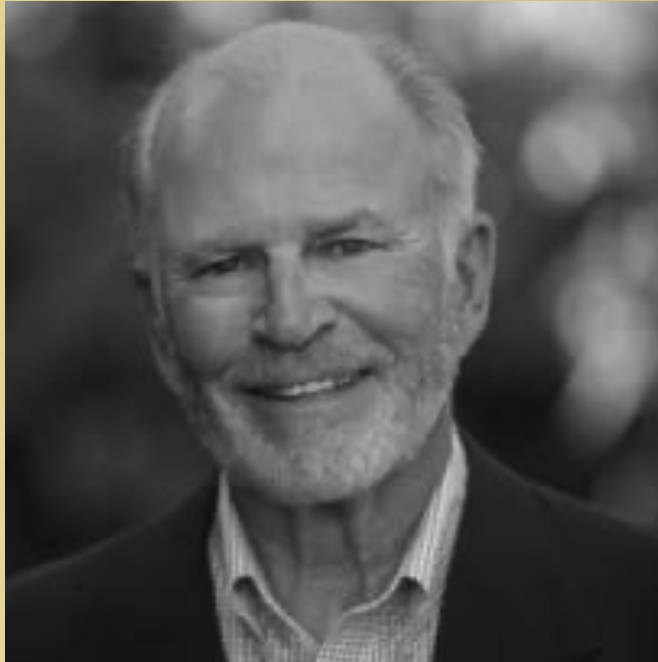
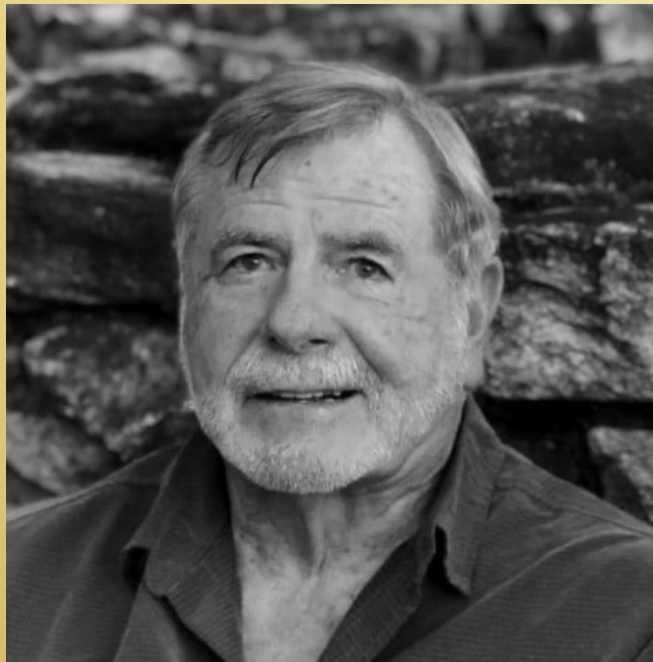


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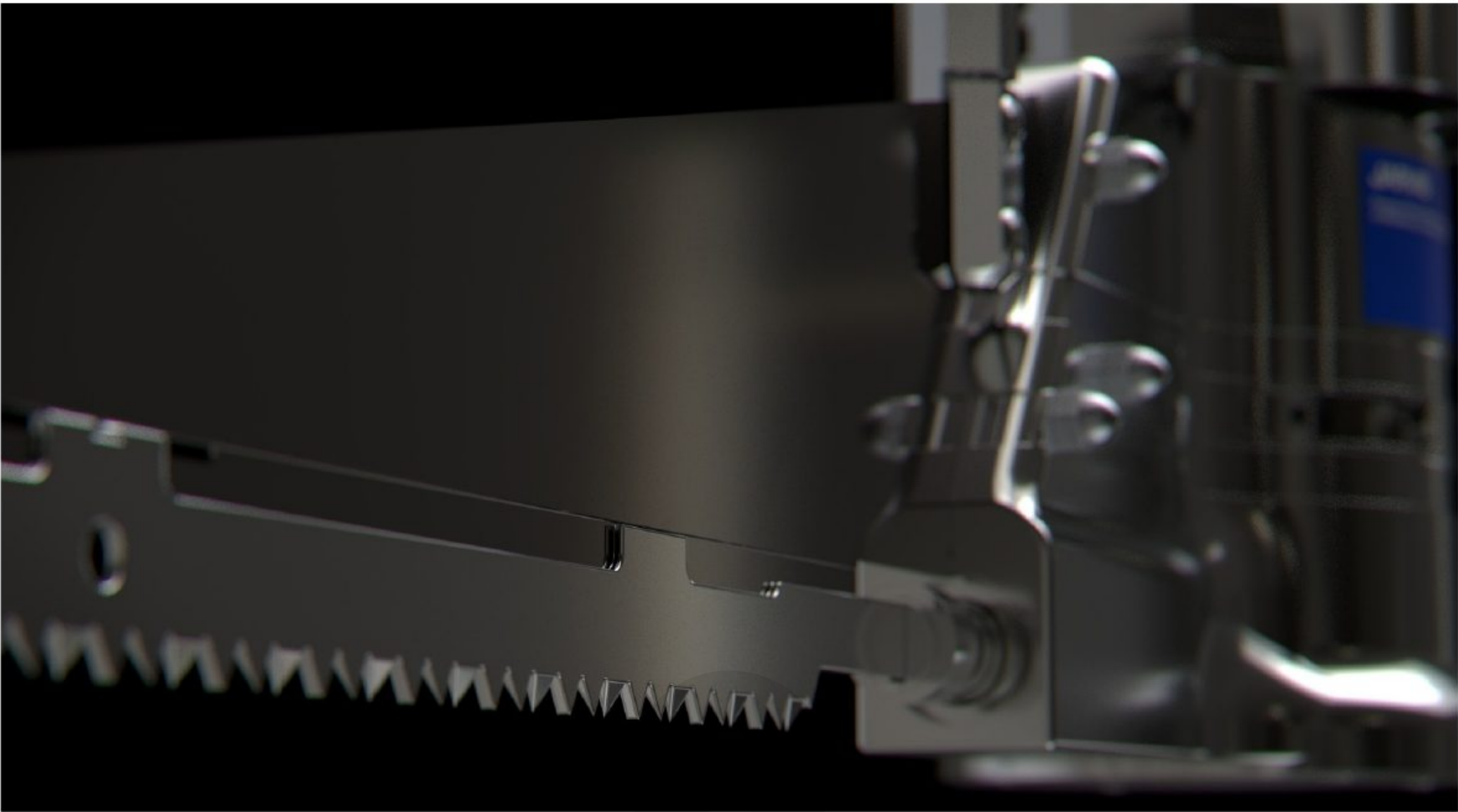
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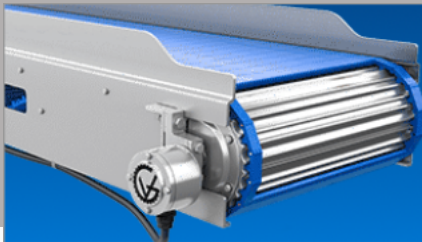
HIGHLIGHTING U.S. PORK EXPORTS



with
DAN HALSTROM
PRESIDENT & CEO of U.S. MEAT EXPORT FEDERATION

HIGHLIGHTING US PORK EXPORTS WITH USMEF'S DAN HALSTROM

The National Provisioner's Multimedia Specialist Brett Parker sits down with Dan Halstrom, president and CEO of US Meat Export Federation, as they discuss US pork exports, which have reached record-high numbers in 2024. In this conversation, Halstrom explains why pork exports are so popular, what the US does differently with their meats as opposed to other countries, and what meat processors could be doing to increase export numbers.



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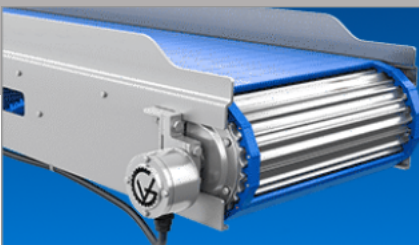
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MEET THE CLASS OF 2023



In this issue, we celebrate the Meat Industry Hall of Fame’s newly inducted Class of 2023. Past inductees along with family members, students, friends and colleagues of this year’s inductees gathered Aug. 2, 2024, in Omaha, Neb., to honor the Class of 2023, marking the induction ceremony’s return to an in-person event for the first time since the pandemic.

This year’s inductees represent a broad array of industry categories: industry, academia, government. And to say that the Class of 2023’s Posthumous Inductee is a household name would be to undersell the iconic status our inductee’s name holds in the history of American food.

Don’t miss Associate Group Editor Sammy Bredar’s profiles of this year’s inductees to the Meat Industry Hall of Fame.

Also, check out some photos from the induction ceremony in our AAMP Convention Review in Independent Processor.



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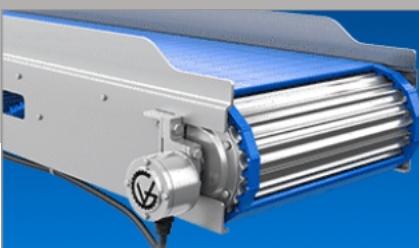
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Congrats! Meat Industry Hall of Fame welcomes latest inductees

- **Terry Caviness** – CEO, Caviness Beef Packers Ltd.
- **Oscar G. Mayer** (posthumous) – Chairman and President, Oscar Mayer
- **John A. Stadler** – Retired Meat Industry Executive
- **Kevin Western** – CEO, Western's Smokehouse
- **Mindy Brashears** – Professor-food Microbiology and Food Safety, Texas Tech University
- **Tommy Wheeler** – Distinguished Senior Research Scientist, USDA-ARS
- **Phil Hinderaker** – Retired, President, Alkar



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MEAT INDUSTRY HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2023

PAST INDUCTEES VOTE IN CLASS OF 2023 MEAT INDUSTRY HALL OF FAME HONOREES.

THE MEAT INDUSTRY HALL OF FAME RECOGNIZES SEVEN INDUSTRY VETERANS FOR THEIR SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MEAT INDUSTRY.

BY SAMMY BREDAR
ASSOCIATE GROUP EDITOR

The National Provisioner is proud to welcome the Meat Industry Hall of Fame Class of 2023.

After nominations solicited from the industry and voting by past inductees of the Meat Industry Hall of Fame, seven members were selected for the Class of 2023:

- **Oscar G. Mayer (posthumous)** — chairman and president, Oscar Mayer
- **Terry Caviness** — CEO, Caviness Beef Packers Ltd.
- **John A. Stadler** — retired meat industry executive
- **Kevin Western** — CEO, Western's Smokehouse
- **Mindy Brashears** — professor-food microbiology and food safety, Texas Tech University
- **Tommy Wheeler** — distinguished senior research scientist, USDA-ARS
- **Phil Hinderaker** — retired, president, Alkar

Many of the Class of 2023 inductees grew up in the meat industry, and posthumous inductee Oscar G. Mayer is no different. He joined his father's retail meat market after graduating from Harvard University, growing the family business from a Chicago-focused enterprise to a large, nationally known meat producer. Oscar G. Mayer had immense impact on the business, spurring the company's first acquisition in 1919 and becoming president in 1928.

Under Oscar G. Mayer's leadership, the company began branding their products to enhance consumer visibility, as well as using the iconic Wienermobile. Also under his leadership, the company invented the first meat industry vacuum-sealed packaging. Oscar G. Mayer took on the role of chairman of the board in 1955 and held that role for 10 years until he passed away in 1965. His profound, longstanding impact on the meat production industry has earned him a spot in the Meat Industry Hall of Fame.

Terry Caviness, CEO of Caviness Beef Packers Ltd., runs his family's beef processing business in Hereford and Amarillo, Texas. The business, founded in 1962, is now in its third generation of family leadership – Terry, along with his sons Trevor and Regan, are currently at the helm of Caviness Beef Packers.

After graduating from Texas Tech University, Terry Caviness returned to his home to work in the family business. In addition to running Caviness Beef Packers, Caviness works as a director and operating partner of CS Beef Packers in Kuna, Idaho, a partnership between his own family and the J.R. Simplot family in Boise.

There are around 2,200 employees between both Caviness Beef Packers and CS Beef Packers. The two companies process around 1.3 million cattle each year, selling and distributing beef on a national and international scale. One of Caviness's most notable career moments was building a new beef processing complex in 2005.

For the next generation of meat industry professionals, Caviness offers the following recommendations:

- Always take the high road.
- Keep a healthy work/life balance.
- Keep both the big picture and details in mind.
- Lead by example.
- Don't take yourself too seriously.
- Keep wise company.

Like much of the Class of 2023, John Stadler grew up in the meat industry, helping out his father and uncles at meat company Stadler Packing Co. After going to college, Stadler worked in Indiana for 10 years, then became a rancher and commodity trader in Colorado for about nine years.

Stadler then decided to return to his home and buy his family's business, renaming it to Mariah Foods. After selling that business, he became the president of fresh pork at Premium Standard Farms, building the first EU-certified plant in the United States. Stadler ran BMI AG Services, then bought Iowa Packaging alongside some investors, taking the company out of bankruptcy, saving 300 job positions and creating Pine Ridge Farms, which is the largest sow-slaughter facility in the world.

Later on, Stadler expanded into the fresh sausage category, creating Kansas City Sausage. Both Pine Ridge Farms and Kansas City Sausage were eventually sold to Smithfield Foods.

For up-and-coming meat industry professionals, Stadler recommends paying attention to hourly workers, and not "getting too big for your britches." Looking back on his career, Stadler is most proud of his relationship building, treating employees like relatives rather than workers. Stadler's commitment to quality, entrepreneurship and relationship building have earned him a spot in the Hall of Fame.

Growing up in his mother and father's small family custom meat processing business, Kevin Western became a jack of all trades, learning all the ins and outs of the meat processing industry. The time he spent working at his family's shop taught him the value of working his way up.

After becoming interested in meat snack sticks in 2003, Western began developing shelf-stable meat snack sticks in various sizes and flavors. He not only labored over the product itself, but over the packaging, look and shelf stability. His dedication led him to become a leader in private-label meat snack sticks.

In 2014, Western created a modern processing plant, aimed to increase his business's snack stick production. Western said "The new facility was able to over triple the production capabilities at the time and now boasts a capacity of six times the original volume throughput."

Western's greatest career highlight is not one moment, but rather the development and growth of his business over time. After retiring from the meat business in 2023, Western spends his time with his wife, Heather, and their five grandchildren.

Western is most proud of the relationships he has developed over the years of his career, including his customers, vendors and employees. For those just starting out in the meat industry, Western recommends constantly learning from peers, working hard and consistently pursuing self education.

Mindy Brashears, director of the International Center for Food Industry Excellence at Texas Tech University, formerly served as the under secretary for food safety. From 2019-2021, Brashears led the USDA's Food Safety Inspection Service. She was instrumental in managing the food supply chain during the pandemic, and she is credited for multiple events, such as the Swine Inspection Modernization and Egg Inspection Modernization, during her time at FSIS. While leading the organization, she created a graduate fellowship for students in food safety, which supports FSIS priority research.

Now at Texas Tech, Brashears also works as a Paul Whitfield Horn Distinguished Professor, holding the Roth and Letch Family Endowed Chair for Food Safety. At Texas Tech, Brashears focuses on food safety and public health for pre-harvest and post-harvest production. In addition to her roles at Texas Tech, Brashears serves on the Board of Directors for the International Stockman's Education Foundation, as a Fellow in the National Academy of Inventors, on the Development Council for the American Meat Science Association and on the Academic Advisory panel for the Protein Pact.

A career highlight for Brashears goes back to her first day on the job at FSIS, where she faced the largest E. coli O157:H7 recall in history at that time. The recall and its aftermath set the path for her food safety research moving forward.

Brashears is an active advocate for women in the meat industry, creating and moderating the "Pink Ribbon Food Safety Task Force," a Facebook page focused on women in food safety.

Looking back on her career, Brashears is most proud of her students. She is proud of seeing the knowledge passed down through them and believes that to be her greatest accomplishment.

Senior distinguished research scientist Dr. Tommy Wheeler is known in the meat science industry for his work in meat safety and quality, carcass composition and instrument grading.

He has spent the last 34 years of his life working for the USDA-ARS, conducting research for this organization and leading the Salmonella Grand Challenge project.

Wheeler graduated from Texas Tech University with his Bachelor of Science in ag economics in 1984. He graduated with his Master of Science in meat science from Texas Tech in 1986 and earned his doctorate in meat science and muscle biology from Texas A&M University in 1989.

After completing his education, Wheeler joined the USDA-ARS's U.S. Meat Animal Research Center as a research food technologist. He then became a research leader for the Meat Safety and Quality Research Unit in 2007, directing research programs for 12 scientists.

Wheeler is the immediate past-president of the American Meat Science Association, and he sits on multiple industry, scientific and academic advisory boards today. Wheeler has received multiple awards for his work and is credited for 263 scientific journal publications, 140 abstracts, 83 technical reports/proceedings, three patents and four book chapters.

One of Wheeler's greatest career highlights was the Beef Carcass Grading Camera System and working to develop it and see it implemented in the industry. He is proud of working closely with industry colleagues to create meat industry and food safety solutions.

For young meat industry professionals, Wheeler recommends constantly learning, seeking out strong leaders and mentors and consistently expanding a professional network. He also urges young professionals to maintain their integrity and develop themselves into a highly reliable, trustworthy and capable worker.

Retired president of Alkar, Phil Hinderaker, has greatly expanded the Alkar business during his time in the industry. He took small smokehouse manufacturer Alkar and led it to become a leader in thermal processing equipment and technology.

After graduating from the University of Wisconsin, receiving a Bachelor of Arts from UW-Oshkosh and a Master of Business Administration from UW-Madison, Hinderaker began working for Wisconsin-based Alkar.

Hinderaker went on to expand technologies to help meat processors improve their operations. He also led the creation of a new headquarters, featuring a thermal processing technical center. Hinderaker received recognition for this work with the 1995 AMI Supplier of the Year Award going to Alkar.

Alkar then continued to expand, moving into international markets and receiving the Wisconsin Governor's Exporter Achievement Award in 1994. During his career with Alkar, Hinderaker was on the Boards of the American Meat Institute and the Meat Industry Suppliers Association.

One of Hinderaker's most notable moments of his career was creating a large-quantity hot dog production machine, producing one to five tons per hour. Alkar created the J-con continuous hotdog system in 1998, which became the primary industry system for skinless sausage production.

Hinderaker recommends future meat industry professionals find a job that they enjoy. He says, to succeed, professionals must work hard, show up and be prepared.

Though many producers have great products, relationships make all the difference. The Meat Industry Hall of Fame Class of 2023 are experts not only in meat, but in cultivating and building strong relationships with each farmer, supplier, vendor, customer and employee.

To celebrate the Meat Industry Hall of Fame's Class of 2023, MIHOF is returning to an annual in-person honors ceremony, with this year's induction reception taking place Aug. 2, 2024, during the **AAIMP** American Convention of Meat Processors & Suppliers Exhibition in Omaha, Neb.

A total of 145 people welcomed the Class of 2023 into the Meat Industry Hall of Fame at this year's reception and ceremony. The reception was sponsored by Multivac, Diamond Sponsor; Reiser, Gold Sponsor; and ESI Group, Reception Open Bar Sponsor.

The National Provisioner invites all meat and poultry industry professionals to join us in commemorating these seven leaders with our industry's highest honor and recognizing the meat and poultry industry as the leading sector of North American food production.

Learn more about the Meat Industry Hall of Fame and this year's in-person induction reception honors ceremony [here](#).



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GRAB-AND-GO PACKS BECOME A LUNCHBOX GO-TO

PACKS FOR KIDS SNACKS MUST OFFER EASY-OPEN PACKAGING.

BY FRED WILKINSON
CHIEF EDITOR

It’s back-to-school time across the US. Nearly 30 million students eat school lunch every day, according to the School Nutrition Association.

When it comes to school lunch, 82% of parents with children in kindergarten through eighth grade say they are satisfied with the food the school offers, according to foodservice market research group Technomic. High-school students, however, are far less impressed, with only 46% saying they are satisfied with their available lunch options.

School feeding occasions don’t just mean lunch anymore. Before- and after-school eating occasions include school breakfast programs as well as after-school care and after-school activities.

For families needing a quick, convenient, kid-favorite lunch bag go-to, both jerky and meat sticks provide protein and a feeling of fullness and satisfaction as either a snack or a meal component at school.

“With kids, taste wins every time,” said Cathie Weiner, senior brand manager for Hinesburg, Vt.-based Vermont Smoke & Cure.

“We’ve found that starting around middle school, children start to eat what their parents and peers eat and that the pantry transitions to being for the total household,” Weiner said. “That’s why we converted our top four flavors (Turkey Pepperoni, Original Beef + Pork, Bacon and BBQ) into half-ounce sticks sold in a convenient 3-ounce pouch, sized right for families preparing lunchboxes and who are on the go.”

Single-serve options that are pre-packaged are perfect for the lunchbox because they save time when preparing for school in the morning, said Claire Donohue, product marketing specialist for St. Louis-based Volpi Foods Corp.

“Parents are looking for these value-added meat snacks not only to save time though, they must be easy for their child to open on their own,” Donohue said. “Making sure there are perforated tear lines on bags or lids that can peel back easily is very important. These small details can determine if the parent will purchase the product again.”

She said Volpi Snack Cups with Pepperoni & Cheddar as well as Volpi’s five- and 10-pack bags of Roltini Singles are popular this time of year because each Roltini is individually wrapped for ease of packing into a school lunch.

“The snacks are easy to pack into a lunchbox and can be found across convenience for an easy grab on the way to school, or at club and retail for the ease of buying in bulk,” she said.

For both meat sticks and jerky, Weiner said a paradigm shift needs to occur from positioning meat snacks like jerky or meat sticks as being a salty, guilty pleasure to being positioned as a premium, more charcuterie-style product.

“A meat snack should and can taste like the superior cuts of meat connoisseurs or health-conscious people seek,” she said.

VSC is launching a premium beef stick that will mimic classic ribeye flavor, she said.

“Pepperoni continues to be a popular flavor with school-aged children,” Donohue said. “It is an easily recognizable flavor that children are introduced to through pizza and other avenues. Mild flavors trend as well.”

Donohue said Volpi is seeing a trend for back-to-school lunches that are pre-portioned and pre-packaged meat snacks that are high in protein and feature better-for-you ingredients.

Making sure meat snacks are allergen friendly is important for school snacks, Donohue said.


“This can be challenging, as some meat snacks might feature certain ingredients or flavor profiles that can’t be enjoyed by all,” she said. “A great way to make sure a meat snack is child friendly is to look for those that use all-natural, minimal ingredients.”

She said Volpi brand products feature no artificial ingredients, and items like their Salami Stix are dairy-free for those that cannot consume dairy.

Photo credit: Pixabay

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CATHERINE WEINER
Senior Brand Manager
Vermont Smoke & Cure



JACKIE HENDRICKS
Brand Manager of Innovation
Johnsonville



Consumers' love for meat snacks just keeps growing. During this webinar you will learn about the flavors and other product attributes shoppers are seeking in this always innovative category.

Hear from Catherine Weiner, Senior Brand Manager for artisanal smoked meat stick producer Vermont Smoke & Cure, and Jackie Hendricks, Brand Manager of Innovation for Johnsonville as they share an overview of the trends powering the category.

GAIN INSIGHTS ON EMERGING MEAT SNACK TRENDS, INCLUDING:

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SALES TRENDING UP FOR DELI MEATS



PRE-SLICED AND PACKAGED DELI MEAT SALES BOTH SHOW RECENT SALES UPTURNS, BUT DELI PREPARED MEAT SALES ARE EVEN HOTTER.

BY FRED WILKINSON
CHIEF EDITOR

The 52 weeks from June 2023 to June 24 saw total deli category sales hit \$54.9 billion, with dollar sales and pounds sold both up by 3.1% and 2.7%, respectively, according to Circana retail sales analysis.

Deli meat sales represented \$9.1 billion of that \$54.9 billion. Dollar and unit sales for deli meat for that 12-mointh period both saw declines, with dollar sales and pounds sold both falling by -2.4% according to Circana.

Retail data from June 2024 finds deli meat sales totaled \$729 million for the month. Dollar sales fell slightly at -1.1%, and pounds sold dropped -0.2%.



Circana’s retail sales analysis shows some encouraging signs for both pre-sliced and packaged deli meats.

Sales of pre-sliced deli meats from June 2023 through June 2024 were \$1.6 billion, with flat dollar sales and units sold down -1.6%. June 2024 delivered a promising performance, with pre-sliced deli meat sales of \$125 million. Pre-sliced deli meat dollars sales grew 1.7%, while pound sold were up 4.5%.

Packaged lunchmeat sales for June 2024 also showed signs of a sales upturn. Packaged lunchmeat sales were \$579 million in June 2024, with pounds sold up 1.9% and dollar sales down modestly at -0.4%.

For the June 2023 through June 2024 timeframe, packaged lunchmeat sales totaled \$7.1 billion. Dollar sales fell -1.9% and pound sold held steady at -0.5%.

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DELI MARKET TRENDS

Circana retail research shows deli-prepared food sales continue to grow for both full meal solutions as well as meal ingredients, such as prepared meats and appetizers.

Sales of deli prepared foods from June 2023-24 were \$30.2 billion, with dollar sales up 5.5% and units sold rising 4.5%. Prepared meats claimed a \$6.1 billion share of that category, with double-digit dollar sales growth (10.8%) and units sold (12.2%).

June 2024 saw that pace pick up, with deli prepared meats enjoying \$490 million in sales for the month with dollar sales up 12.4% and units sold up 15.1%.

A shopper survey representing 40,000 consumers ages 18-plus conducted through market research firm Acosta Group finds the frequency of consuming freshly prepared meals is rising across all age brackets, with the strongest growth among Gen X consumers.

Acosta survey suggestions to enhance consumer engagement and growth for deli-prepared items include:


- make convenience a priority
- offer at-home eaters restaurant-quality food to build customer loyalty
- make meals customizable for all tastes and needs.

While the survey finds that 72% of respondents say they prepare most of their meals at home, convenience and uniqueness are key needs met by retailers and restaurants. The survey found that 53% of consumers surveyed consider freshly prepared retail foods as a treat and not just a quick and convenient meal solution, more than the 52% citing timesavings as the chief appeal.


With consumers seeking attractively priced, restaurant-quality meal solutions on demand, Acosta analysis suggests retailers have an opportunity to push the envelope on their made-to-order meals to gain share of stomach

More than one-third (37%) of consumers surveyed by Acosta said they see buying freshly prepared foods as a way to try new and interesting foods.

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INCREASED PRESENCE OF IMPORTS HEIGHTENS COMPETITION

ABUNDANT 2024 CROP AND HIGHER CARRYOVER FROM 2023 PUSH FEED COSTS LOWER
BY DAN EMERY

This is the 14th year our crop report featured in The National Provisioner. Every year is vastly different, with a separate set of global circumstances. The reason crops are important is that feed ingredients represent approximately 50% of our overall cost. Because prices fluctuate so dramatically, it is a very unpredictable component of our business. What is different from other years is that carryover of corn, wheat and soybeans has recovered significantly from 2023. Acres planted are nearer record high, and crop conditions remain better than last year.

We still have a war in Ukraine. Ukraine and Russia make up 47% of the global potash supply. Ukraine has rich soil and has been a major exporter of wheat to countries that cannot produce enough. Because of the war, both have been disrupted. One of the other major sources of potash is in Canada and fortunately they have been making up some of the deficit left by Ukraine and Russia.

Because Russia has historically been a major importer of leg quarters, this part of the bird has also been disrupted. With the leg quarters being more than 50% of the bird's weight, when its price is disrupted by war or politics profitability is dramatically lower. US consumers looking for value have discovered leg quarters. The crop conditions in Brazil are also a factor. For the first time Brazil, now a major corn and soybean producer, exported a significant amount of soybean crush into the Eastern US, changing the balance of supply.

U.S. plantings of major crops for 2024 harvest (in millions of acres) Source USDA 6/28

	USDA 6/28	ANALYST AVG.	ANALYST RANGE	USDA 3/28	USDA 2023 FINAL
Corn	91.5	90.353	89.0-91.3	90.036	94.641
Soybeans	86.1	86.753	85.5-87.5	86.510	83.600
All wheat	47.2	47.657	47.1-49.0	47.498	49.575
Winter wheat	33.8	34.197	34.0-35.3	34.135	36.699
Other spring	11.3	11.340	11.2-11.7	11.335	11.200
Durum	2.17	1.998	1.9-2.1	2.028	1.676

This year the weather has been cooperative, and acreage is near a record high. As this is written in early July, rain is critical in the next 45 days, if for some reason it does not rain, like it did in 2011, that can also dramatically impact crop yield and prices. Another key factor is the carryover of corn and soybeans from 2023. This year carry has dramatically increased compared to 2023. All these factors will push prices lower on corn, soybean and wheat. In the US, our primary feed component is corn/soybean crush whereas in the EU wheat is used as a substitute for corn, it is not as efficient at converting feed to meat.

Key findings released in the USDA Acreage report include June 28,2024:

The planted acreage report showed farmers have 224.8 million acres planted on all crops, which is higher than average. It is 91.5 million acres more than anticipated.



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Corn: The planted acreage report showed significant changes in the US since March. It shows more corn acreage are planted and fewer soybean and wheat acres. USDA pegs 2024 corn plantings at 91.5 million acres, which is more than a million acres above the agency's March estimate, but more than 3 million acres below final 2023 tallies. The average estimate was for 90.353 million acres, with trade guesses ranging between 89 million and 91.3 million acres. As a result, corn futures stumbled 5% lower in the minutes immediately following the report's release. With the change of administration in Mexico, GMO yellow corn products will continue to be allowed to be shipped to Mexico, the No. 1 export market for US corn producers.

Soybeans: A total of 86.1 million acres are planted in soybeans, which is higher than 2023 but less than estimated in March. Producers have 970 million bushels of soybeans in storage. It was up from March's anticipated 962 million bushels in storage. There is an increase of 22 percent more in storage from 2023. Soybean plantings were closer to the mark but still reported-in moderately below analyst expectations.

Crop carryover from 2023 harvest. Source USDA 6/28

Wheat: The report showed 47.2 million acres of wheat are planted, which is lower than 2023 and much lower than anticipated in the March forecast. When it comes to the Grain Stock report, farmers have 4.993 billion bushels in storage which was higher than anticipated and 22 percent more than in 2023.

The report showed 702 million bushels of wheat in storage, which was up 22% from 2023. Wheat acres are also expected to decline this season, with all-wheat plantings now projected at 47.2 million acres. That is a 5% decline from 2023-24. Analysts were expecting to see a slightly larger footprint after offering an average trade guess of 47.657 million acres.

Winter wheat plantings were also below the average trade guess in today's report. Soybean acres are projected to move 3% higher from 2023 to 2024, with 86.1 million acres. That was a bit below the average trade guess of 86.753 million acres. It was also below USDA's prior projection of 86.510 million acres that the agency made in late March. Of the total, USDA reports winter wheat plantings at 33.8 million acres, spring wheat plantings at 11.3 million acres and durum plantings at 2.17 million acres.

US wheat exports have declined for decades to the point that the US is considered a residual supplier to the global market, with Russia the top wheat exporter. Brazil has overtaken the US as the world's largest soybean exporter, with China, the world's largest soybean importer, indicating it favors doing business with Brazil. The US remains the world's largest corn exporter by far, but Brazil also is making inroads in that sector, with recent record-high corn production and exports.

Because all South America is becoming more efficient at raising corn and soybeans, they are beginning to dominate global export markets — 48% of the soybeans and 40% of corn originate from South America, up dramatically from just 10 years ago. US farmers will have to become better at dominating their own market because exports will be more competitive. Because of Mexico's proximity to the US, it now boasts \$6 billion in annual sales from US corn producers.

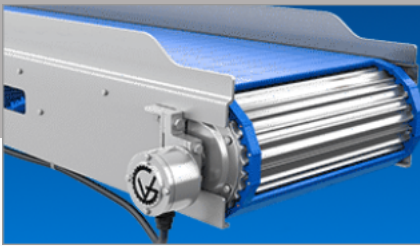
If you follow a five-year trend, grain-based feed ingredients including corn, wheat and soybean prices travel within a pricing range of one another. Their price also correlates to the price of oil. Controlling and reducing cost are always a key factor in a successful or unsuccessful year for good companies in the protein business. Ethanol production continues to get more efficient, maximizing the energy extracted from every bushel of corn. Ethanol is now the No. 1 consumer of corn, with animal feed ingredients close behind in second. Crude oil markets are back into the \$84 per barrel range in July 2023, caused by OPEC moderating production during and a recent increase in consumption. President Biden's release of millions of gallons of gasoline from the strategic reserve moderates this as well.

We have expressed long-term concerns about our farmers and their ability to continue supplying the feed ingredients we need on a cost-effective basis. Seventy percent of the farmland is changing hands in the next 15 years. This means the next generation of farmers need to take control and continue to produce the crops we need to feed our animals and supply ingredients for our baked goods.


Additionally, experts are genuinely concerned that we continue to lower our water tables and 10 years from now will have significant challenges with the water supply and Quality. Some areas of the U.S. are facing significant water stress such as Nebraska, Colorado, California, Delaware, Ohio, Virginia, North Carolina, Arkansas and the entire Southwest. As an industry we need to improve our stewardship of water use, returning it back into supply in the form of potable water. We also need to protect adjacent waterways.

Photo credit: To Come

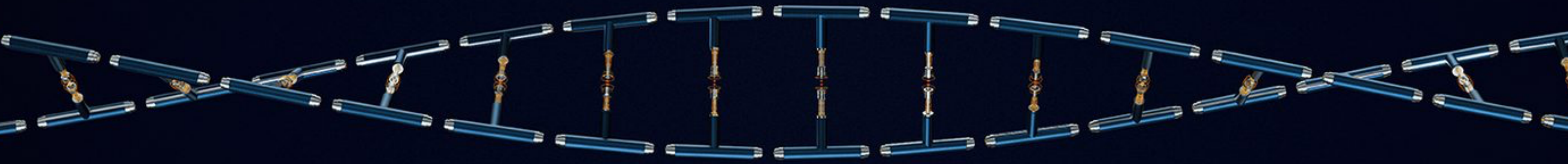
Charts: USDA report 6/28/2024



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SHOULD YOU BE USING WHOLE GENOME SEQUENCING IN YOUR FOOD FACILITY?

WGS ENHANCES DETECTION ACCURACY FOR PATHOGENS.

BY SHAWN K. STEVENS
FOOD INDUSTRY COUNSEL LLC

Whole Genome Sequencing (“WGS”) is an advanced molecular technique that decodes the DNA sequence of an organism's genome. Its application in food safety, and particularly as part of environmental monitoring programs, offers substantial benefits but also comes with notable risks.

The benefits of using WGS include enhanced detection accuracy for pathogens. Traditional DNA Typing methods, such as Ribotyping and Pulse Field Gel Electrophoresis, often fail to accurately differentiate between closely related strains. WGS, however, is far more precise, allowing food companies to track contamination sources with far greater absolute accuracy. When used as part of more sophisticated environmental or food ingredient or product testing programs, WGS can be used to generate extensive data over time that can be stored and analyzed for future reference. This data can help build a robust database of pathogens, facilitating more efficient identification and response strategies. It also aids in understanding the evolution of pathogens, as well as their movements and source.

The use of WGS can also help food companies meet stringent regulatory requirements and demonstrate a proactive approach to food safety. This commitment can enhance the company’s reputation, fostering consumer trust and potentially providing a competitive market advantage. In many cases, however, if a company wants to use WGS but also protect the information from any disclosure to regulators or otherwise, we often use the attorney-client privilege to shield and protect the information.

There are difficulties and risks associated with openly using WGS. The initial investment in WGS technology, can be substantial. Small to medium-sized enterprises might find these costs prohibitive, which could ultimately limit the widespread adoption of WGS in the food industry.

There are also certain privacy and data security concerns. By its very nature, WGS data can contain extremely sensitive information that could be misused if not properly secured. Food companies must thus implement stringent data security measures to protect this information.

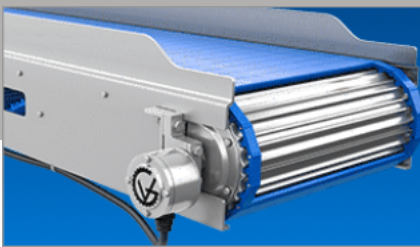
And, there are nevertheless regulatory concerns if the WGS data that is being collected ultimately establishes that a food facility has a problem with a resident organism that it cannot eliminate. Because the use of WGS in food safety is still relatively new, the regulatory frameworks for using and interpreting the data, and basing enforcement decisions on that data, is still evolving. So, we will need to wait on the regulatory agencies to provide guidance on what that ultimate framework may eventually look like.

There is no doubt that WGS holds significant promise for enhancing food safety through improved detection, outbreak investigation, and comprehensive data generation. However, the technology also presents challenges, including high costs, data protection considerations, and regulatory uncertainties. Food companies should consider weighing all the risks and benefits to determine if WGS is a viable (or, non-viable) addition to their monitoring programs.


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AN EARLY LOOK AT THE 2025 INTERNATIONAL PRODUCTION & PROCESSING EXPO

2025 IPPE WILL SHOWCASE THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY, EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES.

BY GWEN VENABLE
USPOULTRY

It does not seem like it, but the 2025 International Production & Processing Expo (IPPE) is only six months away. It will be here before you know it!

The 2025 IPPE is scheduled for Jan. 28-30 at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta. As the only annual exposition highlighting the best of the poultry and egg, meat and animal food industries, the 2025 IPPE will provide timely and important information and an efficient way for producers and processors to find solutions to enhance their operations.

With more than 550,000 square feet exhibit space already booked and 1,050+ exhibitors, the 2025 IPPE will showcase the latest technology, equipment and services that the three industries have to offer. Here is what you can look forward to experiencing:

- A trade show floor that will include exhibitors showcasing products and services in feed equipment, feed ingredients and animal health in Building A, and with live production, egg production and processing, genetics, incubation, animal health, meat and poultry processing/packaging, rendering, and Worker Safety and Food Safety Pavilions in Buildings B, BC & C.
- Three TECHTalk Theaters that will provide a platform for exhibitors to present talks on operational and technical topics, from process efficiencies to technology and sustainability.
- A New Product Showcase that will display exhibitor video submissions highlighting the most current technology and services, offering solutions for your business.
- A wide variety of fee-based and free education programs that will feature world-class speakers and thought leaders presenting on industry trends, timely topics and updates to improve your business. Look for a list of programs on the IPPE website.
- Numerous networking and communication opportunities for rejuvenating business relationships with your community, including the Happy Hour that will be held at the end of the opening day of IPPE.
- A Discovery Zone that will include the Taste of IPPE and award presentations.
- An IPPE Courtyard with additional seating and fun games, such as checkers, cornhole and Connect4 to help you relax when you need a break from walking the vast trade show floor.
- IPPE’s participation in the U.S. Department of Commerce Trade Event Partnership Program that will help bring in international poultry, meat and feed buyers recruited from around the world.

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There will be so much to see and do! Are you ready to feed your business growth, meet your bottom-line goals, crack open new innovations, and find solutions to meet your business needs? It’s all at IPPE 2025!

Be sure to hold Jan. 28-30, on your calendar to attend. Visit the IPPE website, www.ippexpo.org for more information and to link directly to attendee registration and housing opening on Oct. 7.


On behalf of IPPE’s three organizing sponsors – the U.S. Poultry & Egg Association, American Feed Industry Association and the Meat Institute – we look forward to seeing you in Atlanta!

Gwen Venable is the executive vice president, expo & communication services, for the U.S. Poultry & Egg Association.

Opening image credit: Fred Wilkinson



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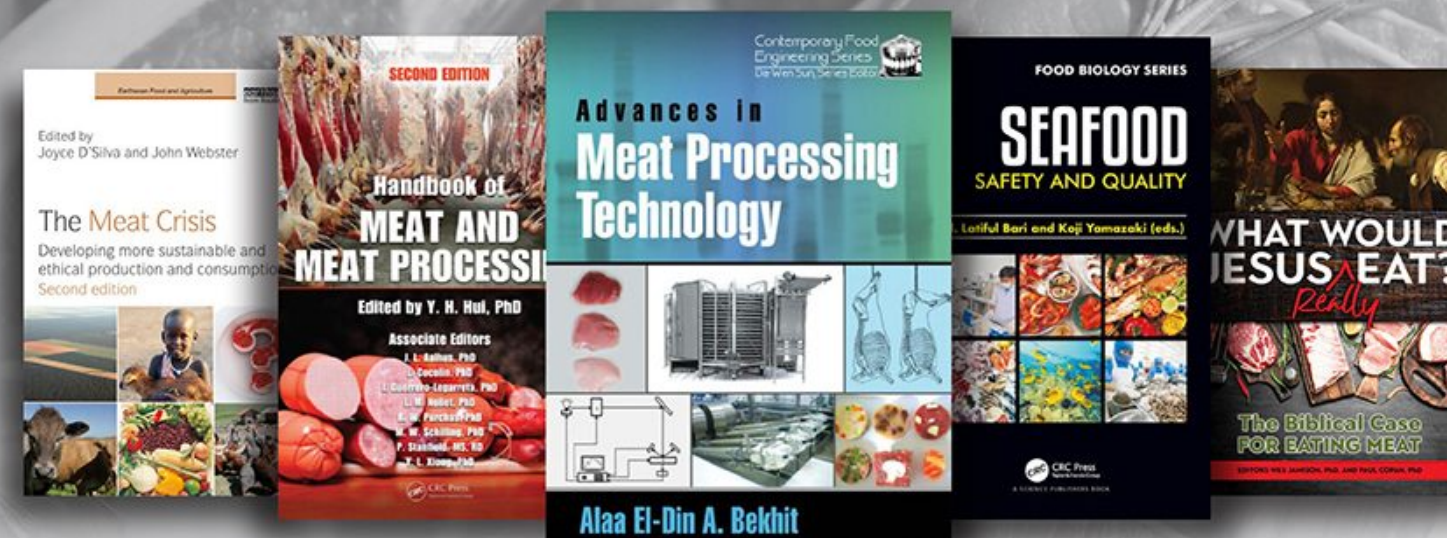


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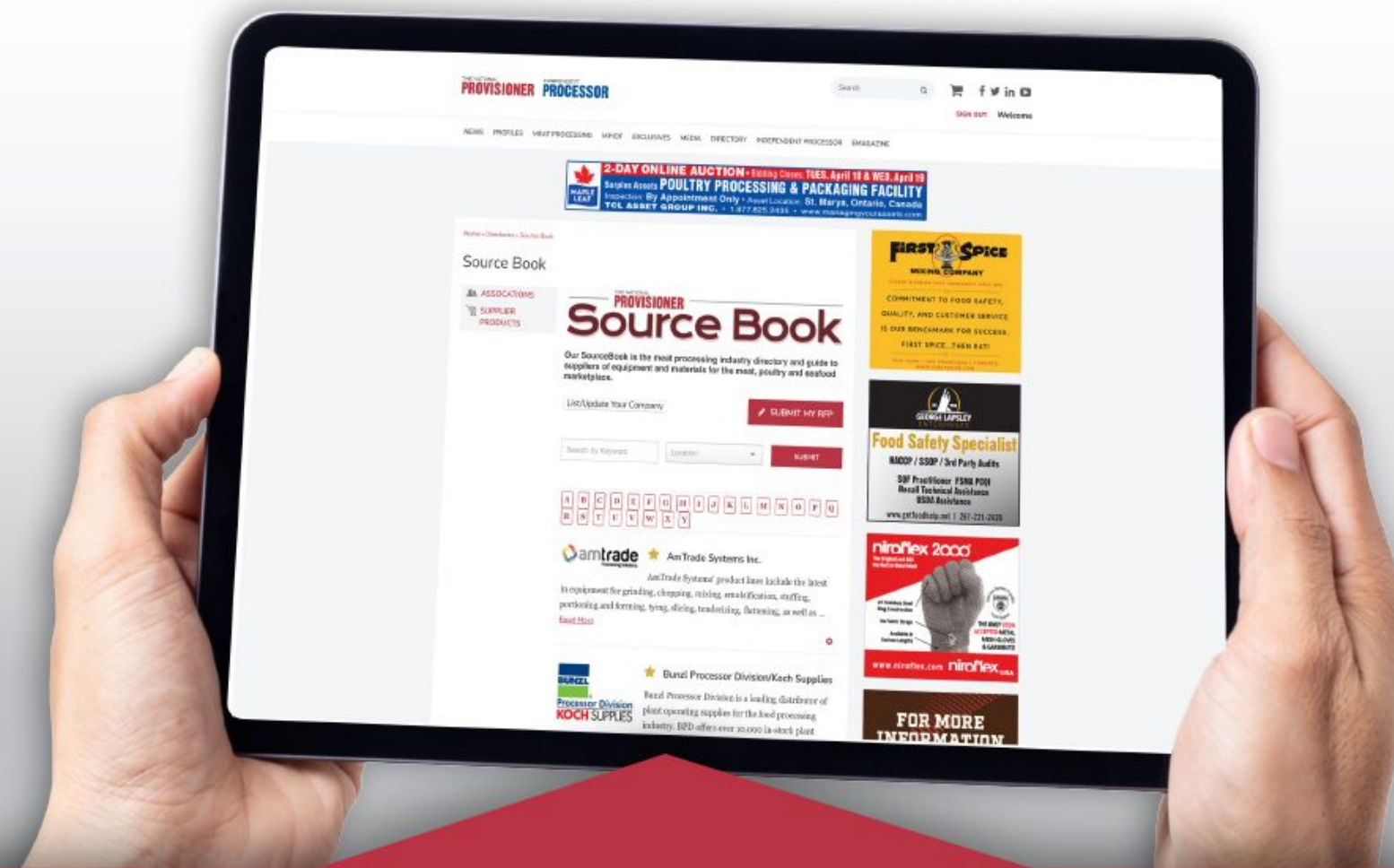
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2024 PROCESSOR OF THE YEAR ➡ CYPRESS VALLEY MEAT CO.



ARK.-BASED CYPRESS VALLEY MEAT CO. THRIVES IN FACE OF ADVERSITY

THE NATIONAL PROVISIONER IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE OUR 2024 INDEPENDENT PROCESSOR OF THE YEAR, CYPRESS VALLEY MEAT CO.

BY SAMMY BREDAR
ASSOCIATE GROUP EDITOR

The National Provisioner is proud to announce our 2024 Independent Processor of the Year, Cypress Valley Meat Co. Ark.-based Cypress Valley Meat has been around since 2005, standing the test of time. Through record-high inflation, a pandemic and a family loss, the Shaw family has persevered and allowed their business to not only survive, but thrive. The success of Cypress Valley Meat has rightfully earned the company the title of Independent Processor of the Year.

To gain a deeper perspective on the CVMC business, The National Provisioner consulted with Chris Shaw, plant operations manager. He noted that President Andy Shaw first began his venture into meat processing in 2005, offering wild game processing to local customers and primarily focusing on deer processing.

As customers saw the consistent high quality of Andy’s work, they requested custom processing for cattle, hogs and lambs in addition to wild game.

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By establishing a solid reputation, CVMC was able to break into new markets. “As CVMC began to service local farmers we continued to expand to meet demand,” Chris said. “We currently have six locations with four locations under USDA inspection, one custom plant, and a return to our legacy wild game location (Vilonia, AR) in the fall of 2024.”

CVMC maintains close relationships with partner farmers, prioritizing relationship building and high-quality customer service, which can be accredited to CVMC’s artisan butchers. The company feels that their employees help set them apart from the crowd.

“Our focus on company culture and retention has allowed us to retain the talent that makes that all possible,” Chris said. “Artisan butchers are not readily available in the job market. However, we have legacy talent that have mastered their craft and they have the ability and passion to pass this knowledge on to new team members.” The company also credits the Missouri Association of Meat Processors and American Association of Meat Processors as a great place to share industry best practices.

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Chris Shaw, Mike Redden, Benny Jones, Dedric Nunn, Kieth Crow, Brandon Dunn Meat judging

In 2016, Cypress Valley Meat Co. began a joint venture with Grass Roots Farmers’ Cooperative called Natural State, which offers small-scale, humane poultry processing for direct-to-consumer companies. As the Grass Roots Farmers’ Cooperative was looking for a processor that could produce high-quality products and packaging, both reflecting the cooperative’s regenerative agriculture practices, they found their match in Cypress Valley Meat.

“It was an opportunity for Natural State Processing to service the needs of a direct to consumer company while maintaining the mission of reinventing the role of the processor by being a strategic partner to the farmer and destination job for our team members,” Chris said. He noted that, as one of nearly 20 independent U.S. poultry processors, Natural State continues to serve very small, small and midsize farms.

President Andy Shaw consistently prioritized relationships with each customer, and he did the same with his employees. By investing in skilled, dedicated team members, Andy was able to set the company up for continued success.

“Andy did a remarkable job of finding exceptional talent from the front line to the leadership team that were empowered to run the business like owners,” Chris said. “With a focus on What we do and How we behave the mission of the company has always been bigger than any individual.”

Cypress Valley Meat Co. lobby

Kim Schroeder, Benny Jones, Brandon Dunn, Kim Shaw, Chris Shaw

Tragically, Andy passed away in 2021. In the face of massive loss, the Shaw family maintained Andy’s legacy and have propelled it forward based on the founding principles Andy instilled in the company. “Andy anchored the business with a focus on our PURPOSE,” Chris said. “Positive Perspective Always, Unified Team and Family Atmosphere, Relationships not Transactions, Pride in the Product, Openness =Honesty, Self Driven, and Embracing change.”

Chris noted that those at Cypress Valley Meat miss Andy in business, but they most miss his love and friendship.

Looking ahead, Cypress Valley Meat sees potential in the value-added category, with branded retail opportunities on the horizon.

Image credits: Cypress Valley Meat Co.

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John Stadler with his family



Mindy Brashears with her students from Texas Tech University

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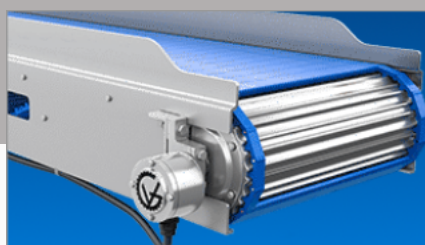
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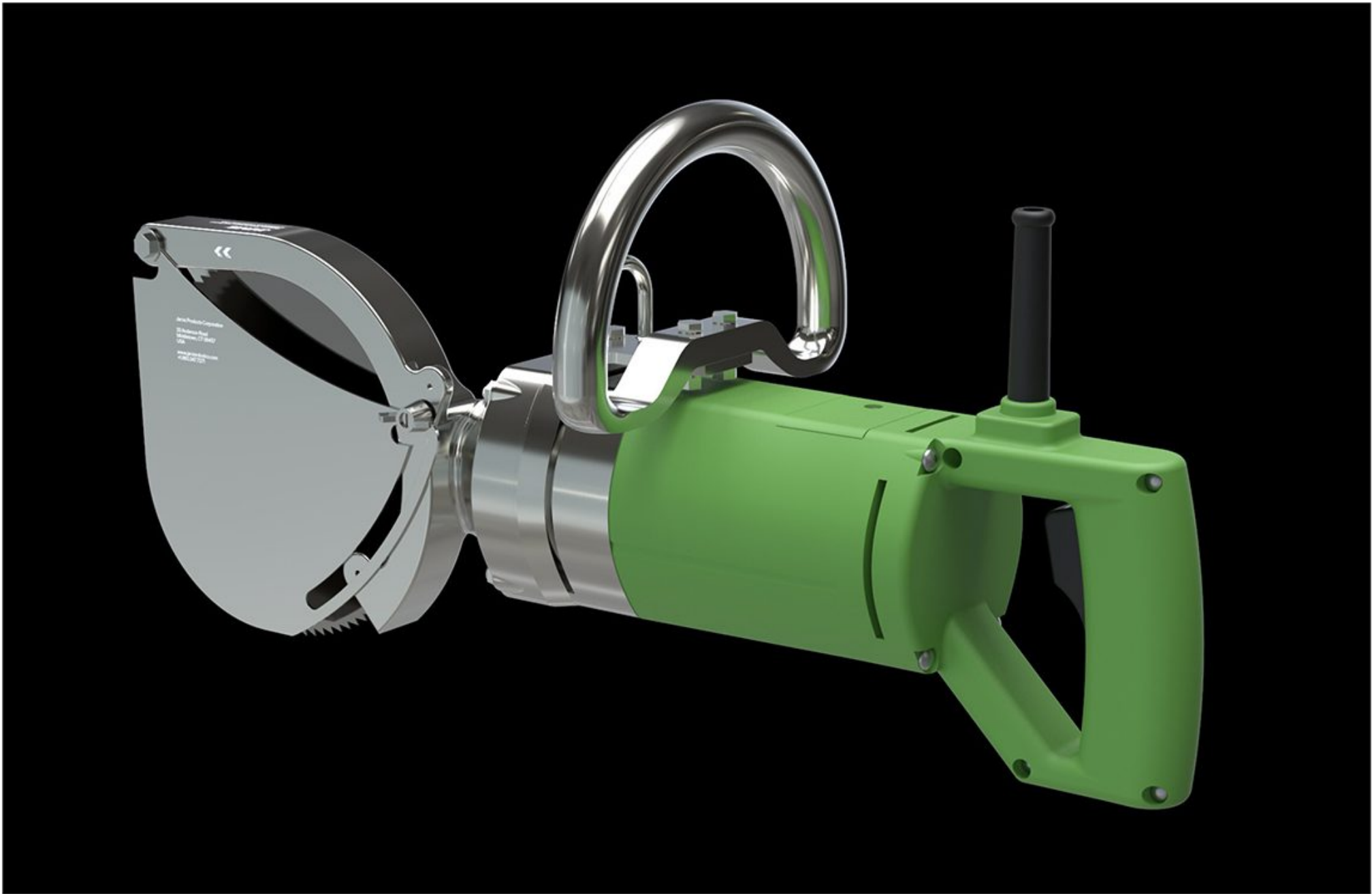


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LIQUID SMOKE OFFERS FLEXIBILITY FOR PROCESSING

THE GLOBAL MARKET VALUE FOR LIQUID SMOKE IS EXPECTED TO REACH \$245 MILLION BY 2033.

BY FRED WILKINSON
CHIEF EDITOR

OKLAHOMA CITY – Liquid smoke has a long history in the production of smoked meat products, and it can offer some benefits over traditional smoking methods.

During the 2024 Reciprocal Meat Conference in Oklahoma City, the Revolutionizing Food Preservation with Innovative Clean-Label Smoke Technology workshop session offered a brief history of liquid smoke's use in smoking meats.

Workshop presenter Joshua Gurtler, lead scientist with the US Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Research Service, shared an overview of the uses and regulatory status of liquid smoke for food applications.

Liquid smoke, traditionally called wood vinegar, is a natural flavoring agent that is made by burning wood chips and condensing the smoke into a liquid. Liquid smoke has been used for hundreds of years in places like Japan, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brazil and Southeast Asia.

Though its use in the Americas dates to the Colonial Era, liquid smoke was first popularized and marketed in the US in 1895 by Missouri pharmacist Ernest H. Wright, with farmers using it to cure meats. Gurtler said the 2023 global market value for liquid smoke was \$93 million, and that is expected to reach \$245 million by 2033.

The industrial application of liquid smoke to meat, poultry or seafood offers a number of benefits:

- enhanced color, aroma and flavor
- antioxidants and antimicrobials to fight microbial and oxidative spoilage
- toxic compounds such as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, waxes, resins, terpenes and metals are removed by refining condensates with phase separation and filtration
- reduction in harmful smoke emissions
- reduced employee safety hazards
- reduced labor costs for food application and cleanup
- increased throughput.

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- Gurtler said commercially marketed liquid smoke uses include:
- concentrated liquids for atomizing, or smoke regeneration in smoking/cooking chambers
- extracts added to meat via injection or mixing
- water-miscible solutions for direct liquid surface application
- powders added to carriers to provide smoke flavor
- condensates to be directly added to sauces for meat application.

Federal food labeling regulations allow liquid smoke to be listed as “smoke flavoring” or “natural smoke flavoring” on the ingredient deck. The label for meat products incorporating liquid smoke also must include wording such as “artificial smoke flavoring added” or “smoke flavoring added.”

According to the USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service’s 2024 Food Standards and Labeling Policy, "Meat or poultry products which have been exposed to natural liquid smoke flavor which has been transformed into a true gaseous state by the application of heat or transformed into vapor by mechanical means, e.g., atomization, may be labeled ‘Smoked.’"

Panelist Surabhi Wason, food scientist for Kerry, said using liquid smoke lets processors capture the best of the smoking process while removing undesirable toxins.

Wason said smoking of meat, poultry and fish has been increasing in popularity. The smoked products category, valued at \$694 million in 2022, is expected to increase by 66% to \$1.15 billion by 2032.

Wason said the use of liquid smoke allows processors to control the concentration of smoke being applied, helping ensure consistency of desired characteristics in the final product.

She said liquid smoke helps ensure not only product quality but also extend shelf life, while enabling processors to create products that allow consumer-friendly flavor labeling.

Surabhi Wason, food scientist for Kerry, says using liquid smoke lets processors capture the best of the smoking process while removing undesirable toxins.
Photo credit: Fred Wilkinson

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SMA EMBRACES REBRANDING EFFORT

REBRANDING AS SMA UNDERSCORES THAT MEMBERSHIP GROWTH INCREASINGLY COMES FROM OUTSIDE OF THE SOUTHWEST.

BY LACY BATES



KFC, Dunkin', FFA, and Meta are all entities that have rebranded in the last few years. Rebranding a company is a way to signal a shift focus and realign with corporate strategy, consumer values, and bring a fresh perspective to the organization.

This is why in May 2024, SMA collaborated with industry professionals, SMA staff and Board of Directors to re-evaluate SMA's core strategies, mission and vision, as well as the association's name. Since 2018, Southwest Meat Association has seen membership increasingly grow outside of the southwestern region of the US, which can be confusing to convey to companies outside of the organization. It was time for a shift. In present day, SMA is proud to represent member companies in more than 30 states throughout the United States. Therefore, moving forward, Southwest Meat Association will be rebranding to SMA.



A huge thanks to everyone for participating in SMA's Strategic Planning Session at the Standard Meat Company's Headquarters in Fort Worth, Texas.

Picture left to right: Lacy Bates- SMA, Tyler Kusak- Yoakum Packing Co., Karrie Menz- Surlean Foods, Jason Holcombe- StartKleen Legacy, Joe Harris- SMA, Jonathan Pace- Smokey Denmark Smoked Meats, Jarrod Miller- USM Manufacturing, Ed Ruff- Morrilton Packing Co., Jason Beyer- ABF Packing, David Englutt- Marel, Pat Nicholson- Farm to Market Foods, Jim Ondrusek- Pederson's Natural Farms, Ken Cable- Sysco Specialty Meat Group, and Bobby Yarborough- Manda Packing Co.

During SMA's strategic planning meeting, it was the desired time to transform the association's mission and vision statement into a fulfilling promise to our members for years to come.

Mission: To support U.S. processors and their suppliers through networking, advocacy, education and regulatory expertise.

Vision: To be the nation's leading food industry association whose members cultivate a culture of excellence through shared core values, enhancing opportunities for their long-term success.

VALUES:

- Family
- SMA agrees to include family in every aspect of the business. With numerous family-owned businesses within the association, SMA will continue to produce family-friendly events and provide support for family businesses.

Leadership

- SMA vows to be a leading food industry trade association by employing and collaborating with top talent in the industry to advocate for the association and its members.

Integrity

- SMA promises to preserve the integrity of the association by being honest, truthful, and righteous for each member company.

Excellence

- SMA pledges to excel in all aspects of the association and provide excellence to our membership.

Credibility

- Through it all SMA guarantees to be a creditable industry association bringing value to each member company and to other industry associations.

STRATEGIES:

- Core Strategy 1: Define membership value and communicate with members regularly to encourage engagement and retention.
- Core Strategy 2: Identify opportunities to increase regular membership and associate membership to ensure the long-term sustainability of SMA.
- Core Strategy 3: Identify opportunities to increase revenue to ensure the long-term sustainability of SMA.
- Core Strategy 4: Increase engagement with new universities to attract students and access educational content.

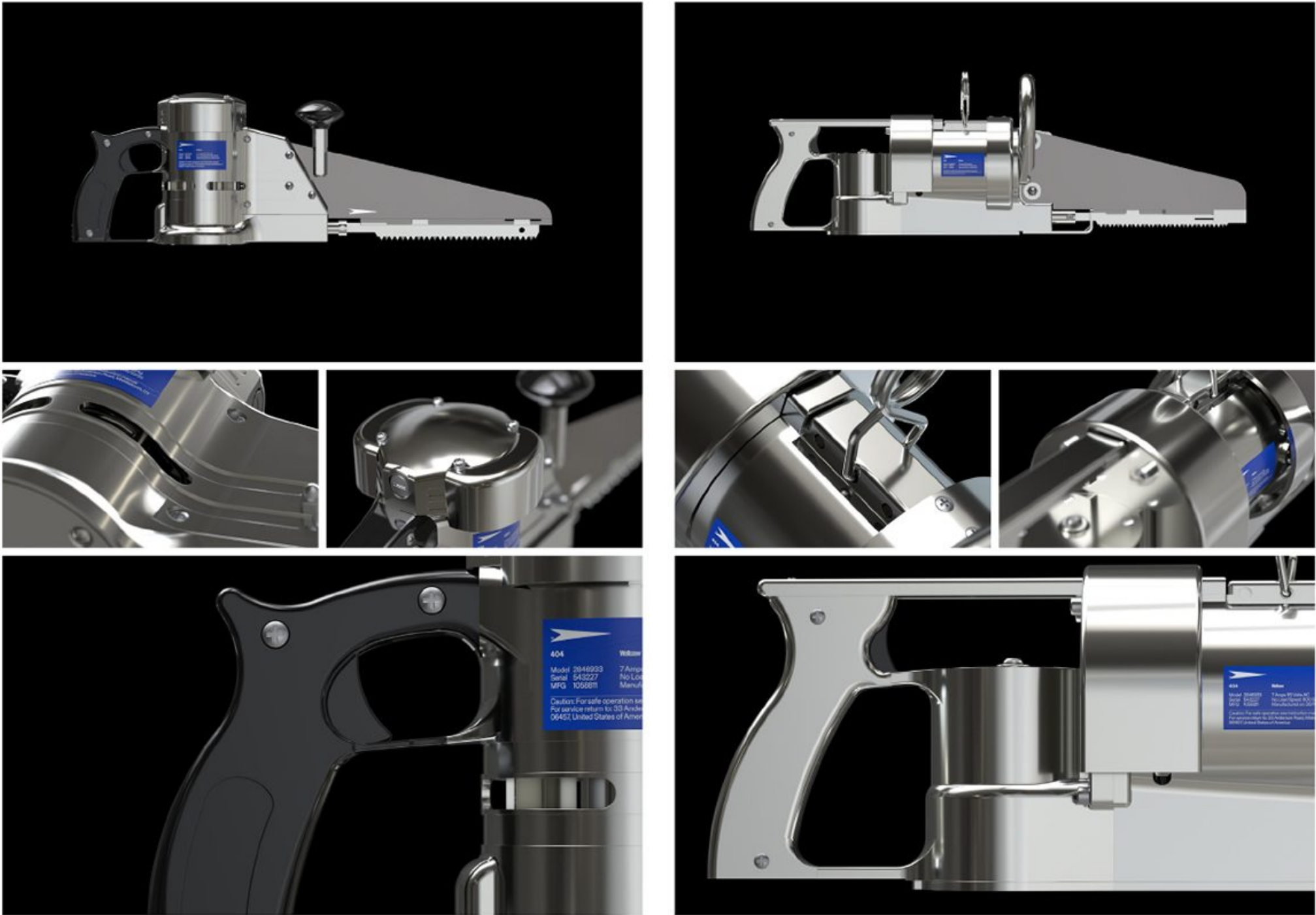
SMA is ambitious to move forward with our newfound strategies and mission to realign the association for current and future members. So long Southwest Meat Association. Hello, SMA!

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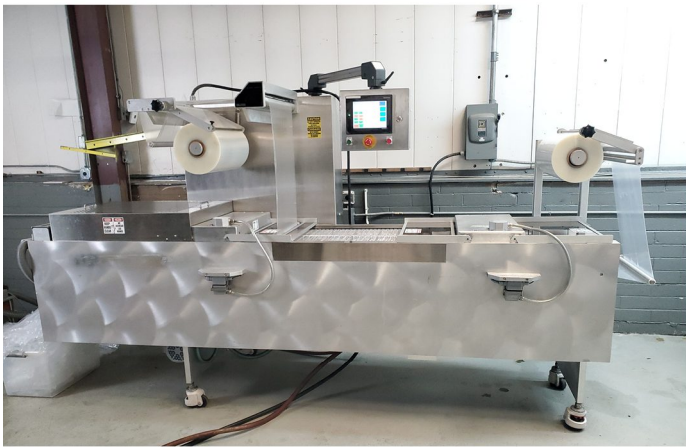
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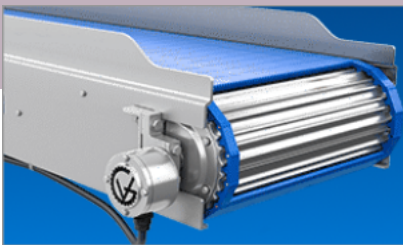
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