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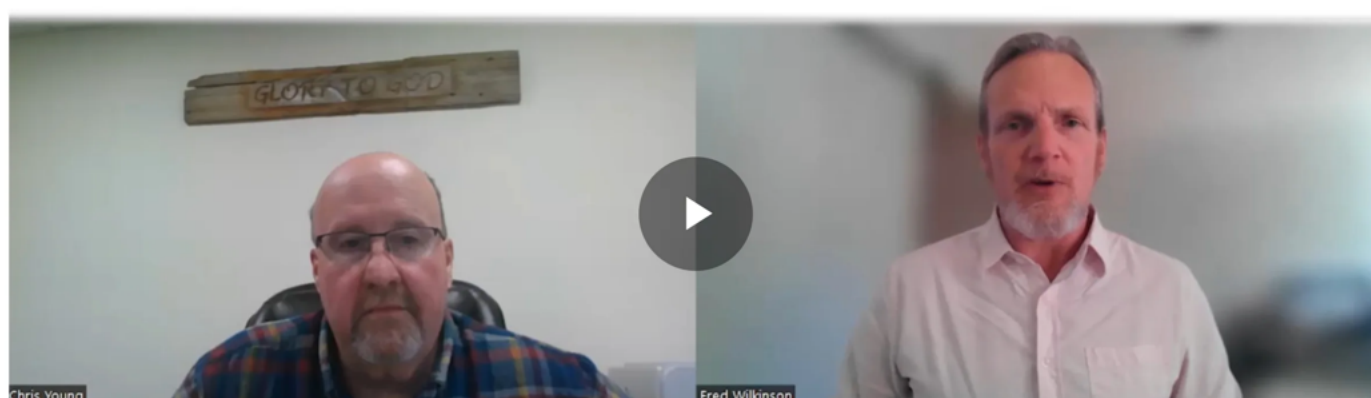


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Chris Young

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Get the rundown on the labor market outlook for the meat industry in 2023 and hear about some ways processors are finding success in sourcing labor.



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CHECKING IN ON SEAFOOD

In this month's edition, *The National Provisioner* is taking a look at the overall seafood market outlook for 2023, with a focus on aquaculture and innovations in sushi.

In our Seafood Report 2023, find out what market forces are impacting supplies and how the rest of the value chain is being affected. The seafood market ended 2022 with dollar and pound declines, according to IRI retail sales data. While price inflation for seafood in 2022 was not as bad as for the overall food and beverage category, continuing supply and storage challenges will influence 2023's market.

Check out our Sushi Category Report, and learn about sushi trends that include local seafood, layers of texture and salmon-topped sushi.

In our Aquaculture Report, learn about the use and promotion of



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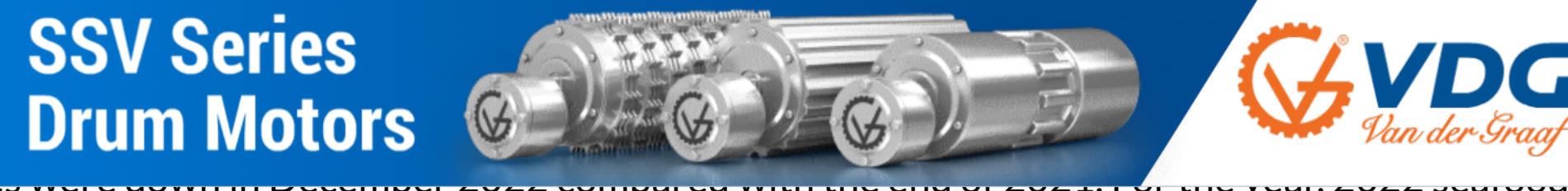


SUPPLY CHALLENGES AND MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

THE SEAFOOD SUPPLY CHAIN WILL EXPERIENCE ISSUES WITH CONTINUITY OF SUPPLIES FROM VARIOUS REGIONS AROUND THE WORLD IN 2023.

BY FRED WILKINSON
CHIEF EDITOR

Coming off two strong sales years, seafood saw dollar and pound declines in 2022. Pounds declined just under 15% and fell below 2019 levels, according to the U.S. Seafood News. Dollars were down 10% but remained ahead of their pre-2020 levels.



Fresh seafood prices were down in December 2022 compared with the end of 2021. Over the year, 2022 seafood prices increased 7.9%, below the rate of inflation for the overall food and beverage category (12.5%). Only frozen seafood prices increased above the total store level of inflation. Shelf-stable seafood prices, including canned products and pouches, had a double-digit increase over year-ago levels in December 2022.

The global seafood market is expected to grow from \$236.81 billion in 2021 to \$262.81 billion in 2022 at a compound annual growth rate of 11%. The market is expected to reach \$387.75 billion in 2026 at a compound annual growth rate of 10.2%.

There continue to be some challenges in the supply chain related to continuity of supply from various regions around the world, said Kim Gorton, president and CEO of Slade Gorton & Co. Inc., an importer and distributor of fresh and frozen retail and foodservice seafood products sold across North America.

She said recent supply-side constraints are more related to quota changes and geopolitical forces.

The seafood supply chain represents the most complex food system on the planet, Gorton said, and given that 80% to 85% of consumer demand for seafood in the U.S. is filled with imported product, much of which has months-long order lead times and various seasonality, supply cannot be adjusted quickly as demand fluctuates.

"Pricing in many categories softened in the second half of 2022 as ocean freight rates declined, supply was more plentiful and demand began to stabilize," Gorton said. "The biggest issue facing us today is the lack of available storage capacity

again. The impact of inflation and the eventual economic slowdown that started at the end of Q1 in 2022 saw seafood demand begin to slow and inventories begin to build heading into the second half of 2022.

"We expect the storage capacity constraints to continue throughout much of the year," said Gorton, who currently serves as the chair of the board of directors of the National Fisheries Institute.

Adding to the supply chain pressure for 2023 is the closure of Alaska's snow crab harvest season for 2023.

Azure, Rectangle, Font, Line, Aqua

"This unprecedented event has had a devastating effect on the fisherman and processors for these products," Gorton said. "Combined with the lack of product available now that had formerly come from Russian fisheries, supply has all but disappeared with some product still coming from South American fisheries. We expect consumers and operators will turn to alternative shellfish products, particularly lobster and shrimp."

Megan Rider, domestic marketing director for the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute, said the Alaska snow crab season closure is an example of Alaska's commitment to sustainability and fisheries management.

"The industry is as committed to ensuring the health and sustainability of our fishing communities as much as the fisheries themselves," she said. "Like any ecosystem, it's a delicate balance, and reactions across the industry are understandably mixed."

Rider said fishermen, processors and distributors try to diversify their products to include various species to help minimize the effect of unavoidable supply chain issues.

"Because Alaska is home to such a wide range of seafood — including five species of salmon, eight species of whitefish including wild Alaska pollock, cod, halibut, sablefish, rockfish, sole/flounder, various shellfish and more — and different species respond differently to different types of environmental pressures, a low harvest for one species is often balanced by a large haul of another," she said.

Dan Obradovich, processing sales manager for Pacific Seafood, said the absence of snow crab from Alaska — along with product from Russia because of the trade embargo stemming from the Ukraine situation — means there's a significant amount of crab that's not going to be coming into the market in 2023.

"Dungeness crab is one of the cornerstones of our business," he said. "So we have an alternative to snow crab."

VALUE-ADDED TRENDS

Adding value is about more than just the end consumer's eating experience. Such products increasingly are designed to add value for foodservice operators to help address their labor and supply chain issues. The seafood marketplace continues to see innovation in adding value to products, including portioning rather than using fillets or whole fish.

"As back of the house restaurant operations continue to struggle with access to labor and high food costs, purchasing more pre-cut or pre-portioned seafood is a growing trend," Gorton said. "Precut/pre-portioned seafood helps operators in a number of different ways, including reduced handling and prep, less food waste, as well as more consistent plate coverage and cooking times."

She said the tradeoff is that portions are, on the whole, more expensive than buying fish that needs to be butchered or portioned in the kitchen (such as shrimp).

"Operators are advised to compare food costs based on factoring in prep time and handling, food waste and guest satisfaction related to consistent experiences when determining which is best," she said. "We see continued innovation with ready-to-cook and ready-to-eat seafood offerings. Having expanded broadly in retail over the past decade, value-added seafood products offer operators convenience and consistency, helping to offset challenges with back-of-house labor. Well beyond breaded seafood portions, or 'square fish,' we see marinated, spiced and stuffed products becoming more popular in certain foodservice segments, particularly in hospitality and higher education."

Gorton said that among the items Slade Gorton is showcasing this year are various value-added sushi- and sashimi-ready products, particularly in the salmon category, as well as pre-cut and pre-portioned poke cubes, and ready-to-plate salmon carpaccio.

Rider said that with inflation affecting most foods across the country, value-added seafood products have a big opportunity to attract customers who aren't as confident in their home cooking skills or who seek restaurant quality seafood at a lower price.

"There was a huge increase in home seafood consumption in the early years of the pandemic, but even for those consumers who became more comfortable cooking seafood, value-added options can still relieve cooking fatigue and provide inspiration to experiment with new flavors and branch out into new species," Rider said.

Rider said trends Alaska suppliers are seeing include pre-marinated and seasoned seafood options aligned with trending flavors, as well as a focus on species with abundant availability, such as Alaska sockeye salmon, sablefish (also known as black cod), various Alaska whitefish species and surimi (made from wild Alaska pollock). Value-added options that can stretch seafood with other ingredients, for example crab or salmon cakes, are also increasing in the marketplace in order to balance cost increases.

2022 was the year of tinned seafood, Rider said, with everything from small fish like mackerel to elevated versions of canned Alaska salmon rising in popularity.

"In the coming year we expect to see proliferation of this trend, with products moving from specialty stores and markets to everyday retailers and consumers choosing salmon as an alternative for canned tuna," she said.

Recent advances in packaging, particularly vacuum seal skin packing, continue to help producers maintain freshness, flavor and appearance of seafood, Rider said.

Millennials and younger consumers offer opportunities for products that offer taste and convenience but also feed their creative instincts. In the coming year, said John Hathaway, president of Shucks Maine Lobster, a producer of value-added "MSC Certified Sustainable" Maine lobster products.

"Their interest is a little bit different in that they're really into prepared meals," he said. "They want to have things delivered to them where they can be a little bit creative."

FLAVOR TRENDS

Foodservice consumers are craving more seafood options than beef, chicken or plant-based protein, according to recent research from Datassential.

"Both prep bowls and tacos have seen growing menu penetration in recent years," Rider said. "Fried continues to be the most common seafood prep method at both limited- and full-service restaurants, followed by grilled."

Foodservice flavor trends influencing seafood products over the past couple of years include fermented flavors.

"Things like gochujang, fish sauce, kombucha, kimchi and yogurt are all on the rise," Gorton said. "Trendier restaurants are going away from heavy sides for entrees like mashed potatoes and moving towards lighter more complex flavors. Citrus will always be a flavor trend that follows seafood of all kinds. Recently people are discovering some not as popular citrus grapefruit that work really well with fish such as yuzu, grapefruit, kaffir lime sudachi, and calamansi."

According to Datassential, Asian flavors will lead the way for foodservice trends for the coming year, with sweet soy, togarashi, spicy mayo and sweet chili sauce topping the list of seafood flavors and sauces.

"We're also seeing growing consumer interest in global flavor fusion and complex flavors, so dishes like Korean BBQ Alaska salmon tacos — which are influenced by different cultures — or sweet/spicy, sour/umami flavor mash-ups, all work really well with seafood," Rider said.

Gorton said something that is not necessarily "new" but has had a large increase in popularity recently is dry aging fish.

"It's a much more common technique using beef, but many chefs with a passion for seafood are utilizing it as it has many benefits," Gorton said. "Dry aging as a process adds shelf life to the fish, a more concentrated flavor and the ability to get the fish's skin (which as we know has many health benefits) much crispier. It extracts excess water out of the muscle and skin and natural enzymes start to break down to structure of the flesh resulting in a more tender bite."

Gorton noted seafood consumption is also trending for Millennial and Gen Z consumers who seek out healthy, low calorie, high protein foods along with transparency on food labels, traceability and sustainable protein options.



OLSON FARMS INVESTING IN SUSTAINABILITY

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Olson Farms/TD Angus is developing a 45,000-head sustainable beef cattle feeding operation near North Platte, Neb.

“We’re always just looking to be more efficient, more profitable,” said Trey Wasserburger, Olson Farms partner. “We want to be the most efficient and grow our business with technology and innovation, and Bion was an answer to that.”

Bion Environmental Technologies Inc., a developer of livestock waste treatment technology and premium sustainable beef, will collaborate with Olson Farms on the project. The effort will consist of three of Bion’s 15,000-head modules (enclosed cattle feeding barns) that will feature solar panels, manure collection and conditioning, biogas recovery and upgrading, ammonia capture and production of organic fertilizer products, and clean water recovery.

Olson Farms and Bion are working together to create a definitive joint venture in early 2023, with construction anticipated to commence in the second half 2023. That timeline is expected to realize initial beef production by the end of 2024, ramping up to an estimated 135,000 head of annual production by 2025.

“Hopefully, it’ll be online here in 2025, which actually coincides with our beef packing plant here in North Platte as well. So it’s going to all kind of tie together,” he said.

“Our cattle will have the safest, most pure environment that we can offer them.” Wasserburger said.

“We want to we tell people we’re sustainable now,” he said. “We need to verify it and trace it. We’re excited to get moving on this project.”

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“We’ll be more sustainable because we’ll be more profitable,” Wasserburger said. “We’re excited about that as a family. We want to take care of that because I want my children to have the same ample freshwater supply that I did.”

Recovered water will be incorporated back into Olson Farms’ production processes, including irrigating the corn used to feed their cattle.

“We’re going to capture that water, and it is kind of recycled and then actually we can put it back into the water supply for the cattle, but more importantly we can pipe it to our irrigation pivots that irrigate our crops,” he said. “We’re not only going to be sustainable and regenerative in our water supply, but our crops are going to do better because of it.”

Fifth-generation, family-owned Olson Farms started out as a small fertilizer plant before developing into a farming enterprise. Wasserburger and his wife, Dayna, also operate TD Angus, raising and selling bulls to other producers.

“We’re more of a feedyard-focused family enterprise,” Wasserburger said. “Everything revolves down to the feedyard.”

Olson Farms feeds cattle for some of its customers but owns most of its own production through its feedyard near North Platte Neb., mainly Hershey, Neb. Olson Farms raises only Black Angus.

“We try to feed only Black Angus as well,” Wasserburger said.

LABOR OUTLOOK: NOT BETTER, NOT WORSE, STILL CHALLENGING

AAMP PRESIDENT CHRIS YOUNG AND LISA WHEALON OF DELI AND SOUS-VIDE MEAT SUPPLIER DELI STAR SHARE INSIGHTS INTO THE LABOR MARKET.

BY FRED WILKINSON
CHIEF EDITOR

DELI STAR'S 'PEOPLE-FIRST' APPROACH

Deli Star Corp., a deli and sous-vide meat supplier to consumer packaged goods brands, foodservice and retail, added more than 100 new employees to its operations during a six-month period in 2022 — a time when many food industry professionals reported facing recruitment

Lisa Whealon, vice president of operations, that have factored

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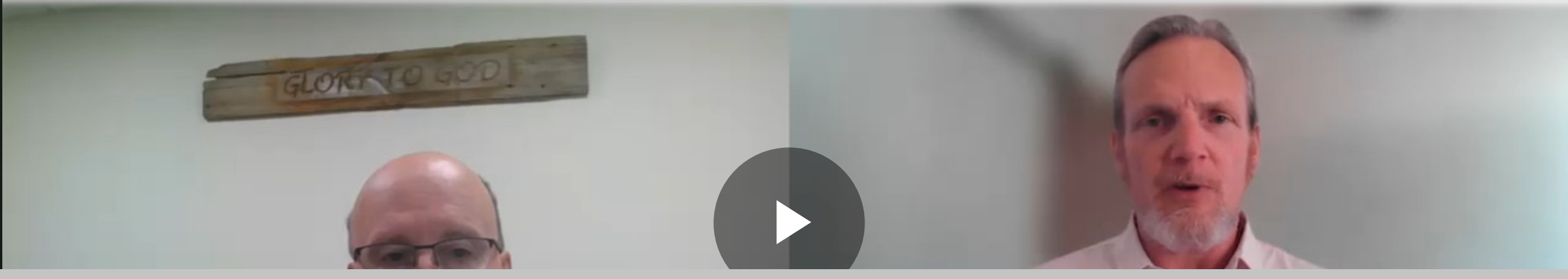
development

The National Provisioner: Share some insights about recruiting and managing a diverse staff.

Lisa Whealon: We did an extensive compensation audit, and one of the outcomes of this work was an increase in starting wages. This, along with creative benefit offerings, set us apart and significantly increased our hiring pipeline. We have also been intentional about evaluating internal processes to eliminate hiring roadblocks. Managing new hires and a diverse staff is all about our people-first philosophy. Being committed to evolving with the ever-changing needs of employees, valuing each person's unique background and contributions, and reflecting this in a dynamic employee experience is what we work to achieve daily. Our commitment to innovation extends well beyond products. Creativity and innovation with benefits and employee experience are key to recruiting, managing and retaining a diverse staff.

The National Provisioner: What has been Deli Star's most stubborn challenge in recruiting and retaining employees?

Lisa Whealon: The greatest recruitment challenge is keeping up with the pace at which we are growing. Given the rapid growth, we believe that retaining employees hinges on our investment in more training and development — ensuring our leaders and employees get the right amount of support to continuously learn, grow and improve.



Chris Young

Chief Editor, National Provisioner

AAMP'S CHRIS YOUNG ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

AAMP President Chris Young comments on the outlook for the labor market for meat and poultry processors in 2023 and shares some approaches processors are employing to source and retain labor.

The National Provisioner: Which incentives – compensation, insurance benefits, career development opportunities — has Deli Star found to be key in attracting employees?

Lisa Whealon: While we take a holistic approach to benefit offerings, there are a few that have been key in attracting employees. For example, making benefits available from day one of employment with Deli Star has set us apart. The HSA contribution from Deli Star for employees and flexible time off have also been appreciated by prospective and current employees. Our investment in certifications for new hires at all levels of the organization, 100% company-paid long-term disability for all employees, and our sabbatical policy for loyal, long-term employees are some of our other unique and attractive perks.

The National Provisioner: What role does morale-boosting team building (company picnics, employee awards, etc.) play in Deli Star's employee engagement?

Lisa Whealon: Being a people-first company, morale-boosting team building plays a huge role. Events and awards are nice and certainly happen at Deli Star, but our focus on ensuring people feel a sense of belonging at work. On a daily basis, we want Deli Star employees to feel seen and heard. One tremendously successful initiative is our employee-driven recognition program, Cultiv8. Since this program formally launched in April, 198 Cultiv8 recognition cards have been submitted. We select from these submissions and recognize employees every month. This recognition is deeply personal and tailored to the employee, as we have a recognition profile for every Deli Star employee. Whether we are celebrating a Cultiv8 recognition, a promotion, or milestone, the intentionality of personalized recognition promotes belonging and engagement.

The National Provisioner: How does Deli Star's use of automation in its processing operations intersect with staffing levels and worker training?

Lisa Whealon: Automated processes allow us to be employee-centric and reduce the time it takes to fill positions. We're able to onboard and get new hires on the production line more quickly. Additionally, automation and company goals have created new roles throughout the organization. However, we've placed an intentional focus on opportunities versus headcount. Within production, there are more opportunities for mobility and growth for our employees.

WILL USDA DECLARE SALMONELLA AN ADULTERANT IN RAW ANIMAL PRODUCTS?

PRODUCERS WOULD LIKELY FACE REQUIREMENTS TO INCORPORATE ADDITIONAL FOOD SAFETY MEASURES TO REDUCE CONTAMINATION AND ENSURE COMPLIANCE.

BY SHAWN K. STEVENS
FOOD INDUSTRY COUNSEL LLC

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serogroups as adulterants, there has been a long-running question regarding whether USDA will take additional steps in the future to declare *Salmonella* as an adulterant in raw animal products and, if so, to what extent.

USDA and the industry have long collaborated toward reducing the incidence of *Salmonella* in meat products. Increased testing, improved sanitation practices and enhanced monitoring, along with more stringent regulatory standards and expectations have all helped to reduce the occurrence of *Salmonella*. Despite these efforts, we see USDA stating more frequently that *Salmonella* remains a significant concern. According to CDC, *Salmonella* remains one of the leading causes of foodborne illness, with an estimated number of annual illnesses exceeding 1 million.

In August 2022, USDA announced its intention to declare *Salmonella* an adulterant in breaded and stuffed raw chicken products. Sandra Eskin, USDA deputy undersecretary for food safety, said the “announcement is an important moment in U.S. food safety because we are declaring *Salmonella* an adulterant in a raw poultry product.” She stated further that initiative represents “just the beginning of our efforts to improve public health.”

These statements could be interpreted in a number of ways, one of which is that additional raw poultry products could possibly be considered in the future for inclusion on the list. How quickly all of this occurs, however, remains to be seen. Additionally, with a new presidential election cycle beginning, federal agencies may become increasingly reluctant to press forward in the near-term with significant new policy pronouncements.

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If USDA were to deem *Salmonella*'s to be an adulterant in one or more products, it would likely have significant implications for the poultry industry. For starters, producers would likely be required to develop and implement additional food safety measures to reduce contamination and ensure compliance.

Many who oppose such a declaration contend that *Salmonella* is a naturally occurring organism that may be introduced, and thus be present, in many types of raw animal products, including chicken, eggs and others, through a wide range of possible vehicles. In turn, they argue that *Salmonella* is more effectively controlled, as it always has been, through additional scientific research, proper sanitation and proper handling and cooking, as opposed to a governmental mandate. Moreover, they argue, a significant regulatory shift such as this could lead to an unneeded increase in the total numbers of recalls and economic losses for farmers and food producers. Instead, implementing more effective regulations, they argue, investing in improved science and better education for consumers to observe safe-handling practices would result in a more effective control of *Salmonella*.

We'll see where USDA ultimately lands on the *Salmonella* issue. With that said, one thing is certain: USDA will continue to tighten – not soften – existing food safety rules and regulations. As a result, USDA's anticipated action of declaring *Salmonella* to be an “adulterant” in some or all raw poultry products will likely be staying on the table.

CRYOGENIC CHEMICALS' SAFE USE IN THE POULTRY INDUSTRY

.PROCESSORS MUST UNDERSTAND CRYOGENIC CHEMICALS' UNIQUE PROPERTIES AND POTENTIAL HAZARDS.

Cryogenic chemicals liquid nitrogen, liquid carbon dioxide (CO₂), and solid CO₂ (Dry Ice) are often used in food processing, which includes grinding, mixing, coating, freezing and packaging foods. Food processors use these liquids to produce a variety of foods, such as meat, poultry, baked goods and prepackaged meals.

Cryo-mechanical freezing utilizes liquid nitrogen to prevent moisture loss and minimize food damage. Cryogenic freezing tunnels and immersion freezers freeze the outer surface of products, preserve moisture, help prevent microbial growth that can lead to food spoilage, and maintain the foods' original freshness and texture.

While the benefits of using cryogenic chemicals are numerous, it is vital to understand their unique properties and potential hazards to ensure that appropriate safety precautions are always taken.



BY MATT SPENCER

USPOULTRY has w
regarding an ongoi
its findings and recommendations, scheduled for release in a final report in early 2023.

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yses and preparing

As a result of the incident under investigation, USPOULTRY has forged a close working relationship with industry safety professionals, various federal agencies, and the National Association of SARA Title III Program Officials that is made up of members and staff of State Emergency Response Commissions, Tribal Emergency Response Commissions and Local Emergency Planning Committees, to develop resources that are meant to inform and educate industry and community emergency planning personnel and first responders on cryogenic chemicals and emergency response actions. The partnership will release these resources in 2023.

There are many benefits of emergency action planning between poultry processors, local emergency planning committees and emergency first responders. It is unreasonable to assume that regional emergency planning and response personnel will understand the potential hazards of an accidental chemical release of these materials in a poultry facility. Facilities willing to cooperate and coordinate with emergency planning and response professionals can facilitate a process that provides the community with a broader understanding of potential hazards.

Collaborating with emergency planning and response professionals can give poultry facilities a better sense of the accident preparedness capabilities available within their community. It also can assist communities with identifying capability gaps, ultimately contributing to minimizing an accident's consequences.

While the CSB continues to analyze data for its final report, there are items the poultry industry and all industries that use cryogenic chemicals can focus on to facilitate using these chemicals safely. Maintaining inspection and testing programs for cryogenic liquid freezers and associated equipment is one of them. These programs should include routine and preventive maintenance intervals and equipment testing to include key safety features. Safety management systems that focus on employee training, auditing and risk analysis of cryogenic chemical systems is another item. Adequate ventilation and air monitoring in areas where cryogenic equipment is in operation is an additional item. Finally, the development of industry guidance resources provides workers with education on the safe operation of equipment and emergency response protocol to cryogenic chemical releases.

Matt Spencer is director, HR & Safety Programs, for USPOULTRY.

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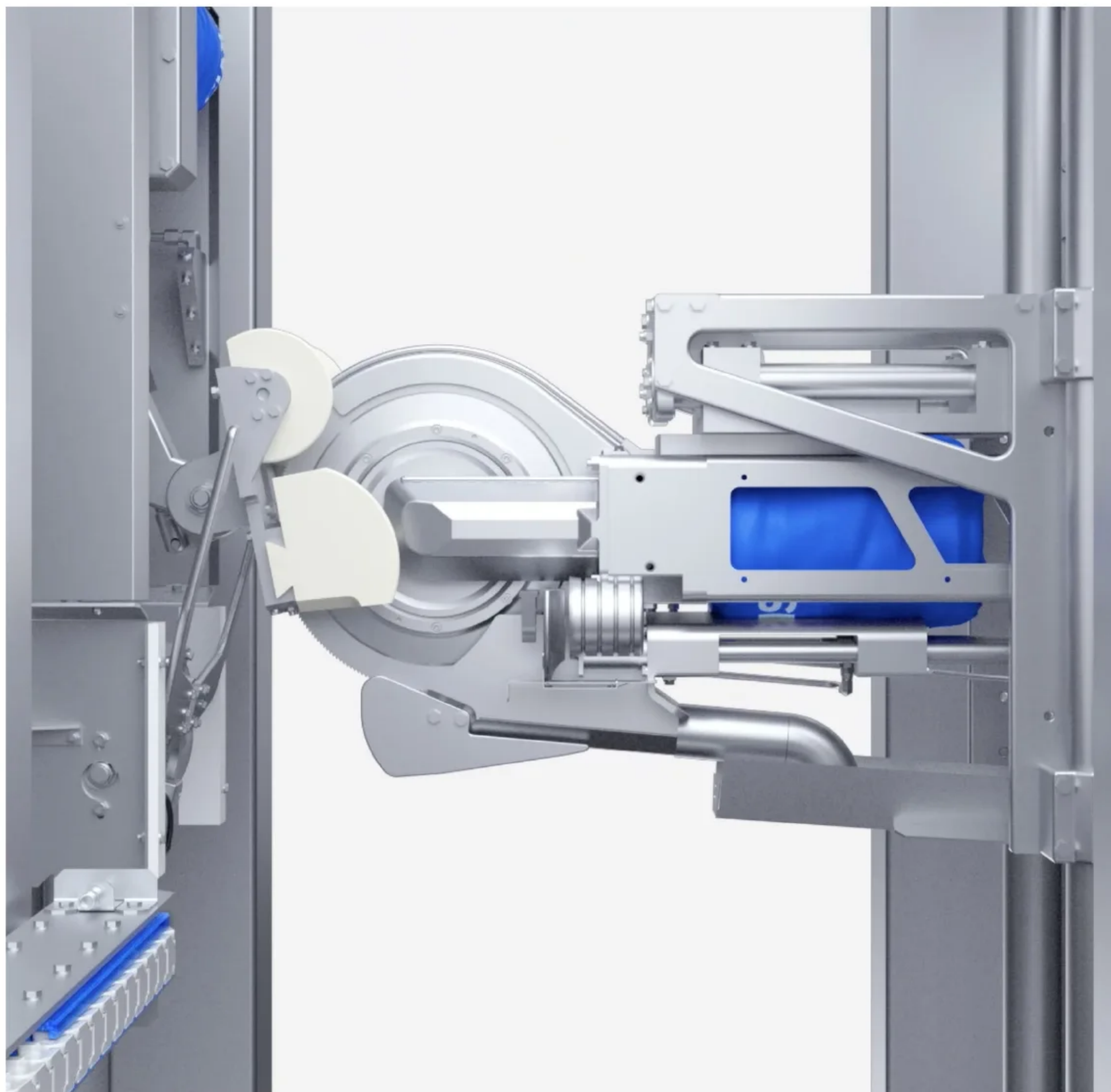
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JOE JURGIELWICZ & SON LTD.'S SUSTAINABLE PEKIN DUCK FARM

JOEY AND MICHAEL
Joey and Michael J

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COMPANY.

The Jurgielwicz brothers say they were raised on the JJS farm with their two other brothers, so they always knew they were going to be involved in the family business.

JJS' largest customer is with the Asian trade, specifically in Chinese barbecue style, Michael says. "If you are walking through, say, New York City or Philadelphia Chinatown, the ones hanging in the windows of those barbecue shops, that's the most common product that we're selling the most of."

JJS also sells different parts of the duck, like boneless duck breast and duck legs, Michael said.

The various industry complications like supply chain issues, COVID and inflation have affected many operations. Michael says that the COVID pandemic forced JJS to turn toward retail markets.

"But also it gave us the opportunity to really focus on the direct-to-consumer with our online store where we created some different consumer-friendly packaging, like just smaller packages instead of the bulk pack, where a customer in their house could go on our website, order ... directly to the door," Michael said. "So, it was a true farm-to-table experience we capitalized during that time."

The isolation of the pandemic prompted consumers to get creative with their cooking, leading to a boost in the online store, Michael said. Looking at supply chain complications, Joey said that the cost of the supply chain is what really impacted their operation.

"One of our largest costs for raising the ducks is the feed and, as we know, commodity pricing has gone through," Michael said. "So, that has affected our costs, and then some price increases we were forced to take throughout the past two years."

HPAI has also affected JJS' operation, particularly in May and June, but they are recovering from the effects of avian influenza, Michael said.

JJS is a sustainable practice, as Michael said that the company uses every part of the duck. "We sell every single part from the feathers for down blankets and pillows to different parts of the ducks like the inside, the intestines, and the gizzards, and everything



Joe Jurgielewicz & Son Ltd. is a Pennsylvania-based Pekin duck supplier.

Michael said their family farm has always been sustainable – sustainability is at the core of their operation.

"I think most farmers are naturally sustainable. They've been doing it forever," Joey said. "So now it's just fun to see the value added of what we've always done."

Aside from being sustainable and family-owned and -operated, Michael said JJS is also veterinarian-owned and -operated.

"So we have 24/7 veterinarian supervision and ownership, and so animal health and welfare is truly at the forefront of our operation," Michael said. "We always say – a happy duck is a tasty duck."

Regarding the product itself, Joey said complete flavor is the differentiator for JJS.

"We kept it as the original breed that our great grandfather, grandfather had in New York," Joey said. "And so, we still like to say, we have the perfect meat-to-fat ratio. So when you go to cook the duck, you get that really crispy skin. It's almost more of an armor on it so that the meat doesn't dry out. So it's really just that perfect flavor," he adds.

Joey said that while JJS has different kinds of consumers, they are hoping to educate consumers who may be more apprehensive to trying duck.

"So, we are looking at new ways of having some, say, further processed items from precooked duck products, some pre-prepped duck products, we're looking at some dry-aged duck," he said. "The main thing is just education to consumers of just how flavorful it is, how healthy it is for you and just adding something different to your daily or weekly diet or menus."



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SUSHI TRENDS AND INDUSTRY COMPLICATIONS

SUSHI TRENDS INCLUDE LOCAL SEAFOOD, LAYERS OF TEXTURE AND SALMON-TOPPED SUSHI.

BY SAMMY BREDAR
ASSOCIATED EDITOR

Chef Taichi Kitamura, executive chef and owner of Sushi Kappo Tamura in Seattle, Washington discussed the current sushi market, focusing on sushi trends and industry complications.



For creative sushi trends, Kitamura offers his insights regarding two current trends. He said sushi chefs want to know about the full origins of the sushi — all the way from water to table — and that sushi chefs are seeing the emergence of more creative trends and a focus on sustainability among sushi chefs toward

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“There are items like herring, sardine, flounder, sole, mackerel and chum salmon on the Japanese fresh sheet at prices as high as \$35 per pound,” Kitamura said. “These items are all underutilized, underpriced or not available in the traditional American market.”

In terms of creative trends in sushi, The Norwegian Seafood Council said Chef Joh Livera is trying layers of texture in sushi. “In his recipe for Crispy Norwegian King Crab Roll, Chef John adds hothouse cucumber for a bit of crunch inside the roll to juxtapose the sweet, succulent Norwegian red king crab legs, and then fries the entire roll in tempura batter for extra crunch.”

Market complications like inflation and supply chain issues have greatly affected the food industry, and Kitamura said sushi is no exception. Despite ongoing industry complications, Kitamura remains optimistic about the availability of fish for sushi.

“At Sushi Kappo Tamura, we’ve focused our current menu on other seafood that is more available, and are still able to offer a couple of menu items, sourcing red crab,” Kitamura said. “However, alternate species from Alaska and in the Pacific Northwest may open seasons in the new year, allowing sushi products to use more crab as it becomes available.”

Alaska’s crab season has closed, and though Kitamura said that species like snow and king crab are less available, he is confident that there is ample seafood available for consumers.

While supply chain issues have affected some seafood species, there are plenty of high-quality, sustainable fish available in the market, he said.

“Bristol Bay sockeye salmon out of Alaska just had the highest harvest on record, making it easy to access wild, sustainable sockeye salmon right now,” Kitamura said.

Salmon is a popular fish in sushi right now, according to The Norwegian Seafood Council. “Salmon is

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NORWAY SEAFOOD INDUSTRY EMBRACES SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE

THE NORWEGIAN SEAFOOD COUNCIL DISCUSSES THE STATE OF NORWEGIAN AQUACULTURE. BY SAMMY BREDAR

Recent consumer trends show that consumers are wanting more sustainable food. Norway is paving the way for sustainable aquaculture, as The Norwegian Seafood Council notes in its discussion of the state of aquaculture in Norway.

Representatives from The Norwegian Seafood Council relay current developments in Norwegian aquaculture.

The National Provisioner: What sustainability benefits does employing aquaculture offer Norway’s seafood industry?

The Norwegian Seafood Council is one of the world’s supply. Norway has the most comprehensive assessment of the world’s only sustainable seafood.

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...in half of the world’s only sustainable seafood.

As a major seafood nation that has been farming salmon for more than 50 years, Norway has a special responsibility to promote and pioneer sustainable practices in seafood production.

- Fifty years of experience has allowed Norway to find innovative solutions to lower carbon footprints, increase yields and improve fishing welfare.
- Norwegian salmon feed is completely non-GMO, free from antibiotics, and ingredients are sourced from certifiably sustainable sources and strictly controlled for unwanted substances.
- Norway enforces from mandatory pen sizes for farmed salmon raised in a ratio of 97.5% water vs 2.5% fish. The Norwegian seafood industry has strict regulations and high focus on food safety and transparency across the whole value chain – each fish has their own “fish passport” that you can track its life from smolt to packing.
- The soya, better known as soy, fed to Norwegian salmon is not only certified but also supplied by Brazilian vendors with 100% deforestation- and conversion-free soybean value chains. This means no soy grown on deforested land will be traded. In 2021, Norwegian farmers and feed producers announced they would go one step further and no longer buy soya from suppliers that sell soya grown on deforested land to other industries outside of seafood.
- All farms in Norway are required to implement a fallowing (no farming) period after each farming cycle. This allows the natural seabed to enter a recovery period.

through generations. Their intimate knowledge and respect for the sea are inherently part of their seafood industry practices, whether farmed or wild-caught. Norwegians are known for being pioneers, leaders and innovators who set industry standards for responsible aquaculture, wild resource management, sustainable fishing, processing and distribution practices.

For more information on wild-caught seafood from Norway, review this article: [Why wild-caught Norwegian seafood is sustainable.](#)

NP: Feel free to elaborate on any relevant background or trends around this topic.

The Norwegian Seafood Council: The latest Collier FAIRR Index report has ranked three Norwegian aquaculture companies as the most sustainable in animal protein producers in the world. Of just four companies identified by the index as being “low risk” against a number of factors demonstrative of sustainability, three are Norwegian aquaculture producers: Mowi, the world’s largest salmon farmer was No. 1, followed by Greig Seafood at number two. Lerøy Seafood ranked fourth.

NP: How have supply chain challenges affected the Norwegian seafood industry’s aquaculture production, if at all?

The Norwegian Seafood Council: There have not been any major challenges impacting the Norwegian aquaculture production and supply chain.

NP: How is consumer demand for seafood products influencing aquaculture production?

The Norwegian Seafood Council: November 2022 was a record month for Norwegian salmon exports, which totaled 125,234 tons and NOK 10.1 billion. Overall seafood exports totaled NOK 123 billion, which is 29.2 billion more than the same period in 2021. This export value was the third highest ever in a single month and confirms the strong global demand for Norwegian seafood.

The U.S. had the most significant increase in value this month, with an export value of NOK 431 million, or +87% compared to the same month last year. In terms of volume, Norway exported 6,393 tons of salmon, a +30% increase compared to the same month last year.



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SUSTAINABILITY IN FAMILY BUSINESS

MULTIGENERATIONAL MEMBER TIES STEER SMA'S MISSION.

Welcome to 2023! By this time, you may or may not have already thrown the towel in on your New Year's Resolutions. If you haven't, kudos to you!

This past November, I began working on a project researching the growth of SMA's membership over the past five years. This project developed into something much larger, to the point, I was digging through file cabinets and searching through membership directories dating back to 1957. At this point, my Excel spreadsheet may be able to hold a Guinness Book of World Records title.



BATES
WEST MEAT
ASSOCIATION

What I discovered was that a commitment to SMA is a company to still be mentioned, these companies are primarily independent family-owned businesses.

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For nearly 50 years, Morrilton Packing Co., Yoakum Packing Co. and Columbia Packing Co. have relied on SMA to assist with regulatory changes and challenges, sourcing supplies, and finding a networking community.

COLUMBIA PACKING

Columbia means “new beginnings.” That is exactly what Josef Ondrusek was looking for in 1913 when he opened the doors to Columbia Meat Market and Sausage Factory in downtown Dallas. In 1957, Columbia Packing joined SMA (at this time SMA was known as Texas Independent Meat Packers Association). Willie Ondrusek, second-generation businessman of Columbia Packing, served on the TIMPA board of directors. As tradition would have it, his son Bob Ondrusek would later follow in his father's footsteps and become a two-time SMA Chairman in 1981-82 and 1990-91.

After Bob's passing and Joe's retirement, the company was left in the hands of the fourth generation, Amber, Carl and Rusty Ondrusek. Today, Amber Ondrusek serves as the company's fourth president. Recently, the company opened a further processing facility in Ennis, Texas.

In the words of the late Josef Ondrusek, “Business goes where it's invited and stays where it's well treated.” I surely hope that the Ondrusek family always feels invited and well treated by SMA members and staff.

This year marks 100 years the Ondrusek family has been in the meat industry.

MORRILTON PACKING CO.

The legacy of Morrilton Packing Co. started in the late 1920's in Morrilton, Ark. It is true dedication and hard work that has kept Morrilton Packing Co. thriving as a family-owned business for nearly 100 years. During the company's lifetime, it has endured multiple facility fires, the Great Depression and the challenges of losing its workforce to World War II. Through various hardships, Morrilton Packing has successfully expanded its production facility. Today, Morrilton Packing is famously known for its bacon,

Morrilton Packing Co. is still owned by the same family and is, in fact, the only privately owned processor of red meats left in Arkansas.

YOAKUM PACKING CO.

In 1947, E.W. Pietsch opened a processing facility in downtown Yoakum, Texas. Today, the company is known as Yoakum Packing Co. and produces products under the brand Farm Pac. Now the company is operated by E. W's granddaughter, Sherri Kusak, her husband Glen Kusak, and son Tyler Kusak. Farm Pac is famously known for its smoked turkey legs. If you have ever enjoyed a juicy turkey leg at a state fair, amusement park, or festival, there is a good chance it was smoked in Yoakum, Texas. In addition to smoked turkey legs, Farm Pac also produces bacon, sausage, smoked tenderloins, hams and many more smoked products.

Glen and Tyler Kusak are another father & son duo who show their leadership skills in SMA. Glen served as SMA chairman in 1997-98 and 2006-07, as well as a member of SMA's Foundation Board of Trustees. Tyler Kusak will become SMA's chairman of the board in July 2024.

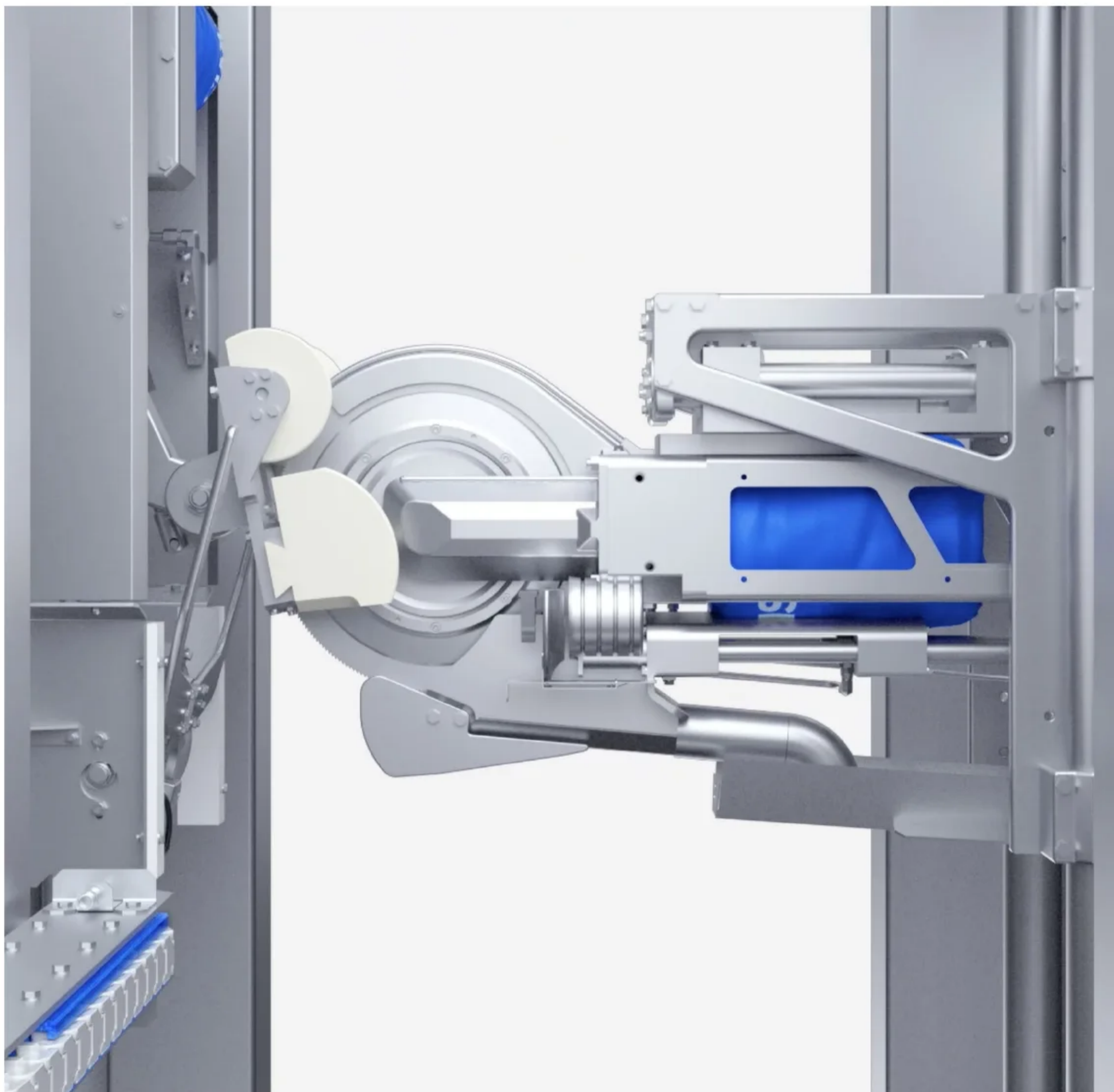
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UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT PREPARES STUDENTS FOR DIVERSE CAREERS IN MEAT SCIENCE

DIFFERENT SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS OFFER UNIQUE AVENUES TO ENGAGE CONSUMERS.

BY MARIANNA BEHREND'S
AMSA

UConn's meat science program in the Department of Animal Science (College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources) was officially established in 1956 by internationally recognized Dr. Donald Kinsman, a longtime American Meat Science Association member who dedicated his career to meat science research and teaching. Since then, the program has been preparing students to embark on diverse careers in the field, while faculty conduct groundbreaking research to help make meat safer, higher-quality and more sustainable. The meat science curriculum at UConn covers multiple steps in the meat production process, from raising animals that will be healthy

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UConn Animal Science
baccalaureate program

focuses on education about animal nutrition, genetics, assessing meat safety and quality, as well as the meat industry in Connecticut and elsewhere in the country.

"Topics including animal harvesting, grading, inspection, processing, packaging, and curing are offered to students," says Dr. Richard Mancini, associate professor. "The classes are designed to provide students with both practical and fundamental molecular principles associated with meat production."

The program also emphasizes sustainable animal management, focusing on how to improve air, water, and soil quality while raising animals for food production.

UCONN | UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

"It's that balancing of the rigor you need for an academic degree but also the industry awareness and career track," says Dr. Joe Emenheiser, livestock extension educator. "And there's a pretty good balance between the two."

In Connecticut specifically, the meat industry is much smaller than in other areas of the country, such as the Midwest, which have much more land available for growing animals and more meat processing infrastructure. Especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused significantly increased demand for local meats, Connecticut's small meat industry is emerging with significant potential.

"It's an opportunity for a land-grant institution to continue to plug in some science and undergraduate training to make sure it's something sustainable, safe and viable," Dr. Emenheiser says.

One thing that makes UConn's program unique is that it is the only university in the area that has cattle, sheep, pigs and chickens on campus for students to study, providing them with hands-on learning opportunities within walking distance. Additionally, UConn is the only land-grant university in New England with an on-site meat laboratory. This laboratory is a small-scale version of the entire

UConn's graduate program is recognized nationally as well as internationally for its pioneering research in meat science and has a robust global footprint with alumni placed at prominent positions in industry and academia. Many meat industry leaders -- including Stephen Campano, Dr. Amy Alderton and Gregory Dady -- and academic research faculty -- including Dr. Kumar Venkitanarayanan, Dr. Surendranath Suman and Dr. Ranjith Ramanathan -- graduated from UConn's animal science graduate program. These leading researchers committed their careers to support the meat industry and educating the next generation of meat scientists. UConn's reach extends abroad as well, with graduate alumni including Dr. Qun Sun and Marilyn Garcia-Edrosolam developing outstanding careers in many other countries.

Since the program's founding, UConn animal science faculty have conducted groundbreaking research to improve the quality and sustainability of meat industry.

"The studies in myoglobin chemistry directed by Dr. Cameron Faustman and Dr. Richard Mancini are landmarks in meat color research, and my lab will keep exploring meat chemistry responsible for fresh meat quality variation to help reduce food waste," says Assistant Professor Chaoyu Zhai. "We also have a team of great researchers with expertise on other components in muscle food production."

At UConn, Dr. Breno Fragomeni runs an animal genomics laboratory studying how genomic selection can improve traits related to meat production, like tolerance for heat stress and disease resistance. Dr. Sarah Reed's lab focuses on the impact of poor maternal diet during gestation and its impact on fetal and postnatal muscle growth and development in sheep models. Dr. Mary Anne Amalaradjou's lab studies sustainable food animal production, food safety, and gut health through the use of natural alternatives to antibiotics to improve poultry production, health, and meat safety. Dr. Abhinav Upadhyay's lab focuses on reducing foodborne pathogens in meat using nanotechnology and Next-Gen sequencing. Dr. Kumar Venkitanarayanan's lab explores the molecular mechanisms by which food-borne pathogens tolerate and survive adverse environmental stresses encountered in nature, foods and in hosts.

In addition to teaching and research, UConn has a strong extension presence in New England communities. Dr. Emenheiser works with producers and processors in the livestock industry on supply chain development and meat quality improvement. Extension educator Dr. Indu Upadhyaya educates farmers on compliance guidelines from the FDA and FSMA (Food Safety Modernization Act), and administers workshops for meat and poultry processors throughout New England.

More information about the University of Connecticut's Animal Science department and their programs can be found at: <https://animalscience.cahn.uconn.edu/>.

Marianna Behrends, Ed.D. is project coordinator for the American Meat Science Association.



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PUBLISHING/EDITORIAL STAFF

EDITORIAL

Douglas J. Peckenpaugh | Group Publisher
peckenpaughd@bnpmedia.com | (847) 770- 5916

Fred Wilkinson | Managing Editor
wilkinsonf@bnpmedia.com | (251) 677-2980

Bethany Vonseggern | Audience Development
vonseggernb@bnpmedia.com

Cory Emery | Art Director emeryc@bnpmedia.com

Jennifer Allen | Advertising/Production Manager
allenj@bnpmedia.com | (248) 833-7347

SALES

Chris Ward | Account Manager
 AL, CT, DE, FL, GA, KS, MD, ME, NC, NJ,
 NY, PA, RI, SC, VA, VT, Puerto Rico
cbwmedia.llc@bnpmedia.com | (678) 361-7815

Wayne Wiggins | Account Manager
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 MN, MO, MT, NE, NV, NM, ND, OH, OK, OR, SD, UT, WA, WI, WY
wwiggins@wigginscompany.com | (415) 377-6130

Pam Mazurk | Account Manager
 International outside of Mexico and Latin America
mazurkp@bnpmedia.com
 001-847-247-0018 (O) | 001-847-226-6729 (M)

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