual sales (\$M): 813*
Employees: 2,300
Plants: 4 Species: Beef, chicken, pork, turkey
Products: Bacon, cured/cooked beef, cured/cooked pork, cured/cooked poultry, ham, luncheon meats/loaves, sausage-cooked, skinless/boneless poultry
Headquarters: Sarasota, FL
(941) 955-0994
www.boarshead.com
Chief officer: Robert S. Martin

Nebraska Beef*

33 Annual sales (\$M): 800*
Employees: 1,000 Plants: 1
Species: Beef Products: NR
Headquarters: Omaha, NE
(402) 734-6823
www.nebraskabeef.com
Chief officer: William Hughes

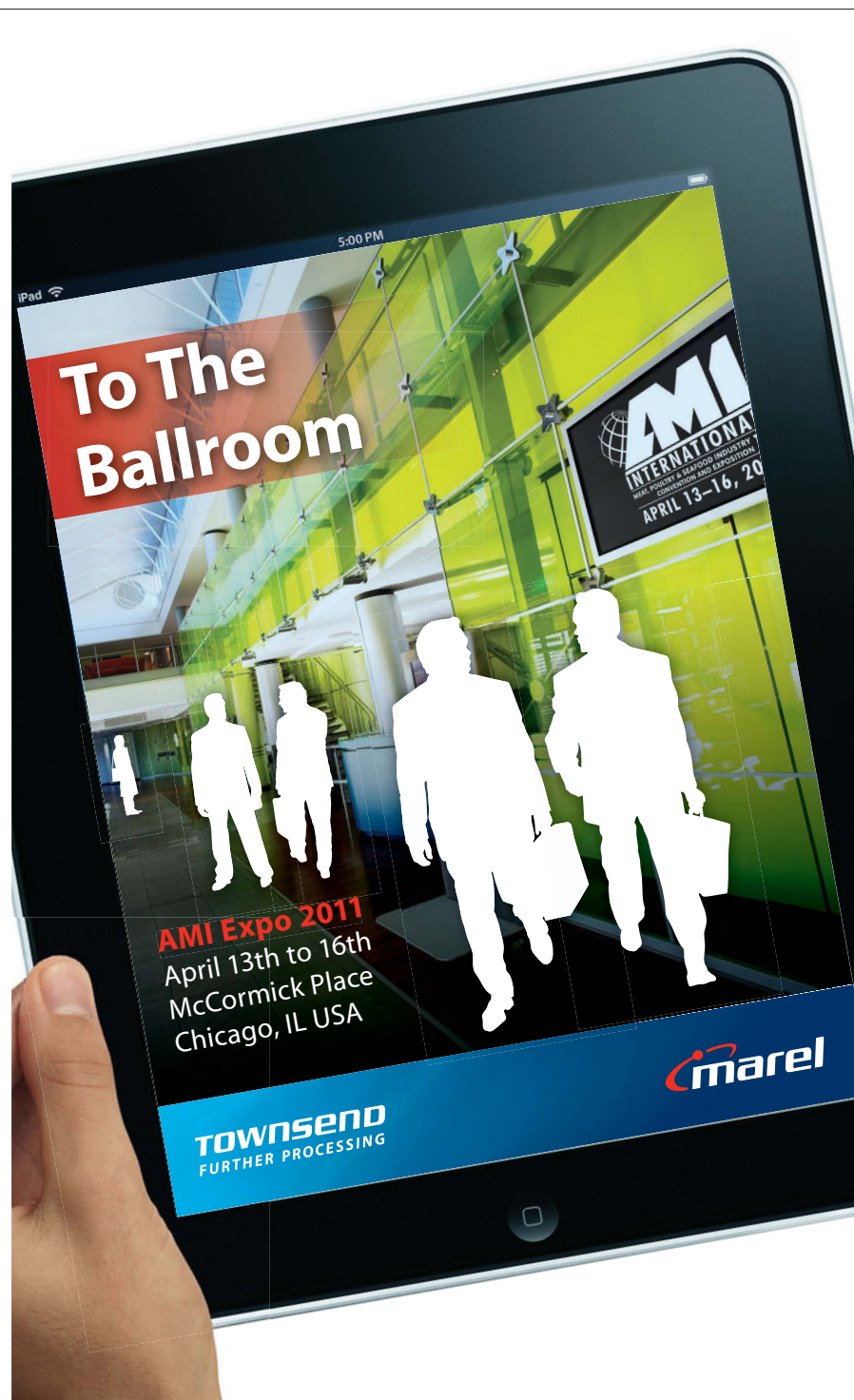
Sofina Foods Inc.*

(acquired Lilydale, Inc.)
33 Annual sales (\$M): 800*
Employees: 3,300
Plants: 12 Species: Beef, chicken, pork, turkey
Products: Cured/cooked poultry, luncheon meats/loaves, skinless/boneless poultry
Headquarters: Markham, ON, Canada (888) 588-1931
www.sofinafoods.com

Fresh Mark, Inc.

35 Annual sales (\$M): 796
Employees: 2,100
Plants: 3 Species: Beef, chicken, pork, turkey
Products: Bacon, battered/breaded products, cured/cooked

beef, cured/cooked pork, cured/cooked poultry, ham, luncheon meats/loaves, sausage-cooked, sausage-traditional
Headquarters: Massillon, OH
(800) 860-6777 www.freshmark.com
Chief officer: Neil Genshaft



25

THE TOP 125 PROCESSORS

Simmons Foods, Inc.

36 Annual sales (\$M): 710
Employees: 5,350
Plants: 6 **Species:** Chicken
Products: Battered/breaded products, cured/cooked poultry, prepared meals, rendering/by-products, skinless/boneless poultry
Headquarters: Siloam Springs, AR (479) 524-8151
www.simmonsfoods.com
Chief officer: Mark Simmons

Link Snacks, Inc.

(Jack Link's Beef Jerky)
37 Annual sales (\$M): 705*
Employees: 1,000*
Plants: 3* **Species:** Beef, bison, chicken, turkey
Products: Cured/cooked meats, cured/cooked pork, cured/cooked poultry, sausage-cooked
Headquarters: Minong, WI (715) 466-2234 www.jacklinks.com
Chief officer: John "Jack" Link

Agri Beef Co.

38 Annual sales (\$M): 700*
Employees: 850 **Plants:** 1
Species: Beef, pork **Products:** Bacon, battered/breaded products, cured/cooked pork, ham, luncheon meats/loaves, rendering/by-products, sausage-cooked
Headquarters: Boise, ID (208) 338-2500 www.agribeeef.com
Chief officer: Robert Rebholtz Jr.

Johnsonville Sausage, L.L.C.

38 Annual sales (\$M): 700
Employees: 1,000
Plants: 4 **Species:** Beef, chicken, pork, turkey
Products: Rendering/by-products, sausage-cooked, sausage-fresh, sausage-traditional
Headquarters: Sheboygan Falls, WI (920) 453-6900
www.johnsonville.com
Chief officer: Ralph C. Stayer

Peco Foods, Inc.

(in process of acquiring Townsends Arkansas Division)
38 Annual sales (\$M): 700
Employees: 3,600
Plants: 6 **Species:** Chicken
Products: NR
Headquarters: Tuscaloosa, AL (205) 345-4711
www.pecofoods.com
Chief officer: Mark Hickman

Coleman Natural Foods*

41 Annual sales (\$M): 672*
Employees: 2,300*
Plants: 7* **Species:** Chicken, pork
Products: Bacon, battered/breaded products, cured/cooked pork, cured/cooked poultry, sausage-cooked, skinless/boneless poultry
Headquarters: Golden, CO (800) 849-5464
www.colemannatural.com
Chief officer: Mark McKay



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West Liberty Foods, L.L.C.

42 Annual sales (\$M): 650
Employees: 1,850

Plants: 4 **Species:** Beef, chicken, pork, turkey

Products: Battered/breaded products, cured/cooked beef, cured/cooked pork, cured/cooked poultry, ham, luncheon meats/loaves, sausage-cooked, skinless/boneless poultry

Headquarters: West Liberty, IA
(888) 511-4500 www.wlfoods.com

Chief officer: Ed Garrett

Fieldale Farms Corp.

43 Annual sales (\$M): 645
Employees: 4,500

Plants: 3 **Species:** Chicken

Products: Battered/breaded products, cured/cooked beef, rendering/by-products, skinless/boneless poultry

Headquarters: Baldwin, GA
(706) 778-5100 www.fieldale.com

Chief officer: Tom Hensley

Rastelli Foods Group*

44 Annual sales (\$M): 640*
Employees: 412

Plants: 2 **Species:** Beef, chicken, lamb, pork, seafood, turkey, veal

Products: Cured/cooked beef, cured/cooked pork, cured/cooked poultry, prepared meals

Headquarters: Swedesboro, NJ
(800) 654-6328 www.rastellis.com

Chief officer: Ray Rastelli

Danish Crown AMBA

45 Annual sales (\$M): 625
Employees: 25,000 **Plants:** 71

Species: Beef, lamb, pork, veal

Products: Bacon, battered/breaded products, canned meats, cured/cooked beef, cured/cooked pork, ham, luncheon meats/loaves, prepared meals, rendering by-products, sausage-cooked, sausage-fresh, sausage-traditional

Headquarters: Randers, Denmark
(45) 89-19-19-19 www.danishcrown.dk

Chief officer: Kjeld Johannesen

Kenosha Beef International, Ltd.

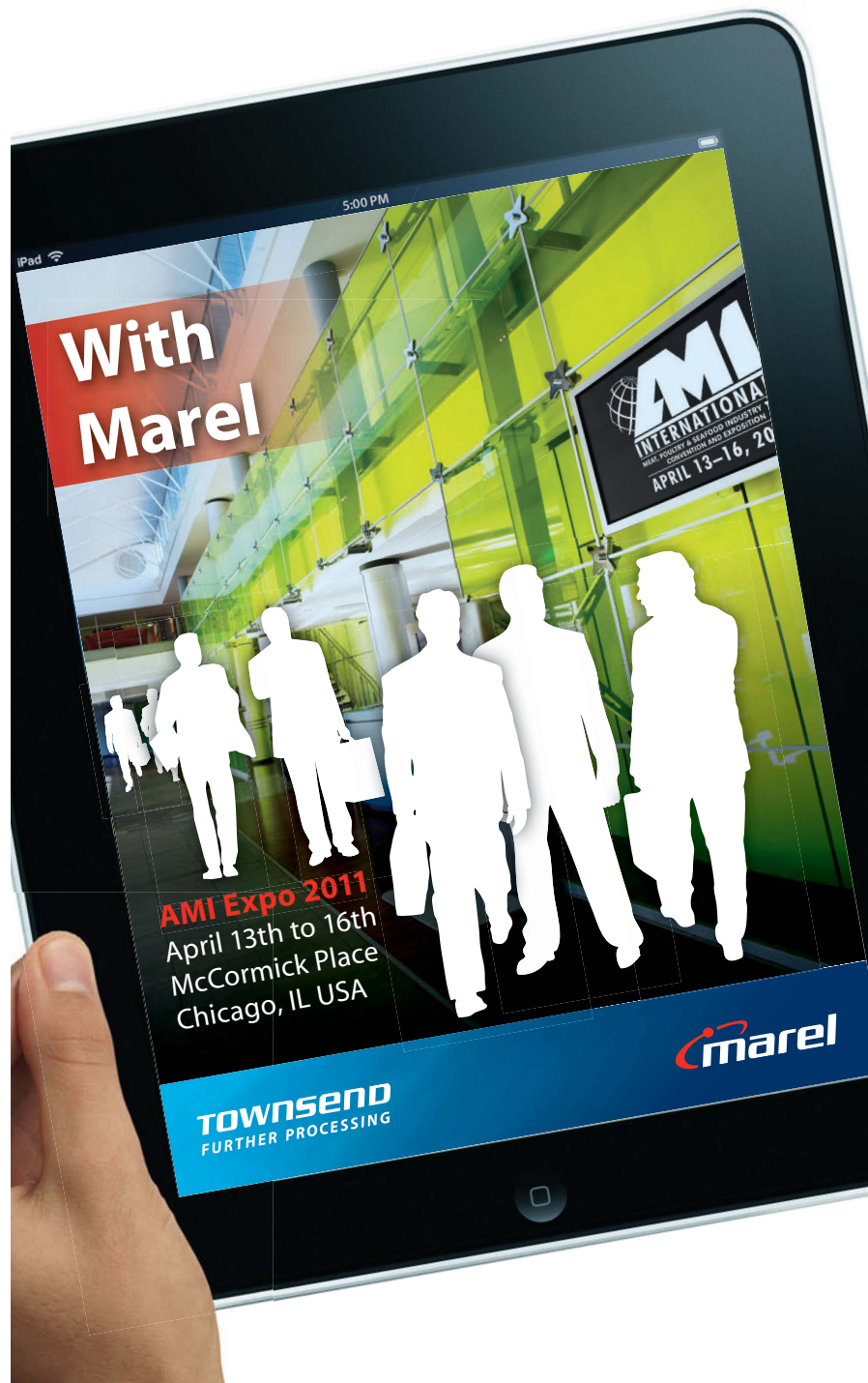
46 Annual sales (\$M): 615
Employees: 800 **Plants:** 4

Species: Beef, turkey

Products: NR

Headquarters: Kenosha, WI
(262) 859-2272 www.bwfoods.com

Chief officer: Dennis Vignieri



25

THE TOP 125 PROCESSORS

AFA Foods*

47 Annual sales (\$M): 600*
Employees: 550 **Plants:** 5
Species: Beef **Products:** NR
Headquarters: King of Prussia, PA
 (610) 277-5010 www.afafoods.com
Chief officer: Ron Allen

Clemens Food Group, Inc

47 Annual sales (\$M): 600
Employees: 2,100
Plants: 3 **Species:** Beef, chicken,
 pork, turkey
Products: Bacon, cured/cooked
 beef, cured/cooked pork, cured/
 cooked poultry, ham, luncheon

meats/loaves, rendering/by-
 products, sausage-cooked, sausage-
 fresh, sausage-traditional
Headquarters: Hatfield, PA
 (215) 368-2500
www.hatfieldqualitymeats.com
Chief officer: Douglas C. Clemens

Colorado Boxed Beef Co.*

47 Annual sales (\$M): 600*
Employees: 400 **Plants:** 3
Species: Beef, chicken, lamb, pork,
 seafood, turkey, veal
Products: Bacon, battered/
 breaded products, ham, luncheon
 meats/loaves, prepared meals
Headquarters: Auburndale, FL
 (863) 967-0636
www.coloradoboxedbeef.com
Chief officer: John J. Rattigan Jr.

O.K. Industries, Inc.*

47 Annual sales (\$M): 600*
Employees: 4,600
Plants: 2 **Species:** Chicken
Products: NR
Headquarters: Fort Smith, AR
 (479) 783-4186 www.okfoods.com
Chief officer: Collier Wenderoth Jr.

Case Foods, Inc.

51 Annual sales (\$M): 578
Employees: 2,500
Plants: 4 **Species:** Chicken
Products: Battered/breaded
 products, skinless/boneless poultry
Headquarters: Troutman, NC
 (704) 528-4501
www.casefarms.com
Chief officer: Thomas R. Shelton

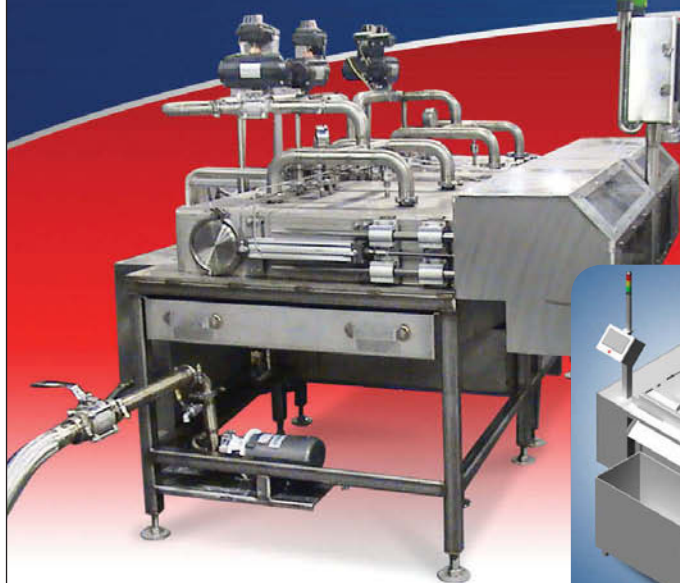
XL Four Star Beef, Inc.

52 Annual sales (\$M): 575
Employees: 1,000
Plants: 2 **Species:** Beef
Products: NR
Headquarters: Omaha, NE
 (402) 731-3370 www.xlfourstar.com
Chief officer: Paul Slater

Lopez Foods

53 Annual sales (\$M): 540
Employees: 1,200
Plants: 2
Species: Beef, chicken, pork
Products: Sausage-cooked

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 Mansfield, Texas 76063
 Phone: (817) 999-8190
www.filtrationautomation.com

Headquarters: Oklahoma City, OK
(405) 603-7500
www.lopezfoods.com
Chief officer: Ed Sanchez

Sam Kane Beef Processors

54 Annual sales (\$M): 525
Employees: 900
Plants: 1 **Species:** Beef
Products: NR
Headquarters: Corpus Christi, TX (361) 241-5000
Chief officer: Jerry Kane

Maple Lodge Farms, Ltd.*

55 Annual sales (\$M): 504*
Employees: 2,200
Plants: 2 **Species:** Chicken
Products: Bacon, cured/cooked poultry, luncheon meats/loaves, sausage-cooked
Headquarters: Brampton, ON, Canada (905) 455-8340
www.maplelodgefarms.com
Chief officer: Jack May, Bob May

Quantum Foods, L.L.C.

(acquired North Star Foods, Inc.)
56 Annual sales (\$M): 500
Employees: 1,500
Plants: 3 **Species:** Beef, chicken, lamb, pork, turkey
Products: Battered/breaded products, cured/cooked beef, cured/cooked pork, cured/cooked poultry, luncheon meats/loaves, prepared meals, skinless/boneless poultry
Headquarters: Bolingbrook, IL (800) 334-6328
www.quantumfoods.com
Chief officer: Edward Bleka

Townsend, Inc.

(being acquired by Peco Foods, Inc.)
56 Annual sales (\$M): 500
Employees: 3,200
Plants: 4 **Species:** Chicken
Products: Battered/breaded products, cured/cooked poultry, skinless/boneless poultry
Headquarters: Georgetown, DE (302) 855-7100
www.townsend.com
Chief officer: Fred Beilstein

United Food Group, L.L.C.*

56 Annual sales (\$M): 500*
Employees: 475
Plants: 2

Species: Beef, chicken, pork
Products: Cured/cooked beef
Headquarters: Vernon, CA (323) 588-5286
www.moransallnatural.com
Chief officer: Rolf Richter



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Creekstone Farms Premium Beef

59 Annual sales (\$M): 475
Employees: 734 **Plants:** 1
Species: Beef
Products: Cured/cooked beef, luncheon meats/loaves
Headquarters: Arkansas City, KS (620) 741-3100
www.creekstonefarms.com
Chief officer: Dennis Buhlke

Allen Family Foods, Inc.*

60 Annual sales (\$M): 468*
Employees: 3,000
Plants: 3 **Species:** Chicken
Products: Rendering/by-products, skinless/boneless poultry
Headquarters: Seaford, DE (302) 629-9136 www.allenfamilyfoods.com
Chief officer: Bob Turley

Omaha Steaks International, Inc.

61 Annual sales (\$M): 457
Employees: 1,800
Plants: 3 **Species:** Beef, chicken, lamb, pork, seafood, turkey, veal
Products: NR
Headquarters: Omaha, NE (402) 597-3000
www.omahasteaks.com
Chief officer: Bruce A. Simon

Brakebush Brother's, Inc.

62 Annual sales (\$M): 425*
Employees: 800
Plants: 1 **Species:** Chicken
Products: Battered/breaded products, cured/cooked poultry,

skinless/boneless poultry
Headquarters: Westfield, WI (608) 933-2121
www.brakebush.com
Chief officer: Carl Brakebush

George's, Inc.

63 Annual sales (\$M): 419*
Employees: 4,100*
Plants: 4 **Species:** Chicken
Products: Battered/breaded products
Headquarters: Springdale, AR (479) 927-7140
Chief officer: Gary C. George

Dietz & Watson, Inc.

64 Annual sales (\$M): 400
Employees: 900
Plants: 3 **Species:** Beef, chicken, pork, turkey
Products: Cured/cooked beef, cured/cooked pork, cured/cooked poultry, ham, luncheon

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Headquarters: Philadelphia, PA (215) 831-9000
www.dietzandwatson.com
Chief officer: Louis J. Eni

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Exceldor Cooperative Avicole

64 Annual sales (\$M): 400

Employees: 900

Plants: 4 Species: Chicken, turkey

Products: Cured/cooked

poultry, skinless/boneless poultry

Headquarters: Lévis,

QB, Canada

(418) 830-5600

www.exceldor.com

Chief officer: René Proulx

Harris Ranch Beef Co.

66 Annual sales (\$M): 363
Employees: 800

Plants: 1 Species: Beef

Products: Cured/cooked beef

Headquarters: Selma, CA

(559) 896-3081

www.harrisranch.com

Chief officer: John Harris

Cooper Farms

67 Annual sales (\$M): 353
Employees: 1,450

Plants: 2

Species: Chicken, pork, turkey

Products: Cured/cooked pork,

cured/cooked poultry, ham,

luncheon meats/loaves, sausage-

cooked, skinless/boneless poultry, turkey burgers, value added products

Headquarters: Oakwood, OH (419) 594-3325

www.cooperfarms.com

Chief officer: Jim Cooper

Ed Miniat, Inc.*

68 Annual sales (\$M): 350*
Employees: 320

Plants: 1 Species: Beef, pork

Products: NR

Headquarters: Homewood, IL

(708) 957-3800 www.miniat.com

Chief officer: Ronald Miniat

Meyer Natural Foods

68 Annual sales (\$M): 350
Employees: 100

Plants: 0 Species: Beef

Products: Case ready beef, ground beef, cured/cooked beef

Headquarters: Loveland, CO

(800) 856-6765 www.

meyernaturalangus.com;

www.laurasleanbeef.com

Chief officers: Mike Day,

Chris Boudinet

Bob Evans Farms, Inc.

70 Annual sales (\$M): 349
Employees: 782

Plants: 6 Species: Pork

Products: Bacon, ham, prepared meals, sausage-cooked, sausage-fresh, sausage-traditional

Headquarters: Columbus, OH

(800) 272-7675 www.bobevans.com

Chief officer: Steven A. Davis

25

THE TOP 125 PROCESSORS

PM Beef Holdings

71 Annual sales (\$M): 347
Employees: 680 **Plants:** 1
Species: Beef **Products:** NR
Headquarters: Windom, MN
 (507) 831-2761 www.pombeef.com
Chief officer: Greg Miller

Intercarnes, S.A. de C.V.*

72 Annual sales (\$M): 319*
Employees: 6,500
Plants: 1 **Species:** Pork
Products: Sausage-fresh, sausage-traditional
Headquarters: Chihuahua, Mexico (52) 614-439-0100

Chief officer: Oscar Eugenio Baeza Fares

Caviness Beef Packers, Ltd.

73 Annual sales (\$M): 310
Employees: 700 **Plants:** 2
Species: Beef **Products:** NR
Headquarters: Hereford, TX (806) 357-2443
www.cavinessbeefpackers.com
Chief officer: Terry Caviness

L&H Packing/Surlean Foods

73 Annual sales (\$M): 310
Employees: 600 **Plants:** 2
Species: Beef, chicken, pork
Products: Cured/cooked pork, rendering/by-products
Headquarters: San Antonio, TX (210) 532-3241
www.surleanfoods.com
Chief officer: Ken Leonard

Cagle's, Inc.

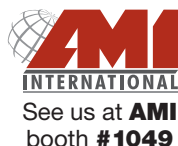
75 Annual sales (\$M): 307
Employees: 1,900
Plants: 2 **Species:** Chicken
Products: Battered/breaded products, skinless/boneless poultry
Headquarters: Atlanta, GA (404) 355-2820 www.cagles.net
Chief officer: J. Douglas Cagle

Gold'n Plump Poultry

76 Annual sales (\$M): 300
Employees: 1,500
Plants: 3 **Species:** Chicken
Products: Skinless/boneless poultry, ground chicken
Headquarters: St. Cloud, MN (320) 251-3570
www.goldnplump.com;
www.justbarechicken.com
Chief officer: Michael Helgeson

FPL Food, L.L.C.

77 Annual sales (\$M): 295
Employees: 730
Plants: 3 **Species:** Beef
Products: NR
Headquarters: Augusta, GA (706) 722-2694
www.fplfood.com
Chief officer: Kimberlie Elkins



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Branding Iron Holdings

78 Annual sales (\$M): 290
Employees: 800

Plants: 4 Species: Beef, pork

Products: NR

Headquarters: Sauget, IL
(618) 337-8400

Chief officer: Scott Hudspeth

Golden State Foods Meat Products Group

78 Annual sales (\$M): 290
Employees: 190

Plants: 1 Species: Beef

Products: Beef patties,
ground beef

Headquarters: Irvine, CA
(949) 252-2000

www.goldenstatefoods.com

Chief officer: Mark Wetterau

Claxton Poultry Farms*

80 Annual sales (\$M): 275*
Employees: 1,800

Plants: 1 Species: Chicken

Products: Skinless/boneless
poultry

Headquarters: Claxton, GA
(912) 739-3181

www.claxtonpoultry.com

Chief officer: Jerry Lane

Sugar Creek Packing Co.*

81 Annual sales (\$M): 270*
Employees: 1,500

Plants: 4 Species: Chicken, pork

Products: Bacon, sausage-cooked

Headquarters: Washington Court
House, OH (740) 335-3586

www.sugarcreek.com

Chief officer: Tom Bollinger

Specialty Foods Group, Inc.*

82 Annual sales (\$M): 258*
Employees: 799

Plants: 2 Species: Beef, chicken,
pork, turkey

Products: Canned meats, cured/
cooked beef, cured/cooked pork,
ham, luncheon meats/loaves,
sausage-cooked, sausage-traditional

Headquarters: Newport News, VA
(757) 952-1200

www.smgmeats.com

Chief officer: Bonita J. Then

Columbus Foods, L.L.C.*

83 Annual sales (\$M): 250*
Employees: 300

Plants: 3 Species: Beef, chicken,
pork, seafood, turkey

Products: Cured/cooked beef,
cured/cooked pork, cured/cooked
poultry, ham, sausage-cooked

Headquarters: Hayward, CA
(510) 921-3400

www.columbussalame.com

Chief officer: Ralph Denisco

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125

THE TOP 125 PROCESSORS

Land O'Frost, Inc.*

83 Annual sales (\$M): 250*
Employees: 800

Plants: 3 **Species:** Beef, chicken, pork, turkey

Products: Cured/cooked beef, cured/cooked pork, cured/cooked poultry, ham, luncheon meats/loaves

Headquarters: Lansing, IL
(708) 474-7100 www.landofrost.com

Chief officer: David Van Eekeren

Lone Star Beef Processors

83 Annual sales (\$M): 250
Employees: 475 **Plants:** 1

Species: Beef

Products: NR

Headquarters: San Angelo, TX
(325) 658-5555

www.lonestarbeef.net

Chief officer: John Cross

Mar-Jac Poultry, Inc.

83 Annual sales (\$M): 250
Employees: 1,300

Plants: 1 **Species:** Chicken

Products: Skinless/boneless poultry

Headquarters: Gainesville, GA
(770) 531-5000

www.marjacpoultry.com

Chief officer: Pete Martin

Request Foods, Inc.

87 Annual sales (\$M): 242
Employees: 580 **Plants:** 1

Species: Beef, chicken, pork, seafood, turkey

Products: Prepared meals

Headquarters: Holland, MI
(616) 786-0900

www.requestfoods.com

Chief officer: Jack DeWitt

Overhill Farms*

88 Annual sales (\$M): 239*
Employees: 1,048

Plants: 2 **Species:** Beef, chicken,

lamb, pork, seafood, turkey, veal

Products: Prepared meals

Headquarters: Vernon, CA
(323) 582-9977

www.overhillfarms.com

Chief officer: James Rudis

Dakota Turkey Growers, L.L.C.

(Dakota Provisions)

89 Annual sales (\$M): 235
Employees: 785 **Plants:** 1

Species: Beef, chicken, pork, turkey

Products: Cured/cooked beef, cured/cooked pork, cured/cooked poultry, ham, luncheon meats/loaves, skinless/boneless poultry

Headquarters: Huron, SD
(605) 352-1519

www.dakotaprovisions.com

Chief officer: Kenneth Rutledge



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Mountain City Meat*

90 Annual sales (\$M): 230*
Employees: 520 Plants: 1
Species: Beef, bison, pork
Products: NR
Headquarters: Denver, CO
(303) 320-1116
www.mountaincitymeat.com
Chief officer: Ron Divin

Stampede Meat, Inc.

90 Annual sales (\$M): 230
Employees: 800
Plants: 2 Species: Beef, chicken,
pork, turkey
Products: Prepared meals,
rendering/by-products
Headquarters: Bridgeville, IL
(800) 353-0933
www.stampedemeat.com
Chief officer: Edward J. Ligas

Marshall Durbin Co.

92 Annual sales (\$M): 226
Employees: 1,900
Plants: 2 Species: Chicken
Products: NR
Headquarters: Birmingham, AL
(800) 245-8217
www.marshalldurbin.com
Chief officer: Melissa Durbin

Abbyland Foods, Inc.

93 Annual sales (\$M): 225
Employees: 725
Plants: 2 Species: Beef, pork
Products: Luncheon meats/loaves,
sausage-cooked, sausage-fresh,
sausage-traditional
Headquarters: Abbotsford, WI
(715) 223-6386
www.abbyland.com
Chief officer: Harland
Schranfnagel

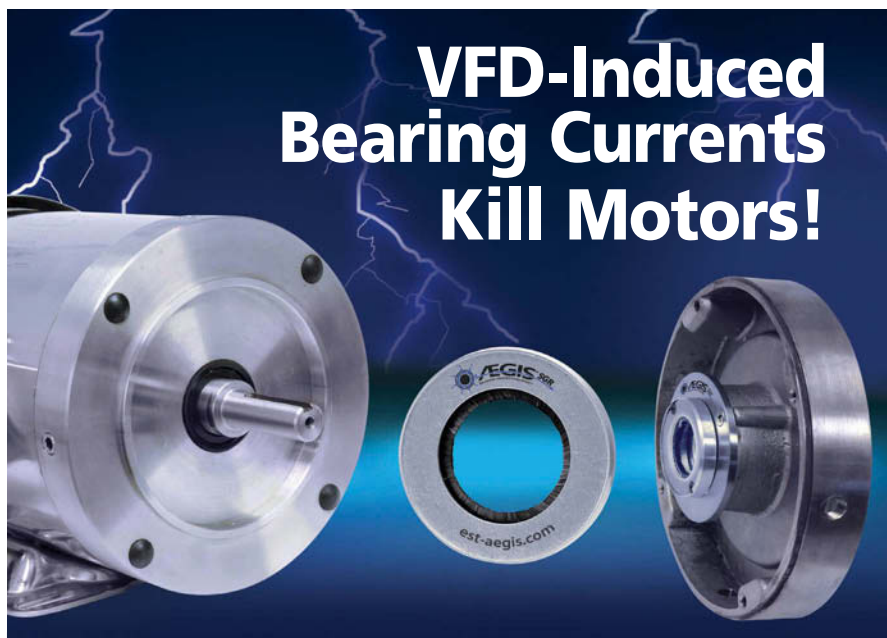
Central Valley Meat

93 Annual sales (\$M): 225
Employees: 325
Plants: 1 Species: Beef
Products: NR
Headquarters: Hanford, CA
(559) 583-9624
Chief officer: Brian Coelho

Superior Farms (T.H.C.I)

95 Annual sales (\$M): 221*
Employees: 370
Plants: 3 Species: Beef, chicken,
lamb, pork, veal

Products: Rendering/by-products
Headquarters: Davis, CA
(530) 758-3091 www.
superiorfarms.com
Chief officer: Les Oesterreich



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25

THE TOP 125 PROCESSORS

Les Viandes duBreton, Inc.

96 Annual sales (\$M): 210
Employees: 450

Plants: 1 Species: Pork

Products: Fresh pork, case ready
fresh sausage, ham & bacon

Headquarters: Riviere-du-Loup,
QB, Canada (418) 863-6711
www.dubreton.com

Chief officer: Vincent Breton

Aurora Packing Co., Inc.*

97 Annual sales (\$M): 202*
Employees: 250 Plants: 1

Species: Beef Products: NR

Headquarters: North Aurora, IL
(630) 897-0551

Chief officer: Marvin Fagel

Farmers Pride, Inc.

98 Annual sales (\$M): 195
Employees: 1,050

Plants: 1 Species: Chicken, tur-
key, duck, cornish game hen

Products: Battered/breaded
products, cured/cooked poultry,
skinless/boneless poultry

Headquarters: Fredericksburg, PA
(717) 865-6626

www.bellandevans.com

Chief officer: Scott J. Sechler

Harrison Poultry, Inc.

99 Annual sales (\$M): 193
Employees: 975

Plants: 1 Species: Chicken

Products: Skinless/boneless
poultry

Headquarters: Bethlehem, GA
(770) 867-7511

Chief officer: Michael A. Welch

Odom's Tennessee Pride Sausage, Inc.

100 Annual sales (\$M): 180
Employees: 780

Plants: 2 Species: Pork, turkey

Products: Sausage-cooked,
sausage-fresh

Headquarters: Madison, TN
(615) 868-1360 www.tnpride.com

Chief officer: Larry Odom

Triumph Foods, L.L.C.

100 Annual sales (\$M): 180
Employees: 2,500

Plants: 1 Species: Pork

Products: NR

Headquarters: St. Joseph, MO
(816) 396-2700

www.triumphfoods.com

Chief officer: Rick Hoffman

Murry's, Inc.

102 Annual sales (\$M): 170
Employees: 1,100

Plants: 1 Species: Beef, chicken,
pork, seafood

Products: Battered/breaded
products, cured/cooked beef, cured/
cooked poultry, sausage traditional

Headquarters: Upper
Marlboro, MD (800) 638-0215

www.murrys.com

Chief officer: Ira Mendelson

Tip Top Poultry, Inc.

102 Annual sales (\$M): 170
Employees: 1,100

Plants: 2 Species: Chicken,
turkey

Products: Cured/cooked poultry

Headquarters: Marietta, GA
(800) 241-5230

www.tiptoppoultry.com

Chief officer: Robin Burruss

Rose Packing Co., Inc.*

104 Annual sales (\$M): 166
Employees: 600

Plants: 1 Species: Pork, turkey

Products: Bacon, cured/cooked
pork, ham, luncheon meats/loaves,
sausage-cooked, sausage-fresh,
sausage-traditional, skinless/
boneless poultry

Headquarters: Barrington, IL
(847) 381-5700

www.rosepacking.com

Chief officer: Dwight E. Stiehl

Grand River Foods

105 Annual sales (\$M): 165
Employees: 500

Plants: 4 Species: Beef, chicken,
pork, turkey

Products: Battered/breaded
products, cured/cooked beef, cured/
cooked pork, cured/cooked poultry,
prepared meals, skinless/boneless
poultry

Headquarters: Cambridge ON,
Canada (519) 653-3577

www.grandriverfoods.com

Chief officer: Craig Richardson

Mountain States Rosen, L.L.C.

105 Annual sales (\$M): 165
Employees: 175

Plants: 2 Species: Beef, lamb,
pork, veal Products: NR

Headquarters: Bronx, NY
(718) 842-4447 www.usalamb.com

Chief officer: Dennis Stiffler

Alberta Beef Packing, Inc.*

107 Annual sales (\$M): 164*
Employees: NR

Plants: NR Species: Beef

Products: NR

Headquarters: Edmonton, AB,
Canada (780) 477-2233

Chief officer: Lee W. Nilsson

Michigan Turkey Producers

108 Annual sales (\$M): 162
Employees: 500

Plants: 2 Species: Chicken,
pork, turkey

Products: Cured/cooked pork,
cured/cooked poultry, ham,
luncheon meats/loaves, rendering/
by-products, sausage fresh,
skinless/boneless poultry, fresh
turkey roasts

Headquarters: Grand Rapids, MI
(616) 245-2221 www.miturkey.com

Chief officer: Dan Lennon

Kayem Foods, Inc.

109 Annual sales (\$M): 150*
Employees: 600

Plants: 2 Species: Beef,
chicken, pork

Products: Cured/cooked beef,
cured/cooked pork, cured/cooked
poultry, ham, luncheon meats/
loaves, sausage-cooked, sausage-
fresh, sausage-traditional, skinless/
boneless poultry

Headquarters: Chelsea, MA
(800) 426-6100 www.kayem.com

Chief officer: Ray Monkiewicz

Prestage Foods, Inc.*

109 Annual sales (\$M): 150*
Employees: 700

Plants: 1 **Species:** Turkey

Products: NR

Headquarters: St. Pauls, NC
(910) 865-6611

www.prestagefoods.com

Chief officer: Kevin Kniefel

Custom Food Products, L.L.C.

111 Annual sales (\$M): 145
Employees: 350

Plants: 2 **Species:** Beef, chicken,
pork, turkey

Products: Cured/cooked beef,
cured/cooked pork, cured/cooked
poultry, ham, sausage-cooked

Headquarters: Carson, CA
(310) 637-0900

www.customfoodproducts.com

Chief officer: Jon Hickerson

Maple Leaf Farms, Inc.

111 Annual sales (\$M): 145*
Employees: 840

Plants: 2 **Species:** Chicken, duck

Products: Battered/breaded
products, cured/cooked poultry,
rendering/by-products, sausage-
fresh, skinless/boneless poultry,
cooked duck

Headquarters: Milford, IN
(574) 658-4121 www.

mapleleafarms.com

Chief officer: Terry Tucker

Premium Brands Holdings Corp.*

111 Annual sales (\$M): 145*
Employees: 971

Plants: 13 **Species:** Beef, chicken,
lamb, pork, veal

Products: Bacon, cured/cooked
beef, cured/cooked pork, cured/
cooked poultry, ham, luncheon
meats/loaves, prepared meals,
sausage-cooked, sausage-fresh,
sausage-traditional

Headquarters: Richmond, BC,
Canada (604) 656-3100

www.premiumbrandsholdings.com

Chief officer: George Paleologou

Zacky Farms, L.L.C.*

111 Annual sales (\$M): 145*
Employees: 1,000

Plants: 3 **Species:** Beef, chicken,
pork, turkey

Products: Skinless/boneless
poultry, cured/cooked poultry,

ham, luncheon meats/loaves,
prepared meals, rendering/by-
products, sausage-cooked, sausage-
fresh, sausage-traditional

Headquarters: Fresno, CA
(559) 443-2700 www.zacky.com

Chief officer: John Ross

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J H Routh Packing Co.

115 Annual sales (\$M): 140
Employees: 300

Plants: 1 Species: Pork

Products: Bacon, ham, rendering/
by-products, sausage-fresh

Headquarters: Sandusky, OH
(419) 626-2251

Chief officer: Thomas M. Routh

John Soules Foods, Inc.

115 Annual sales (\$M): 140
Employees: 460

Plants: 1 Species: Beef, chicken

Products: Cured/cooked beef,
cured/cooked poultry, skinless/
boneless poultry

Headquarters: Tyler, TX
(903) 592-9800

www.johnsoulesfoods.com

Chief officer: John Soules Jr.

Granny's Poultry Cooperative, Ltd.

117 Annual sales (\$M): 135
Employees: 480

Plants: 1 Species: Chicken, turkey

Products: Battered/breaded
products, cured/cooked poultry,
luncheon meats/loaves, skinless/
boneless poultry

Headquarters: Winnipeg, MB,
Canada (204) 488-2230

www.grannys.ca

Chief officer: Craig Evans

Pinty's Delicious Foods, Inc.*

117 Annual sales (\$M): 135*
Employees: 500

Plants: 4 Species: Chicken

Products: Battered/breaded
products, cured/cooked poultry,
prepared meals, skinless/boneless
poultry

Headquarters: Burlington, ON,
Canada (800) 263-7223

www.pintys.com

Chief officer: Jack Vanderlaan

Sioux-Preme Packing Co.

117 Annual sales (\$M): 135
Employees: 300

Plants: 2 Species: Pork

Products: Rendering/by-products

Headquarters: Sioux Center, IA
(712) 722-2555

www.siouxpreme.com

Chief officer: Gary Malenke

Aliments ASTA, Inc.*

120 Annual sales (\$M): 131*
Employees: 400

Plants: 1 Species: Pork

Products: Bacon, cured/cooked
pork, ham

Headquarters: St-Alexandre-de-
Kamouraska, QB, Canada
(418) 495-2728

www.asta-1982.com

Chief officer: M. Jacques Poitras

Strauss Brands, Inc.

121 Annual sales (\$M): 130
Employees: 140

Plants: 1 Species: Beef, lamb,
pork, veal

Products: Bacon, battered/
breaded products, sausage-cooked

Headquarters: Franklin, WI
(414) 421-5250

www.straussbrands.com

Chief officers: Randy Strauss/
Tim Strauss

Simeus Foods International, Inc.*

122 Annual sales (\$M): 125*
Employees: 260

Plants: 2 Species: Beef, chicken,
pork, turkey

Products: Cured/cooked beef,
cured/cooked pork, ham, sausage-
traditional, skinless/boneless
poultry

Headquarters: Mansfield, TX
(888) 772-3663

www.simeusfoods.com

Chief officer: Kelly Hansen

Atlantic Premium Brands, Ltd.

123 Annual sales (\$M): 120
Employees: 600

Plants: 3 Species: Beef, pork,
seafood

Products: Prepared meals,
sausage-cooked, sausage-fresh,
sausage-traditional

Headquarters: Northbrook, IL
(847) 412-6200

www.atlprem.com

Chief officer: Thomas Dalton

Bridgford Foods Corp.

124 Annual sales
(\$M): 117.7 Employees: 520

Plants: 3 Species: Beef,
chicken, pork, turkey

Products: Bacon, ham, sausage-
cooked, sausage-traditional

Headquarters: Anaheim, CA
(714) 526-5533

www.bridgford.com

Chief officer: William L. Bridgford

Central Beef Industries, L.L.C.

125 Annual sales (\$M): 115
Employees: 170

Plants: 1 Species: Beef

Products: NR

Headquarters: Center Hill, FL
(352) 793-3671

Chief officer: Marshall Chernin

Kunzler & Co., Inc.

125 Annual sales (\$M): 115
Employees: 500

Plants: 3 Species: Beef,
chicken, pork

Products: Bacon, cured/cooked
beef, cured/cooked pork, cured/
cooked poultry, ham, luncheon
meats/loaves, sausage-cooked

Headquarters: Lancaster, PA
(888) 586-9537

www.kunzler.com

Chief officer: Christian C. Kunzler III



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Duty calls

Alewel's is a Midwest gem that's rich in tradition

BY STEVE KRUT
meatpoultry@sosland.com

Every small meat processor seems to hit on something they do well. But those that seemingly do everything well are indeed, rare. Alewel's Country Meats is one of those rich finds and a true, rural diamond in the rough.

“The success of our business is not that we never make mistakes, but that we don't make the same ones twice.”

Maybe it's something in the genes that makes this fourth-generation business stay on the cutting edge of innovation and growth, but CEO Randy Alewel deflects the credit to everyone and everything else.

“Our strength is having a variety of quality products and employees who are trained and empowered to make decisions,” he explains. “Customer service is huge. Someone coming into our shop gets personal care.

“I can honestly say that the success of our business is not that we never make mistakes, but that we don't make the same ones twice,” he adds. “We have learned so much from others in our industry. We try to apply what we've learned and take care of our customers. And we've found that they take care of you.”



Alewel

The family started in the food business in 1932 when brothers Hugo and Dick Alewel established a grocery store in an old hotel in Concordia, Mo., which included a small meat shop specializing in the manufacture of sausage and processed cured meat. They later built a slaughter plant just outside town and phased out of the grocery business.

Hugo's son, Roger, returned home from the Air Force in 1964 and worked with the family before buying a meat processing operation and retail store in Warrensburg, Mo. in 1975. When a fire destroyed the Concordia plant



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POULTRY PATTY
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SOAR**

Are your poultry patty sales just as flat as the patties themselves? Then you need our Vemag FM250 Patty Forming Machine. The high-speed FM250 produces the lightest, fluffiest, juiciest, and most tender poultry patty you'll ever sink your teeth into. Unlike conventional patty forming machines that use high-pressure to compress meat into flat, rubbery "pucks", the FM250 uses a gentle, low-pressure system to form patties that look homemade and have a tender bite that no other machine can produce. Meat fibers are not crushed or destroyed on the FM250 – instead they retain their natural alignment so that the finished patty has the superior bite, texture and eating quality of a hand-made product.

Connected to a Vemag HP-E filler with an in-line grinder, the FM250 provides high output and exact weight portions. An easy-to-change forming nozzle allows quick product changeovers. Available with an interleaver and/or stacker, as well as a high-speed shuttle to load freezer and oven belts. A Vemag

ProcessCheck check weigher can also be added inline to automatically monitor individual patty weights and adjust the filler – ensuring uniform weights and reduced giveaway.



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Passion for Food Cutting





in 1979, the family rebuilt and added on to the facility. Just three years later, Roger sold the business to Krachmer Foods of St. Louis and continued working as a manager, but kept the Warrensburg facility, waiting for son Randy to finish studies in animal science at the Univ. of Missouri, Columbia.

Randy put his bachelor's degree to work immediately upon graduation in 1983 and moved things into high gear in Warrensburg. He expanded it three times, the most recent addition being a rustic looking retail store with a warm, contemporary décor.

Randy and wife Teresa, who is the director of career services at the Univ. of Central Missouri in Warrensburg, have three children who work part time while in school and during the summers.

With only 12 employees, the Alewels operate with aplomb in the shadow of a major shopping center and despite a Wal-Mart store that is almost visible from their facility. From the front porch to the retail shop where nestling pig statues seem right at home, customers enter a fantasy land of meat products that have earned the family more than 200 state and national awards for their quality.

Every aspect of the retail store is customer-friendly and the variety of gourmet products is exceeded only by the quality.

The 575-sq.-ft. retail store accounts for 40 percent of the Alewel sales volume, but the rest of the 6,000-sq.-ft. facility houses a vibrant private-label division (20 percent); a popular custom processing trade (20 percent) and a growing catering business (10 percent).

"We've been doing more private labeling and our high quality standards help us a great deal," Randy adds. "We just keep focusing on refining what we do to do it better."

In Missouri, custom deer processing is a huge boost to smaller processors, and the Alewel's offerings in that department are strong in the value-added area. Prize-winning recipes for deer summer sausage, snack sticks, jerky, franks, brats and chili-links bring in about 2,000 individual sportsmen a year, and the varieties in those categories include a bevy of flavors.

Catering is a strong suit at Alewel's Country Meats and the high-end offerings can be picked up or delivered. From whole, roasted pigs to baron of beef, smoked turkey, barbecue choices or even sandwiches for office or corporate meetings, the family owners do it with pizzazz. Customers need only answer "when and how many" and everything from serviceware to plates is planned for them.

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Above: Alewel's meat products have earned the family over 200 state and national awards for their quality. Lower: Alewel's website features recipes and tips for cooking, gift packages and custom processing information. (Photos courtesy of Alewel's Country Meats)

A visit to the firm's website (www.alewels.com) provides a lesson in marketing gift packages. Bundles give a choice of several sausages and a bacon sampler lets one get cured, Cajun, peppered and dry cured bacons. Others offer everything from smoked turkey, smoked chops, ham, sausage and cheeses.

Alewel's website also features recipes and tips for cooking steaks, standing rib roasts, Alaskan halibut and even red-eye gravy to grace their famous dry-cured country hams. For the custom trade, they offer to process product using customers' recipes or theirs.

Warrensburg is still a rural community and about 3,000 vehicles a day pass in front of the store. When Walmart opted to offer only pre-packaged meats, Randy stuck with traditional service and enjoyed his biggest Christmas volume ever. In 2010, Alewel's sales grew by 33 percent.

Maintaining a business for 79 years requires a nimble approach and flexible business model. All the while, a commitment to serving the community and the industry in which it operates is essential. Roger, who flew B-52 bombers in the Air Force, joined the Missouri Army National Guard when he returned to the meat business. He also served as the manager of the Missouri State Fair and his wife, Ronnie, worked as the secretary of the Missouri Association of Meat Processors (MAMP).

Hugo, Randy and Roger were inducted into MAMP's Hall of fame in 1989, 2001 and 2002, respectively. Both Roger and Randy were presidents of the American Association of Meat Processors (AAMP) and in 2004 they became the first father and son to be inducted into AAMP's Cured Meat Hall of Fame. Roger and



Ronnie were honored with AAMP's Annual Achievement Award in 1997.

Randy is presently commander of the 35th Engineer Brigade of the Missouri National Guard and has earned the rank of colonel.

His involvement in the Missouri Pork Producers and Missouri Cattlemen Associations, the Warrensburg Rotary Club, Western Missouri Medical Center (trustee) and Warrensburg Chamber of Commerce speaks volumes, but considering he has also managed Alewel's Cattle Company and Brisket's BBQ Restaurant, a drive-through promoting Alewel's smoked products and catering services, no one

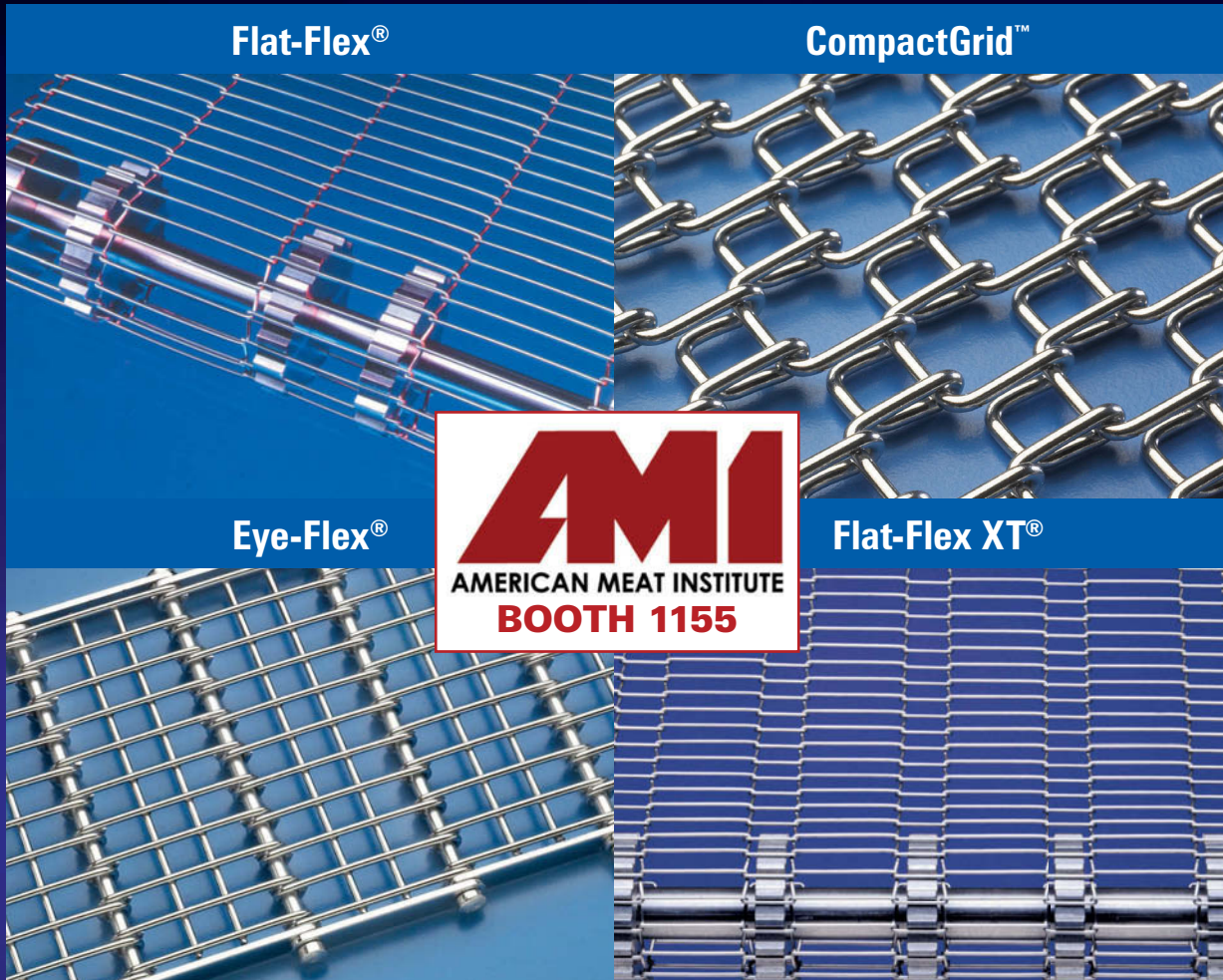
can question how much he believes in giving back to those who supported him and his family business.

But when asked about what makes him proudest, Randy serves up another piece of his brand of humble pie: "The employees we have are what make and sustain our business. We have three who have been here over 20 years, one over 30 years and the average is nine years with us." ■

Steve Krut, an industry veteran, is a contributing editor writing exclusively for Meat&Poultry, specializing in small business issues. He resides in Marietta, Pa.

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Koch's Turkey Farm launched its first entrée in the turkey burger marketplace with Cranberry Turkey Burgers in March 2010. (Photo courtesy of Koch's Turkey Farm)

Delectable pairings

Formulating with fruits and vegetables deliver flavor and quality attributes

BY BRYAN SALVAGE
bsalvage@sosland.com

Incorporating fruit or vegetables into red meat and poultry products is not a new idea. Pickle and pimento loaf and olive loaf lunchmeats have been around for decades. But new variations on this old idea, such as Koch's Turkey Farm Cranberry Turkey Burgers, Aidells Spicy Mango with Jalapeño Smoked Chicken and Turkey

use of fruits and vegetables as ingredients in beef products is becoming more common for two reasons.

"Consumers really like the 'artisan' look of vegetables that are used internally in a tied or rolled roast, [usually small dehydrated versions] and externally for the visual effect, and of course it helps with some bold flavors to give smaller portions a larger impact and mitigates some calories also," Moore says. "I'm mainly seeing the veggie rubs or visual inclusions."

Various new and upscale types of meatloaf and meatballs are also starting to show-up with interesting combinations, Moore continues. "Stuffed product, which is really 'retro' similar to the old pocket steak/chop and/or pinwheel where some veggies are sprinkled on a flattened steak then tightly rolled and tied and then sliced for a very nice meat case presentation [are also being seen]," he says.

Fruit has been on the upturn for quite a while, Moore adds. "It does two things," he says. "In gourmet sausages and burgers, it can add flavor

and allow sugars to be minimized or taken out of a formula because the natural sweetness in most fruits will give the same effect to softening the saltiness. And many fruits give some nice juicy attributes that can help keep a lower-fat sausage or burger more like the mouth-feel of a higher-fat version, and the flavor of fruit seems to complement the savory of meat. More fruit also is being incorporated into glazes that keep the product moist during cooking and holding."

Fruit and vegetable ingredients in pork products at the retail meat case are primarily in marinated products, says Jarrod Sutton, assistant vice president of channel marketing for the National Pork Board. "While the marinated category has slowed its growth considerably the last few years, it still holds a prominent place in the meat case, specifically marinated pork tenderloins," he adds.

In a chart featuring sales data from FreshLook Marketing for marinated pork products, Sutton points out the dominant flavors are teriyaki and lemon.

“New, value-added variations of meat and poultry products with vegetables or fruit keep flooding the new product pipeline.”

Sausage and Cher-Make Pepper Jack Bratwurst with jalapeño peppers and pepper jack cheese, keep flooding the new-product pipeline.

Such ingredients can enhance product eye appeal by adding color while improving flavor and reducing fat content and in some cases, reduce raw material costs. Steve Moore, a consultant for the beef checkoff program, says the

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The marinated category holds a prominent place in the meat case, specifically marinated pork tenderloins. (Photo courtesy of the National Pork Board)

“As for foodservice...it is common for operators to include fruits and vegetables as accompaniments to meat entrée dishes,” Sutton says. “We are fortunate pork offers such an amazing flavor profile to complement countless cuisines, which obviously enables culinary creative types to express their inspiration with few limitations.”



Sutton

Some clients of The Turover Straus Group Inc. have used fruits and vegetables as accompaniments to meat and poultry, but not “in” meat, says Alan Turover, co-president of the company, which is one of the leading food innovation conceptualizing and prototyping firms in the US.



Turover

“We have developed fruit salsas, fig and other types of balsamic glazes, sauces containing fruits and vegetables, fruit flavored glazes that are added to or placed on top of meats and poultry and several fruit and vegetable products that are cooked with, as opposed to just being a side dish to, meat and poultry,” he says.



Farrell

“These fruit and vegetable products are added for several reasons – sometimes to add color to the meat, sometimes to add flavor, to reduce overall fat content, or sometimes to reduce raw material costs,” he adds.

“These fruit and vegetable products are added for several reasons – sometimes to add color to the meat, sometimes to add flavor, to reduce overall fat content, or sometimes to reduce raw material costs,” he adds.

Enhancing turkey

Many value-added turkey products include traces of fruit and vegetables for flavor, says Norma Farrell the National Turkey Federation’s culinary consultant. “Marinades and demi-glazes frequently incorporate



fruits and/or vegetables with tenderloin products,” she adds.

Some ground turkey products include soy to help retain moisture in meatballs and burgers. Other vegetables are also added to these ground products to provide added flavor. Some brands of turkey meatballs add vegetables (including dehydrated and powdered forms). Turkey sausage products include both soy and vegetable ingredients.

Both the enhancements to ground turkey products and the marinated turkey tenderloins are perfect examples of the industry responding to consumer demands for quick-and-easy dinners, Farrell says.

“With the additional flavors and ready-to-cook enhancements, dinner can be prepared much quicker,” she adds. “The same ease of preparation and extra flavor enhancements are equally important to the foodservice industry as all operations try to control both food and labor expenses” (See “Turkey innovation,” side bar on Page 74 for product examples).

Adding value

During the past year, many meat and poultry products entered both foodservice and retail markets featuring vegetable or fruit ingredients. In January, Miami-based Burger King Corp. launched its new Jalapeño & Cheddar

BK Stuffed Steakhouse burger in the US. This premium sandwich includes bits of jalapeño peppers and Cheddar cheese inside the flame-broiled burger that’s topped off with poblano sauce, tomatoes and lettuce, all served on a bun. The burger is available for a limited time at participating Burger King restaurants nationwide. In late February, this product also entered the Canadian market.

“Our guests have expressed their love for our quality burgers, and we know that they enjoy the bold combination of spicy and cheesy in a big way,” said Jonathan Muhtar, BK’s vice president of global product marketing and innovation. “With our first ever stuffed sandwich, we’re giving our guests what they want – juicy, 100-percent beef infused with jalapeños and Cheddar for an experience you can see and taste in every bite.”

Pushing poultry’s profile

Tamaqua, Pa.-based Koch’s Turkey Farm launched its first entrée in the turkey burger marketplace with Cranberry Turkey Burgers in March 2010. Cranberries complement the

In January, Burger King Corp. launched its new Jalapeño & Cheddar BK Stuffed Steakhouse burger in the US. (Photo courtesy of Burger King Corp.)





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Last year, al fresco All Natural added Chipotle Chorizo with Mango to its growing line of chicken sausage. (Photo courtesy of All Natural)

strengthening healthful alternative movement. Made with all-natural turkey, the product contains no artificial ingredients. The burgers contain a minimal amount of fat and go from the skillet to the plate in about five minutes, the company says.

“Our new burgers are truly unique; they combine the great taste of cranberries with our delicious turkey,” says Duane Koch, president of Koch’s. “With these new burgers, families can now continue to eat great-tasting burgers without the worry of having too much red meat in their diet.”

Chef Bruce Aidells of Aidells Sausage Co., San Leandro, Calif., prides himself on innovation when it comes to incorporating fruit and vegetables in his artisan chicken sausage. As stated on his website, Chicken Apple was his first chicken sausage introduced in the early 1980s and it remains a bestseller. He crafts sausage using exceptional ingredients, such as sun-dried tomatoes, artichoke hearts, mangoes and chunks of humanely raised poultry, the website states.

Aidells’ fully cooked retail products featuring fruit or vegetables include Mango Smoked Chicken Sausage, Fully Cooked Pineapple & Bacon Smoked Chicken Sausage, Spicy Mango with Jalapeño Smoked Chicken and Turkey Sausage, Spinach & Feta Smoked Chicken and Turkey Sausage just to mention a few.

Fresh restaurant and foodservice dinner sausage offerings include All Natural Mango Chicken Sausage and Organic Spinach & Feta Smoked Chicken Sausage while breakfast links include Apricot Ginger Breakfast Links (chicken and turkey). Cooked meatball offerings include Sun Dried Tomato/Parmesan Meatballs (chicken and turkey). Aidells proves there are no limits when it comes to creating innovative products.



The Spicy Chicken Sandwich rollout was Chick-fil-A's largest product introduction in 20 years. (Photo courtesy of Chick-fil-A)

Last year, al fresco All Natural added Chipotle Chorizo with Mango to its growing line of chicken sausage. This product line is manufactured by Kayem Foods Inc., New England's largest meat processor.

Made from skinless chicken meat blended with chipotle peppers and mango in a smoky adobo sauce, al fresco Chipotle Chorizo was created using an authentic Mexican recipe from the region of Tierra Caliente, renowned for its chorizo. The smoky hot adobo is perfectly complemented by the hint of refreshing mango, the company says.

"We know that not only is the Hispanic community the largest and fastest-growing ethnic segment of the US population, but also that al fresco consumers are seeking out international flavors and cuisine to spice up the meals they prepare at home," said Sarah Crowley, al fresco senior brand manager, when the product was launched this past May.

Fully cooked product can be prepared in minutes. al fresco All Natural Chicken Sausage comes in other flavors, such as Sweet Apple and Roasted Pepper & Asiago. They contain no artificial ingredients, have 70 percent less fat than traditional pork sausage and are gluten-free. al fresco products are sold at retail supermarkets nationwide.

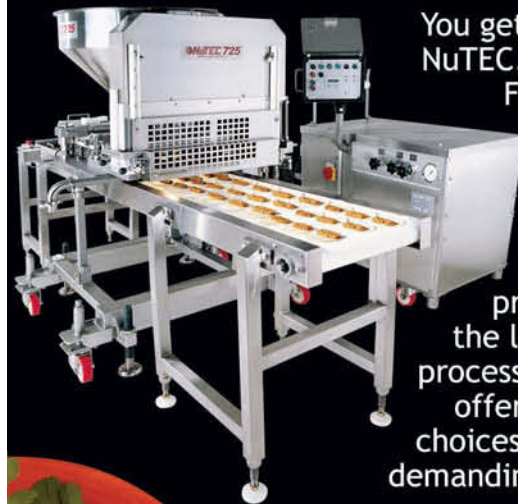
Eat more chicken

As of June 2010, the new Spicy Chicken Sandwich was available at Chick-fil-A restaurants nationwide. It is the first new sandwich to hit its menu boards since its Chargrilled Chicken Sandwich was introduced in 1989.

The new offering is breaded, seasoned with peppers, pressure-cooked in 100 percent refined peanut oil and served on a bun with pickles.

Considering the capital investment and marketing expenses required to introduce a totally new sandwich, the Spicy Chicken Sandwich rollout was Chick-fil-A's largest product introduction in 20 years. The rollout required a number of kitchen equipment additions, including installing new pressure cookers and ventilation systems at most restaurants to prevent the spicy recipe from crossing over to other menu items.

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Taco Bell's Cantina Tacos are based upon authentic-style Mexican street tacos, which are designed using simple, fresh ingredients customers regard as high quality. (Photo courtesy of Taco Bell)

Turkey innovation

The following are examples of turkey products enhanced by fruits or vegetables provided by the National Turkey Federation.

- ◆ Value-added Butterball turkey products containing fruits or vegetables include:
 - Meatballs, Italian Seasoned Frozen – Contains textured vegetable protein (soy protein concentrate, caramel color).
 - Lemon-Pepper Tenderloin, Herb Roasted Tenderloin and Teriyaki Tenderloin – Marinade contains lemon juice concentrate, lemon juice solids and dehydrated lemon peel.
 - Teriyaki Tenderloin – Marinade contains lemon juice concentrate, pineapple juice solids and green onion.
 - Herb Breast of Turkey Roast – Ingredients include tomato powder, dehydrated red bell pepper, parsley and spices.
 - Foodservice: Savory Turkey Burgers – Contains dehydrated onion, dehydrated garlic and soy.
 - Foodservice: Turkey Pot Roast – Contains onions, dehydrated carrots. Demi Glace contains tomato powder and onion powder.
 - Foodservice: Turkey Pot Roast with Vegetables – Includes onions and dehydrated carrots. Demi-glace contains tomato powder and onion powder. Added vegetables include carrots, celery and pearl onions.
- ◆ Shady Brooks/Honeysuckle White products include:
 - Meatballs, Italian Seasoned Frozen – Contains textured vegetable protein product (soy protein concentrate, caramel color), dehydrated red and green pepper and dehydrated onion.
 - Basil Pesto Turkey Breast Tenderloin – Includes basil and dehydrated garlic.
- ◆ Foster Farms meatballs contain added garlic, onions and peppers while Hormel's Jennie-O Turkey Store products include Lean Turkey Burgers with diced tomatoes and Bell peppers and Turkey Burger Patties with onion and garlic seasonings.
- ◆ House of Raeford Turkey Rolls consists of TVP (textured vegetable protein); granular soy nuggets used as a filler. House of Raeford Turkey Smoked Sausage with Pepper Jack Cheese Links contains green and red jalapeño peppers and soy products/protein. ■

Last September, Rosemead, Calif.-based Panda Express launched Kobari Beef nationwide, which was inspired by the sweet, smoky and spicy flavors found in Korean BBQ. The new dish includes slices of tender marinated beef tossed with wok-seared mushrooms, leeks, crunchy onions, crispy red bell peppers and a new secret Kobari sauce.

In August 2010, Irvine, Calif.-based Taco Bell launched a new line of Mexican-restaurant-style tacos, Cantina Tacos, and all-new Carnitas shredded pork. The tacos include grilled, warm, corn tortillas; Premium fire-grilled chicken; Premium cut carne asada steak or Carnitas shredded pork; and topped off with a chopped onion and cilantro blend and a sliced lime wedge.

“Our Cantina Tacos are based upon authentic-style Mexican street tacos, which are designed using simple, fresh ingredients, that customers regard as high quality,” said David Ovens, chief marketing officer, Taco Bell Corp., Irvine, Calif.

Fruity wings

Early last year, Exeter, NH-based Margaritaville Foods launched its newest addition to its portfolio of island-inspired food and beverage products, Margaritaville chicken wings. The new line features four flavors of fully cooked, frozen and easy-to-prepare chicken wings – Island Buffalo, Mango Chutney, Orange Peel and Caribbean BBQ. Each variety is sold in a 28-oz. bag and includes a sauce packet with flavors and spices inspired by Caribbean cuisine.

Margaritaville chicken wings are sold frozen at retailers including: Safeway, Genuardi's, Von's, Dominick's, Randall's, and others. Margaritaville Foods is a marketer of restaurant-quality food products for retail consumers.



Early last year, Margaritaville Foods launched its new line of fully cooked, frozen and easy-to-prepare chicken wings. (Photo courtesy of Margaritaville Foods)

The brand draws its inspiration from entertainment icon, Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville Restaurant chain and feature unique island-inspired recipes.

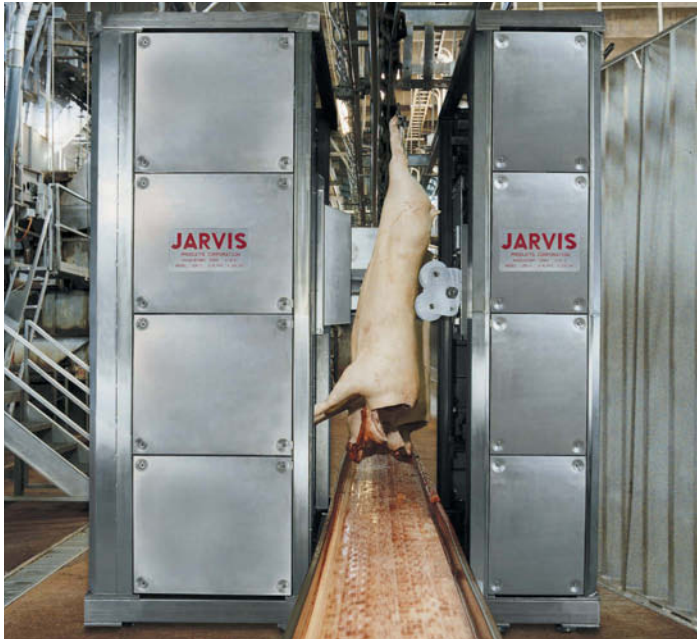
Utilizing fruit or vegetable ingredients in new products will likely continue growing.

“Such enhancements will only continue as the market place continues to expand to include both ease of preparation products and a wide variety of flavors and ethnic cuisines,” NTF's Farrell says. ■

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Everything but the squeal

By-product demand enhances processors' bottom lines

BY BERNARD SHIRE
meatpoultry@sosland.com

There's an old saying in the meat industry that butchers use every part of a hog except for the squeal. Well, that

could apply to other livestock and poultry as well.

According to Sherrie Rosenblatt, marketing and communications director for the National Turkey Federation, virtually every part of every turkey is utilized. Everything except for the

gobble, that is. "It's estimated that turkeys have 3,500 feathers at maturity. The bulk of turkey feathers are

composted or otherwise disposed of. However, some feathers may be used for special purposes," she says.

Rosenblatt notes dyed feathers are used to make American Indian costumes and quills for pens. "The costume 'Big Bird' wears on 'Sesame Street' is rumored to be made of turkey feathers," she says with a laugh. Turkey feather down has been used to make pillows. And for commercial use, turkey skins are tanned and used to make items like cowboy boots, belts and other accessories.

Parts of animals, including livestock and poultry, are used to make

a myriad of products, including both food and non-food products. The use of by-products from livestock and poultry, including fats, oils, grease, hides, hooves, feathers, blood and other parts, is quite extensive and contributes a major amount of income to the meat and poultry industry.

Big business

Each year about 9 billion animals are slaughtered in the US, including about 150 million cattle, sheep, hogs and goats, and 8.9 billion chickens, turkeys and ducks. There are no exact figures on the sales of animal by-products each year. According to the US Dept. of Agriculture's drop value report for the beginning of February, the hide and offal value from a typical slaughter steer was estimated at \$12.83 per hundredweight, with a typical slaughter steer weighing 1,325 lbs. The hide and offal value from typical fed cattle (steers and heifers) at the beginning of February was estimated at \$13.09 per hundredweight live, with a typical fed slaughter cattle weighing 1,275 lbs.

"By-products are a very big part of the poultry and meat industry," says Richard Lobb, spokesman for the National Chicken Council. "If you look at



Rosenblatt

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it simply, a lot of parts from birds and livestock get rendered for use in fertilizer. Some offal goes into pet food. And then there's feather meal, which isn't very well known outside the industry, which goes into poultry feed and other uses."

"The by-products industry is very big," agrees David Meeker, senior vice president for scientific services at the National Renderers Association in Alexandria, Va. "It's impossible to determine how big or the monetary value of the by-product industry. We can say



Lobb

half of every animal slaughtered – livestock and poultry – goes to rendering. So that gives you some idea," he says.

According to the NRA, raw materials numbers are as follows in the US: a total of 54 billion lbs. a year of offal, blood and feathers come from meat and poultry to be made into by-products. Of that, 20 percent is made into bone meal or poultry meal and 20 percent goes into different classes of fats and tallow. He says yellow grease totals 11 billion lbs. a year, and protein meal totals 10 to 11 billion lbs. a year,



Meeker

selling for \$300 to \$800 a ton. Meeker estimates the rendering industry is a \$5 billion to \$7 billion industry annually in the US.

By-products have uses in the food industry and for non-food purposes as well. And while the use of animal by-products has come under criticism, especially by members of consumer and animal-welfare groups, poultry and meat processors say most consumers would be surprised how many goods and items they buy or make use of for consumption come from – or are made from – animal by-products. These include such things as leather goods like shoes, automobile seats, shoelaces, bracelets, motorcycle bags, pet food, synthetic oil and fuel, cosmetics, shampoos, creams, mouthwashes, deodorants, rubber, inks for writing, adhesives, medicines, toothbrushes and shaving brushes, fertilizer, insulin, wool, candles, adhesives and surgical sutures. And those are just a few of the uses for by-products.



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By-product evolution

Since groups opposed to the use of by-products have tried to give them a bad name, industry companies that make items from animal by-products like to use another name for them. “We’d much rather call them co-products,” says Eddie Troutman, vice president, beef, international and by-product sales for Cargill’s meat business in Wichita, Kan. “Because they’re products from the animal we are using for different purposes besides food for humans – that still makes them animal products.”

One major product coming from livestock by-products is leather, according to Cargill. John Hochstein, assistant vice president for hides and skins at Cargill, is the company’s hide expert. He says the main use for cattle hides is leather, and the most common use from the substance is shoe leath-



Ninety-five to 97 percent of US hides get exported mainly to three places: China, South Korea and Italy.

er. Sixty percent of the leather market goes for shoes. The rest of it goes into handbags and many other products. “The tannery will split the hide and then it goes to the leather industry – and they decide what to do with it,” Hochstein says.

It can be items as diverse as dog chews, raw dog bones, the gelatin in-

dustry, hydrolyzed protein for hair treatments and shampoo. “Then there are sporting goods, like baseballs, baseball gloves, shoelaces and leather bracelets,” according to Mark McMahon, assistant vice president, rendered solutions for Cargill. Hochstein says the

by-product market is controlled greatly by the yearly harvest of animals and whether the slaughter of meat and poultry is up or down. “The hide market crashed when the economic downturn happened,” he notes, saying the crash ended since the economy began

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recovering. “Every day, the economy is coming back on an upswing,” he says. “So you’re seeing more nice leather seats of significant value, since there’s more demand for them now.”

Most hides from cattle in this country go overseas – they’re exported. “Ninety-five to 97 percent of US hides get exported mainly to three places: China, South Korea and Italy,” he adds.

Then what happens? “The finished leather products are made in those places, and then the products are imported back into the US for sale,” he continues.

Cargill’s Troutman tells how cattle hooves are used to make a number of products. “The toenail itself can be ground up and in some cases used for dog treats and ‘pig ears’ – most go to rendering.” What about tails? “If you’re talking about the switch end of

the tail, the oxtail is saved for soups. The end can go into pet chews,” he says. Most hooves go to rendering and are ground up for tallow, meat and bone meal, he adds.

Tongues are edible and are sold in the US and exported to Mexico, Russia and Japan, if it meets the government’s requirements there. Variety meats are 50-50 between the US and overseas. Cargill’s McMahan noted all products left over not considered edible go to meat and bone meal and a liquid, which is tallow. Other products can include cosmetics, plastics, rubber and tires. Meat and bone meal is a product of the rendering industry, McMahan says. It is primarily used as an animal feed, he adds. Feeding of this product to cattle was thought to contribute to the spread of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), so in most places it is no longer al-

lowed to be fed to ruminant animals. By-products are still used to feed single-chamber stomach animals, and is commonly used as a low-cost meat in dog and cat food. It also goes into poultry feed; with a small amount also being used in swine feed. A lot is exported to countries like Indonesia.

Edible tallow is another by-product that goes to the refining business and is also used as cooking oil, McMahan says. Some high-end pet foods make use of edible tallow. Troutman adds blood is also used as a by-product. “Whole blood is taken and split, the white from the red cells. White cells are plasma. Some is used in pet food, but most of this finds its use in baby pig starter feed,” he says. “Eighty percent of ‘blood meal’, which is what the red blood cells are called, is used in dairy feeds,” Troutman says.

Rendering

Rendering is the major process of taking by-products from animals after slaughter not being used for human food and turning them into valuable products. Taking a large part of each animal and bird to rendering is what makes the by-product industry so successful. Meeker says virtually all inedible parts of turkeys, for example, including feathers, blood, offal and fat, are rendered and put to good use.

Meeker says two of the most important markets for animal by-products are animal feed and the oleo chemical industry for animal fats. Chicken and turkey processors, as well as renderers, are involved in manufacture of these products. In fact, he says, many renderers burn fats directly in their own boilers, depending on the markets and prices of other fuels.

“Other than fuels, there have been very few alternative uses that approach the value of feed ingredients,” Meeker says. “I have heard of some encouraging preliminary research on the use of feather meal to make biodegradable nursery pots, a technology that may also work for meat and bone meal,



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as well as poultry by-product meal.”

Then there’s feather meal. Larry Risty, with Central Bi-Products, in Redwood Falls, Minn., says this meal is a major by-product from turkey and chicken. The meal is made from

poultry feathers by partially hydrolyzing under heat and pressure and then grinding them. It’s used in formulated animal feed and in organic fertilizer. He says it is used in animal rations and is highly digestible for an-

imals. “Fish rations can also contain a lot of feather meal, and of course, it’s great for fertilizer,” Risty says. “There’s also experimentation going on in making plastics from feather meal. Of course, the feathers come from chicken and turkey processing plants. The feathers are hydrolyzed

Two of the most important markets for animal by-products are animal feed and the oleo chemical industry for animal fats.

under pressure and then ground up. The fibers are broken down, and the carbon chains resulting are more digestible. Some is used in poultry rations, and much of it also goes to ruminant rations.”

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Another division of his company is called Northland Choice Pet Food Ingredients and it is a manufacturer of canned pet foods, most of which are meats that would be called by-products, although they really aren't. It's just they're not used for human foods.



Risty

The ingredients are from chicken and turkey and sometimes are blended together to make custom meat mixes. "They can include eviscerated ground chicken, hearts, livers, mechanically deboned chicken, ground turkey and custom mixes," he says. "The products are chilled or iced from USDA-inspected slaughter plants to prevent any bacterial action and are drained prior to freezing."

Renewable energy

Then there's the whole field of renewable energy, with products coming from animal sources and by-products. Probably the best known is Tyson Renewable Energy, a part of Tyson Foods. This growing and promising field began with an alliance with ConocoPhillips to create diesel fuels. Bob Ames, vice president for renewable fuels at Tyson, says the Conoco project was put on hold because it was no longer economically feasible. "The \$1 per gallon tax credit was eliminated; we were only getting 50 cents a gallon, where the biofuel was continuing to get \$1 a gallon tax credit. So that project is not currently active," he adds.

Instead, Ames says, Tyson entered into a joint venture with Syntroleum, a Tulsa, Okla.-based synthetic fuel technology company, to make synthetic fuels produced from renewable feedstocks. The joint venture is called Dynamic Fuels, based in Geismar, La., and makes what's called "renewable diesel fuel." The advantage? "Producing these fuels leverages our procurement capabilities and helps our relationships with

others in the industry. It also helps our commodity trading and helps us access feedstocks from other sources with less risk," Ames says. "Syntroleum contributes to the project gas-to-liquid technology expertise while producing synthetic fuel and developing synthetic fuel standards for the US Air Force and the Department of Defense. The renewable diesel fuel from Dynamic Fuels is chemically identical to conventional diesel fuel."

Four months ago on Nov. 8, the Ty-



"The renewable diesel fuel from Dynamic Fuels is chemically identical to conventional diesel fuel."

son-Syntroleum joint venture company opened its first US commercial scale advanced biofuels plant at its Geismar headquarters. The plant is successfully converting non-food grade animal fats produced or supplied by Tyson Foods, such as beef tallow, pork lard, chicken fat and greases into high-quality renewable fuels. "The production actually began a month earlier, in October, and right now is producing 2,500 barrels a day of the fuel. And it's growing," Ames says. "We were looking to do something with by-products from

animal production from our company. This has been spurred by technological development that's taken place in recent years." Where do the greases come from? "We acquire greases like McDonald's used fryer grease. Nothing goes to waste anymore," Ames says, laughing. "How much do feedstocks enter into the project? About 2 billion lbs. a year."

He explains the four-step process: "First, we take the animal fats and greases, and clean them up. Then we run them through a hydro process, which converts those fats to diesel fuel. Then it's cooled so the animal fat doesn't congeal. The final step is distillation, which cuts the product into three fuels: diesel, naphtha and propane [LP gas]. To date, costs for the plant have totaled \$170 million.

"We expect to produce 75 million gallons of renewable fuel a year," he says. "Financially – this is a startup at this point," Ames points out. He's also hopeful the tax credit will be restored for diesel fuel because Tyson would like to renew its alliance with ConocoPhillips to produce that type of fuel, as well.

"If that happens, we'll look at that project again," he says.

"For decades, we've tried to add value to our products," Ames points out. "The idea to get into this type of project using our by-products came out of Tyson's corporate strategy and business group. This kind of innovation is in the same spirit as when we began cut up chicken, in addition to our normal whole chicken operations. This is also part of sustainability. While the lion's share is diesel fuel, we also are making co-products, like naphtha and LPG. We're very pleased with the progress we're making on this project," Ames says. ■

Bernard Shire is a contributing editor based in Lancaster, Pa. With a background in editing and writing for daily news publications, he also works as a food safety consultant and writer for Shire & Associates LLC.

We would like to hear from you – to comment on his story or to request reprints, contact us by e-mail at meatpoultry@sosland.com.

Cleaning passion

While sanitation isn't glamorous, engaged employees are stars

BY JOE STOUT

meatpoultry@sosland.com

In everyday life, we know people who are really good at something they do. For example, a person may excel at playing cards, golfing or making chili in a cookoff. Often we hear questions such as, "How did you learn to make such a good dish," or "How did you become so good at golf?" You could bet this was not the first time the person participated in such activities. No doubt they had repeated the process time and time again and learned more about the actions involved or the technique needed. Every time they repeated the event, they enhanced and improved their abilities and the ultimate result. The fact of the matter is they had passion for what they were doing and conscientiously applied learnings from the last time, each time they repeated it. This is a passion for excellence and perfection – in essence, it's the old adage, "Practice makes perfect."

For those involved in any aspect of the food industry, we need to apply this approach to ensure food products are safely produced and delivered to consumers.

How can you apply a practice-makes-perfect approach to what you or your plant employees do regarding sanitation, quality or food safety every day? Let's talk about some possibilities on how to do it better.

Path forward

It all starts with a cleanable facility and with equipment designed to be easily cleaned. As an advocate of the relationship of sanitary design to food safety, I encourage a comprehensive understanding of weaknesses in current sanitary design and the challenges

poor design brings to cleaning. This understanding of design challenges can be gained by using an equipment or facility-design checklist. The Grocery Manufacturers Association or the American Meat Institute offers such checklists that can be used to evaluate current designs and modify them as needed.

Develop science-based programs using existing knowledge in the industry. This is the prime step because we must have a basis for what needs to be done and a consistent approach to be followed. These programs need to be living documents that can be adjusted over time as you learn more about the successes and weaknesses in your facility.

Training is a critical component of teaching sanitation and quality personnel as well as plant management about the correct ways to clean and how to execute quality programs. All employees need to understand the basics of food safety, good manufacturing practices (GMPs), HACCP, microbiology and sanitation procedures to enable them to perform daily tasks routinely and in a consistent and disciplined way.

Establish key performance indicators (KPIs) to confirm that the programs are effective and are completed at the prescribed frequency. Examples of KPIs could be actual equipment or facility cleaning vs. what is scheduled; clean equipment measurements such as bacterial or pathogen environment swabs (*Listeria* or *Salmonella*); plant inspection results; GMP compliance; or employee training.

Finally, practice does make perfect. Continuous improvement of prepara-

tion and procedure ensures the best food safety process. This applies to our food manufacturing facilities and warehousing locations. If we see an improvement opportunity, we need to practice and practice to get it perfect.

A higher level

Elevating the process even more requires answers to questions that challenge your process. To do so:

- Solicit feedback on how to do it better
- Talk to your peers about other methods to use
- Solicit support from outside your company about correct procedures and ideas
- Talk to other employees in your own company about continuous improvement

One of the best learning events I've used while visiting food plants during sanitation procedures is to talk to the individuals doing the cleaning. These employees have great ideas. Ask

Continuous improvement of preparation and procedure ensures the best food safety process.

if there is a better, safer and faster way to do a task. More often than not, the answer is yes – and all you need to do is to listen. This is also a way to motivate the employees doing the work. Another great tool is to form sanitation teams. Such efforts can build a passion for excellence, thus engaging the heart and mind of the organization.

If you are searching for excellence and perfection in sanitation, set a path of continuous improvement, and practice until you find perfection. Then continue to improve. ■

Joe Stout was director of global product protection, sanitation and hygienic design at Kraft Foods, where he worked for 28 years until his retirement in 2010. Stout recently formed a consulting business, Commercial Food Sanitation LLC, to provide sanitation and hygienic design consulting for the food industry. He can be reached at joestout@cf-san.com.

We would like to hear from you – to comment on this story or to request reprints, contact us by e-mail at meatpoultry@sosland.com.

Reassigning resources

GAO report shows need for single food-safety agency

BY ERIC SCHROEDER
meatpoultry@sosland.com

A new report issued by the US Government Accountability Office has determined that the fragmented federal oversight of food safety has caused “in-

The GAO found 15 federal agencies collectively administer at least 30 food-related laws.

consistent oversight, ineffective coordination and inefficient use of resources.”

The report, “Opportunities to reduce potential duplication in govern-

ment programs, save tax dollars, and enhance revenue,” is the GAO’s first annual report to Congress in response to a new statutory requirement that the GAO identify federal programs, agencies, offices, and initiatives, either within departments or government wide, which have duplicative goals or activities. Congress asked the GAO to conduct the work and to report annually on its findings to better inform government policymakers as they address the rapidly building fiscal pressures facing the national government.

In the section devoted to food safety, the GAO found 15 federal agencies collectively administer at least 30 food-related laws. In illustrating the fragmented nature of federal food-safety oversight, the GAO report pointed to the 2010 nationwide recall of more than 500 million eggs due to *Salmonella* contamination. In that instance, the Food and Drug Administration was responsible for ensuring that shell eggs were safe and properly labeled, the Food Safety and Inspection Service was responsible for the safety of eggs processed into food products and the Agricultural Marketing Service of the US Dept. of Agriculture was responsible for setting quality and grade standards for the eggs.

To help alleviate some of the problems associated with duplication, overlap and fragmentation, the GAO identified alternative organizational structures that may be analyzed in more detail, including a single food-safety agency, either housed within an existing agency or established as an independent entity that assumes responsibility for all aspects of food safety at the federal level. Other suggestions include the establishment of a single food safety inspection agency that assumes responsibility for food safety inspection activities, but not other activities, under an existing department, such as the USDA or the FDA, or the establishment of a data collection and risk analysis center for food safety that consolidates data collected from a variety of sources and analyzes it at the national level to support risk-based decision making.

“Although reducing fragmentation in federal food-safety oversight is not expected to result in significant cost savings, new costs may be avoided

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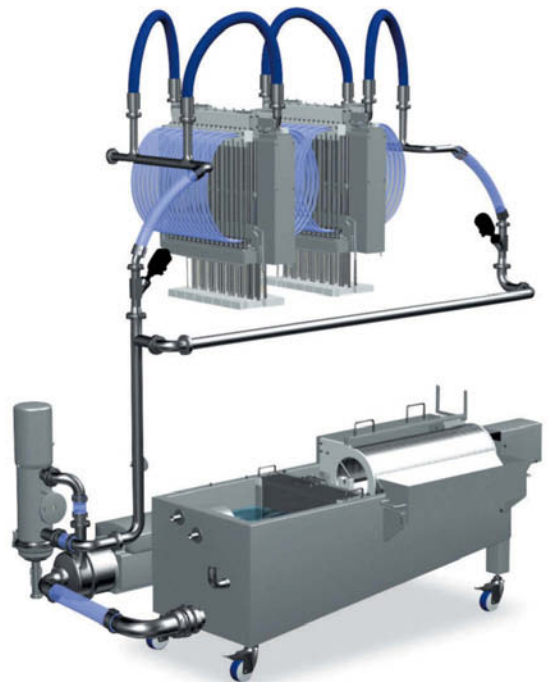
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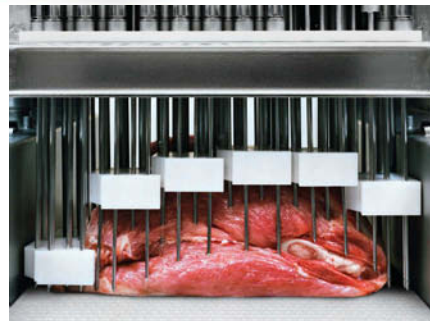
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“A single agency dedicated solely to food safety would eliminate the jurisdictional conflicts, as well as significantly reduce duplication and cost.”

by preventing further fragmentation, as illustrated by the approximately \$30 million for fiscal years 2011 and 2012 that USDA officials had said they would have to spend developing and implementing the agency’s new congressionally mandated catfish inspection program,” the GAO said.

The GAO stressed that reorganizing federal food-safety responsibilities “is a complex process,” noting

that reorganization may have “short-term disruptions and transition costs.”

“However, reducing fragmentation and overlap could result in a number of nonfinancial benefits,” the GAO said. Among those benefits are synergy and economies of scale that may provide more focused and efficient efforts to protect the nation’s food supply, and improved public confidence in the systems, the agency said.

Responding to the report’s findings, Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) said, “While I do not agree with all of the GAO’s findings, the report does accurately provide additional evidence for the need to consolidate the responsibilities of the 15 federal agencies that currently have jurisdiction over our nation’s food-safety system into a single independent agency. I have introduced legislation that would establish such an agency since 1999,

and believe that this is a critical step toward preventing foodborne illnesses and protecting public health.

“A single agency dedicated solely to food safety would eliminate the jurisdictional conflicts, as well as significantly reduce duplication and cost.”

Sen. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.) said the report shows how government may be able to save taxpayers billions of dollars every year without cutting services.

“In many cases, smart consolidations will improve service,” he said. “GAO has identified a mother lode of government waste and duplication that should keep Congress busy for the rest of the year.” ■

Eric Schroeder is the managing editor of Food Business News, a sister publication of Meat&Poultry.

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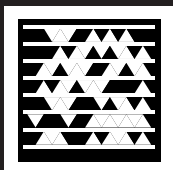
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BY BRYAN SALVAGE
bsalvage@sosland.com

There's a major food-safety force taking shape in Manhattan, Kan.; a unique biocontainment research and training facility named the Biosecurity Research Institute (BRI). Located at Pat Roberts Hall on the Kansas State Univ. campus, this facility serves as a safe and secure location for researchers studying high-consequence pathogens (See BRI: A work in progress, Page 96). *E. coli* O157:H7 and its shigatoxin-producing cousins are currently a major focus of public health programs, research programs and beef industry efforts, and this will be a primary

regulatory and research focus for the next several years, says Randall Phebus, Ph.D., Professor of Food Safety & Defense at KSU. He is also a scientific principal investigator (PI) at the BRI.

BRI researchers have been active in understanding the risks this group of pathogens poses to the beef industry. "We have been developing detection methodologies targeting this broader group of STEC [Shiga Toxin-Producing *Escherichia coli*], and my colleague Dr. T.G. Nagaraja's research group has successfully developed a multi-plex polymerase chain reaction [PCR] assay that de-

fects the seven primary STEC simultaneously from environmental and bovine fecal samples."

Research is further validating this assay for beef products and surveillance studies have been conducted to gauge the prevalence of these different STEC in production environments.

"I am working with Dr. Harshvardhan Thippareddi at the Univ. of Nebraska to model the growth and

Above (from left): Dr. Richard Oberst (Co-PI), Casey Paddock and Rachael Sullivan (research assistants) work in the BSL-3 containment laboratory. (Photo courtesy of the BRI)



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survival of non-O157:H7 STEC in beef products to generate quantitative predictive tools for regulatory and industry use,” Phebus says. “Dr. Thippareddi and I have worked for the past three years with Dr. John Luchansky at USDA’s Eastern Regional Research

Center in Pennsylvania to quantify the risks associated with production and cooking of non-intact beef products relative to STEC [work conducted in his USDA ARS laboratory].”

BRI researchers are gearing up to conduct a very large inoculated study

looking at the distribution tendencies of *E. coli* O157:H7, assuming that some level of non-uniform contamination of boneless beef trimmings occur during grinding operations, plus they will evaluate various sampling and detection strategies at successive points in the ground beef system, he adds. “We will be looking at various contamination scenarios of 2,000-lb. combo units that are ground and packaged simulating commercial processes.”

As a principal investigator at the facility, Phebus brings in and executes defined research projects.

“We are now conducting sponsored research with select agents, which are pathogens or biological toxins that have been declared by the US government to pose severe threats

“We are moving larger food/meat-related projects into the food processing suite to initiate within the next couple of months.”

to public health and safety, including plant and animal health,” Phebus says.

As a PI approved for possession and use of these agents, it is his responsibility to ensure that all rules are followed, a detailed agent inventory is maintained, BRI complies with university and federal biosecurity and training schedules, and that all activities involving the use of the select agent is done to minimize risks.

Phebus has been heavily involved in creating the vision of the BRI food processing suite, designing it for processing functionality as a research unit, equipping it with processing and laboratory equipment and validating it will function as required to allow the facility to conduct the best possible research in a safe manner. “Research projects within the BRI were initiated in 2008 in lab spaces that had been completed and certified, and now we are moving larger food/meat-related

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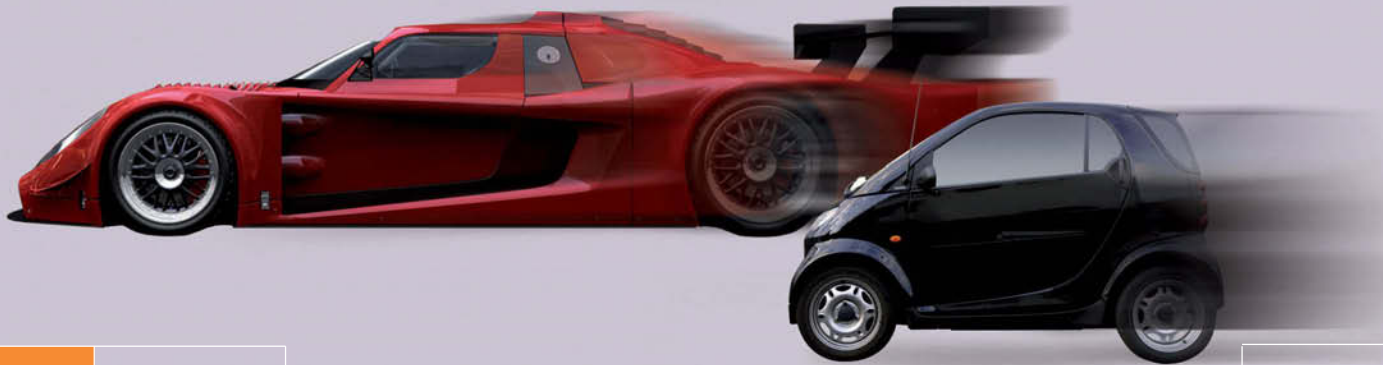
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projects into the food processing suite to initiate within the next couple of months,” he says.

To date, BRI’s research primarily has been focused on large animal health and disease issues and control of important crop diseases, such as porcine

reproductive and respiratory syndrome (PRRS) and wheat blast. Most recently the BRI became home to the US Department of Homeland Security funded Center of Excellence for Emerging and Zoonotic Animal Diseases (CEEZAD). The US Dept. of Agri-

culture’s Arthropod-Borne Animal Diseases Research Unit (ARADRU) also recently located to Manhattan, Kan., and is conducting its biocontainment research activities within the BRI.

Since 2005, Dr. Richard Oberst and Phebus have been leading research sponsored by the US Army (Natick Soldier Systems Center) to validate various in-field, bioagent detection systems to ensure the safety of the military’s food supply.

“The goals of our research are to prove the capabilities of detection systems of interest to the military [i.e. detection limits and accuracy against defined targets, and impact of potential interfering sample components] when analyzing a diverse set of food types for numerous bioagents that might be present, either by intentional or natural contamination scenarios,” Phebus says. “Our research is now expanding to evaluate and quantify risks associated with defined commercial simulated food processing activities; focusing on understanding bioagent distribution, determining effective sampling strategies, modeling agent growth and/or survival, and ultimately controlling risks in various food commodities including meat and poultry products.”

The beauty of the Natick-funded research projects they also have direct application and benefit to day-to-day food processing in the US and beyond, Phebus says.

“Often we are characterizing traditional foodborne pathogens utilizing standard sampling and testing methods, or employing common pathogen control strategies,” he adds. “With the large scale of research we can do, we can closely replicate commercial processing while under biocontainment thereby providing more realistic answers and predictive capabilities.”

With a research facility as large and complex as the BRI, building its external features was the easy part.

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air- and waste-handling systems that are integrated across the entire facility, are proven and then re-proven to work in all kinds of artificial failure scenarios, and finally are certified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and/or USDA to meet fed-

eral standards for biosafety level 3 and 3 Ag operations,” Phebus says. “We have been gaining these approvals for various research spaces within the facility for the past couple of years.”

In the BRI’s animal abattoir and food-processing suite, efforts were

made to procure and install processing equipment meeting BSL-3 operation, cleaning and disinfection standards, then re-aligning building air, waste and personnel operation systems to accommodate running the equipment.

“When you are running a full-scale Chad carcass wash cabinet within a functioning biocontainment facility, you have to modify it to minimize aerosol sprays, capture and decontaminate steam vapors to prevent fouling of HEPA filters, and maintain directional airflow between two large processing rooms,” Phebus says. “We have approximately \$30,000 invested merely in sanitary welding on the Chad cabinet to ensure our ability to effectively decontaminate it after pathogen-inoculated studies.”

Another unique piece of equipment custom-designed for BRI’s work on carcass antimicrobial intervention treatments is a 6’x6’x12’ sealed carcass inoculation cabinet that facilitates uniform application of microbial cul-

“The Biosecurity Research Institute is a national treasure in terms of a research and education facility.”

tures to the whole carcass using electrostatic spray technology followed by intervention applications to validate their efficacy, he adds.

Future endeavors

Phebus and colleagues will continue to model the growth and/or survival of various STEC strains in beef and other food matrices to generate data to support predictive modeling tools.

After a couple more months of grinding equipment set-up and installation and project planning [experimental design finalization, discussions with beef processors, and securing university required biosafety approvals], the BRI will conduct the large beef trim grinding project. Two





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View from inside of newly installed "Biobubble" BSL-3 containment enclosure. This is actually a portable biosafety room constructed within the food processing room of the BRI, which is itself BSL-3. This gives a very high level of protection for workers conducting large studies that generate infective aerosols. (Photos courtesy of BRI)

antimicrobial intervention technologies are scheduled for validation on raw beef carcasses and/or fabricated products this year. Phebus anticipates-validation studies for other technologies shortly after.

"We will be working diligently to publish our findings via peer-reviewed manuscripts, along with industry and consumer-based guidance through multiple channels," Phebus says.

BRI colleagues plan to develop traditional and distance-oriented educational materials to improve awareness and effective control of STEC in food. "We plan to train students, producers, process line workers, managers, and regulators in the most effective sampling and detection strategies, effective use of processing technologies and procedures, and how to properly use risk management tools to minimize STEC risks," he adds.

Other KSU programs will provide extensive support to these efforts.

"The Biosecurity Research Institute is a national treasure in terms of a research and education facility," Phebus points out.

"It is a facility that we see as supporting government, academic and industry needs across the nation for decades to come," he concludes. ■

We would like to hear from you – to comment on this story or to request reprints, contact us by e-mail at meatpoultry@sosland.com.

BRI: A work in progress

The 113,000-sq.-ft. Biosecurity Research Institute (BRI) at Kansas State Univ. is equipped to ensure the safety of employees and the surrounding community during the myriad of research conducted at the facility since its opening about five years ago.

University officials received the keys to the building in 2006 from the contractors, but there was much to do in finishing some building systems, hiring and staffing, developing operational programs, training people, etc., says Randall Phebus, Ph.D., Professor of Food Safety & Defense at KSU and a scientific principal investigator (PI) at the BRI.

His group initiated the first BRI studies in 2008 working with BSL-2 grade agents that required only a smaller confined research laboratory. Some of the first larger-scale research in the BRI was initiated with non-select agents (plant and animal pathogens) in 2009.

"In early 2010, we undertook the rigorous and lengthy process of building and program certification by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for work with select agents, which we were granted," he adds. "These projects are now under way. Additional research areas of the BRI are scheduled for certification over the next few months. So, it's been a sequential and progressive progress."

BRI features

Microbiology labs are officially designated as biosafety levels (BSL) 1-4 according to criteria established by the CDC. Most labs that work with more commonly known bacteria and viruses, such as *Salmonella*, *HIV* and *Listeria*, are rated BSL-2. BSL-3 is a lab classification identifying where work occurs with indigenous or exotic agents that may cause serious or potentially lethal diseases, especially through inhalation.

Specialized building and lab features are in place to minimize risk to personnel, and significant training and operational protocols are used. The BRI supports comprehensive "farm-to-fork" infectious disease research programs that address threats to plant, animal and human health. It is a biosafety level (BSL)-3/BSL-3Ag facility that provides for the large-scale integrated study of animal, plant and human pathogens that are food, water, animal or environmentally associated.

"Moreover, the facility supports research investigations that can portray 'real life' scenarios whereby food animals, food products and/or the environment are contaminated, managed, treated and/or processed systematically to mimic commercial production, processing and consumption of food products – farm to fork," Phebus says.

BRI education and training staff are dedicated to developing novel education programs to educate food safety professionals. These will include E-learning training modules.

The BRI can also conduct research on all food animal species and further processed products whenever there are important food quality, safety or defense questions to be answered. The abattoir is set up to accommodate harvest of all three primary protein species. It includes all of the standard meat processing equipment currently used in the industry available in the processing room.

For more information, visit www.bri.k-state.edu. ■



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Guy Giordano, President and CEO
SafePac Pasteurization, LLC and Vincent Giordano Corporation

Vincent Giordano
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Packaging under pressure

With HPP applications expanding, processors face packaging and production flow implications

BY KIMBERLIE CLYMA
kclyma@sosland.com

High-pressure pasteurization (HPP) is not a new technology to meat and poultry processors, but it's not exactly mainstream either. The process of denaturing pathogens using up to 87,000 pounds of water pressure is being used by an increasing number of processors including Tyson, Perdue Farms, Hormel, Oscar Mayer and most

“Packaging has to be well designed so that it doesn't get distorted (during HPP treatment).”

recently, Cargill. The technology is an effective post-packaging intervention, however, the added equipment expense, challenges with existing product packaging and obstacles related to implementing it as part of automated operations is hindering universal adoption of HPP throughout the industry.

HPP technology can be used on a variety of meat products, seafood, ready-to-eat meals, vegetables, sauces and marinades, fruits and juices and dairy products. The goal of treating the foods with HPP is to reduce or eliminate pathogens to extend shelf life and enhance food safety. Pathogens such as *E. coli*, *Salmonella* and *Listeria* can be virtually eliminated using this method.

Though specific systems vary slightly, this is how the process works in general: Packaged food products are placed in a cylindrical pressure vessel; water is added to the vessel and then the contents are pressurized at levels up to 87,000 psi; once the required pressure is achieved, product is held at that pressure for a predetermined dwell time – typically three minutes. The intense pressure interrupts the cellular activities of foodborne pathogens and other microorganisms, and

they die. The pressure in the vessel is known as hydrostatic pressure, which means it is applied equally in all directions, ensuring the product will not be crushed while in the vessel.

After the vessel is pressurized for the required amount of time, it is decompressed and the product can be removed from the vessel. The treated food packages then go through a drying process before being sent to the final packaging area for label application, boxing and shipping.

Commercial viability

The benefits of HPP technology when it comes to extending shelf-life and

Above: Cargill recently announced a partnership with American Pasteurization Company to offer fresh ground-beef patties for foodservice customers that are treated using high-pressure processing technology. (Photo courtesy of Cargill)



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enhancing food safety are virtually undisputed. Experts including Dr. James Marsden, senior science advisor of the North American Meat Processors Association and the Regent's Distinguished Professor of



Marsden

Meat Science at Kansas State Univ., have worked with the technology to conduct studies to verify its effectiveness.

"HPP for processed meats works beautifully, it's well proven and established in the marketplace," Marsden says. "It takes *Listeria* right off the table. It virtually eliminates the risk of *Listeria* in those types of products."

HPP is also highly effective with other types of meats. Marsden conducted a study at KSU, in conjunction with researchers at the Univ. of Nebraska, to find out if HPP is as effective in killing *Salmonella* and *E. coli* O157:H7. "We conducted an inoculation study and then measured the reduction of *Salmonella* and *E. coli* O157:H7 with HPP treatment," he continues. "We got a 5-log reduction for both pathogens, which is the same result as cooking. It virtually eliminated *E. coli* and *Salmonella* from raw ground beef.

"That said, even though it works great from a food safety point of view, there's a lot that has to be done to make it commercially viable. HPP can distort the appearance of the product, it can change the color of the product, and sometimes it can create heat," Marsden adds. "Temperature has to be controlled during the process. Packaging has to be well designed so that it doesn't get distorted. And oxygen has to be controlled so that you don't get oxidation or browning of the product during treatment.

"But if all these parameters are controlled, then it can work beautifully for any type of product," he says. "I can remember having the same conversation about HPP 10 to 12 years ago when processors first wanted to start using the technology on pro-



The extended shelf-life conferred by HPP often allows processors to save on their packaging costs, especially in the reduction of gas use. (Photo courtesy of Maple Lodge Farms)

cessed meats, and the same challenges and concerns were out there. Obviously processors were able to overcome the obstacles. I have no doubt that they will be able to overcome the same challenges for raw meats."

Perfect packaging

Packaging concerns top the list when it comes to processors considering add-

ing HPP to an existing production system. "Not all packaging is suitable for high-pressure processing," says Greg Zaja, vice president of sales and R&D for Milwaukee-based American Pasteurization Company, where food companies ship their products to be HPP treated. A growing number of meat and poultry processors are utilizing APC's service, and

Cargill introduces Fressure patties

In mid February, Cargill announced a partnership with Milwaukee-based American Pasteurization Company to offer fresh ground-beef patties for foodservice customers that are treated using high-pressure processing technology. The products, marketed under Cargill's Fressure brand, offer customers shelf-life that is double that of traditional fresh burgers without effecting flavor or appearance, the company said.

Fressure ground beef patties are first produced and packaged at Cargill's Columbus, Neb., facility before being shipped to APC's facility in Milwaukee and HPP. The process does not use high temperatures, chemicals or



irradiation, while ensures the retention of the nutrient value and freshness of the ground beef, the company said. Cargill focused research efforts on making HPP commercially viable for ground beef patties with a goal of pushing shelf-life from 21 days to 42 days without any side effects, while eliminating pathogens that cause foodborne illness and spoilage.

APC was founded in June, 2004 by an ownership team that includes Justin Segel, formerly the president of Emmpak Foods, which was acquired by Cargill in 2001. APC treats a variety of proteins, fruits and vegetables at its plant but Cargill is the first processor sending ground beef to the facility for HPP treatment.

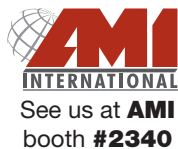
"Bringing Fressure to market required a multi-year investment in research and development for equipment and processes," said a Cargill spokesman.

"The benefits extend to both fresh and frozen Fressure patties," he added. ■



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(Photo courtesy of NC Hyperbaric)



“Changes are typically made to the packaging materials to ensure all parameters are suitable for a specific product by using HPP.”

depending on the type of products, packaging is a consideration. “More and more packaging suppliers are adapting to the technology and understand the physical properties that are necessary for packaging materials that are high-pressure processed.”

According to Avure Technologies Inc., some of the potential packaging roadblocks include an excessive amount of packaging “skirt” material, which can limit the efficient utilization of the high-pressure cylinder; the amount of gas flushing in a package; and the seal ability of the flexible packaging material.

“When new products are introduced to HPP there are concerns that the product packaging will not withstand the process due to the film properties or package flexibility,” Zaja says. “Changes are typically made to the packaging materials to ensure all parameters are suitable for a specific product by using HPP.”

It’s not enough to simply provide the

HPP equipment to processors, many HPP technology companies find it necessary and valuable to work closely with packaging companies to make sure the technology and packaging work together in the most efficient way. “Packaging companies we work with are prepared to work directly with their customers to make whatever packaging changes are necessary in order to incorporate our technology,” Zaja says.

Avure works with major flexible film producers to design solutions for its customers’ applications. “In addition, the Avure HPP lab in Kent, Wash., possesses significant knowledge of packaging and work directly with our customer base to address any issues that they might face during the HPP adoption process,” says Matt Rutherford, senior vice president of global sales for Avure.

Kansas City, Mo.-based Multivac Inc. has gone a step further and created a partnership with Uhde High Pressure Technologies to offer its customers a one-stop-shop for HPP and packaging technology. The German company has more than 80 years of experience in high-pressure applications.

One challenge of adding an HPP step to a processing operation is integrating it into an otherwise fully automated facility. The loading and unloading of the high-pressure vessels is typically done manually in order to maximize the amount of product that fits into the vessel.

“We try to find a balance between automating the technology and achieving the most filling ratio in the vessel,” says Jaime Nicolas-Correa, commercial manager for NC Hyperbaric, a Madrid, Spain-based supplier of HPP equipment. “We can automate the loading and unloading process of the product into the HPP containers but the filling ratio will be lower than if it’s done by hand and the production per hour will also be lower. This isn’t always cost effective for the processor.”

Not unlike APC, Safe Pac Pasteurization recently began offering HPP

technology from NC Hyperbaric to processors of food products on a contract basis from its East Coast facility.

Integrating solutions

Keeping costs down and maintaining production efficiencies are constant concerns when considering the addition of new technology such as HPP. Multivac, as a market leader in thermoform packaging machines, is successfully overcoming this obstacle. The company recently announced its newest technical innovation that allows its HPP technology to be integrated into fully automated packaging lines. Prior to this innovation, HPP was typically conducted in a separate manufacturing stage, which some processors consider to be disruptive to throughput. Using patent-pending technology, Multivac has developed a solution to integrate high-pressure equipment into packaged food lines, according to Tobias Richter, product manager in the Systems Business Group for MULTIVAC Sepp Hagggenmüller GmbH. The solution includes the high-pressure equipment as well as an automation concept to integrate the process into packaging lines designed to meet the demands of the food industry.

With the integration solution developed by Multivac, the finished food packages are automatically loaded into transport containers, HPP-treated, and then automatically unloaded before being dried and undergoing necessary labeling and packed into cartons. “In this way, it is for the first time that we can process large, industrial-scale production quantities fully automatically in a quasi-continuous operation,” Richter says.

Efficient use of the space inside the HPP vessel is crucial to achieving maximum productivity, Richter says. “Since the high-pressure equipment is round for reasons of optimizing the distribution of pressure forces, the loading pattern also has to be designed accordingly.” With a favorable pack shape it is possible to treat



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up to four tons of packaged food per hour in the high-pressure equipment.

Multivac engineers work with customers to develop the optimum package shape and a customer testing facility is available at its Uhde High Pressure Technologies office in Hagen, Germany.

“High pressure provides many added values to processors.”

Multivac also offers a high pressure compatible packaging concept for modified-atmosphere packaging applications.

“There are challenges with MAP packages since they are more rigid and the amount of gas in the package makes it more expensive per pound to treat. But if our customers insist upon MAP packages, then we can find a way to

work within those parameters,” Nicolas-Correa says. “But with HPP, we don’t feel MAP packages are as necessary. The HPP technology eliminates the shelf-life issues that MAP packages were designed to deal with.”

Consumer acceptance

Unlike other food-safety or food-preservation methods typically used on meat like irradiation, thermal treatments or chemical preservatives, high-pressure processing is in the unique position of having consumer support. Because the method is environmentally friendly and doesn’t require any product additives, processors can deliver the “clean labels” consumers are demanding.

“There’s no consumer resistance to this technology. It’s unlike any other process out there,” Marsden says.

The positive consumer response to

HPP technology is helping to raise industry awareness and acceptance of the technology as a viable food preservation and food safety technique. “High pressure provides many added values to processors such as extending shelf-life, which results in better managing of raw materials, fewer changeovers, reduction of the cost of returns and the expansion of distribution areas,” Zaja says. “Consumers can finally enjoy safe, quality products without preservatives. More manufacturers are advertising this process [HPP] directly on their labels to let consumers know they have taken extra hurdles to provide them with quality, safe products.”

“We have just begun to tap into the potential created by this exciting technology,” Rutherford says. ■

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Unveiling ideas

New food products highlight quality, convenience and flexibility

BY JOEL CREWS
jcrews@sosland.com

Looking back at some of the past year's new product introductions, it's easy to see that R&D officials are indeed, responding to widespread demand in the marketplace. The themes across most of the items are consistent, whether the products are designed for foodservice, retail or institutional applications:

- Convenience reigns supreme and is evident in packaging, preparation options and portability;
- The emphasis on quality and ingredients is undeniable and many new product marketers are not shy about accentuating the source of their ingredients and the care with which those ingredients were derived;
- Health and wellness is the driving force behind many of the offerings, especially when the products are targeting school-age consumers or college campuses;
- There is no "one-size-fits-all" category of foods or meal times and most new products address varied preferences for portion size and avoid being pigeonholed into a specific day-part or dining venue. The same holds true for flavor profiles, as is evident later on. Most new products are offered in several varieties, each featuring a unique, but related flavor that's linked to the new product's theme.

A shotgun approach to developing products for the masses might be the most efficient R&D approach, but appealing to the diverse and individual demand of changing consumer preferences can be an elusive moving target. ■

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Burritos EVOLve

Marketed as "made-from-scratch" using "natural and organic" ingredients, Boulder, Colo.-based EVOL Burritos debuted its new line of deli-wrapped burritos, designed to be sold fresh or hot by vendors located in coffee shops, university cafeterias and convenience stores. Available in six varieties, some of which include bacon, sausage, chicken or beef, the burritos weigh 7 ozs. and are designed to appeal to the growing demand for grab-and-go food items at various retail outlets. Including the new products, EVOL Burritos are available in 21 varieties, all of which are touted as "hand-rolled" and include only antibiotic-free chicken, pork, beef and sausage and cage-free eggs.

Adding chicken to the mix

Earlier this month, Bar-S Foods introduced its Deli Shaved Oven Roasted Chicken Breast Lunchmeat for its retail customers. The latest product is the first chicken variety added to the company's growing Deli Shaved line, which includes: smoked ham, honey ham, black forest ham, oven-roasted turkey breast and smoked turkey breast, all available in 9-oz. or 1-lb., re-closeable packages. To appeal to retail shoppers, the packaging is pillow packed to ensure optimum shelf-life and freshness.





A chicken addition to the Buffett line

Marketed to bring restaurant-style tastes to retail-shopping sports fans, and introduced just days ahead of this year's Super Bowl in February, Margaritaville Foods launched a new line of fully cooked, frozen chicken wings. According to data from Nielsen, for the 52 weeks ending Nov. 29, 2010, in the frozen poultry segment, chicken wings alone accounted for more than \$418 million in sales, indicating the obvious popularity of this food choice.

Inspired by Jimmy Buffett, the musical icon known for his island-themed melodies, the new wings are packaged in a 28-oz. bag and include a packet of one of the following flavors: Mango Chutney, Island Buffalo, Caribbean BBQ and Orange Peel.



Sara Lee's healthy appeal

Based on consumer research indicating growing demand among adults for healthier options on restaurant menus and the fact that in-house research concluded 62 percent of foodservice patrons are more likely to choose items lower in sodium content, Sara Lee Foodservice rolled out a new line of lower-sodium deli meats. Both Sara Lee-branded bulk deli meats and its Hillshire Farm brand bulk and pre-sliced deli meats are formulated with 25 percent less sodium than comparable products in the category and are certified by the American Heart Association. Lower sodium bulk deli meats available include Sara Lee's Oven Roasted turkey breast or chicken breast. Hillshire's bulk deli meats include its lower-sodium boneless honey ham as well as its roast beef. Lower Sodium Hillshire Farm pre-sliced deli meats include honey- or oven-roasted turkey, and smoked or honey ham.



Talking turkey

This past month, Tamaqua, Pa.-based Koch's Turkey Farm rolled out a new addition to its line of turkey burgers, which debuted in 2010. The new All Natural Burgers were designed to provide a healthy alternative to beef hamburgers, according to the company. Seasoned with a hint of rosemary, the company's natural line of burgers are low in fat and can be cooked in a skillet in approximately seven minutes.

"Our turkey burgers are low in sodium, low in calories and low in saturated fat, and they taste great," said Duane Koch, president of Koch's Turkey Farm. The burgers are available at specialty supermarkets, including Whole Foods and Koch points out the turkey meat comes from free-range birds raised without hormones or antibiotics and are fed vegetarian diets. The company's turkeys are raised humanely and Koch's animal welfare standards are ensured by a third-party auditing firm.



Artisan sandwiches

AdvancePierre Foods' just-launched line of Mercato Grille Panini Sandwiches, which are available in five varieties, are designed for heat-and-eat applications or heat-and-hold venues. They can be warmed using a microwave, Panini press or traditional oven. The hand-held sandwiches are fully assembled, wrapped in oven-ready parchment paper and flash frozen to ensure freshness. The varieties offer serving flexibility that can satisfy all day-parts, includ-

ing breakfast, lunch, dinner or snack time. The choices include the following Panini-style sandwiches: Italian; Turkey, Ham and Swiss; Three Cheese Tomato, Asiago Chicken and Chicken Parmesan.

A Frank approach to appetizers

Also capitalizing on the popularity of frozen chicken wings and appetizers as a whole, Frank's RedHot, based in Parsippany, N.J., recently launched a line of fully cooked Buffalo Wings, Buffalo Shrimp, Chicken Fries and Chicken Poppers. Knowing US grocery store sales of frozen and refrigerated appetizers and snacks, frozen wings and frozen shrimp accounted for about \$1.6 billion, according to Nielsen data for 2010, the new products are being offered by the company at club stores as well as supermarkets. The protein products are processed and distributed by Completely Fresh Foods for French's Foods, a division of Reckitt Benckiser, which makes Frank's Redhot Cayenne Pepper Sauce. Completely Fresh's other food lines include Jack Daniel's ready-to-eat meals and John Wayne Authentic Cowboy Meals.



Going kosher

Late this past year, Old World Kosher Sausage officials announced the introduction of a new Chicken Sausage that is certified kosher by the Orthodox Union and carries the OU symbol to identify it as such. The new offerings are made from OU kosher-certified chicken thighs and are available in flavor profiles that have never been offered to this segment, according to the company. The OU diligently monitors every aspect of processing the sausage as well as inspecting the processing facilities to ensure compliance with kosher standards is maintained. The formulation for the kosher line was developed by David Samuels, a manufacturer and distributor of meat products, said Ethan Feinberg, president of Old World Kosher. "We are truly honored that David Samuels has chosen to share his secret recipes with us so we can bring this unique product to the kosher community," including foodservice and retail customers, he said.

"With flavors like Chicken Apple Sausage, Hot Italian Sausage, and Sweet Italian Sausage, caterers and restaurateurs can't seem to get enough of these delicacies," Feinberg added.



Back to school

With the recent public spotlight trained on childhood nutrition and the quality and safety of food offered by the National School Lunch Program, one of the newest products developed by Tyson Foods meets the government's nutritional guidelines for sodium, fat and protein. Tyson's Wokin' Orange All-in-One Entrée, which is made from fully cooked strips of dark chicken meat in an orange sauce, was developed specifically for the NSLP and to appeal to school officials in the US who are responsible for feeding thousands of children each day. "Our ethnic-inspired, all-in-one product solution allows foodservice directors to meet the growing demand for authentic flavors, while at the same time delivering a solution that is operationally friendly and nutritionally sound," said Johnny Hughes, vice president and general manager of the Government Business Unit of Tyson Foods Inc.



BY RICHARD ALANIZ
meatpoultry@sosland.com

Questioning benefits

Employers must consider whether all former workers deserve jobless benefits

As job growth continues to stall, former employees occasionally seek unemployment benefits they don't deserve, either because they are desperate, confused or trying to cheat the system. Employers, ultimately bearing the cost of unemployment payments, must evaluate whether to challenge those unemployment claims.

Appealing unemployment benefits is expensive and time consuming and success is not guaranteed. Employers should understand what is involved in the appeals process, recognize the long-term implications, involve the right people in the process and carefully consider how to proceed when former employees claim benefits they have not earned.

In weighing the decision, there are several factors to consider. If employees are denied jobless benefits, in part because of employer resistance, an employee is more likely to consider a claim of discrimination, particularly retaliation. Determining unemployment eligibility also takes time, since someone must collect documentation and attend a hearing to testify on the company's behalf. There are other PR issues to consider as well. While jobless claims are not usually front page news, companies may appear greedy or unsympathetic to current employees or the public if they actively work to deny workers jobless benefits, even when the company is in the right.

Finally, in addition to the time, cost and damage to the company's public perception, employers also tend to lose most of their appeals. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, employers won only 36 percent of the 405,153 unemployment claims they appealed in 2009.

Appeal considerations

If you do decide to appeal an unemployment claim, there are several things to keep in mind:

- **Don't wait until a claim is filed to think about appeals** – For smaller companies with low turnover, an unemployment claim may be an unusual undertaking. Before a claim is ever filed, the company should have a system in place to quickly gather relevant information. If you have not considered



Document everything – Every company should have policies about the appropriate way to handle and document employment evaluations, firings and layoffs.

the issue recently, now is a good time to do so. A team of in-house attorneys, outside counsel and human resources professionals should review current policies to ensure accuracy and compliance with current laws and regulations, including those governing unemployment insurance.

- **Document everything** – Every company should have policies about the appropriate way to handle and document employment evaluations, firings and layoffs. If an employee has been fired for cause, the employer must cre-

ate a paper trail outlining exactly what the employee did wrong, how it violated company policy and why the company chose to terminate. Hours and work history should also be documented and easily accessible – employees may not be eligible for unemployment benefits because they worked too few hours or were not employed for sufficient duration.

- **Consider the specifics of each situation** – Before appealing a claim, be sure that managers or supervisors handled a job dismissal appropriately and were clear that the employee was not entitled to unemployment benefits.

- **Find a point person** – Depending on the company's size, it should designate one person or a certain group of people to review all unemployment claims. Those people should be educated about the claims process and be able to quickly access pertinent information and documentation.

- **Don't take any claim for granted** – It is important to take each claim seriously. Unprepared company representatives may misspeak during a hearing and damage the appeal or expose the company to future, unrelated claims.

An unemployment claim hearing can quickly turn into a case of "he said-she said." However, with the right strategies, processes, documents and knowledgeable professionals, employers can develop a good sense of which cases to appeal and ultimately boost their success ratio in those select appeals. ■

Richard D. Alaniz is senior partner at Alaniz and Schraeder, a national labor and employment firm based in Houston.

We would like to hear from you – to comment on this story or to request reprints, contact us by e-mail at meatpoultry@sosland.com.

Richmond Cold Storage Company LLC has selected **HighJump Software** as its 2010 Quality Critical Supplier of the Year. To be considered for the award, quality critical suppliers must demonstrate the ability to share cost savings ideas, demonstrate quality customer service, assist in the implementation of new products and services and be willing to step up and make an impact.

George Watts, the **National Chicken Council's** retiring president, was presented with the Harold E. Ford Lifetime Achievement Award of the US Poultry & Egg Association (USPOULTRY) during the 2011 International Poultry Exposition in Atlanta. The award recognizes Watts for his dedication and leadership over the years and for serving the poultry industry and USPOULTRY in an exemplary manner.

Mike Brown will succeed Watts as NCC president, effective this month. Brown previously served as vice president for legislative affairs of the American Meat Institute, where he had worked since 1995.

Butterball LLC, Huntsville, Ark.-facility associates **Kristy Drewyor** and **Felicia Hickman** were named 2010 employees of the year during the Huntsville Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Community Awards Banquet in January.

Intelligrated announced the appointment of **Kevin O'Reilly** to the position of Sales Engineer II for the company's eastern regional operation. O'Reilly will be responsible for sales in the region under the direction of **Eric Palotas**, vice president of eastern regional operations for Intelligrated.

The **National Turkey Federation** honored **George Nicholas**, founder of Nicholas Turkey Breeding Farms, with the NTF Lifetime Achievement Award this past month at the NTF

Annual Convention, Nicholas received the award posthumously for his long-term, unselfish dedication to creative innovation in turkey production. **Jihad Douglas** and **Yan Ghazikhanian**, Aviagen Turkeys, accepted the award on behalf of Nicholas' family and the company he founded. Nicholas passed away in 1985.



In other NTF news, **Damon Wells** was appointed as its vice president of government affairs. Wells will oversee and implement all aspects of the federation's legislative affairs program, from policy formulation and development to advocacy on Capitol Hill.

Bill Donald, a third generation Melville, Mont. rancher, was elected to succeed **Steve Foglesong** as the **National Cattlemen's Beef Association** president. **J.D. Alexander**, Pilger, Neb., was elected as NCBA president-elect, and **Scott George**, Cody, Wyo., is the new NCBA vice president.

Cattle producer **Tom Jones** from Pottsville, Ark., was elected as the **Cattlemen's Beef Board** (CBB) chairman. He was elected during the 2011 Cattle Industry Annual Convention in Denver, Colo.

New **National Restaurant Association** officers assumed their roles in January. The newly inducted board officers are **Sally Smith**, chair; **Rosalyn Mallet**, vice chair; and **Phil**

Hickey Jr., treasurer. These officers will hold their positions until Jan. 1, 2012. Smith is president and CEO of Buffalo Wild Wings Grill and Bar, Minneapolis, Minn. Mallet is president and CEO of PhaseNext Hospitality in Plano, Texas, a franchise operating company. Previously, she was president and interim CEO of Caribou Coffee. She also held leadership positions at Applebee's, TGI Friday's and la Madeleine Bistro/Café. Hickey is chairman of O'Charley's, a Nashville, Tenn.-based multi-concept public restaurant company.

The **American Meat Institute** has appointed **Dennis Boik** as director of environmental and sustainability issues for the association. Boik will monitor environmental regulations that affect AMI members. He will serve as staff liaison to the AMI Environmental Policy Committee and AMI Sustainability Committee.

Boik retired from Hormel Foods Corporation in December 2008 with 38 years of service.

HID Global announced it has appointed **Jean-Miguel Robadey** to run the company's Identification Solutions (IDS) RFID animal tagging business. The company also appointed **Jason Walden** to lead its RFID Industry and Logistics business in the UK, Ireland, Benelux and Scandinavia. ■



Brown



Jones



Smith



Mallet



Robadey



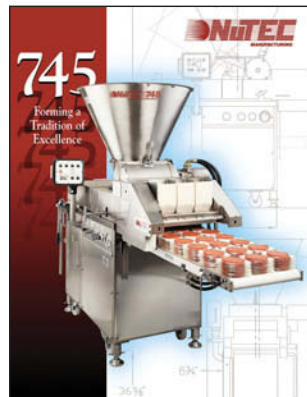
Pipeline detectors

Phantom Pipeline detectors from Fortress Technology are suited for sausage, ground beef or any pumped meats and are built rugged to withstand the harshest production environments with IP69K certified stainless steel construction. Several material options are available for the non-metallic pipe including nylon, rubber and Teflon for the more demanding high temperature/pressure applications. An automatic reject valve can be incorporated into the system to remove contaminated product from the flow. For more information, call Fortress Technology at (416) 754-2898.

www.fortresstechnology.com

Free literature

Free four-page, full-color literature is available on NuTEC Manufacturing's 745 Food Forming Machine. Built for versatility, the 745 can run beef, pork, poultry, fish, vegetables and cheese. A completely hydraulic, microprocessor controlled, multi-outlet forming machine, the 745



combines accurate weight control, minimum leakage, and quick change-overs with mobility. The machine's portable design allows the machine to be easily transported to wash-down departments or other areas in the plant. NuTEC's sales brochure features a large, detailed photo of the 745 Food Forming Machine on the

front cover. Inside, informative copy and feature photography combine to lead the reader through a step-by-step description of the 745's features and benefits. Product specifications, electrical specifications and an engineering drawing are included on the back. For more information, call NuTEC Manufacturing at (815) 722-2800.

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Automated HPP

Multivac Inc. recently announced a new technical innovation that allows its high-pressure processing (HPP) technology to be integrated into fully automated packaging lines not only for vacuum packages, but also for use with Modified Atmosphere Packaging (MAP). HPP is used by processors as a food-safety intervention to control pathogens including *Listeria* and *Salmonella* while increasing shelf-life by as much as four times of non-treated products. Because the process is conducted under ambient temperature, even heat-sensitive food products can be treated with this method. HPP-treated, packaged food passes through a pressurized vessel, which denatures pathogens by delivering 87,000 psi of water pressure for a specified dwell time. Using patent-pending technology Multivac has developed a solution to integrate high pressure equipment into packaged food lines. Multivac also offers a high-pressure compatible packaging concept for MAP applications. With the integration solution developed by Multivac, the finished food packages are automatically loaded into transport containers, HPP-treated, and then automatically unloaded before being dried and undergoing necessary labeling and packed into cartons. For more information, call Multivac at (816) 891-0555.

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Hollymatic has combined four sought-after feature/benefits and put them all into one tenderizer machine that provides customers with a real profit center. Their Tender Rite Tenderizer offers power, safety, efficiency and a competitive price to add profits to grocery store and supermarket operations as well as small to medium-sized processing plants. A ¼ HP motor has the power to process up to 1,200 steaks per hour. The Tender Rite's hygienically superior design with all stainless steel housing and inlet improves food safety. Stronger tenderizing blade assemblies provide greater efficiency. With optional stir fry slicing blades, butchers and processors can create stews and sliced portions. To top it off, Hollymatic has aggressively priced this tenderizer to be an attractive addition to any meat operation. For more information, call Hollymatic at (708)579-3700.



www.hollymatic.com

Space-saving hand sanitizing

CM Process Solutions new Hygicontrol HSR is designed to completely sanitize hands and wash the soles of operator's footwear. This continuously welded stainless steel construction machine is sensor operated and is supplied with a separate chemical injector system for both hands and footwear. All cycle parameters, such as hand sanitizer time and brush rotation time, are fully adjustable. For more information, call CM Process Solutions at (951) 808-4376.



www.cmpsolutions.net

Food processing blades

Designed with a patent pending proprietary tooth design for smoother cuts through meat products, new MeatMiser Food Processing Blades from Hyde Industrial Blade Solutions (IBS) reduce waste and improve per piece yield for meat and poultry processors. Engineered for maximum performance and minimal waste, Hyde MeatMiser Food Processing Blades are manufactured with "arcuates" or "swooping teeth" and beveled edges replacing more traditional scallop-edge blades. The arcuates enter the cut gently along the long arc without ripping into the food to be processed, slicing the meat cleanly. In keel and full bird cut testing, these blades reduced waste from poor cuts by 75 percent, increasing output and finished product net weight. The blades are made of 420 grade stainless steel and are heat treated for durability and long life. Hyde MeatMiser Food Processing Blades have a double bevel (each side is beveled) and the bevel on each side has a compound bevel (two different bevel angles) for increased efficiency and productivity. These blades come in a variety of sizes to accommodate different processing machines and operations including 5.86-, 6-, 7.188-, 10- and 10.63-inch diameters. For more information, contact Hyde IBS at (800) 872-4933.



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Deadline is April 22, 2011



LED light

Larson Electronics' magnalight.com announced the addition of the EPL-24-2L-LED-LV low-voltage, explosion proof LED light. Designed to operate off of 12 or 24 volts DC or AC, the 30-watt LED light carries a UL 844 Class 1 Division 1 and Class 2 Division 1 hazardous location rating as well as a separate paint spray booth certification. The new Magnalight EPL-24-LED-LV low voltage explosion proof LED light is designed to last at least 50,000 hours. Designed for long life, the Class 1 Division 1 LED light offers a small 2 foot, 2 lamp form factor and operates natively off of low voltage, including battery banks, small generators, solar panels and other off grid power sources without the need for additional power supplies or transformers. With a T6 temperature rating and a separate paint spray booth certification, the low profile EPL-24-2L-LED-LV explosion proof LED light is application for most any hazardous location area application. For more information, call Larson Electronics a (800) 369-6671.

www.magnalight.com

Ham trimmer

The Whizard Series II Trimmer (Model 925) from Bettcher Industries is the ideal tool for tackling the challenges of trimming and cleaning Prosciutto di Parma and other air-dried hams. Featuring a special circular serrated blade along with an adjustable depth gauge and an available post



handle, the Model 925 trimmer is engineered to improve cutting performance on Parma hams – speeding up the cleaning procedure while requiring less effort when compared to using a straight knife

or older powered circular knife models. Whizard Trimmers for Parma ham trimming and cleaning improve meat yields while at the same time reducing excess stress to the hand and forearm of the operator because less force is needed to clean the ham. The Whizard Series II Trimmer's blade/housing interface generates less "chatter" and heat for reduced vibration, thereby improving worker operating conditions. An enhanced gear mesh design contributes to smoother blade operation, while better proximity to the built-in steeling device button makes steeling blades quicker and more convenient. For more information, call Bettcher Industries at (440) 965-4422.

www.bettcher.com/parma-ham-trimming

Film clamp

Lantech's Load Seeking Clamp 4.0 was created to reduce film breaks. When film breaks or releases at the clamp, it requires the operator to reset the machine, which causes downtime. The Load Seeking Clamp's robust design holds onto the film preventing film breaks and releases at the clamp.



Most clamps on the market are "stationary clamps" and do not move out to the edge of the load. This causes the film to sag in the gap between

the clamp and the load reducing containment at the bottom of the load. At the beginning of the wrap cycle, the Load Seeking Clamp 4.0 goes out to the edge of the load creating clamp-to-load contact regardless of the width of the load. This eliminates sagging issues and maximizes containment at the bottom of the load. The Load Seeking Clamp 4.0 is standard on the SL Automatic stretch wrapper. For more information, call Lantech at (800) 866-0322.

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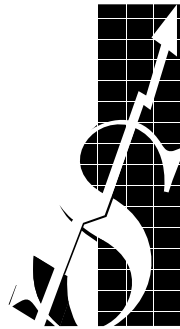
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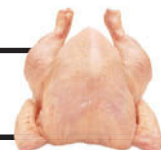
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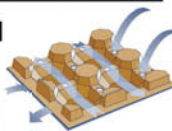
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Move that bus!

Cargill's Wichita, Kan.-based meat business joined other area companies in contributing to the success of ABC's Extreme Makeover: Home Edition home build benefitting former Wichita State Univ. All-America baseball player Carl

Hall, who was paralyzed from the neck down after a 2010 car accident. The show selected Hall and his family – wife Stacey and

four children – to receive an all-new home that is wheelchair accessible throughout. Cargill donated a variety of Sterling Silver Premium Meats beef and pork cuts to stock the freezer in the Hall family's new home. To help the

Hall family with preparing their selection of meats and further enjoy their new home, Cargill also donated a grill. VIPs dined on Sterling Silver ribeye steaks, pork chops, beef brisket and pork loin. Cargill, in cooperation with local Sterling Silver Premium Meats grocery retail partner, Dillons Food Stores, provided the meats and worked with a local caterer to prepare and serve products. ■



Living art

Washing hands properly is “a must” for those who work daily in US meat and poultry plants. Here's a unique story to keep this important topic top of mind. Thanks to a gift from Georgia-Pacific Professional, the Centers

for Disease Control and Prevention plan to highlight the health benefits of proper hand washing through a multi-media art exhibition called *Watching Hands: Artists Respond to Keeping Well*. The exhibition is scheduled to open in September, 2011 at the Global Health Odyssey Museum on the campus of CDC's headquarters in Atlanta. “CDC's Global Health Odyssey Museum

offers unique opportunities to share CDC's

work and health messages with the Atlanta community and the thousands of individuals who visit CDC from all over the world,” said Charles Stokes, president and CEO of the CDC Foundation. ■



(Photo courtesy of CDC)

Prime Ribbing

Cartoon by Bob Bliss



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Over Herd

“This rule, while obscure, could effectively dismantle the business models used by livestock producers, meat packers and poultry processors – setting the industry back decades in its customer-driven evolution toward value-added products.”

— J. Patrick Boyle, American Meat Institute president and CEO, on a proposed rule by the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA).



Royal innovation

Forget about Lady Gaga's meat dress – *that's so yesterday* – we recently learned through a story in OK! Magazine that Crown Carveries has made a portrait of Kate Middleton and Prince William (the Royal Wedding couple) out of turkey, gammon, beef, carrots, peas, broccoli, cauliflower, potatoes and gravy. Word has it that it took the company four hours to put the couple's “fork-trait” together. ■

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