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WITH CARE**

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The company's flagship plant turns 30 this year
while SPAM celebrates its 75th anniversary

XL FOODS RECALL

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FOR DEFAMATION**

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Sara Lee spin-off creates
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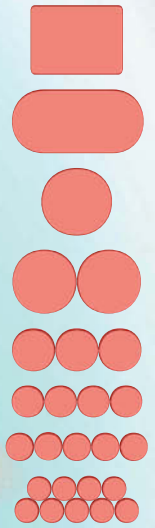
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BY BRYAN SALVAGE
bsalvage@sosland.com

People power

The most enjoyable part of my job is visiting packing and processing plants, witnessing first-hand the expert hand-craftsmanship (such as at Allen Brothers' Chicago plant, which is featured in this issue) and various in-plant technologies, but most importantly meeting the people who make these facilities hum.

While reflecting on the plants visited this year, one plant clearly stands out — Hormel Foods' Austin, Minn., plant. (See the June 2012 cover story in *Meat&Poultry*.)

This 1.1 million-sq.-ft. facility turned 30 years old in September. What's scary is I remember visiting the construction site of this plant on a cold winter's afternoon in the early 80s and stumbling over frozen mud and foundation work while taking notes.

The original Austin plant spanned 54 acres, towered nine-floors high at the tallest spot and was the largest meat plant in the world in its heyday. The facility today remains one of the largest meat plants in the world — and is a modern technological marvel.

This plant is six plants under one roof — dry sausage, meat products, grocery products (canning), shipping warehouse, harvest and fabrication plus a large refinery operation — all connected by common passageways. It employs almost 1,750 people.

Products manufactured total 1.3 million lbs. per year, representing about one-eighth of the annual product volume produced by the entire company.

The Austin plant is different in many ways. Hormel has a partnership with Quality Pork Processors

Inc., which is located at one side of the facility. All fresh pork QPP processes goes to Hormel Foods, which utilizes the meat cuts and trimmings throughout the Austin facility.

The facility's Automatic Storage and Retrieval System (ASRS), which has been operating since day one, is a 14-level-high, computerized warehouse that stores and retrieves products by bar code.

Hormel's high-pressure processing system used on some of its products was initiated in the Austin plant through R&D. Many ergonomically designed pieces of machinery and assists eliminate physical stresses created by some jobs on the line.

As this plant evolves, space keeps getting tighter, but Hormel manages to squeeze more production out of it each year through innovation, not by adding brick and mortar.

But more than anything else, Hormel executives credited their employees for making the company successful. Most workers I spoke with credited teamwork and working closely together for the facility's continued success.

During my long drive home, it dawned on me the one thing all successful companies I've visited over the years have in common are caring, hard-working employees.

Here's a big "thank you" to the thousands of men and women who work tirelessly every day behind the scenes at meat and poultry facilities all around the country. ■

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

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Advertising Materials Coordinator

Sharon Alexander

Sales: dcrost@sosland.com

Editorial: jcrews@sosland.com

www.MeatPoultry.com

Address editorial correspondence to:

Editor, Meat&Poultry, 4800 Main Street,

Suite 100, Kansas City, MO 64112.

Phone: (816) 756-1000 Fax: (816) 756-0494

Letters via email can be sent to

meatpoultry@sosland.com. Letters may also

be sent via fax to (816) 756-0494. The Editor

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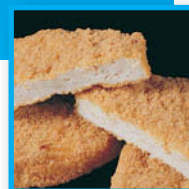
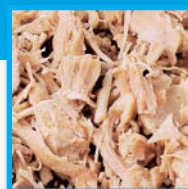
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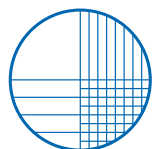
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Donnie Smith

Tyson announces fiscal 2012 results

Despite higher fourth-quarter income, income for the full-year at Tyson Foods Inc. fell 22 percent on challenging commodity markets.

For the year ended Sept. 29, the company had income of \$583 million, equal to \$1.64 per share on the common stock, which compared with income of \$750 million, or \$2.04 per share, during the previous year. Sales for the year were

\$33,278,000, up 3 percent from \$32,266,000.

“While fiscal 2012 wasn’t a record EPS year, I think it was our best year — certainly our best effort to date,” said Donnie Smith, president and CEO. “Our team members didn’t make excuses; they made a difference, and they made money. This allowed us to buy back stock throughout the year, including \$50 million in the fourth quarter, and to reinvest in our business at a record level while strengthening our balance sheet.

“Our strong balance sheet, liquidity position and a desire to return cash to shareholders led the board of directors to declare a special dividend and to increase the regular dividend by 25 percent. The board’s action is reflective of our increased profitability and the investments

we’ve made in the company.

“Our accomplishments, reinvestment in our business and record sales in fiscal 2012 were achieved in difficult market conditions. Fiscal 2013 is likely to be equally if not more difficult, but there will always be challenging circumstances in this business. It’s our job to accelerate growth by focusing on innovation, serving our customers and developing our team members, whatever the market conditions may be.”

The Chicken segment had operating income of \$446 million during the year, up 171 percent from \$164 million during the previous year. Sales for the segment were \$11,591 million, up 5 percent from \$11,017 million.

Operating income within the Beef segment was \$218 million, down 53 percent from \$468 million during the previous year. Sales for the segment were \$13,755 million, up 2 percent from \$13,549 million.

The Pork segment posted operating income of \$417 million, down 26 percent from \$560 million during the previous year. Sales for the segment were \$5,510 million, up 1 percent from \$5,460 million.

Net income for the company during the fourth quarter increased 91 percent to \$185 million, or 53 cents per share, which compared with income of \$97 million, or 27 cents per share, during the same quarter of the previous year. Sales for quarter were \$8,373 million, down slightly from \$8,404 million during the same quarter of the previous year. ■

Ahold to build meat plant in Pennsylvania

Ahold USA announced plans to build a new meat-processing facility in Cumberland County, Pa., and has joined an operating agreement with Vantage Foods to operate the plant.

The building site is in Lower Allen Township, Cumberland County, and the project cost is approximately \$63 million. The meat processing and packaging plant will span 162,000 square feet and will be a US Department of Agriculture-inspected facility. The facility will hire 850 employees to run the plant.

Ahold and Vantage Foods received a funding offer from the Department of Community and Economic Develop-

ment in which Ahold USA will receive a \$1.275 million PA First grant to use toward the cost of the project. Vantage Foods was offered and is eligible to apply for \$360,000 in job training assistance and up to \$1.7 million in tax credits.

“Central Pennsylvania is an ideal location for our newest US facility,” Leonal Kilgore, president and CEO of Vantage US said. “The Lower Allen Township community is well-resourced with strategic access to major distribution arteries and a vital local labor force. It is our full intention to earn our place as a good corporate citizen and to generate strong economic spin off for the community and surrounding area.” ■

ConAgra Foods acquires Ralcorp Holdings

ConAgra Foods, Inc. has agreed to acquire Ralcorp Holdings, Inc. for \$90 per share for a total transaction value of \$6.8 billion, including the assumption of debt. The agreement comes after Ralcorp spurned ConAgra's acquisition efforts in 2011.

ConAgra said the acquisition will add to ConAgra's existing private-label business of about \$950 million to create the largest private-label packaged food business in North America with about \$4.5 billion in combined annual private label sales. Combined, the companies represent sales of about \$18 billion annually and more than 36,000 employees.

"We are very pleased to have reached an agreement with Ralcorp after a period of collaborative dialogue between the two companies," said Gary Rodkin, CEO. "Ralcorp is already the largest private label food company in the US



Gary Rodkin

and is well positioned for future growth. The acquisition of Ralcorp is a logical and exciting step for ConAgra Foods. Adding Ralcorp provides us with a much larger presence in the attractive and growing private label segment and accelerates our recipe for growth strategy."

The transaction is expected to close by March 31, 2013, and is expected to have a modest benefit on ConAgra's fiscal 2013 results. ■

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BUSINESS NOTES

Oberto to open new plant in 2013

Oberto Brands, manufacturer of the Oh Boy, Oberto! brand of jerky products, plans to open a new processing facility in Nashville, Tenn., during the first half of 2013. The new facility will be the company's second and support its business in the eastern US.



"After seeing tremendous growth over the past few years, we now need to significantly increase our production capabilities," said Tom Ennis, cCEO of Oberto Brands. "We chose Nashville as the location for Oberto's new production facility because of its great business climate and incredible workforce; we look forward to partnering with this dynamic, growing city to help us diversify our supply chain and get closer to the fastest growing region of our business."

The company said the plant is scheduled to open during the second quarter of 2013 and it will employ approximately 300 once it is fully operational. ■

Hormel reaps \$2B in new product sales

Hormel Foods Corp. reached \$2 billion in total sales from new products created since 2000, the company announced Nov. 26.

The company's "Go for \$2B by 2012" builds upon Hormel's earlier Billion Dollar Challenge, which generated \$1 billion in sales from new products beginning fiscal year 2000 and ending in fiscal year 2009. Hormel met the Billion Dollar Challenge two years early — by the end of fiscal 2007 — with \$6.19 billion in reported total sales with more than \$1 billion coming from new product sales, according to the company.

New product releases across the company's business divisions contributed to the goal. Hormel said the most successful new products include Hormel party trays, Hormel Natural Choice deli meats, Hormel Compleats microwave meals and Jennie-O Turkey Store oven ready items and turkey burgers.

"Our company was founded on innovation and that spirit continues to guide us today," said Jeffrey Ettinger, chairman, president and CEO. "Generating more than \$2 billion in sales from products that didn't exist 12 years ago is a remarkable accomplishment. I am proud of all our 19,600 employees around the world whose hard work and commitment to making Hormel Foods successful continues to propel our company forward." ■





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Sanderson pulls plug on would-be plant site

Sanderson Farms Inc. announced Nov. 13 that Nash County, NC, will no longer be the site for its new poultry-processing complex.

Sanderson Farms had previously announced sites in Nash County had been selected for the location of a new poultry-processing complex subject to various contingencies. The company further announced construction of the new complex remains on hold pending improvement in market fundamentals, including the supply and price of corn and other feed grains. The processor was initially interested in building a chicken-processing plant on 145 acres on N.C. 97 and planned to hire 1,100 employees. However, opposition from local residents and the city of Wilson has lingered for two years and resulted in two lawsuits over their concern about the potential impact the operation would have on local water supplies.

“While we are disappointed that Nash County will no longer be considered for this project, we understand the need for certainty with respect to Sanderson Farms’ ability to move forward with construction in a timely manner once the other contingencies are met,” said Robby Davis, a member of the Nash County Board of Commissioners. “Unfortunately, various legal challenges will not allow us to meet Sanderson Farms’ schedule without the possibility of delay.”

“We very much appreciate the hard work of everyone in Nash County who worked diligently to recruit us to the area,” added Joe Sanderson Jr., chairman and CEO of Sanderson Farms. “Today’s announcement will affect the location, but not the timing, of the next poultry complex for Sanderson Farms.” ■

McDonald’s USA names new president

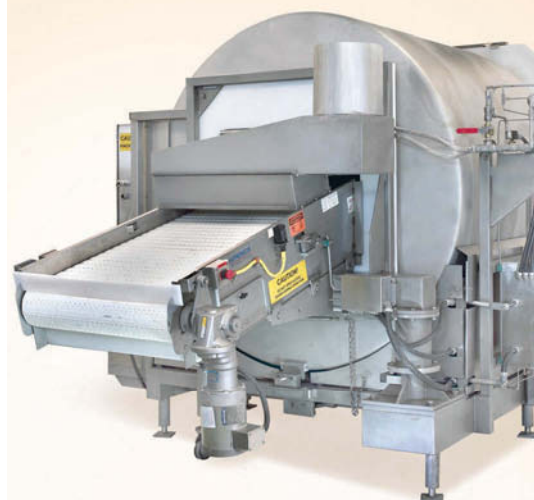
Jeff Stratton, formerly global chief restaurant officer for McDonald’s Corp., was named president of McDonald’s USA, effective Dec. 1. He succeeds Jan Fields, who is leaving the company after more than 35 years.

Stratton began his career at McDonald’s more than 40 years ago, beginning with his start as a crew member in Detroit. He held numerous US field operations positions before becoming West Division president in 2001. Shortly thereafter, he was promoted to chief restaurant officer for McDonald’s USA, a role he held until joining the global team in 2005.

“Jeff’s roots in restaurant operations, his strong leadership and his innovative actions driving our Plan to Win framework make him the right choice to lead the US business,” said Tim Fenton, COO. “Don Thompson and I are confident in Jeff’s deep experience and his dedication to finding solutions that are right for our customers and shareholders.” ■



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Activists on the attack

For quite some time, the US Dept. of Agriculture has been championing the idea of expanding local agriculture and agri-business. USDA is encouraging the use and consumption of local and regional foods. Agriculture

one of its farm oxen and processed the animal for food served at the college dining hall. This raised the ire animal-rights activists. The 11-year-old ox, named Lou, was put to sleep after an injury to his hind leg deteriorated.

This ox and another one named Bill (pictured) were retired this past summer from the college's working farm. The plan had always been to turn the animals into beef products to be served in the college dining hall.

This is nothing new for the college. It has done the same previously with other college farm animals, in keeping with the school's support of local and sustainable agriculture. But this time, the decision was criticized

emails critical of the college's decision were sent to the college from all over.

Worse yet, even slaughterhouses located not far from Green Mountain College were threatened, preventing the college at first from finding a place to butcher the animals, officials said.

This case touches on the relationship between ethics and humane treatment of animals. The ethics are on the side of the college, because it believes it will be more humane to euthanize the animals, so they will not suffer, and use them for food, as part of the local and sustainable approach to agriculture being encouraged by USDA.

The activists, who probably oppose the idea of anyone eating meat at all, would prefer the animals to go to a sanctuary, even though the veterinarians believe that would make them suffer inhumanely. No doubt, the activists have taken this stand to gain publicity and make agriculture and the meat industry look bad.

The incident also points to the increasing ignorance about how food is produced in this country. While only about 2 percent of Americans are actively involved in agriculture or agribusiness, this ignorance about "where our food really comes from" seems to be growing. The emphasis on local and sustainable agriculture is a good step, but the industry must do even more to abate continuing attempts by animal-rights activists to hurt the US meat and poultry industry. ■



Photo courtesy of Associated Press

Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan recently announced awarding of grants to encourage consumption of local foods, including meat and poultry, in the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs.

Such a policy is helpful to both big and small food companies. The policy and encouragement gives small meat and poultry processors a better shot locally. Large food processors, including America's meat packers and poultry producers, continue to market their products all over the country and the world. Everyone gets their chance to produce and sell products, and depending on the size of the processors, they cater to their areas of strength.

But a recent case in Vermont would put a damper on this, thanks to animal-welfare activists. Green Mountain College, a rural, agricultural college in Poultney, Vt., recently euthanized

by animal-rights activists, who said the oxen should go to a sanctuary instead. In a statement, the college said it decided to put down the ox after conferring with veterinarians.

Green Mountain College said, "The arrival of cold temperatures and icy conditions are certain to increase his suffering, and we have concurred with our veterinarians' judgment it was not humane for him to suffer further." The college also said publicly that the other ox, Bill, would not be sent to a sanctuary either. Instead, the animal would remain at the college farm and receive veterinary care consistent with appropriate livestock practices. Eventually, the second ox would also be slaughtered and turned into meat for the college. After this information came out, animal-rights activists and other critics circulated and signed online petitions. Thousands of

Bernard Shire is a contributing editor based in Lancaster, Pa. Shire also works as a food safety consultant and writer for Shire & Associates LLC.

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2012 REVIEW.....

Corporate challenges



Drought, LFTB and rising feed costs create hurdles in 2012 and set the stage for the New Year

BY JOEL CREWS
jcrews@sosland.com

While certain market challenges were apparent coming into 2012, each year there are unforeseen issues that blindside the industry – and this year was no exception. Shrinking supplies, unsteady demand and passing along higher prices to customers were just some of the realities meat and poultry processors were braced for heading into the New Year. But no one could have seen the costly effects of a historic drought that would deal a crippling blow to the industry at mid-year. Likewise, nobody predicted the disastrous impact of media reports misrepresenting the production of lean, finely textured beef (under the misnomer of “pink slime”) used in ground beef supplied to retail outlets and quick-service restaurants. Adding insult to injury, was the decision by the Environmental Protection Agency to deny requests to waive the Renewable Fuel Standard, further pressuring prices on livestock feed in the wake of the devastating drought of 2012.

Through it all, many high-profile companies managed to realize higher sales in the year and in some cases, profitable results, due in most cases to the success of value-added and packaged meat programs. This year’s media events and market conditions in the US pushed some company’s into bankruptcy, forced some plants to shut down, while others looked to opportunities outside the country, where the price of doing business is more favorable.

Feeling the fallout

As recently as last month, JBS SA, based in São Paulo, Brazil, announced some good news tempered with bad news, indicative of the challenges facing US processors. As part of a plan to bolster its beef production in Brazil by 15 percent, JBS will start up six new slaughtering facilities, adding 1.2 million head to its capacity by mid-year and up to an annual capacity of 2 million head by the end of 2013.



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During a conference call announcing the results of its fiscal third quarter, which included a quarterly profit of \$178 million, CEO, Wesley Batista said the forecast for beef production in Brazil is exceedingly positive.

“The cost of raising an animal in the United States is twice the cost of raising an animal in Brazil. So, they are reducing the size of their herd,” Batista said, due in large part to the drought-induced rise in feed costs.

Meanwhile, Dakota Dunes, SD-based Beef Products Inc., a manufacturer of lean, finely textured beef (LFTB), announced this past May it would close three of its plants. The company made the decision after demand for LFTB diminished as a result of media reports called into question the safety of the FDA-approved product.

Also sent reeling from the challenging market conditions in 2012 was Fresno, Calif.-based Zacky Farms, which filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in October. The processor of turkey and chicken cited skyrocketing feed costs as the cause of its financial hardship.

A perfect storm

Reacting to the widespread drought in much of the US, most livestock producers brought their animals to slaughter early rather than endure the higher feed costs, which served to shrink the nation’s herd. During the Kansas Livestock Association’s annual convention this past month, Randy Blach, vice president of CattleFax told attendees how the worst drought in nearly 100 years has resulted in the US cattle herd size shrinking by as many as 1 million head. He also said consumers should expect to pay up to 8 percent more for meat in the coming year, thanks to the summer’s conditions.

According to many processors, curbing the rising price of meat was dealt a costly blow when the EPA denied industry-wide requests to waive the Renewable Fuel Standard, creating more pressure on feed prices by mandating increased ethanol production. Responding to this decision, Donnie Smith, Tyson Foods president and CEO, bristled, saying: “The decision is a disappointment and frankly, I

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think it's a disservice to US consumers. Our nation just experienced one of the worst droughts in almost 50 years and yet it didn't seem serious enough to give US consumers a relief on higher food prices."

Smith's comments came as Tyson reported its end-of-year results for fiscal 2012 this past month. The company reported income of \$583 million, equal to \$1.64 per share on the common stock, which compared with income of \$750 million, or \$2.04 per share, during the previous year. Sales for the year were \$33.3 billion, up 3 percent from \$32.3 billion. The declining income and EPS were directly attributable to the volatile commodity markets.

Smith said during an earnings call that the company achieved record sales in the face of challenging market conditions. "Fiscal 2013 is likely to be equally, if not more, difficult," he said, "but there will always be challenging circumstances in this business."

In fiscal 2013, Tyson Foods is anticipating an incremental \$600 million in feed ingredient costs. Tyson's

Chicken segment led the charge in fiscal 2012, with operating income of \$446 million during the year, up 171 percent from \$164 million during the previous year. Sales for the segment were \$11,591 million, up 5 percent from \$11,017 million.

Sales in the Beef and Pork segments at Tyson posted improved results, but were compromised by challenges in the commodity markets. Operating income within the Beef segment was \$218 million, down 53 percent from \$468 million during the previous year. Sales for the Beef segment were \$13,755 million, up 2 percent from \$13,549 million during the previous year.

The Pork segment posted operating income of \$417 million, down 26 percent from \$560 million during the previous year. Sales for the segment were \$5,510 million, up 1 percent from \$5,460 million.

Commenting on the fiscal 2012 earnings decline, Smith said Tyson Foods made some "missteps" during the year. Additionally, some losses were related to the company's

equipment?

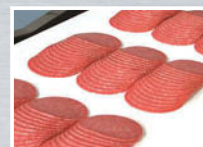
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global operations, but he said he expects improved results in the coming year.

“Our start-up operations in Brazil and China lost a little over \$100 million in fiscal year ‘12,” he said. “In China, as we bring on more company-owned housing in 2013, allowing us to move more of our mix away from whole-sale and into more desirable channels, we will reduce our losses substantially. .

“We made some missteps in parts of our domestic business that cost us, too, Smith said. “Even with these missteps we still had very strong results in 2012.” He said the company learned from these mistakes.

“We won’t be making them again, which gives us a head start on 2013,” he added.

Soldiering on

In early September, C. Larry Pope, president and CEO of Smithfield Foods, reported 2013 fiscal first quarter earnings of \$61.7 million or \$0.40 a share compared with

\$82.1 million or \$0.49 a share during the same period the previous year.

Sales for the quarter were \$3.091 billion, a very slight decline compared with the first quarter of fiscal 2012 when sales were \$3.094 billion.

In his comments on the company’s first-quarter performance, Pope referenced the rising cost of production and the impact on business during the quarter.

“On the operating side, our results reflect the ongoing turmoil in all protein and grain-based businesses today, high volatility and increasing cost of production primarily tied to higher grain costs,” he said. He went on to say that while the company’s hog production business got off to a profitable start in the first quarter, its fresh pork results were “disappointing.” Pope cited the influence of high-priced product and the challenge of a surplus of up to 3 percent more meat to sell this year in a sluggish retail environment.

“We did not have a good quarter in fresh pork,” Pope said. “As most of you know, the summer months are generally the worst months of the year for fresh pork, and that was the case this year.”

Pope concluded, by saying that he expects better days ahead in the remaining three quarters of Smithfield’s fiscal year. “While I’m not nearly satisfied with this quarter’s results, I am not really worried about fresh pork and fully expect fresh pork profitability to be fine for the year.”

During a Nov. 20 earnings call, Jeffrey Ettinger, president and CEO of Austin, Minn.-based Hormel Foods, referenced his company’s outlook on 2013 as it reported positive results for the end of its fourth quarter and for the fiscal year. For the year, Hormel reported earnings of \$1.86 per share, a 7 percent increase over the previous fiscal year. He pointed out that for the first time in the company’s history, sales exceeded \$8 billion, topping out at \$8.2 billion for the full year, a 4-percent increase over the previous year.

Top of mind for the company in 2013 are higher grain costs and volatile protein costs and processing margins, Ettinger said.

“We plan on reducing our harvest levels in both our Jennie-O Turkey Store and Refrigerated Foods segments by 1 percent to 2 percent,” as a means of limiting Hormel’s exposure to the rising commodity costs. “We will also continue to take strategic and modest price increases where we need them,” he said. ■

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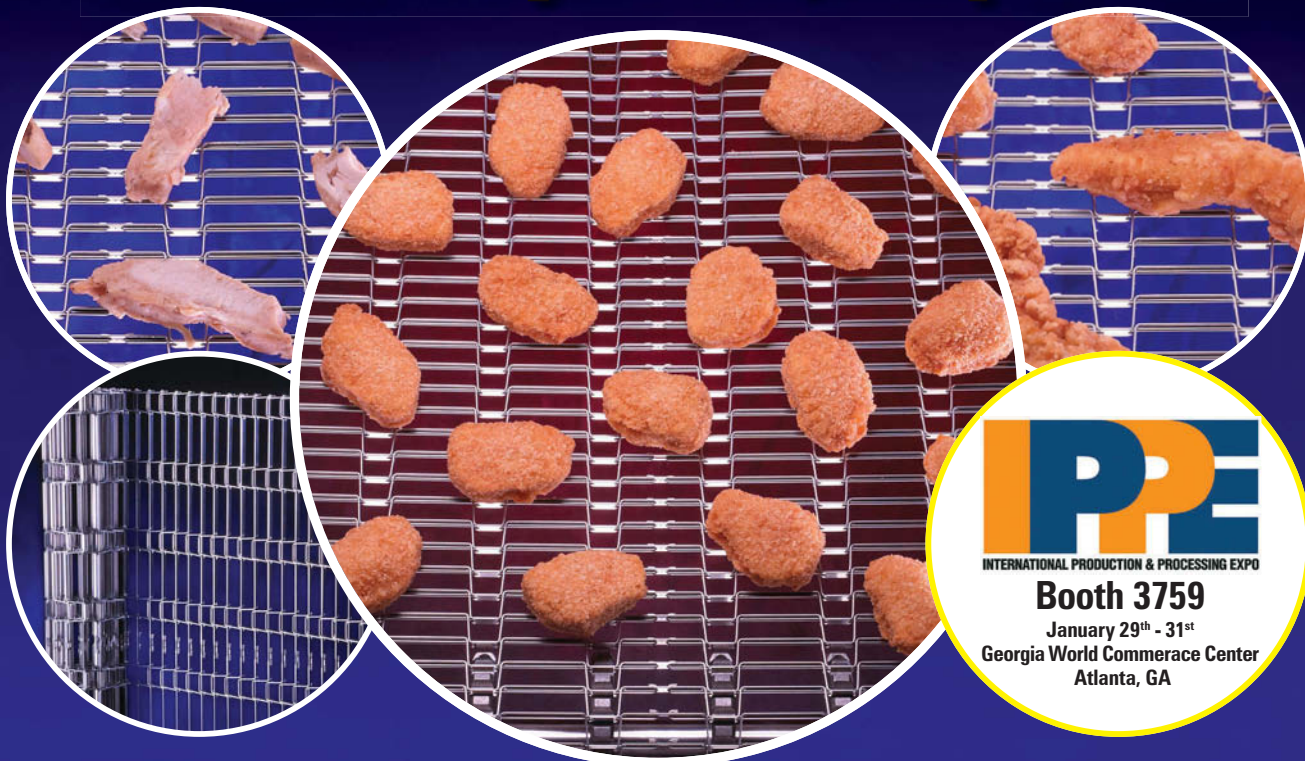
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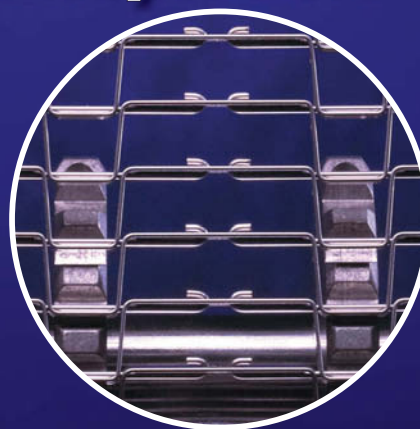


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2012 REVIEW.....

Pushing for profitability



Beef, pork processors look for a happier New Year

BY KIMBERLIE CLYMA
kclyma@sosland.com

At the start of each year, economists and forecasters attempt to predict what lies ahead for the industry – but no one came close to predicting the challenges the meat industry faced in 2012. There was no crystal ball showing the “pink slime” fiasco and the economic and job losses that would follow. And the fallout from this summer’s drought is still being assessed and will most likely impact beef supply and demand well into 2013 and beyond.

According to US Dept. of Agriculture reports, total red-meat production for 2012 is projected slightly lower than in 2011, as is per capita disappearance (or consumption). While poultry per capita consumption was down during the first half of 2012, it is projected to be down only about 2.4 percent for all of 2012, with total red meat and poultry per capita consumption down less than 1.5 percent.

Relief for the agriculture and livestock industry is not likely to come soon. According to USDA forecasters, “Relief for either cattle feeders or beef packers looks unlikely in 2013, except at the expense of one or the other, until higher cattle prices are matched by higher retail beef prices, feeder cattle prices decline and/or lower corn prices result in feed costs low enough to allow cattle feeding profits. Feeder cattle prices will likely move higher over the longer term as feeder cattle supplies dwindle, reflecting heifer retention for breeding and successively smaller calf crops.”

Corn prices are not likely to decline much until corn supplies increase significantly, which is not anticipated before harvest begins in fall 2013.

“Lower corn production has raised commodity prices and this combined with the amount of corn diverted to

the ethanol industry has exacerbated input costs for producers,” said J. Patrick Boyle, president and CEO of the American Meat Institute.

“Fighting for significant reform of the Renewable Fuel Standard will help ease the pressure on high grain prices and help us rebuild our herds,” he added. “It is essential that we all be vocal about the need to let our nation’s ethanol industry stand on its own and operate in the free market as all other users of corn do.”

Year-end results

As of Oct. 28, 54 percent of pastures and ranges in the United States were rated poor to very poor, compared with 58 percent on Sept. 9, just 40 percent at the same time in 2011, and 31 percent on average from 2000 to 2010. Lack of pasture is forcing growers to place cattle on feed at lower weights; this coupled with higher grain prices is further reducing prices of feeder cattle in the near term.

The impact of placing cattle on feed sooner is likely to result in greater production declines in 2013 than in 2012, potentially leading to higher prices in 2013 and beyond. The final numbers for beef production in 2012 is projected to end up being 2.3 percent lower than 2011 levels, and decline another 4.2 percent in 2013, according to USDA Economic Research Service data. In addition:

- Feedlot operators are paying lower prices for cattle as higher feed costs and reduced availability of pasture lead to increased supply of feeder cattle. Feeder cattle prices are expected to remain in the mid to upper \$140 range for the remainder of this year and into 2013.

- Imports of feeder cattle from Mexico began to decline in July and August and continued to drop in September.

- Heat stress, higher feed prices and the potential for reduced hog and poultry inventories continue to dampen the outlook for pork and poultry production into 2013.

- Broiler production estimates for 2012 and 2013 have been reduced to 36,889 and 36,445 million lbs., respectively, down from 37,201 million lbs. in 2011, due to higher feed costs.

- Hog farrowings are expected to decline in the second-half of 2012 and the first three quarters of 2013 because of high anticipated feed prices. Pork production for 2013 is expected to be slightly more than 1 percent below 2012 at 22,940 million lbs.

- Milk production in 2012 is projected to be 1.7 percent higher than 2011, but high feed costs are expected to re-

sult in essentially no change in milk production in 2013. While milk prices are projected to remain lower than 2011 levels in both 2012 and 2013, anticipated prices for 2013 were raised somewhat in the November World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) report. Milk prices received by farmers averaged \$20.14 per hundredweight (100 lbs.) in 2011, and are projected at \$18.50-\$18.60 per hundredweight in 2012 and at \$19.10-\$20.00 per hundredweight in 2013.

Consumer effects

Experts predict the impact of the 2012 drought on consumers won’t be fully felt until 2013. The Food Institute predicts the drought will raise the year’s grocery bill for a family of four by \$351.12 – \$44 of which will be toward meat purchases. These increases come while Americans are still battling the recession.

“According to CattleFax, consumers can expect to pay 5 to 8 percent more at the meat counter next year whether



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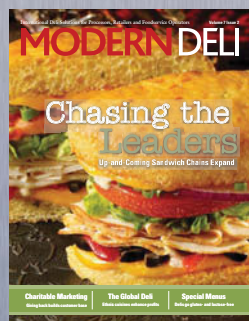
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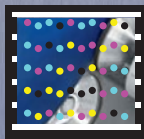
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you buy beef, pork or chicken,” Boyle said. “While we are seeing an initial rise in meat supplies due to herd liquidation, which may offer some relief from high prices, in the long term, our shrinking herds will send meat prices higher.

“Fortunately, consumer demand has remained strong despite these price increases. We hope we can continue to maintain that demand by providing high-quality products,” he added.

These days, more than half of the beef consumed is in ground form, since it tends to be the cheapest option in the red-meat case. Average price per lb. for beef at the end of October was \$4.77, up \$0.10 since May. Retail beef prices appear to have reached at least a temporary upper limit, not yet breaking much above \$5 per lb. for Choice beef, according to USDA’s ERS. How long the apparent \$5 per lb. ceiling on Choice beef will hold is uncertain, though.

At the start of 2012, forecasters said beef supplies would likely decrease in 2012. According to USDA forecasts, beef supplies were set to fall to 54.1 lbs. per person, down 3.3 lbs. from 2011’s 57.3 lbs. As it turns out, the reduction in beef supply didn’t drop as much expected – the prediction for year-end beef supply for 2012 is 56.8 lbs. per person; still down, but not as bad as anticipated. However, a further decline is expected in 2013 as available beef supplies are set to fall to 54.8 lbs. by the end of the year.

“US demand for the higher-quality and higher-priced cuts will be pressured by the lack of supply. We can expect overseas demand for high-quality US red meats to remain strong but to what point – this depends on the elasticity of demand in each market,” Boyle explained.

“As well, US meat exporters will explore increasing demand for non-traditional beef and pork muscle cuts in foreign markets to diversify product availability,” he said. “We should see strong demand in the US for imported lower-quality beef to assist in easing prices of processed meat products at least as long as US to foreign currency exchange rates are favorable [‘weak’ relative to the US dollar] to foreign suppliers.”

Pork processors don’t face the supply and retail price challenges that the beef industry is experiencing. High corn and soybean meal prices are issues, but pork producers can adjust production quicker in order to accommodate price issues. Forecasters are predicting that there will be plentiful supplies of pork into 2013 which may result in consumers looking at pork as an alternative meat selection to beef as prices remain high. ■

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2012 REVIEW.....

Up in the air



Feed costs and a sluggish economy create a cloudy 2013 forecast for the poultry industry

BY ERICA SHAFFER
eshaffer@sosland.com

The poultry industry has taken the long road to recovery. After the poultry market collapsed in 2008 along with the general economy, poultry producers began a comeback in 2010. By 2011, growers scaled back supplies and struck the right balance between production and demand. The industry was finally able to entertain the prospect of profitability in 2012.

The poultry industry began the first half 2012 on a high note. But by the second half, the situation turned. The worst drought in 50 years, record-high feed costs and the diversion of corn into ethanol production slowed the industry's rebound. This year does not compare to the

challenges of 2008, but poultry-industry stakeholders are concerned that market conditions sparked by the drought of 2012 will pressure the industry in 2013.

"If you spoke to anyone in the industry, they would describe the year as concerning on a number of fronts," says Joel Brandenburger, president of the National Turkey Federation. "Certainly, nothing happened this year that was as catastrophic as what we saw in the second half of 2008 and in 2009. But what you have seen is another run-up in input and feed costs."

Feed costs surged in 2012, but unlike the price spikes of 2008, prices didn't come down very far off the spike,



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Brandenburger says. “In ’08 they spiked very high, and then by the end of the year came down very sharply,” he says. “This year they spiked, and they haven’t come off much more than a dollar from the high point. We’re looking at substantially higher feed costs this year.”

Granted, the situation is not as dire compared to 2008, but industry stakeholders are on high alert to the troubling trends, according to Brandenburger.

“There are some troubling trends, but you would find that they’ve already taken a hard look at their marketing and production plans for 2013 and are beginning to react accordingly,” Brandenburger says. “I don’t think you’re going to see uniform action across the board – there may be some companies that have reason to increase production.

“Industry wide, you’ll probably end up seeing a small decrease in production for next year,” he adds.

The turkey industry saw prices soften for some turkey parts. There were sharp decreases in prices for dark meat, wings and breast trim, Brandenburger says, and that is a troubling trend.

“It is a great way to take the next big step forward in modernizing and making the inspection system as science-based as possible.”

– Joel Brandenburger, NTF

“I think most people in the industry feel that this softness could last into 2013,” he says. “So, there’s some concern as we start the New Year.”

The first half of 2012 was the better half for the chicken industry, according to Bill Roenigk, senior vice president of the National Chicken Council. But the forecast for profitability in 2013 is precarious, at best.

“Record-high feed costs during the second half of 2012 and undoubtedly at least the first half of 2013, if not the full year, makes any predictions about the chicken business in the New Year somewhat more difficult and a bit more precarious and the forecast becomes even more interesting,” he says.

Ultimately, the industry will be challenged again to find the proper supply-and-demand balance to achieve positive momentum in 2013.

“In 2009 when chicken production decreased 3.8 percent, the wholesale broiler price increased 6.2 percent,”

Roenigk says. “In 2012, with chicken production estimated by USDA to be off 1.2 percent from 2011, the composite broiler price will most likely increase about 8 percent from the year before. USDA is forecasting about a 1 percent or so decrease for chicken production in 2013. Certainly, a modest increase in the wholesale price will not begin to offset the double-digit percent increase in feed costs.

“If, however, chicken production is down 3 percent or more in 2013 as certain private analysts believe, the increase in composite broiler price could begin to cover ballooning feed costs,” he adds. “But the question remains: Will a possible double-digit percent increase in the wholesale price of chicken be enough to offset and cover record-high feed costs?”

Expanding exports

Given the fuzzy picture of the domestic poultry market, exports will be critical to the vitality of the poultry industry.

Exports have been a great story for the turkey industry, NTF’s Brandenburger says.

The turkey industry recorded 583 million lbs. of exports in 2010, which increased to slightly more than 700 million lbs. of exports in 2011, Brandenburger says. In the first quarter of 2011, the industry recorded just less than 160 million lbs. of turkey meat exported, compared to 180 million lbs. of turkey meat exported in the first quarter of 2012. This represents a 13 percent increase in turkey-meat exports.

“I do know that in the fourth quarter some countries that have not been buying as much began to buy again,” Brandenburger says. “There’s reason to be optimistic the export story will be at least as positive this year as it was last.”

A robust and expanding export market is critically important to the economic viability and well-being of the US chicken industry, as 19 percent of chicken produced in the US is exported, says Tom Super, NCC vice president of communications. Exports of poultry meat for January through September this year reached 3.04 million metric tons with a value of \$4.032 billion, up 6 and 14 percent respectively from the comparable period in 2011, according to data from the USDA’s Foreign Agricultural Service.

“Export markets for chicken are becoming more diversified, so the industry must continue with product diversification to take advantage of these and other new opportunities,” Super says.

Renewable fuels review

The Renewable Fuel Standard was the subject of fierce debate in 2012. Tighter corn supplies prompted calls for a review of the RFS and a waiver from the federal ethanol mandate. The poultry industry's efforts to convince the Environmental Protection Agency to waive the RFS for 2012 and part of 2013 was met with fierce opposition from the renewable fuels industry and would eventually fail. Stakeholders in the poultry industry expressed disappointment by the EPA's decision in November to deny an RFS waiver.

"NCC is indignant that EPA chose to ignore the clear economic argument from tens of thousands of family farmers and poultry producers that the food-to-fuel policy is causing and will cause severe harm to regions in which those farmers and producers operate," NCC's Super says. "More than a dozen poultry companies since the second renewable fuels standard was implemented in 2007 have filed for bankruptcy, been sold to other companies or have simply closed their doors."

In October, Zacky Farms LLC filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection with the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of California in Sacramento, Calif. Cagle's Inc. filed for bankruptcy in October 2011 after several years of significant operating losses. Cagle's filed the petitions in the US Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Georgia in Atlanta, Ga. Cagle's had been operating for more than 60 years.

Brandenburger said the EPA's decision while disappointing, didn't come as a surprise. He says the regulation would have made it impossible for EPA to grant a waiver.

"It was created as a political pro-

cess," he says. "It was written so that it would be almost impossible for EPA to grant a waiver.

"The fact that the EPA did not grant a waiver in a year with a drought like this shows the system is, for all intents and purposes, rigged," Brandenburger adds. "I'm not saying anyone did anything inappropriate at EPA, I'm just



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saying that the law is written to make it almost impossible for EPA to grant a waiver. That's very troubling. If not this year, when would you possibly do it?

"Fundamental reform of the RFS is going to be essential going forward. We have quite a bit of confidence that Congress is going to take this issue up next year," he continues.

Inspection shift

Changes to poultry inspection rules also will be on the poultry industry's regulatory radar for 2013. Under the proposed program, company employees in most chicken and turkey slaughter plants would have the responsibility for checking eviscerated carcasses for visual defects such as bruising and sorting out those that are unlikely to pass federal inspection. A single federal inspector would be stationed at the end of the line, just before the chill tank, to conduct a final visual inspection.

Additionally, other USDA personnel will work in the

plant, but off the line, to ensure that the plant is meeting its pathogen reduction program and its Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) program. A USDA pilot program designed to test the new system was limited to 20 chicken plants and five turkey plants.

"The exciting part about it is the food-safety record out of those model plants was excellent – every bit as good as the traditionally inspected plants, in some cases better, Brandenburger says. "By opening it up to everybody who's qualified it will allow in most plants, the USDA inspectors, to be redeployed so that they're looking more at the microbiological inspection activities that can best help control pathogens on raw poultry, and allow the plant workers to do some of the routine non-food safety related sorting that the government inspectors had previously been responsible for.

"It is a great way to take the next big step forward in modernizing and making the inspection system as science-based as possible," he adds.

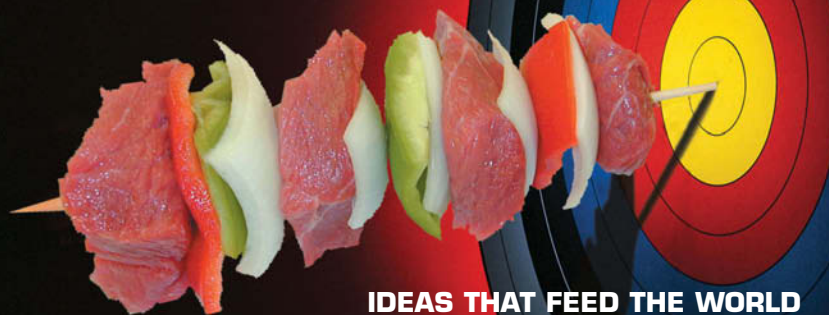
NCC also supports the move toward a scientifically based approach to poultry slaughter that more closely reflects Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point principles, Super says. However, NCC suggests the proposal's success depends on additional clarifications to the proposed rule and illustrations of how it will be implemented.

Specifically, NCC's comments: Recommends necessary implementation procedures; address the proposed sampling requirements; recommend changes to the inspection process for ready-to-cook standards; explain why avian leucosis is not a public health concern; recommend special training regarding septicemic and toxemic conditions; explain why line speed should not be arbitrarily limited; address worker safety concerns; request clarification regarding online and offline antimicrobial use; and address chilling requirements.

NTF's Brandenburger says antibiotic use in the industry and how

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those drugs are regulated also will be a topic on the Federation's radar in 2013.

Ongoing animal welfare

The poultry industry has a full plate of issues and concerns to monitor in 2013, including animal welfare. The past year has seen animal welfare activists make significant advances in their agenda to transform conventional food animal production. The poultry industry has had its share of undercover video "exposes" and was not immune to the pressure activist groups exerted on the industry to force change in production practices. Nevertheless, animal welfare will remain a priority for the industry.

"The chicken industry has come together on a specific set of expectations that will ensure that the birds they raise are taken care of with the highest standards starting at hatch," Super says. "Since healthy, top-quality animals are needed for food, proper treatment is not only an ethical obligation, but it just makes good business sense."

The NCC Animal Welfare Guidelines and Audit Checklist were developed to help producers and processors ensure the welfare of birds. Super says the guidelines have been widely adopted within the chicken industry.

"These guidelines cover every phase of the chicken's life and offers science-based recommendations for proper treatment," he adds. "We'll be working to revise and update them in 2013."

The National Turkey Federation also developed a comprehensive set of welfare guidelines with an audit tool, according to Brandenburg. These items are updated every two years.

"We've found that this document

has been very successful," Brandenburg says. "We're very excited about what we've done and continue to do in that area." ■

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A Legend

Mother-daughter team keeps Steve's Meat Market thriving

It's not listed on the label, but love is a critical ingredient in every one of the 250-plus sausage varieties produced at Steve's Meat Market in Ellendale, Minn.

On Jan. 29, 2013, this small family owned business will celebrate its 40th anniversary. This is the story of a sausage-maker's legacy that lives on through his family. In reality, it's the story of legend.

Founder Steve Eaker learned to become a master at the craft from the farm up. He learned about butchering on the family farm. When he was just nine, his family went away for the day and Steve took the initiative to slaughter six hogs and dress them. He soon learned about smoking and curing and at the age of 13, when his grandfather was ill, he took over all

the meat-related chores, becoming the neighborhood butcher.

Steve went on to graduate from the meat-cutting program in Pipestone and later cut meat in the Twin Cities area. In 1973, he and his wife, Donnavon, established their small retail market in Ellendale.

Together, they put their focus on meats and sausage, using a small stuffer he borrowed from his uncle. When he over-stuffed his first batch of summer sausage and the stuffer blew up, he had to purchase a new one, but he was reluctant to spend money on a linker. Instead, he kept hand-tying sausage until 1990.

Things were on a roll at the small shop in Ellendale, with Steve the perfectionist expanding his line-up to more than 250 smoked and cured

meat products, winning awards at state and national competitions and being regularly called on to go out teaching the craft and helping others get started. He never turned anyone down.

His prowess earned more than 370 awards for cured and smoked meats, and Steve was inducted into the Cured Meats Hall of Fame in 1996. He also was awarded the Annual Achievement Award by the American Association of Meat Processors (AAMP) in 2005.

But a week after Christmas 2005, Steve was diagnosed with cancer and succumbed to the disease on April 1, 2006.

Carrying on

Since Steve ran the production to his own exacting standards, Donnavon enlisted their daughter, Rachael Lee, who had worked with her dad for 10 years, to work as the full-time sausage-production manager. The two began writing down Steve's recipes. Donnavon continued handling the business end of their enterprise and Rachael, a marketing and business graduate of Augsburg College applied

lives on

BY STEVE KRUT
meatpoultry@sosland.com

her father's techniques and tricks of the trade to maintaining the equipment and the finer points of sausage and meats production.

Not sure they could make it, Donnavon contemplated selling the business.

"There were people interested in buying us out," she recalls, "but they really didn't want to pay what the business was really worth. The economy was down. We were the largest employer in our town of 671 people. We knew we had an obligation to those 18 employees to try to make it work."

By all standards, the business was elite for its size; the 5,000-sq.-ft. operation boasted an enchanting retail area, the most modern processing and packaging equipment and a reputation that reached nationwide.

But it also had the true grit of a mother and daughter determined to carry on the dream of a meat legend.

"I always questioned Steve about whether he was married to me or the business," Donnavon reflects. "Now I find myself married to the business."

Donnavon and Rachael have forged ahead to not only carry on Steve's Meat Market, but have seen it flourish in new directions.

Donnavon still handles the financial end of the business and has worked to private-label their meat products for the upscale Byerly's & Lunds supermarket chain. She does weekly radio ads and says her voice "is becoming known to most folks" in the 75-mile area surrounding the El-

lendale location just off Interstate 34.

Three, one-truck Vortron smoke-houses, mixer grinders, four tumblers, lifting systems and a gleaming processing area are testaments to good planning of the production area.

"Dad took the original blueprints and made changes to keep things flowing in one direction," Rachael says.

The USDA inspected plant serves accounts throughout Minnesota and in nearby Iowa and does spiral slicing of hams for numerous other processors. Radio ads, two billboards along

the interstate and word-of-mouth serve as their only advertising.

The "Smokey Acres" in-house label on many of their products is also creative, with the word "acre" rhyming with the pronunciation of the last name Eaker.

The business slaughters one day a week, usually eight to 14 head of cattle and two-dozen hogs, these days a rarity for a downtown, landlocked establishment. In addition to the custom slaughter, the firm has a good reputation for game processing, offering

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Workers at Steve's Meat Market utilize technology from VC999 to package its hand-crafted products originated by Steve Eaker.

sportsmen a full variety of summer sausages, fresh sausage, bratwurst, snack sticks, jerky and other offerings.

Winning tradition

Rachael has not only held true to her father's winning recipes, but has continued his winning tradition, garnering three awards in last spring's cured meats competition of the Minneso-

wieners and ring bologna in the American Cured Meat Championships.

She has also developed some new products, including a turkey, sauerkraut and Swiss sausage called the "Turkey Rachael."

The innovative shop offers retail customers sausages of nearly every stripe, wild rice, sauerkraut or mustard brats, Thuringers, Cajun and Euro-

pean varieties and smoked hams, bacons and turkeys.

This past summer, the firm took home a grand championship for non-fermented, semi-dry summer sausage. Steve's also earned a pair of reserve grand championships for

pean varieties and smoked hams, bacons and turkeys.

Taco, pork and pizza patties are displayed alongside spinach and feta cheese and smoked mango jalapeño chicken sausage. The attractive retail area also features 85 varieties of cheeses and gourmet private-label condiments, sauces, spices and seasonings.

Emulating perfection is a formidable task. But for Donnavon Eaker and Rachael Lee, the lessons taught to them by an extraordinary meat processor remain their guiding light. ■

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

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Sodium solutions

Debates about consumption and research continue

BY JEFF GELSKI AND KEITH NUNES
meatpoultry@sosland.com

Sodium reduction remains a top-of-mind issue for the food industry, according to a recent survey of food manufacturers conducted by the United Kingdom-based Leatherhead Food Research.

In the survey, researchers asked food and beverage industry executives to respond to the comment “Commercialization of emerging technology is the only way of achieving a step change in ...” A little more than 40 percent said either productivity or efficiency while about 40 percent said reduction of fat or reduction of salt. Sustainability was over 35 percent, health and wellness nearly 25 percent.

There is an urgency to achieve greater sodium reduction levels in products because research continues to emerge regarding the impact excess

sodium in the diet may have on individual health and wellness.

For example, a study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, showed a correlation between sodium intake and systolic blood pressure and risk for pre-high blood pressure and high blood pressure among overweight or obese US children.

Digging into the data

Researchers from the CDC estimated average daily sodium intake of 3,387 mg in the 6,235 US children of the ages 8-18 who participated in NHANES 2003-08. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010 recommends 2,300 mg of sodium or less per day for adults. For every 1,000 mg of increased sodium intake per day,

the risk for high blood pressure among overweight and obese children rose 74 percent. Among normal-weight children, the increase was 6 percent, which was not a strong association, said Elena Kuklina, M.D., Ph.D., a nutritional epidemiologist with the CDC who was involved in the study. Among all children, for every 1,000 mg of increased sodium intake per day, the risk for high blood pressure increased 35 percent, she said.

The study divided the children into four groups. The first quartile averaged 2,316 mg of sodium intake per day while the second quartile averaged 3,014 mg, the third quartile averaged 3,642 mg and the fourth quartile averaged 4,589 mg. Kuklina said children in the fourth quartile were twice as likely to have elevated or high

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blood pressure. Mean adjusted systolic blood pressure increased progressively with the sodium intake quartile. Sodium intake and weight status appeared to have synergistic effects on risk for pre-high blood pressure and high blood pressure.

Kuklina said the study had two major limitations. First, it was based on dietary recall, or children being asked to remember what they ate in the past 24 hours, which is not as accurate as urine sample tests. Second, Kuklina said the study was a cross-sectional one in that it measured predictor (sodium intake) and outcome (blood pressure) at the same time. There was no follow-up with the children involved.

Morton Satin, vice president of science and research for the Salt Institute, Alexandria, Va., said he found flaws in the study.

"This paper seems to represent the gradual shift of CDC's focus away from using hard science to clarify the human response to challenges to a form of advocacy-science in order to support a pre-determined agenda," Satin said. In addition to the limitations of basing the study on dietary recall, Satin said he found no indication of the sodium content of the diets. If some of the children ate a bigger overall diet, they probably consumed more sodium.

The American Heart Association said the study shows the need for a

limit to the amount of salt in foods consumed by young people.

Nancy Brown, CEO of the American Heart Association said, "High blood pressure, once viewed as an adult illness, is now affecting more young people because of high-sodium diets and increasing obesity.

"While new nutrition standards for school meals are helping, progress is slow.

This study strongly underscores the need to move faster because our kids are on an early path to heart attacks and strokes."

Reduction continues

In early October, Nestle S.A., Vevey, Switzerland, announced a partnership

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with Chromocell Corp. to identify compounds with the potential to be used as taste-giving ingredients in a range of foods. The joint project is intended to help advance Nestle's nutrition, health and wellness agenda by enabling Nestle to further enhance the nutritional profile of its products.

Based in North Brunswick, NJ, Chromocell is a life-sciences company. The two companies plan to use Chromocell's proprietary "Chromover" technology to screen ingredients to find those that provide similar or equally pleasing tastes to salt.

Nestle, which is investing \$15 million in the collaboration, said the ingredients may help it reduce the amount of salt used in its products

while preserving the tastes consumers are used to.

Nestle claims to be the first company in the food industry to introduce comprehensive policies for the systematic reduction of specific nutrients considered detrimental to health when consumed in excess.

In late September, Kraft Foods Inc. said it is on track to complete a three-year project to reduce sodium by an average of 10 percent across its North American portfolio by the end of 2012.

"We worked hard to make meaningful reductions in sodium without sacrificing the taste, quality or safety of some of North America's favorite foods," said Russ Moroz, vice president of research, development and quality.

Among other products, Kraft Original BBQ Sauce has been updated with a 40 percent sodium reduction and Oscar Mayer Deli-Fresh Smoked Ham and Oscar Mayer Beef Bologna also have 25 percent less sodium.

In total, Kraft has reduced sodium in more than 1,000 stock-keeping units in 24 different product categories. The company offers more than 100 products with either low, reduced or no sodium, including meat products, such as Oscar Mayer Lower Sodium Bacon. ■

Jeff Gelski and Keith Nunes are contributing editors from Food Business News, a sister publication of Meat&Poultry.

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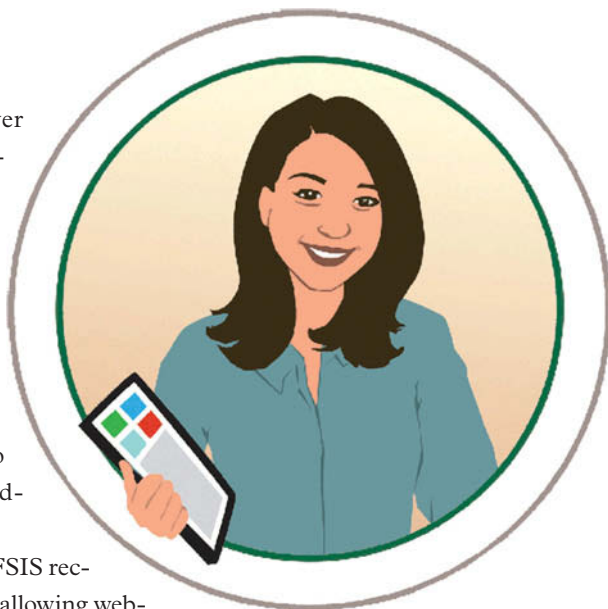
BY BRYAN SALVAGE
bsalvage@sosland.com

Food safety has never been more important to US consumers. In recognizing this, the US Dept. of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service created 'Ask Karen' – a virtual food safety advice website designed to answer consumer food-safety questions.

"In the early 2000s, FSIS recognized technology was allowing websites to use virtual experts to help their audience with various problems, and we began to explore the same tactic for helping the consumers who call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline," says Diane Van, deputy director of FSIS' Food Safety Education Staff. "Putting this [Ask Karen] capability on our website (http://www.fsis.usda.gov/ask_karen/) seemed like a logical next step; it allows people to find answers to their questions around the clock."

In 2004, USDA hotline food-safety experts created a database of questions and answers based on their existing fact sheets and other educational materials. The hotline staff now constantly researches and updates the database based on consumer inquiries or new product data. FSIS only makes changes to the database based on recommendations from its microbiologists and policy staff.

"The interactive site is one of FSIS' many efforts to empower consumers with knowledge as we continue to drive down incidences of foodborne illness," Van says. "USDA knows it is our job to make food as safe as possible before it reaches consumers' tables, but knowing the risk of food poisoning is not zero – and it may never be zero – we have to get the word out about what consumers can do to protect themselves."



Virtual food safety

'Ask Karen' is a virtual food-safety representative who offers advice about properly handling, storing and preparing food to prevent illness. The site is an automated and interactive response system, available 24/7 offering nearly 1,500 food-safety answers searchable by topic and by product. The website gives consumers immediate access to information that can help protect them and their families, any time needed.

'Ask Karen' is backed by real people. The Meat and Poultry Hotline responds to emailed questions and to the live chat questions between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. on weekdays. Its knowledge base is populated with questions that have been asked by real consumers.

As consumers have become more Internet-savvy, they have been using the Ask Karen database and chat in increasing numbers, Van says. They ask the same types of questions their food-safety experts receive via the toll-free hotline on safe cooking, storage, handling, labeling and more.

"During Hurricane Sandy, Ask Karen received an influx of chats about food safety during power outages," Van says. "And around Thanksgiving and Christmas – the busiest season for the hotline, calls center on safe handling and cooking of turkey, ham, beef roasts and holiday buffets."

One of the more memorable calls the hotline has received was from someone wanting to thaw a turkey in the dryer, which is unsafe, Van relays. "So far this holiday season, the top questions we are receiving include: 'How long does it take to cook a turkey, based on weight; How long does it take to thaw a turkey in the refrigerator; How long can I refrigerate a thawed turkey before cooking it; Did I buy a

fresh turkey too soon; Will it be safe until Thanksgiving; and how long is a turkey safe in the freezer?'" she adds.

In May 2011, FSIS created a mobile version of the Ask Karen site. The app is downloadable from the Android

and iTunes app stores. In mobile format, people can take "Karen" with them to the grocery store, farmers market and into the kitchen. In the first year the app was available, traffic to Ask Karen increased 15-fold.

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“Ask Karen and Mobile Ask Karen have a nearly 99 percent self-service rate; nearly all users are able to find the answers to their questions.”

Some of the most frequently asked questions on the app include: “Can *E. coli* be associated with poultry?” and “At what temperatures do bacteria grow the fastest?”

FSIS’ Mobile Ask Karen app provides consumers access to answers to

these and other food-safety questions whenever and wherever they need the information. Consumers might need help when they are in stores buying groceries or in their kitchens or at a grill cooking dinner, Van says.

Ask Karen is available in English and Spanish from desktop computers and mobile devices, and people can either engage in live chats or call the Meat and Poultry Hotline. Ask Karen

also can be accessed via FoodSafety.gov’s Facebook page.

“We know people are using mobile devices more and more to get information when and where they need it, so our most recent focus has been giving people mobile access to ‘Karen,’” Van concludes. ■

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*Turkey packaging
accentuates safety
and ease of use*

BY LARRY AYLWARD
meatpoultry@sosland.com

The Thanksgiving turkeys have long been carved and their leftovers have been turned into everything from turkey soup to turkey tacos. But there's at least one thing consumers may have noticed about the whole birds they purchased this year: Their packaging has never been better.

Turkey processors consider a smorgasbord of options for packaging whole birds, including durability, printability, seal, shrink, gloss, flexibility, handling and ease of use for consumers.

"All of these attributes are important for the packaging of our turkeys," says Bill Klump, senior vice president of corporate marketing for Garner, NC-based Butterball LLC.

Butterball uses an easy-open bag

to provide cooks with a simple and safe way to open the turkey, Klump says. All Butterball whole turkeys include large pull-apart tabs at the bottom center of the package that open in one clean tear.

"We're constantly looking for ways to provide extra convenience to consumers, and this easy-open packaging is an added feature that makes the whole process easier and safer for cooks," Klump says.

Wichita, Kan.-based Cargill, which processes the HoneySuckle White brand, packages whole birds in a high-durability film bag that is vacuumed and sealed with a metal clip at the closure. Some whole birds feature netting around the bags, which also forms a handle for ease in handling by store personnel and consumers. Other bags feature a built-in handle, where a handle is actually part of the bag.

"The bags used provide a high degree of automation, cost effectiveness, high productivity, efficiency and flexibility," says Mike Martin, Cargill's director of communications. "There

is excellent flexibility in bag sizes to accommodate different whole-bird weight ranges. The bags are also easy to hand-carry and have a long track record of acceptance by our customers and consumers."

Klump says the most important packaging components are seal, ease of use for consumers and durability.

"Ensuring that the product is properly sealed and packaged is important to ensure all of our products adhere to the highest food-safety standards," Klump says.

Regarding ease of use, Butterball is always looking for ways to provide added convenience for customers, Klump adds.

"We want to ensure consumers have a positive, safe experience and are always looking for ways to improve," he adds.

Durability for freezing is also vital.

"We want to ensure consumers can freeze their Butterball product without sacrificing quality," Klump says.

Puncture resistance and barriers are also high on the list as well as superior

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print quality and gloss, Klump notes.

Martin also lists durability as a key component. He says the bags Cargill uses are durable enough to allow turkeys to be stored and transported safely, so they get to retailers and consumers in good condition.

Martin also cites preservation of product quality and production efficiency as important to the packaging process. He says printed graphics play a necessary role to provide a package that draws consumer attention at retail and readily communicates a product's features and benefits.

The packaging Cargill uses provides a large surface area for printing product information.

"It's like having a billboard to communicate product features/benefits or promotional offerings," Martin says.

The flexibility in printing enables Cargill to print large, crisp, graphics on the bags, such as those used in the 2012 holiday season Disney-Pixar Blu-Ray DVD promotion for the animated movie "BRAVE," according to Martin.

"Those graphics were used for both our Honeysuckle White and Shady Brook Farms premium turkey brands," he says.

As far as gloss and appearance are concerned, Martin says the package provides "great flexibility" to print a range from matte to high gloss and everything in between.

The L-Bag perseveres

One of the most popular bags in whole-turkey packaging for the past half century has been the Cryovac L-Bag, a vacuum bag for fresh and frozen birds.

"There aren't many products around today that were essentially

the same product that was invented 50 years ago," says Don Smith, marketing director for poultry for Sealed Air's Cryovac brand food packaging.

The L-Bag has evolved over the years. The package also has a new name: It's now called the Super L-bag.

"All of the attributes that are important in this application have improved over the years," Smith says. "But the functionality of the bag is essentially the same. It's a second skin on the bird."

The packaging features a soft vacuum, Smith says, to evacuate most of the air without crushing the cavity of the bird. The bag still features a metal clip like it did 50 years ago. "The biggest change is in the processing itself," Smith says, noting that major changes have occurred with getting the birds into the bags.

Martin says equipment has become more efficient and productive, and the packaging represents proven technology that works for Honeysuckle White's customers and consumers.

Klump is impressed with improvements that have been made in the past 20 years for whole-turkey packaging.

"Improvements have been made in puncture resistance — films are tougher now," he adds. "Print quality has also improved; we have increased ability to print a variety of colors and shrink."

Despite the improvements, Martin and Klump say there's room for more improvement.

"Opportunities always exist to make a product a better experience for the consumer,

whether in portability, ease of opening, etc.," Martin says.

Klump says: "Cook-in films represent a substantial development. This technology increases convenience for consumers by allowing them to move product from the freezer to the oven without having to remove packaging."

Smith says the next evolution in whole-bird packaging will be increased convenience in the form of a cook-in bag.

"We've developed a bag that can be used as the primary package, and that same bag can be the cooking vessel," he says.

The Oven Ease Bags are capable of handling product in a frozen state, Smith notes. "Of course, the processor would have to change the way the [the bird] is packed by leaving out the giblets, and making sure it was seasoned, pumped and ready to cook," he says.

This is happening, but it's not widespread in the turkey industry. A reason for that is tradition, especially at Thanksgiving. Preparing and cooking a turkey in the oven is still a big part of Thanksgiving tradition, Smith says.

That said, Smith says there are plenty of young adults who don't know



Photo courtesy of Sealed Air's Cryovac brand



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how to cook a turkey and might welcome cooking a whole bird in a bag. But it will be a slow transition.

In the meantime, Smith says Sealed Air is listening to processors' requests for improvements in packaging, especially in printing.

"That has been a big issue ... getting the label to 'pop,' " he says. "That's where gloss comes in. Over the years the processing has become much more streamlined, and processors have been demanding that the ink stays on the label. This is a surface-print application. We've had to work with ink suppliers to make sure we have a tough enough ink to handle the conveyors and the way [the turkeys] are handled."

"Opportunities always exist to make a product a better experience for the consumer, including portability and ease of opening."

Sealed Air has also concentrated on making shrink bags easier to open, Smith says.

"It's always a challenge for consumers to get into a vacuum package," he adds, noting that the Cryovac Grip & Tear bag has provided a solution to the dilemma.

Sealed Air usually analyzes its packaging products every few years to decide what it can do to improve and update them, Smith says. A few years ago, the company improved the

opacity and shrink of the bag.

"Opacity is important because you don't want to see the blood through the bag," Smith says. "So, we made the color cream and white."

Puncture resistance and shrink have also improved dramatically over the past several years, Smith says. ■

Larry Aylward is a contributing editor from Medina, Ohio.

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Artisan excellence

BY BRYAN SALVAGE
bsalvage@sosland.com

*Allen Brothers
delivers
premium
quality to
steakhouses
and backyard
chefs*

Thriving, let alone surviving, in today's economy is no easy task for meat and poultry companies. Yet, Chicago-based Allen Brothers Inc. has been thriving since 1893 by providing high-end products to chefs and restaurants domestically and globally.

Annual sales have increased steadily while its primary business goal of focusing on quality, consistency and customer service remains unchanged. "My father [industry visionary Bobby Hatoff, Allen Bros. chairman who passed away in October], always wanted our business to be the best, not the biggest," says Todd Hatoff, 42, president, CEO and fourth generation of the company's founding family.

Allen Bros. offers Prime beef, both dry- and wet-aged, as well as Wagyu beef. Other products include premium pork, veal, lamb, poultry, wild game, seafood, as well as burgers, hot dogs, heat-and-serve entrées, ap-



petizers and even desserts. Servicing major steakhouses, hotels, country clubs and more, Allen Brothers concentrates primarily on the white table cloth restaurant segment. "Beef is our main protein and our biggest category. Within beef, filet is our No. 1 seller," Hatoff says.

Domestic clients include Gene & Georgetti, Chicago; Nick and Sam's Steakhouse, Dallas; and Delmonico's in Philadelphia, just to mention a few. "We have special and unique

partnerships with our customers and have helped many of them win awards. Most recently, the Bull and the Bear in New York won a Silver Spoon for their bone-in ribeye," Hatoff adds.

Allen Brothers is "the Rolls Royce" of steak-cutters, insists Dr. James Marsden, Kansas State Univ. Regent's Distinguished Professor of Food Safety and Security, associate director of the Biosecurity Research Institute located at KSU and senior science advisor for the North American Meat

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Association. Marsden has worked with the company on various projects over the years.

“There is nothing like the products they produce,” he says. “Other steak companies buy Allen Brothers products to use as their target standard. Their meat-cutters are like artists. Nobody does it better.”

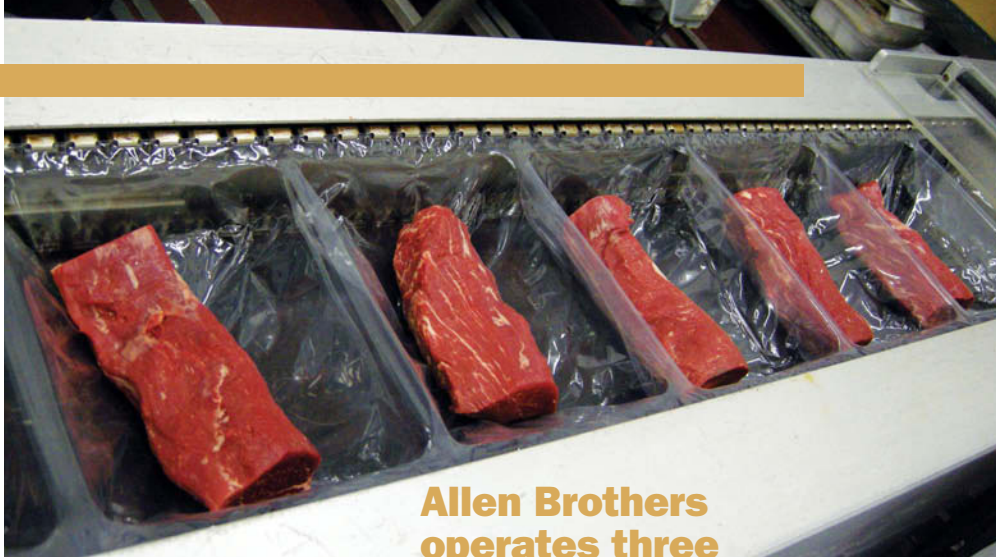
Allen Bros. enjoys robust retail catalog and internet sales, but Hatoff doesn’t plan to further evolve in the retail arena. He’s confident his company’s points-of-difference over the competition will allow his business to remain the leader of the pack.

“Over the years, many of our competitors have been acquired by larger foodservice companies, such as Sys-

co,” Hatoff says. “That changes the culture of what they have been able to provide for customers. As an independent Premium steak company, we are able to work with restaurants to customize products specifically for their needs. We hand-select everything and size-up the loins we receive from multiple vendors. We train our employees to look for the right marbling and

Allen Brothers operates three facilities in Chicago and currently employs more than 100 people.

texture. They also inspect the physical size because when you’re cutting a steak, that’s how you’re going to get a uniform steak. It is a time-consuming, exacting and expensive process.”



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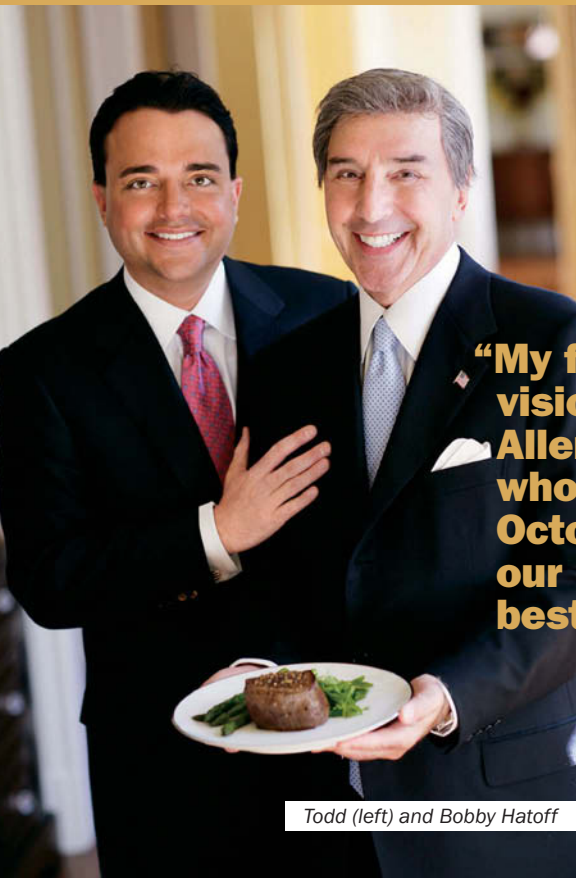


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"My father [industry visionary Bobby Hatoff, Allen Bros. chairman who passed away in October], always wanted our business to be the best, not the biggest."

—Todd Hatoff

Todd (left) and Bobby Hatoff

Each customer demands different product specifications. "Some of Allen Brothers' restaurant customers might want to buy whole cuts so we'll age

want everything to look uniform."

Restaurant customers are always looking for something new to satisfy diners, so Allen Brothers is active in new product development. In September 2012, it introduced USDA Prime Hanger Steaks.

Hands-on excellence

Allen Brothers operates three facilities in Chicago and currently employs more than 100 people. The Thanksgiving-Christmas Holidays are the busiest time of the year for the company and Father's Day is the second-busiest. The company's main 35,000 sq. ft. facility is located one floor below corporate headquarters in the heart of the former Chicago Stockyards.

the product for them [through a patented process] and they will cut it themselves," Hatoff says. "Other restaurant customers will demand portion-control products and they

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All steaks are hand-cut at this facility, which was designed in an “awkward L-flow,” Hatoff chuckles.

Steak-cutting machines are taboo. “We remain a traditional artisan meat-cutting business,” Hatoff iterates. “I can always tell when a steak is machine-cut vs. hand-cut... and so can our customers.”

Thirty-two year company veteran Bob Herrera is the plant’s vice president of operations. “My main responsibility is making sure quality and workmanship are consistently up to par and we take great pride ensuring that our customers receive both the highest quality and consistently cut steaks,” he says.

Although multiple tables exist in

the main plant, two main tables are in the updated cutting room. One table is for cutting tenderloins; the other is for cutting ribs, strips and sirloins. “We separate wet-aged from dry-aged. We have enough vacuum-packaging machines to cover all of our main cuts,” Hatoff says.

A nearby 15,000-sq.-ft. facility is working to take and process holiday orders while its 20,000-sq.-ft. plant on Western Ave. ages much of the products and fulfills orders for the company’s retail catalog and Internet business.

Hatoff proudly describes his meat business as artisan, and it requires talented, knowledgeable meat-cutters. It takes three years of on-the-job train-

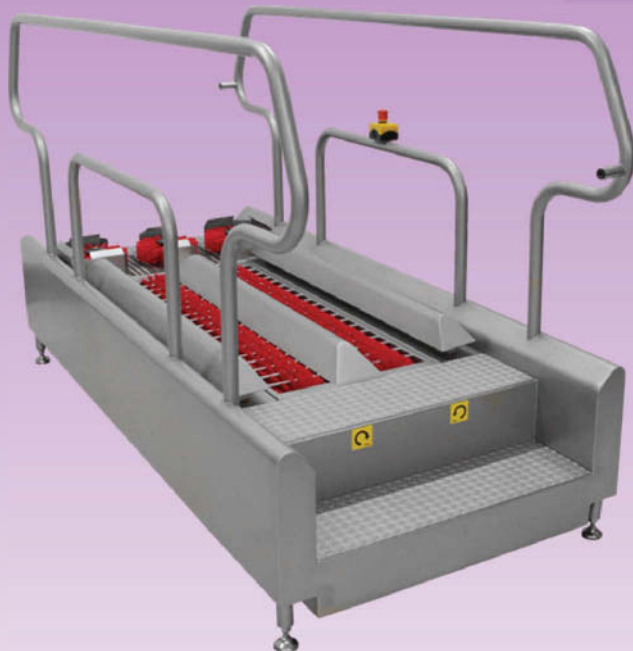
ing before an Allen Brothers meat-cutter becomes a full-line butcher. “It’s better to train someone who is inexperienced vs. trying to retrain someone who was taught to cut the wrong way,” Hatoff says.

Allen Brothers has contract-packing agreements with vendors who create value-added meals for retail (via its catalog business) from its meat products, such as chili, meat lasagna, pot pies and beef stroganoff, just to mention a few. Lavish gourmet desserts are also provided by other niche vendors.

Food-safety leader

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Mail Order: Well Done

Chicago-based Allen Brothers' catalog business is vibrant and growing, says Todd Hatoff, president and CEO.

"Everyone thought when the Internet started to become popular in the 1990s it would end the catalog business," Hatoff says. "Well, not quite. Competition on the Internet is far greater and far more complicated than the mailer. If you're not savvy on Internet technology, you can lose your shirt."

The catalog business is very much a science, Hatoff insists. "It takes a long time to build up a data base, but these customers are more dependable whereas Internet customers are more fickle," he adds. "Our Internet business is doing fine, but the majority of it is being driven by my mailer."

Allen Brothers' most recent catalog, aptly titled "Wrapping Up the Holidays", offers a range of high-end products including tenderloin, filet mignon, tenderloin roast, sirloin strip steaks, ribeye steaks and bone-in heart of rib roast. Wild game products, including bison ribeye, venison sirloin strip medallions, elk tenderloin and bison rib racks, are also offered.

A variety of dry-aged beef, Waygu beef, veal products, Great Steakhouse lamb offerings, as well as fork-tender pork products, ribs, Great Steakhouse steak burgers and steak dogs are also featured. Seafood lovers can choose cold-water Imperial lobster tails, crab cakes, scallops, colossal Black Tiger shrimp, Bering Sea King Crab legs, wild Alaskan sockeye salmon, clam chowder and more.

Original duck breasts, whole semi-boned quail and stuffed Cornish game hens are available. Heat-and-serve pies include chicken pot pie, Seafood Chowder pot pie, pork pot pie and Shepherd's pies, Beef Stroganoff, chilies, Waygu meatballs, Wagyu corned beef hash, beef stew, braised beef pot roast, Wagyu meatloaf, braised domestic lamb shanks and more, plus decadent desserts, are also featured in the catalog.

enhance food safety. Advanced oxidation technologies utilized are designed to control bacteria in the plant environment. These are UV [ultra-violet]-based systems that generate low levels of vapor hydrogen peroxide, Marsden explains. Manufactured by RGF Environmental in West Palm Beach, Fla., the units are also used in the company's two dry-aging rooms. "They control mold and undesirable bacteria during the aging process and accelerate the development of the aged-beef flavor," Marsden says.

Allen Brothers also operates a Cozzini-built unit that utilizes an RGF UV panel for the surface decontamination of beef subprimals prior to blade tenderization. "This is an issue that is growing in importance as the safety of non-intact beef products is being challenged," Marsden says. "The system used at Allen Brothers eliminates most bacteria on the surface and reduces the risk of translocation from the surface into the interior of the muscle."

Combining the strategically placed air-treatment units and the system for treating beef subprimals results in safer, fresher products, Marsden continues. "The systems were scientifically validated at Kansas State Univ.," he says. "We also conduct periodic in-plant validation studies to show that the systems are working properly."

Meat products are either shipped refrigerated or frozen. "We flash-freeze our frozen steaks in less than 20 minutes, which ensures a quality dining experience," Hatoff offers. "I have witnessed multiple taste-tests of steaks comparing our refrigerated product to our frozen product and people cannot tell the difference."

Filling a deep void

On Oct. 7, Allen Brothers' chairman, Bobby Hatoff, unexpectedly passed away. "Our employees, customers and vendors loved and respected my father and they all have shown significant loyalty and continued support to Allen Brothers," Todd states.

Just weeks after Bobby Hatoff's passing, he was inducted into the Meat Industry Hall of Fame. Marsden introduced his award at an induction ceremony while Todd accepted it on behalf of his father.

"Bobby Hatoff was a visionary," Marsden says. "He loved the meat industry, Chicago and the Chicago Stockyards. His was the first company in the US to implement systems to

address the safety of non-intact beef products. He was the first to evaluate high-pressure processing for pasteurizing ground beef. Bobby was the nicest and most generous person I have ever worked with. He was instrumental in accomplishing the consolidation of NAMP and National Meat Association (forming the North American Meat Association). In fact, without him, it would have never happened."

Todd reflects on one of many ways his father impacted Allen Brothers: "When society was changing in the late 1970s and 1980s, breaking cattle, which we used to do, was being phased out and portion-control was becoming more popular – portion control is where he wanted to go."

Todd says eventually he will fill the chairman's vacancy, but he will also likely retain the CEO position. "My father was chairman...and he still is chairman in my mind and my heart."

Hatoff recently changed the structure of his work days.

"I work in the office in the morning and visit restaurants at night," he says. "I am charging forward, but I want to take great care because I want to carry on the legacy that was so important to my father and help ensure that the family vision is fulfilled. Executing on this plan, we think that the future looks bright for Allen Brothers." ■

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Sanitation vigilance

*Good hygiene
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BY KIMBERLIE CLYMA
kclyma@sosland.com

The health of employees plays an important role in food sanitation. Humans are a major source of food contamination. Their hands, breath, hair and perspiration can contaminate food, not to mention unguarded coughs and sneezes, which can cause illness. People are the potential sources of microorganisms that cause illness in others through the transmission of viruses or through food poisoning. Knowing this, it is essential to ensure all employees understand their role when it comes to plant sanitation.

The food industry is focusing more on employee education and training to ensure employees are familiar with the principles of food protection. A top-down approach is crucial. Everyone from management to production, sanitation staff to maintenance, as well as plant visitors, need to understand and follow sanitation practices, and more specifically personal hygiene practices.

This may be easier said than done in a food-processing facility because there are so many activities and movements that could potentially result in the transfer of microorganisms, chemical adulterants or foreign objects from personnel to the food product. The transfer can be direct through the body, skin, hair or mouth

or indirect through equipment, clothing, footwear, utensils or tools. People are probably the biggest source of cross contamination since they move the most from one area of a plant to the other. However, contamination through tools and equipment is also a risk since certain tools are used in multiple areas of a facility, including the equipment that's intended for sanitation around the plant. It defeats the purpose of sanitizing areas of a plant if the tools used to do the job are also contaminating the area.

When it comes to sanitation tools and equipment, it's essential that management gives its sanitation employees the right resources to do their job properly. This means ensuring there is enough sanitation equipment to effectively clean all areas of a plant. Sanitation equipment should be designated to specific areas of a plant to avoid potential cross contamination.

Color-coding tools and equipment is a great way to ensure the equipment is kept in the appropriate area. The equipment should be dedicated into one of three categories: food contact, non-food contact and drain. Brushes, hoses, foaming carts and even sanitation clothing should not be shared in any of these three areas.

Sanitation crews should also be careful not to place any food-contact surface equipment on the floor during the disassembly/reassembly process. Plants need to provide sanitation teams with carts or racks to hold the equipment.

In addition, it's

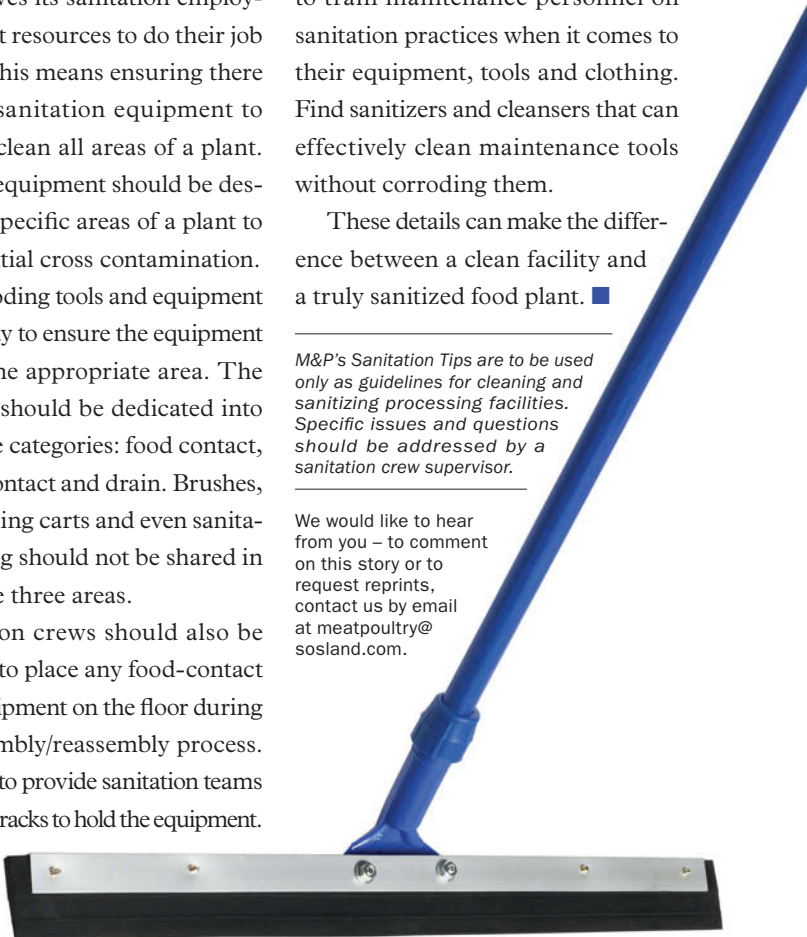
important to have an appropriate place to store the sanitation crews' clothing, footwear and tools. If the sanitation crew dons clothing and footwear that aren't sanitary, it will nullify the work they are doing.

These same rules should apply to the maintenance crew at the plant. Maintenance personnel also go from one area of a facility to another on a daily basis, which increases the possibility of cross contamination. If it isn't possible to provide separate maintenance equipment for different areas of the plant – food contact and non-food contact areas – then it's essential to train maintenance personnel on sanitation practices when it comes to their equipment, tools and clothing. Find sanitizers and cleansers that can effectively clean maintenance tools without corroding them.

These details can make the difference between a clean facility and a truly sanitized food plant. ■

M&P's Sanitation Tips are to be used only as guidelines for cleaning and sanitizing processing facilities. Specific issues and questions should be addressed by a sanitation crew supervisor.

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Employees Must Wash Hands Before Returning to Work



Do this, don't do that

When it comes to sanitation at a food-production facility, there are many do's and don'ts that each and every person at the plant can follow from management down the line. Sanitation cannot be the sole responsibility of the sanitation crew.

DO make hand washing a company-wide priority

- Proper personal hygiene starts with proper hand washing. Approximately 25 percent of food contamination can be attributed to improper hand washing.
- Each employee should wash their hands with soap and water, and possibly sanitize, before entering the food-production environment.
- Hand washing should also be required after any activity that could contaminate the person's hands such as going the restroom, eating, sneezing or coughing, handling raw food or touching non-food contact surfaces, such as light switches, tools, pipes or other equipment.
- Plants must have an adequate amount of hand-washing stations at the entrances and exits of the food-production area of the plant.
- Random hand-washing verification checks can verify hand cleanliness. If employees think there's a chance they might be randomly checked for hand cleanliness, it might keep them more vigilant.

DO emphasize that employees wear appropriate clothing in the plant

- The plant must provide employees with the right kind of outer clothing to wear in the production facility so that there's a barrier between themselves and the food product, such as coats or smocks, aprons, plastic sleeves, hairnets, gloves or even full coveralls.
- Protective plant clothing should never be worn outside of the production area and should be regularly changed and cleaned. It's important to have the outer clothing laundered at the facility instead of allowing employees to take it home to clean.
- Be sure to have an adequate amount of clean outer clothing such as coats or aprons for visitors to put on when touring the production facility.
- Wearing appropriate clothing includes not wearing jewelry, as well as exposed buttons or snaps that could easily fall off and contaminate the environment.

DO pay attention to people's footwear on the production floor

- Footwear can easily be a vehicle that transfers pathogens from one area of a plant to another.
- Plants must decide if footwear will be dedicated to particular areas of the facility – in particular, if shoes must be changed when exiting the production floor. If shoes aren't changed, then footwear should be decontaminated between areas to prevent cross contamination.
- Foamers are one effective method that can be used to sanitize footwear.
- Foot dips or baths can also be used,

but be careful that it doesn't end up having a buildup of debris and bacteria that people end up "washing" their shoes in contaminants. Be sure there is adequate sanitizer to be effective.

- Encourage employees to leave their work footwear at work.
- Provide employees with appropriate cleaning tools such as cleansers and brushes to keep their work footwear clean.

DO provide regular training sessions about personal and plant hygiene

- In addition to training employees about their day-to-day jobs, it's important to train them about how their personal hygiene can impact the health and safety of the plant.
- Posters, videos, online materials and manuals are all great ways to educate employees on what to do and not to do. In addition, signage with picture can help if there are potential language barriers with plant employees.
- Be sure to train new employees on personal-hygiene policies.

It is the primary job of the sanitation employees to keep a food production plant clean and sanitized, but it is the job of everyone at the plant • both on the production floor and in other areas of the facility • to help keep the plant as clean as possible. All employees should see themselves as a part of the food-safety team. ■

This list is to be used only as a guideline. Address specific questions to your supervisor.

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Cuando se trata de sanidad en una instalación de alimentos, existen muchos ‘sies’ y ‘noes’ que cada persona de la planta puede seguir desde la gerencia hacia abajo. La sanidad no puede ser solamente responsabilidad de la cuadrilla de higiene.

HAGA del lavado de manos una prioridad

- La higiene personal adecuada empieza con el lavado de las manos. Aproximadamente el 25 por ciento de la contaminación de alimentos puede atribuirse al lavado de manos inapropiado.
- Cada empleado debe lavarse las manos con agua y jabón y, de ser posible, desinfectarlas antes de entrar al ambiente de producción.
- El lavado de las manos también debe requerirse después de cualquier actividad que pueda haber contaminado las manos de la persona – tales como ir al baño, comer, estornudar o toser, manejar alimentos crudos o tocar superficies sin contacto con alimentos como interruptores, herramientas, tuberías u otro equipo.
- Las plantas deben tener una cantidad adecuada de estaciones para lavado de manos en las entradas y salidas de las áreas de producción de la planta.
- Las verificaciones al azar del lavado de manos pueden confirmar la limpieza de éstas. Si los empleados piensan que hay una posibilidad de que se les verifique al azar la limpieza de las manos, puede mantenerlos más vigilantes.

ENFATICE que los empleados vistan ropa apropiada en la planta

- La planta debe proveer a los empleados con el tipo adecuado de ropa para

vestir en las instalaciones de producción de manera que sea una barrera entre ellos y el producto comestible, tales como batas, blusones, mandiles, mangas plásticas, redes para el cabello, guantes o incluso cubiertas para todo el cuerpo.

- La ropa protectora de la planta nunca debe vestirse fuera del área de producción y debe cambiarse y limpiarse regularmente. Es importante que la ropa protectora externa se lave en las instalaciones en vez de que los empleados la lleven a casa.

- Asegúrese de tener una cantidad adecuada de ropa limpia tales como batas o mandiles para que vistan los visitantes cuando hagan recorridos en el complejo de producción.

- El vestir ropa apropiada incluye no usar joyas así como también botones o broches expuestos que puedan contaminar el ambiente fácilmente.

PONGA atención al calzado de la gente en el piso de producción

- El calzado puede ser fácilmente un vehículo de patógenos de un área de la planta a otra.
- Las plantas deben decidir si el calzado debe destinarse a áreas en particular dentro de la instalación – en particular si los zapatos deben cambiarse al salir del piso de producción. Si los zapatos no se cambian, el calzado debe descontaminarse entre las áreas para prevenir la contaminación cruzada.
- Las espumas son un método efectivo que puede usarse para desinfectar el calzado.

- Se pueden usar baños desinfectantes pero tenga cuidado de que no termine creando acumulación o restos y bacteria y que la gente termine “lavan-

do” sus zapatos en los contaminantes. Asegúrese de tiene el desinfectante adecuado para que sea efectivo.

- Motive a los empleados a que dejen su calzado para laborar en su trabajo.
- Provea a los empleados con las herramientas adecuadas para limpiar tales como limpiadores y cepillos para mantener su calzado de trabajo limpio.

PROVEA varias sesiones de entrenamiento regularmente acerca de la higiene personal y de la planta

- Además de entrenar a los empleados acerca de su trabajo diario, es importante entrenarlos acerca de cómo la higiene personal puede impactar la salud y seguridad de la planta.
- Los carteles, videos, material en línea y manuales son medios fabulosos para educar a los empleados acerca de qué hacer y qué no hacer. Además, los letreros con imágenes pueden ayudar si existen barreras potenciales de lenguaje con los empleados de la planta.
- Asegúrese de entrenar a los nuevos empleados acerca de las políticas de higiene personal.

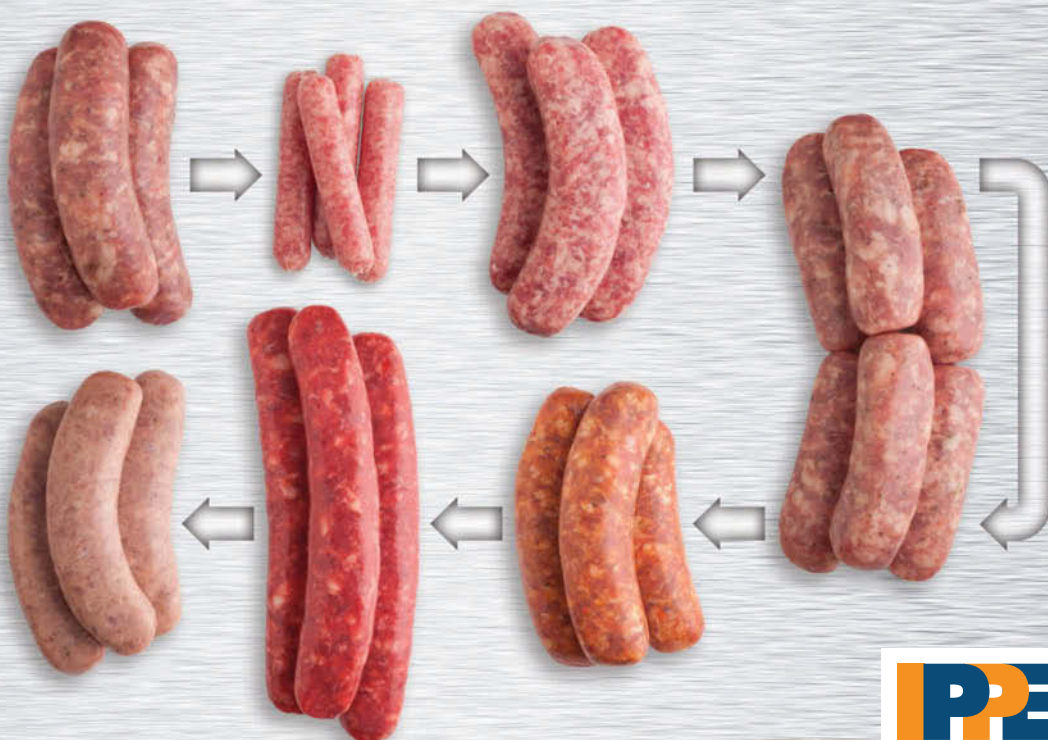
Es trabajo primordial de los empleados de higiene mantener la planta de producción de alimentos limpia y desinfectada, pero es trabajo de todos en la planta• tanto de producción como de otras áreas de la instalación– mantener la planta tan limpia como sea posible. Todos los empleados deben verse a sí mismos como parte del equipo de seguridad de alimentos. ■

Esta lista es solamente para usarse como guía. Dirija preguntas específicas a su supervisor.

Nos gustaría escuchar de usted. Para comentarios acerca de este artículo o para solicitar reimpresiones, contáctenos por correo electrónico a meatpoultry@sosland.com.

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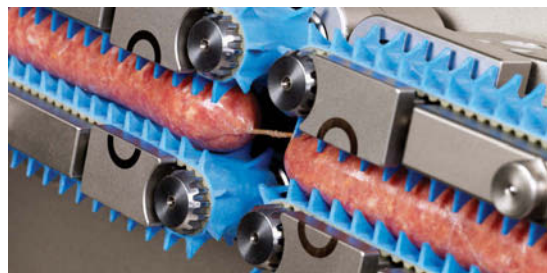


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Adding value through freezing

Processors ensure quality and safety with chilling technology

BY BRYAN SALVAGE
bsalvage@sosland.com

Effective, efficient chilling and freezing are critical processes essential to maintaining food-safety and quality. More forward-thinking meat and poultry processors are now taking a longer-term view when committing funding for investments in adding or replacing chilling and freezing technology.

When shopping for such technology, Butterball LLC executives demand specific features. This Kings Mountain, NC-based processor, a Seaboard Corp. business, is the largest vertically integrated turkey producer in the United States, accounting for 20 percent of total turkey production in this country. It produces about 1.2 billion lbs. of chilled and frozen product per year. While its 675,000 sq.-ft. plant in Mt. Olive, NC, is the world's largest turkey plant, Butterball also operates plants in Carthage, Mo., as well as in Huntsville, Jonesboro and Ozark, Ark.

"For us, the first essential feature for chilling-freezing equipment and technology is the food safety and sanitary design," says Irving Young, Butterball's director of food safety and quality assurance. The company



Linde's Cryoline Cryowave IQF freezer features rolling-wave action designed to prevent products from clumping together or sticking to belts.

also wants equipment and technology that's designed to be safe for Butterball associates to use.

"We like to see things like air monitoring with alarms and guards with interlocks to prevent accidental injury of employees who are operating, cleaning or working around the equipment," Young says. "It's a plus when there's an opportunity to receive on-site training and clear directions and procedures for operations, maintenance and sanitation cleaning."

Performance and efficiency are also key features for such equipment. "We consider the manufacturer's performance guarantee – the description, operation specifications and capacities," Young says. "We also look at the operational parameters of equipment, including the minimum, maximum, variation and heat removal [BTU/lb.]; energy use to determine the feasibility and costs to operate the technology; and the future abilities for upgrades and increased capacities."

Technology update

Productivity, or throughput, is an issue, especially with existing production lines running at maximum speed or having to change product mix frequently, says Frank Martin, marketing manager of food refrigeration with Danbury, Conn.-based Praxair Inc. . “Cryogenic systems help reduce bottlenecks and also meet needs when floor space is at a premium or there is no additional expansion area available,” he adds. “Rapid freezing using liquid nitrogen or carbon dioxide helps maintain the product quality and save yield while improving the overall processing speed. Sanitary guidelines, easy clean-up and low maintenance costs are always top-of-mind with our

customers. Praxair freezing and chilling systems meet the new USDA sanitation standards.”

Quick delivery and installation with low capital expense are the main drivers of this technology, Martin says. Many plants – depending on the product and line set-up – are challenged to meet production quotas while still maintaining the high-quality standards for the product, he adds. “There is often less maintenance and downtime using cryogenic systems compared to traditional mechanical systems depending on the use,” Martin says.

Praxair’s newest cryogenic freezing offering for the protein industry is its ColdFront ultra-performance, solid-belt tunnel system. The patented de-

sign is manufactured by Praxair using a solid, stainless-steel belt. This new belt design expands the types of products that can benefit from rapid and thorough freezing – especially formed, semi-solid, heavily marinated and other wet, difficult-to-handle products. The added benefit for all products is the elimination of belt marks from the product, Martin says.

Processor demand

Three features meat and poultry processors need from their freezing and chilling operations are higher yields, higher productivity and reduced operating costs, says Mark DiMaggio, head of Food & Beverage, Linde North America Inc., Murray Hill, NJ.

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Cryogenic equipment can address all three, he adds. "Productivity gains of 10 percent or more are common. Improved handling for diced and sliced products can contribute to higher yields. And new high-efficiency equipment designs improve cryogen efficiency to help lower the cost-to-freeze."

With today's lifestyles, many consumers are driven by convenience, DiMaggio says, which has led to growth in more prepared meats, such as marinated chicken breasts, quick-

serve products and ready meals. Cryogenic freezing helps lock in moisture, quality and value, he says.

Every processing plant is different so the Linde Food team performs in-plant assessments and works with customers to review the operation and optimize the process with proprietary and patented solutions. "In some cases, we can consolidate lines," DiMaggio says. "Tip Top Poultry was able to fold three IQF diced-poultry lines into one with our new Cryoline CW freezer."

Linde's Cryoline Cryowave IQF

freezer is its latest technology offering for industry. Its rolling-wave action helps prevent IQF products from clumping together or sticking to belts, DiMaggio says. This hygienic freezer eliminates the CO2 snow carryover and fines (small pieces of protein) loss associated with flighted freezers and significantly reduces freezing costs. Applications include sliced and diced poultry and beef as well as pizza toppings.

Food-safety role

GEA Refrigeration Technologies' meat and poultry customers want equipment that is easy to clean to ensure freezing and chilling systems are free of bacteria to meet food-safety requirements, is low-cost and features ease of maintenance and uptime, says Richmond, B.C. (Canada)-based Paul Osterstrom, vice president of the company's sales support and competence center.

The demand for ready-to-eat food products has increased over the years offering opportunities for his company. "The focus on hygiene and ensuring freezing equipment meets ever-stringent food-safety requirements is the greatest challenge facing our customers," he adds.

GEA Refrigeration Technologies manufactures easy-to-clean freezers built with stainless-steel, welded construction and caulked joints, which can harbor bacteria. The design ensures easy accessibility for cleaning and inspection. The company also manufactures systems with more efficient energy usage.



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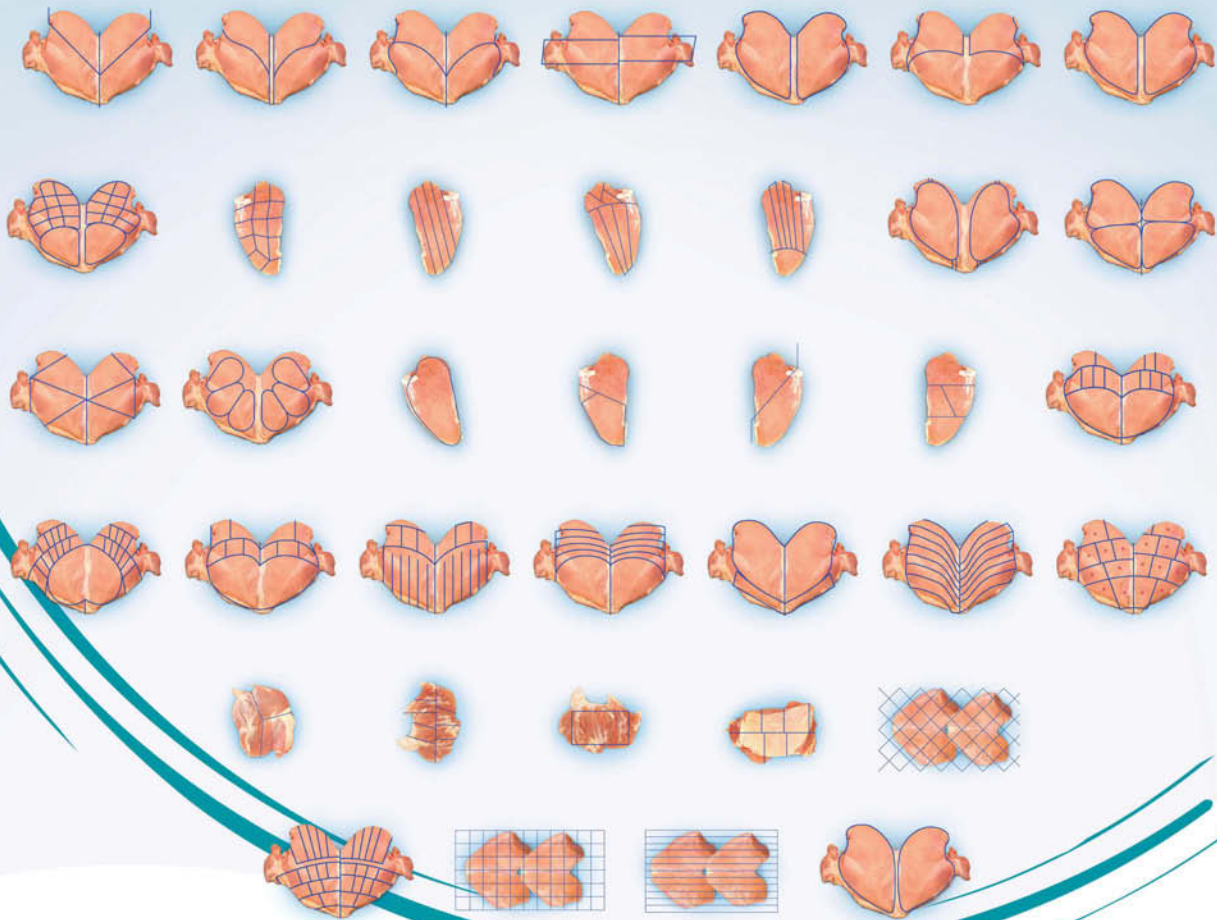
Linde is “shaking up” IQF processing with the world’s first hygienic tunnel freezer with (patented) rolling-wave action that keeps products separate as they freeze. The high-efficiency Cryoline® CW (CRYOWAVE™) nitrogen freezer offers distinct advantages vs. flighted freezers.

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The CRYOWAVE is ideal for individually quick freezing poultry, pizza toppings and other high-value products, as well as small items that tend to clump or stick to belts. In addition, precise control minimizes fines loss and locks in moisture, shape and quality for higher yield. Catch the Wave and learn how Linde experts can help you “shake up” IQF production.





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Innovative solutions in manufacturing techniques provide benefits to the processor through increased food safety and more efficient freezers. “GEA Refrigeration Technologies solutions includes improved welding techniques, smoother and easier-to-clean welds, computerized automatic clean-in-place systems for efficient cleaning and mounting of motors external to the enclosure for ease of maintenance/increased hygiene,” Osterstrom says.

Sandusky, Ohio-based Andrew Knowles, sales support manager for freezer, stein and allied equipment for JBT FoodTech, agrees most meat and poultry plants are emphasizing hygiene with their new equipment-freezing solutions. “Processors are

demanding more hygienic upgrades in their spiral freezing systems, such as fully seam-welded, stainless-steel enclosure panels; hygienic evaporator coils; self-stacking belt technology; CIP wash-down systems; Steam in Freezer (sanitation step); and eliminating capped-rail wear strips,” he adds.

Some meat and poultry customers are working toward longer production runs to avoid nightly defrosts/cleanings and some customers are trying to maximize their capacity while trying to minimize their capital equipment investment and operating costs, he says.

New products include the Gyro-Compact M8 Twin Belt – Duplex (Spiral Cooler and/or Freezer). With two belts forming into one stack, the

GC M8 Twin Belt freezer is primarily used for freezing raw beef/hamburger patties from two independent formers. Its Advantec CC – Compact Chiller (Linear Impingement Cooler and/or Freezer) is used for crust freezing meat cuts and/or meat logs. The Advantec CC Impingement Freezer uses a stainless-steel tube/aluminum fin cooling coil, a fully seam welded insulated enclosure, elevated on stainless-steel legs, and can be provided with stainless-steel drive and fan motors.

The company’s Gyrocompact 10TC Tight Curve (spiral cooler-freezer) with a 42-inch-wide belt tight curve belt, provides a high-capacity, wide-belt freezer solution in an enclosure box that is only 15 feet by

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9 inches wide. It is primarily used for freezing raw chicken, parfried nuggets, parfried tenders, fully cooked diced chicken and fully cooked chicken breasts where plant space is limited. The GC M10TC can provide 45 tiers of belt under 18 feet of available height.

Looking ahead

Praxair is looking at customer requests for temperature control earlier in the process to retain product quality and reduce contamination or to address food-safety issues, Martin says.

The concern for food safety is driving the need to design freezers and chillers that minimize areas that can harbor bacteria, GEA's Osterstrom

says. "As meat and poultry processors seek greater efficiencies and improved up-time, we are realizing an increased demand for larger, more efficient food-manufacturing lines that include more efficient freezing processes, with less equipment to clean, yet that also includes greater up-time while ensuring food safety," he adds.

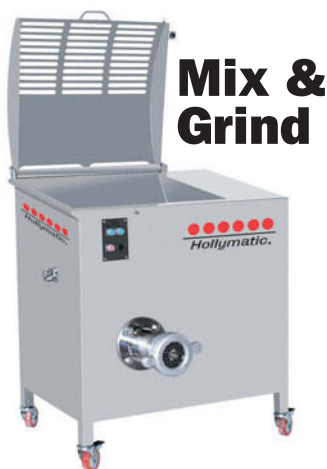
"By listening to the needs of the meat and poultry industry, Linde has made significant strides in cryogenic technology during the past couple years," DiMaggio says. "State-of-the-art cryogenic solutions are designed for high-volume productivity and to get more BTUs out of every lb. of cryogen."

More automated and precise han-

dling helps avoid bottlenecks and reduce product losses. Regarding reducing losses, even a few percent can add up to \$500,000 or more a year on high-volume processes.

"Advanced cryogenic technology will continue to be a relatively quick way to transform meat and poultry processing operations, and attention to food quality and safety is increasingly making hygienic design a differentiating factor in equipment decisions. Leasing arrangements reduce immediate capital outlays so processors can reap the financial benefits that much sooner," DiMaggio says. ■

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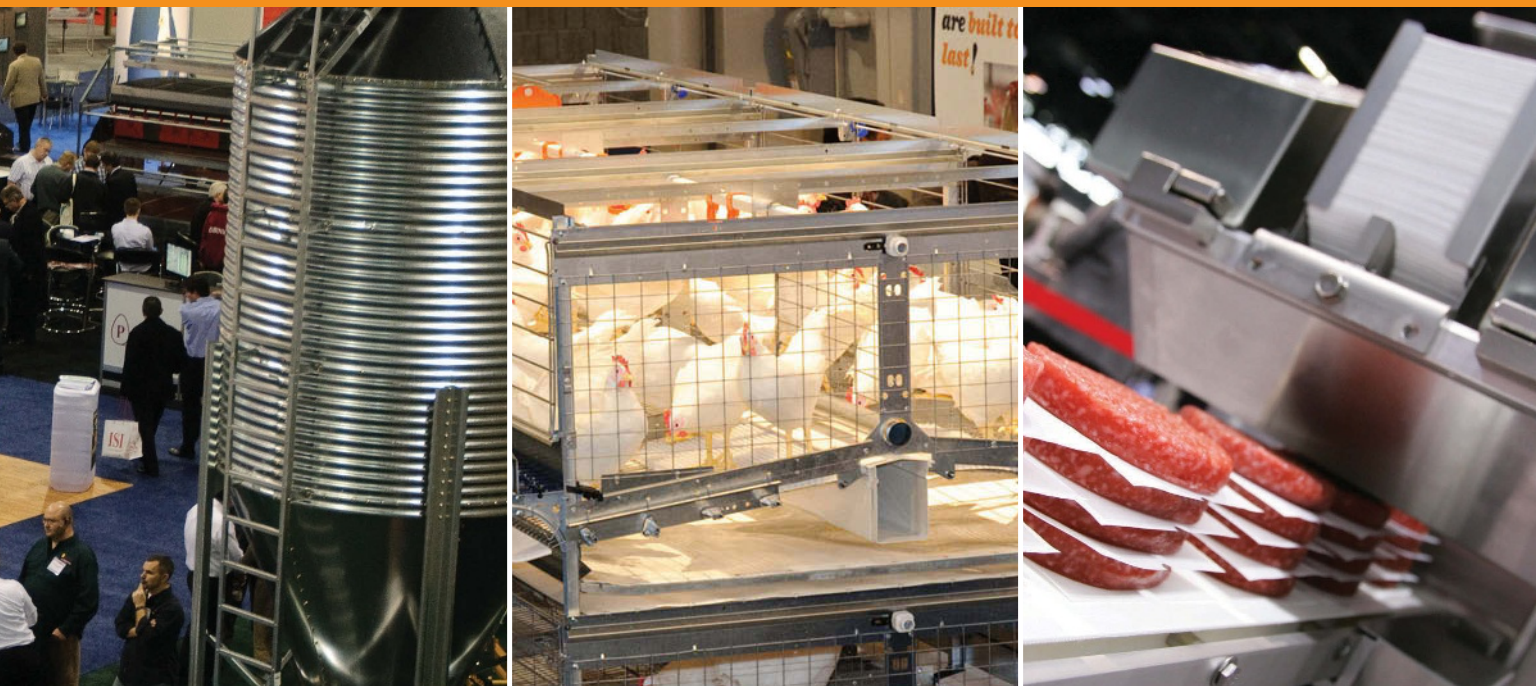
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BY DR. TEMPLE GRANDIN
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AMI conference targets animal care

Robust systematic approach

Larry Davis, Humane Handling Enforcement Coordinator for the US Dept. of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service, explained the requirements for a robust systematic approach for humane slaughter compliance. A robust systematic approach is written like a HACCP plan and when a plant has a non-compliance they have to document their response.

There are four parts to developing a robust systematic approach. (1) Initial assessment of areas where problems could occur, such as slipping and falling during unloading, lack of water availability in the holding pens, excessive electric prod use, handling downers and missed stuns; (2) The plant management writes up Standard Operating Procedures to prevent problems by initiating practices such as always having a back-up stun gun, stunner maintenance program, specifying the number of animals placed in the crowd pen, policies on electric prod use and internal audits on falling, electric prod use, stunning and vocalization; (3) Periodic evaluations to make sure the SOPs are being done. (4) Continuous reassessments to ensure procedures are being followed. A true robust systematic approach has

to be practiced in the plant and not be a pretty book that stays in the office.

Beta-agonist research

Kurt Vogel from the Univ. of Wisconsin at River Falls reviewed the scientific research literature on the effects of beta-agonists, such as ractopamine and zilpaterol, on cattle and pig welfare. He conducted Google searches and found only one scientific journal paper on cattle and six papers on pigs. There is a huge need for more research. The six pig papers were all studies conducted at Purdue Univ. and researchers found that when ractopamine was fed at high doses to pigs, there were some problems such as hoof lesions, increased aggression in gilts and more difficult handling.

I and other people who work with fed cattle have observed heat stress and lameness in certain groups of cattle arriving at slaughter plants. These problems have only been observed during very hot weather. Usually, only a few cattle in a group are severely affected. ■

Dr. Temple Grandin operates Grandin Livestock Systems Inc., Fort Collins, Colo., and is a faculty member in the animal science department at Colorado State Univ.

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.

A variety of topics were discussed at the 2012 AMI Animal Care and Handling Conference, including topics such as: the effect of cattle breed on balking during handling; a systematic approach to animal handling and stunning; and published research on beta-agonists.

Michelle Thomas from the Univ. of Arkansas reported that fed Holstein steers balk more and are harder to move into the restrainer compared to other breeds. In her study at a large fed-beef plant, an electric prod had to be used on 9 percent of the Holstein steers and only 2 percent of the Angus steers. Some brindle cattle that may have a small amount of Brahman genetics moved into the restrainer with 0 percent use of the electric prod. One odd finding was that more frequently balking cattle had a lower dressing percentage. This effect was still present in the beef breeds after the Holstein data was removed. There is no explanation for this highly significant finding. I speculate that it may be related to fat thickness.

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Spinning at up to 2,000 RPMs, high-speed deli-log slicers can be optimized for high repeatability with high-efficiency cryogenic freezers from Linde. The Linde Food Team works with beef, poultry and pork processors to define the ideal crust-freezing temperature and crust-freeze depth to match the slicing operation.

Linde performs in-plant assessments to identify current cost-to-freeze and works with processors to develop optimal process solutions.

(800) 755-9277

www.lindefood.com



String lighting

Larson Electronics LLC announced the addition of an explosion-proof LED string light, offering long bulb life, extreme durability and little heat output for operators in confined spaces. The EPL-SL-10-LED 100-watt, explosion-proof string light is designed for operators needing to illuminate long, hazardous areas like tunnels. Larson Electronics manufactures a wide variety of explosion-proof lighting for hazardous rated areas, including string lights, pedestal mount lighting and cart-based lighting systems.

(800) 369-6671

www.magnalight.com



Spreading conveyor

The Bridge Machine Spreading Conveyor Model SCA is designed to transfer product from a narrow belt evenly across a larger belt for maximum belt coverage. The servo-driven spreading conveyor is available with state-of-the-art depositing control achieved by the servo-drive's precision. The conveyor also features a touch-screen control panel.

(856) 829-1800

www.bridgeonline.com



Vibrating rod level indicator

BinMaster announces the introduction of the standard VR-21 vibrating rod level sensor and solid extended VR-41 vibrating rod level sensor. This vibrating rod level switch is used to detect high-, mid- and/or low-level in bins, silos and hoppers containing powders or dry bulk solid materials. It features three sensitivity settings and can reliably detect very light materials with bulk densities down to 1.25 lb. per cubic foot.

(402) 434-9102

www.binmaster.com



Direct-fed microbial

Novus International Inc. announced the launch of SPORULIN Direct-Fed Microbial (DFM) for the poultry industry. This new DFM was developed at the Univ. of Arkansas after five years of research and is currently manufactured by Pacific Vet Group-USA. Novus has the exclusive distribution rights in most markets around the world. Novus is proud to add SPORULIN direct-fed microbial to its industry-leading poultry gut health portfolio.

(314) 576-8886

www.novusint.com

Meat saw literature

Safety and ease of operation are key to Hollymatic's Hi-Yield, High Speed 16-5000 Meat Saw. As explained in its four-color literature, Hollymatic's "new generation of Meat Saw" has safety features that separate it from other conventional saws. Bulleted copy on the front details the quick brake function that stops the blade within 1 second, swing open construction that allows for easy cleaning and blade changing, and several other key features of the Hi-Yield Saw.

(708) 579-3700

www.hollymatic.com



Sanitary conveyor

Through a partnership with sister company Walker Custom Sheet Metal, customers of Egan Food Technologies can now purchase the ultra-sanitary, tool-less W.O.W. Conveyor, which has been designed to help food manufacturers meet the strict sanitation requirements of the FDA's Food Safety Modernization Act. The W.O.W. Conveyor, which stands for "Walker Original Washdown," was named for both its ease in breakdown for complete sanitation and customers' reactions upon seeing the conveyor.

(616) 791-9952

www.eganfoodtech.com



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Markets  **timely data provided**

- US livestock futures were lower.
- US wheat and corn futures were lower, while soy complex futures were mixed.
- The value of the US dollar against the euro was higher.
- Crude oil futures were trading sharply lower.
- New York gold futures were higher.
- US stock indexes were sharply lower.
- European stock indexes were lower.
- Asian stock indexes closed mixed on Friday.

Calendar of Events and Reports

- US April Employment report
- May 5-8: National Restaurant Association Show 2012, Chicago, Ill.
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News and Markets Review

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- Cattle futures soared while hog futures followed with modest gains Thursday. Live cattle futures surged after weekly export sales data indicated U.S. beef exports remained strong last week despite concerns about BSE. Feeder cattle futures mostly closed up the 3c-a-lb daily
- Major US stock indexes were lower on conflicting economic data on Thursday. There was a report on a decline in weekly jobless claims but also weaker-than-expected data from the service sector. The **Dow Jones Industrial Average** was down almost 62 points, closing at 13,206.59. The **Standard & Poor's 500 Index** was down almost 11 points, closing at 1,391.57. The **Nasdaq Composite Index** was down almost 36 points, closing at 3,024.30.

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New Product Showcase

Plastic pallets

CTC Plastics announces two new products that are changing the industry: pallets and resin compounds. These two CTC Plastics plastic products contain Lehigh Technologies' Micronized Rubber Powder (MRP) made from recycled tire material. CTC Plastics' two new products help companies reach their sustainability objectives through the use of green resins, or through their supply chain by using a more environment-friendly pallet.

(937) 228-2880

www.ctcplastics.com



Safe shipping wrap

Lantech, the company that invented stretch wrapping, announced a breakthrough in reducing the risk of product damage during shipping. Containment force is the total amount of pressure on the load produced by the layers of stretch film that hold it together as a unit. Lantech has the only system in the marketplace that automatically monitors and measures for the right amount of containment force on every load. It's a built-in, quality-control measure exclusive to the L-Series machines.

(800) 866-0322

www.lantech.com



Mobile measuring system

Bosch Packaging Technology offers its Mobile Measuring System – a cost-effective and time-saving method of capturing OEE-relevant data for the analysis of Overall Equipment Effectiveness (OEE). It enables manufacturers to gain a rapid overview of the OEE of their production lines and serves as a basis for equipment optimization. The Mobile Measuring System can be used both on its own and together with Bosch OEE Consulting service.

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www.formerassoc.net



Pepper extract

Kalsec is increasing its portfolio of peppers with the addition of Szechuan pepper extract. Szechuan (or Sichuan) peppers, commonly used in Asian cuisine, have a unique citrus and herbal aroma and flavor that is distinctly different from black, white or chili peppers. Its active ingredient – sanshools – delivers a tingling, numbing sensation in the mouth. Additional innovations from Kalsec include HeatSync Systems, which are designed to control the timing, intensity and palate location of heat delivery.

(800) 323-9320

www.kalsec.com



X-ray webinars

Eriez is offering free, personalized webinars to educate interested parties on x-ray technology used for inspection in the food, packaging and pharmaceutical industries. Webinars are customized for attendees' specific applications and conducted by Eriez personnel. Eriez also offers an array of downloadable literature and videos, an interactive selection flowchart, online testing and more.

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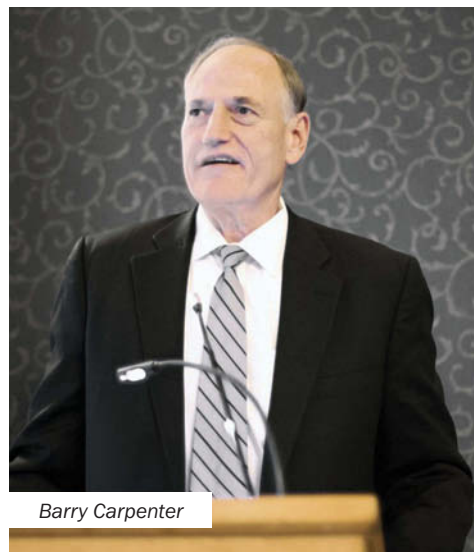


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second hand - first class

Birko hosted a 60th anniversary gala Nov. 15 in Denver, Colo., as the official kickoff of its 60th year, which begins in 2013. **Barry Carpenter**, CEO of the North American Meat Association, gave the keynote address at the gala. Carpenter recognized Birko for its leadership in providing food-safety solutions to the protein industry. Carpenter also encouraged Birko, the National Meat Association's Supplier of the Century, to meet new food-safety challenges by continuing to support the industry through innovation. Founded in 1953, Birko is a WBENC Certified Women's Business Enterprise that provides food-safety solutions to the protein-processing, food and beverage industries.



Barry Carpenter



Olivier Bazin

Olivier Bazin has joined the **LIMA** team as export manager. Bazin will be responsible for strengthening the links between LIMA and its distributors so as to develop further LIMA sales and service. He will be covering Central and South America, Southern and Eastern Africa, Middle East and India.

Automated Packaging Systems is celebrating its 50th year in business and the induction of its founders, **Hersey Lerner** and **Bernie Lerner**, into the 2012 Packaging Machinery Manufacturers Institute Packaging Hall of Fame. The Lerner brothers founded Automated Packaging Systems in 1962 and are still actively involved in the business today. The brothers were inducted into the Hall of Fame during PACKEXPO in late October.



Jeanne Meeder

Jeanne Meeder has joined **Wixon** as Industrial Ingredients and Consumer Products director. Meeder joins the firm's research and development team and will manage the Industrial Ingredients and Consumer Products Labs, responsible for new product development, product reformulation and product optimization.

Tyson Foods Inc. announced **Sara Lilygren** has been named executive vice president of corporate affairs. Lilygren will manage external affairs and lead the company's charity programs, which focus on education and hunger relief.

Dixon, a leading worldwide manufacturer and supplier of hose fittings and accessories, has acquired **Eagle America Inc.** The acquisition was effective Nov. 1.

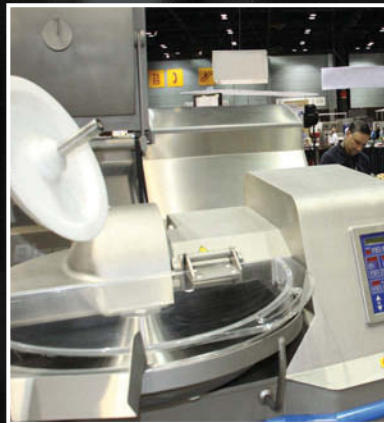
US Meat Export Federation (USMEF) members elected Steve Isaf, president and founder of Interra International, as USMEF's new chairman. Other USMEF officers elected were **Mark Jagels** a corn and soybean farmer from Davenport, Neb., chair-elect; **Leann Saunders**, president of IMI Global Inc., vice-chair; and **Roel Andriessen**, senior vice president of international sales for Tyson Foods, secretary-treasurer.

New sector representatives have also been elected to the executive committee. **Mark Boyd**, director of export sales for Porky Products, will represent the purveying/trading sector; **Mark Gustafson**, vice president of international sales for JBS USA, will represent the packing/processing sector; and **Kevin Kester**, a rancher from Parkfield, Calif., will represent the beef/veal producing and feeding sector.

The **US Farmers and Ranchers Alliance (USFRA)** elected its 2013 Executive Committee: Chairman – **Bob Stallman**, American Farm Bureau Federation; Vice Chairman – **Weldon Wynn**, Cattlemen's Beef Board; Secretary – **Bernard Leonard**, US Poultry & Egg Association; Treasurer – **Dale Norton**, National Pork Board; and At-Large committee members – **Mike Geske**, National Corn Growers Association and **Nancy Kavazanjian**, United Soybean Board.

Scientific Certification Systems Inc. announced it's now operating under the trade name, SCS Global Services. The new corporate identity reflects the company's position in third-party certification, auditing, testing and standards development. Its expanded services are showcased on its new website, www.scsglobalservices.com. ■

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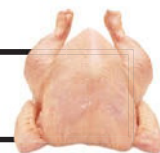
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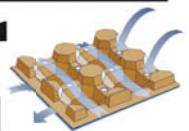


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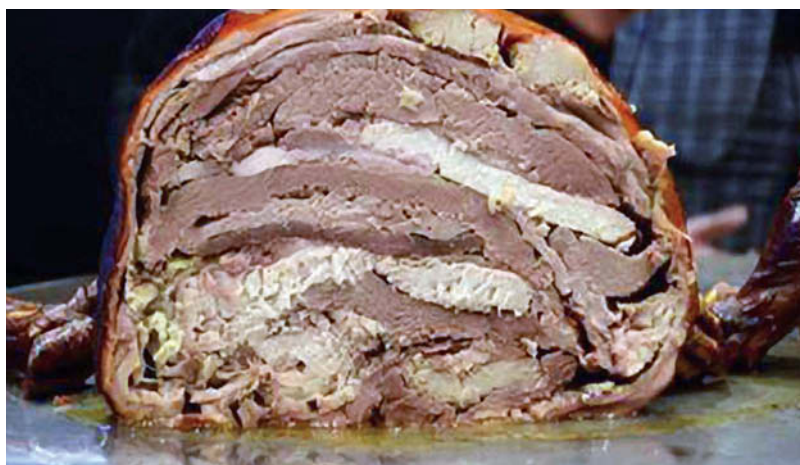
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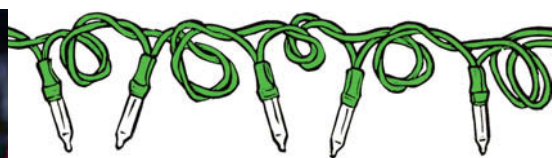
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Turducken 'on steroids'

Americans wanting to add a bit of extra protein to their Thanksgiving meals last month might have made Turducken – a meat dish made of chicken inside a duck inside a turkey. An Australian radio show called “Merrick & The Highway Patrol” took the multi-meat dish a step or two further and created what was called “Turducken Ridiculous.” Elle Conwell, the show’s producer said they “took the concept of a Turducken and put it on steroids,” by combining the meat of 20 animals into one. ■



OVERHERD

“The decision is a disappointment and frankly, I think it is a disservice to US consumers.”

—Donnie Smith, president and CEO of Tyson Foods, Inc., on the EPA’s decision to deny waiving the Renewable Fuel Standard.



MERRY CHRISTMAS from the staff of MEAT & POULTRY



Grooming with bacon

J&D’s Foods, the makers of a variety of bacon-flavored food items including bacon salt, bacon popcorn, bacon croutons and bacon mayonnaise, has come up with an item sure to top every man’s holiday wish list. J&D’s now offers Bacon Shaving Cream, “a high-end, luxurious bacon-scented shaving cream.” According to the company, “Nothing is more powerful or captivating than the smell of bacon. It is truly the smell of victory (and breakfast).” ■

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