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TALKING BARBECUE WITH CHAMPION PITMASTER TUFFY STONE

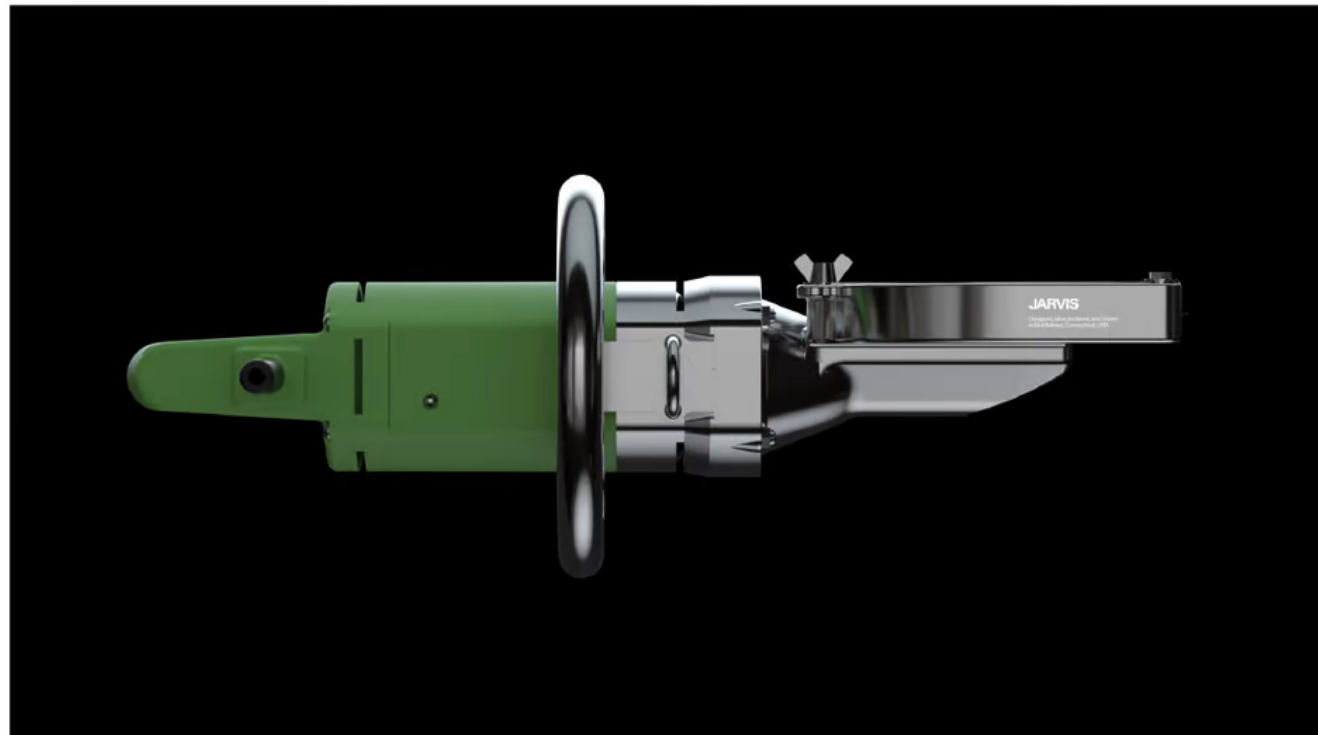
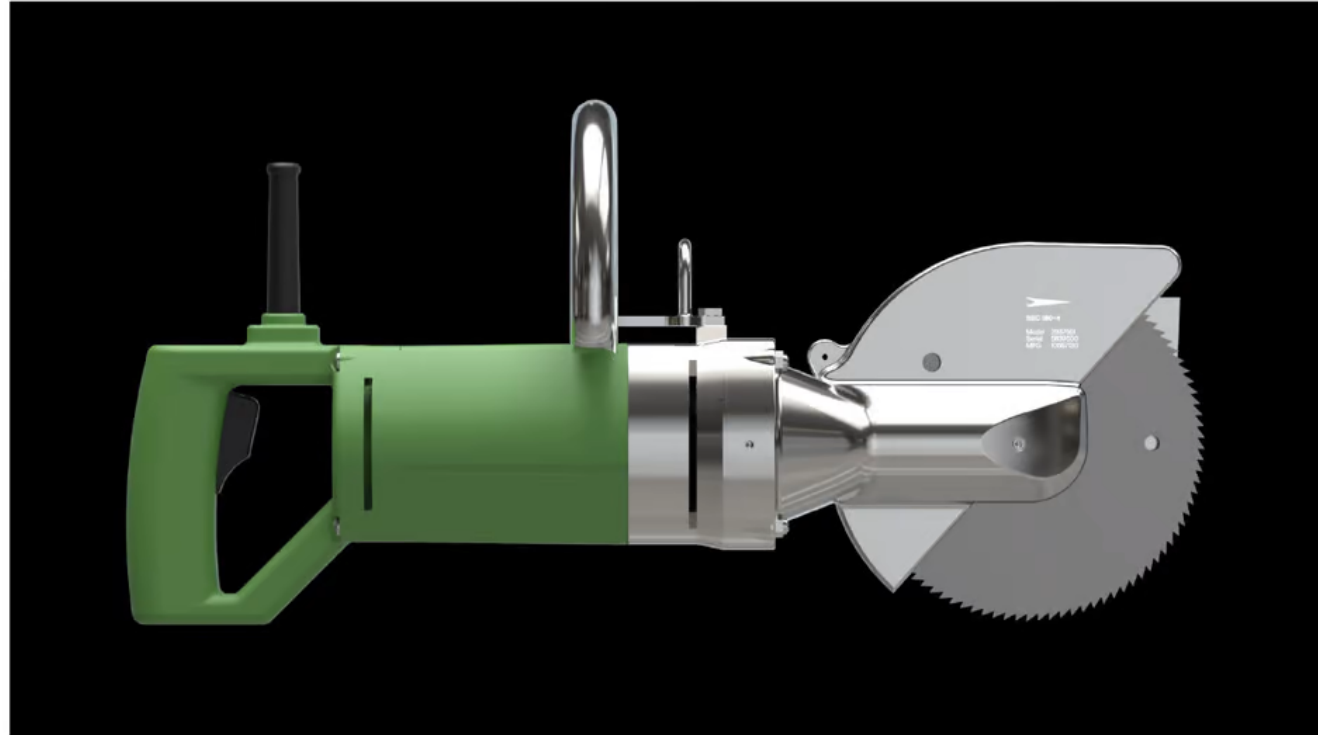
Trained chef and successful restaurateur and caterer George “Tuffy” Stone leads the competitive barbecue team Cool Smoke. The six-time World Barbecue Champion and Barbecue Hall of Fame inductee recently visited with *The National Provisioner* to discuss what makes great barbecue.



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TOP-VIEWED NEW CONSUMER PRODUCTS:

1. Bradshaw Ranch Thick N Juicy Burgers
2. Smokey Bones debuts new Lunch Bones Bowl
3. Sonny's BBQ introduces limited-release BBQ Bowls
4. Premium plant-based brisket to hit grocery shelves, restaurants this summer
5. Not winging it: John Soules Foods' AmaZings illustrate product development focus



MOST-POPULAR FEATURES:

1. Teachable moments in humane animal handling
2. The National Provisioner's 2022 Processor of the Year: John Soules Foods
3. Atlas Holdings acquires Foster Farms
4. Southeastern Meat Association Annual Convention returns
5. HPP driving Universal Pure's growth in Texas



MOST-RECENT PODCAST EPISODES:

1. Episode 143: Rockwell Automation's augmented reality technology
2. Episode 142: Superior Farms' CEO Rick Stott discusses the Sheep Discovery Center
3. Episode 141: CEO Ido Savir of SuperMeat plans a 2023 opening for a U.S. cultured poultry production facility
4. Episode 140: Talking consumer trends with 210 Analytics' Anne-Marie Roerink, Part 2
5. Episode 139: Talking consumer trends with 210 Analytics' Anne-Marie Roerink, Part 1



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SEEING THE BRIGHT SIDE

Well, it's that time of year again when summer has already reached the midway point, and it's easy to think of it as being half over instead of focusing the fact that half of it remains to be enjoyed.

Maybe we can all take a lesson in optimism from stressed out American consumers, many of whom are entering the third year of their lives being buffeted by the pandemic and its lingering effect on how we all live now. Find out how people are adapting to eating fewer meals away from home in the Lunch Formulations article in this issue.

Breakfast and dinner sausage are proving to be consistently popular proteins post-pandemic. Check out our Sausage Report 2022 and see where the market may be heading.

I recently marked my first 100 days as *The National Provisioner's* managing editor, and I'm looking forward to attending the American Association of Meat Processors Annual Convention in Des Moines this month. Until then, if your business has new hires, expansions or products that the meat processing trade could benefit from learning about, feel free to reach out and say hello and let's start the conversation.



FRED WILKINSON

 EMAIL FRED WILKINSON



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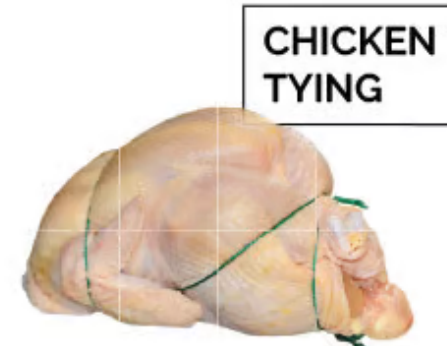
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STILL



ALTHOUGH SALES GROWTH HAS COOLED, PRICE, CONSUMER BRAND LOYALTY AND FLAVOR INNOVATIONS CONTINUE TO POSITION BREAKFAST AND DINNER SAUSAGE AS GO-TO FAVORITES IN AN INFLATIONARY MARKET.

BY FRED WILKINSON
MANAGING EDITOR

Sausage sales growth around the mid-point of 2022 has cooled a bit from its previous two years of double-digit growth, but both the breakfast and dinner sausage categories maintain overall growth despite retail price inflation

"Sausage is incredibly popular, so even when there is inflation the impact on sales isn't always as strong as it is in some of the other meat categories," National Hot Dog & Sausage Council President Eric Mittenthal said.

Overall retail sales of breakfast sausage for the 52-week period ending April 24, 2022, were \$2.06 billion, up 2.1% from a year ago at the same time but up 13.9% from 2020 and up 22.9% from 2019, according to IRI monthly shopper survey data. Dinner sausage sales were more than double those of breakfast sausage, at \$4.66 billion, up 1.6% from 2021, 11.1% from 2020 and 22.1% from 2019

"Relative to some of the other whole-muscle cuts, you continue to see affordability in sausage, and that's probably why the performance of sausage has been strong ever since the start of the pandemic," said Anne-Marie Roerink, principal at 210 Analytics.

At foodservice, demand also has remained strong, Mittenthal said, adding that inflation has impacted overall sales at retail, with sales being up dollar-wise but down in volume. Sausage's performance has been consistent with the rest of the meat category, he said.

Roerink said more people working from home since the pandemic has improved previously strong sales for frozen breakfast sandwiches and other ready-to-eat items as well as breakfast sausage and dinner sausage, which is often eaten for other meal occasions.

SAUSAGE IS INCREDIBLY POPULAR, SO EVEN WHEN THERE IS INFLATION THE IMPACT ON SALES ISN'T ALWAYS AS STRONG AS IT IS IN SOME OF THE OTHER MEAT CATEGORIES.

"Especially during COVID we saw an enormous strength in the total sausage category," she said. "I think part of that was which meal occasions ended up moving from foodservice — or just on the go — to the home. One that really jumps out is the breakfast occasion."

The sales gains retail made during the pandemic as foodservice demand fell continue to power creative growth at the store level.

"You also see sausage expanding as a part of the total service counter area. A lot of stores actually take sausage as a way to develop items that are proprietary to them," she said. "So it really has become an area of differentiation."

Sausage products' affordability and flexibility has not gone unnoticed in other food sales channels.

"I've seen them popping up in meal kits recently, so that's probably a way in which meal kits can keep a little bit of a more favorable price point," Roerink said.

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BRANDING MATTERS

Breakfast and dinner sausage brands in general enjoy strong consumer loyalty, often based on consumers having grown up eating the brand or the sausage being a regional culinary mainstay, Roerink said.

"This is an area where I think we've seen national brands and private brands work beautifully hand in hand," she said.

Mittenthal, who also serves as chief strategy officer for the North American Meat Institute, said sausage has been benefiting from more than a decade of increasing consumer demand.

"We've seen kind of category switching to an extent, where people who would previously buy hot dogs are buying a little bit more in the sausage category," he said.

Retail studies suggest sausage purchasers are creatures of habit. Brand loyalty is a key factor in consumer sausage purchasing decisions.

According to Power of Meat survey data, in 2012 63% of consumers said they did not have a brand preference when purchasing processed meat products such as sausage, Roerink said. In the 2022 study, that had fallen to 29%. Nearly half of those surveyed (45%) stated a preference for a specific regional or national brand, compared with 26% expressing a preference for a private-label brand. She said the growth in brand loyalty has trended up generationally from Baby Boomers, to Gen-Xers to Millennials and Gen Z, with each successive demographic group expressing stronger brand loyalty.

In a grocery marketplace still contending with supply chain shortfalls, consumers' brand loyalty to a specific sausage brand can potentially negatively impact the overall category, Roerink said. For example, instead of purchasing a different brand of sausage in place of an out-of-stock favorite, the shopper could opt for a product outside the sausage category entirely.

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SAUSAGE

MARKET HIGHLIGHTS



- In 2021, Americans spent more than \$7.5 billion on hot dogs and sausages in U.S. grocery stores.
- Dinner sausage sales topped \$4.8 billion and weighed in at nearly 1.27 billion pounds in 2020, a 15% volume increase from 2019. For the same time period, breakfast sausage sales were more than \$1.46 billion and 361.5 million pounds (up 15.5%).
- Dinner sausage sales peak during the summer, with dollar sales accounting for nearly a third of annual sales.
- Breakfast sausage sales peak during the holiday season from November through January.
- Consumption of dinner sausage is fairly uniform across income levels, while lower-income families consume the most breakfast sausage.
- Larger families eat the most breakfast and dinner sausage, as do younger families. Sausage consumption cools considerably for senior citizens.
- The Big Apple has a big appetite for sausage, with New York leading the way in dinner sausage sales, at \$148.3 million. Los Angeles and Chicago are the second- and third-largest markets, with sales of \$140.8 million and \$110.6 million, respectively. Dinner sausage sales peak during the summer, with dollar sales accounting for nearly a third of annual sales.

Source: National Hot Dog and Sausage Council

FLAVOR TRENDS

In a category as broad and varied as sausage, interesting and tasty innovations always abound. Product development in the sausage category has benefited from new flavor formulations as well as increasingly popular new proteins.

"We're seeing some really interesting and sweet flavors," Roerink said, naming Kaye Meats and its sausages with flavor profiles such as pepper jack, pineapple bacon and sweet bell pepper provolone.

Taking the flavor innovation up another level, the Al Fresco brand's *Tastes Just Like* line of chicken sausage products includes some unexpected flavors, such as Chicken Burrito, Nashville Hot Chicken, Chicken Parm and Fried Rice. Another innovation is blending vegetables such as broccoli, kale or mushrooms into sausage, Roerink said.

"There has been so much innovation in the entire breakfast and dinner sausage categories," she said. "People can really have fun with the flavors."



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CONSUMER EDUCATION

The final frontier in reducing foodborne illness?

INDUSTRY HAS A CRUCIAL ROLE TO PLAY IN ENHANCING THE PUBLIC'S KNOWLEDGE OF SAFE FOOD HANDLING AND PREPARATION.

BY SHAWN K. STEVENS
FOOD INDUSTRY COUNSEL LLC

As we pass the halfway point of 2022, we would like to commend the meat and poultry processing industry for a continued job well done. As we have been fortunate to report for several years, we continue to see encouraging trends in the meat industry as it relates to foodborne illness outbreaks and recalls.

So far, in 2022, there have only been two recalls of meat and poultry products announced by industry for the suspected presence of pathogens. The total amount of product affected has been less than 30,000 pounds. Considering that, a decade ago, it was not uncommon to see more than 100 million pounds of meat and poultry products recalled for pathogens, the low numbers so far this year are quite impressive.

One of the things that has always impressed me is the meat industry's unwavering desire to continually improve the overall safety of its products. And, though we are not yet perfect, it is becoming increasingly difficult for food scientists and others to identify harvest and processing improvements that would offer further meaningful improvement. So, what other things can we collectively do to help further reduce the occurrence of foodborne illness?

In my mind, enhancing consumer education remains a critical area where we can continue to make meaningful change. Last year, the National Cattleman's Beef Association published a [report](#) detailing some of the areas where consumer food safety education could be improved. The findings were quite interesting.

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According to the report, only about 20% of consumers are concerned with foodborne illness and food poisoning when cooking at home. By contrast, 32% identified *overcooking* as a concern. Similarly, taste, quality and preparation time were of significantly more concern than food safety. This is probably not a function of consumers behaving recklessly or "not caring" about food safety. Rather, it is likely a function of consumers believing that the products they purchase at the grocery store are inherently safe and free of any pathogens, despite the fact that they are raw animal products.

Ironically, these consumer views are likely a product of the industry's remarkable success in combatting foodborne illness at the processing level. Indeed, foodborne illness has become uncommon to the point that consumers rarely regard it as a pertinent risk. If the industry continues its efforts aimed at consumer education and engagement in the realm of preventing foodborne illness, it is likely we will yet further reduce the number of recalls and illnesses.

As we head into the second half of 2022, keep up the great work!

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Inside Kerry's Expanded Coatings and Breadcrumbs Plant

Kerry's recent \$125 million expansion of its Rome, Georgia, facility gave the company a chance to address soaring market demand for coatings and breadcrumbs, while implementing several engineering and technological innovations to boost productivity, cost savings, sustainability and efficiencies throughout. Aleisha Jaeger and Christina O'Keefe detail the impact engineering has had on this project, which added 30% more production capacity.



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BRADY WELU
Senior Managing
Engineer,
Fresh Meats
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How Tyson Uses Automation to Transform its Case-Ready Meat Operations

Tyson Foods built its new \$300 million, 600,000-square-foot case-ready meats plant in Eagle Mountain, Utah, with an eye firmly on the future. The greenfield project gave Tyson a blank slate for incorporating automation in every area of the facility for maximum efficiency, speed, productivity, labor savings and staff safety. Tyson's Brady Welu explores how automation has transformed today's case-ready operations and the lessons learned along the way.



PRESENTED BY

THERESA MOTTER
CEO,
Van's Kitchen



Women in Food Manufacturing

If you've shopped for eggrolls at any supermarket or convenience store, chances are Van's Kitchen was among your choices. The Dallas-based brand produces several million eggrolls each year, and is currently in 10,000+ retail outlets nationwide, with annual revenues of \$45 million. Theresa Motter is Van's CEO (Chief Executive Officer/Chief Eggroll Officer) and is the driving force behind this rapidly growing company. Hear about the company's roots — started by her Vietnamese-immigrant parents in 1986 — and what it takes to stay successful in this competitive industry.

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Re-creating the restaurant experience AT HOME



MORE AT-HOME EATING HAS SHOPPERS OPTING FOR SOME TRADITIONAL AND NON-TRADITIONAL MID-DAY MEAL SOLUTIONS.

BY FRED WILKINSON
MANAGING EDITOR

The pandemic moved many meal occasions to the home, and retail inflation has kept many of them there.

Research from Technomic conducted in the first quarter of 2022 suggests that overall restaurant patronage frequency has dropped, with consumers from homes with annual incomes of \$50,000 to \$100,000 indicating a four percentage-point drop in how often they order from restaurants more than once a week. The decrease is greater for this middle income group than it is for both higher-income and lower-income demographics, although all groups have seen the number of regular restaurant visits drop during the first quarter of 2022. The broad-based demand softening points toward consumers limiting their overall restaurant dining occasions.

With people increasingly preparing more meals at home to save money, many are starting to suffer from cooking fatigue. Consumers are turning to lunchmeat not just as a convenient and affordable meal solution but also as a way to enjoy a restaurant-style eating experience at home.

"If you think about foodservice, there's a wide number of chains that have that more upscale sandwich with the better bread and a variety of different toppings, and that's really something people are trying to re-create at home," said Anne-Marie Roerink, principal at 210 Analytics. "What we're seeing is people are looking for something different, and that means they're drawing a lot of inspiration from those restaurant meals they used to eat."

That can mean using artisan bread and spicier condiments, such as wasabi mayonnaise or upscale mustard, she said.

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GETTING ON BOARD WITH CHARCUTERIE

If there's an eating trend that consumers are showing no sign of becoming bored with, it's boards.

"Charcuterie has been absolutely red hot over the last year or year and a half, ever since entertaining in the home has come back," Roerink said. "You see some really, really great selections that are already on nice looking trays. All the consumer has to do is take off the lid."

She said Aldi grocery stores have featured an entire endcap for all things charcuterie. Taking it a step further, Aldi engaged with food influencers and chefs to design certain boards, which shoppers could put together themselves from charcuterie items for sale on the endcaps.



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MEAT SNACKS FOR LUNCH

With the afternoon meal not infrequently being an on-the-go meal occasion, some consumers are turning to meat snacks as a grab-and-go protein option.

"We find that high users are even utilizing our beef jerky products for meal replacement options," said Robert Leary, chief marketing officer for marketer of smoked snacks, beef jerky and beef sticks Old Trapper. "Our 18-ounce family size bag is targeted at our market's high users. It syncs right up with consumer trends regarding snacking and the need for on-the-go and high protein options."



BURGER TIME

You know the burger category is hot when Arby's — a name synonymous with roast beef sandwiches — up and debuts its first-ever hamburger, the Wagyu Steakhouse Burger, featuring a 6.4-ounce patty blended from 52% American Wagyu and 48% ground beef.

Carl's Jr. and Hardee's have rolled out their "Jurassic World: Dominion" tie-in Primal Menu, which includes the Primal Angus Thickburger, while Carl's Jr. is exclusively offering its plant-based Beyond Wraptor Burger and the Double Beyond Wraptor Burger.

Americans eat about five burgers per month, according to a recent survey, with 33% preferring a traditional burger but an adventurous 16% willing to try something new or innovative. Close to half (42%) say they prefer to order a burger as-is off the menu, and close to a quarter (23%) like to customize their burger.



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CHRIS JOHNSON
Director of Business Development – Food
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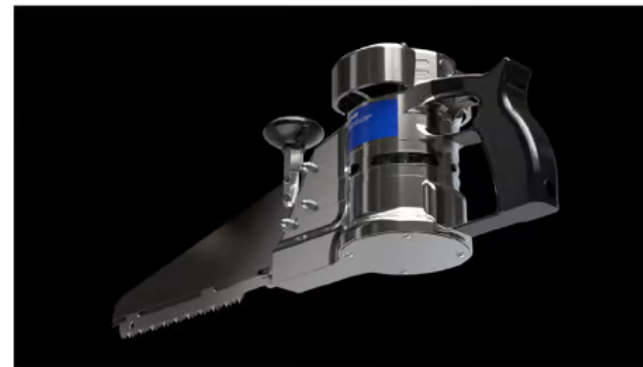
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Seventy-five years ago, poultry and egg leaders met in May of 1947 in Atlanta to discuss a variety of issues affecting the industry. Seeing an opportunity for collective action to address problems too large for one person or company to solve, the meeting resulted in the creation of a new “all-feather” association representing broiler growers, turkey growers, egg producers, hatcheries, processors, and feed and allied companies. Arrangements were also made for a “poultry convention” in January 1948.

From these early beginnings, we have seen what was then the Southeastern Poultry & Egg Association grow into what is now known as the U.S. Poultry & Egg Association, or USPOULTRY, as we like to call it.

From its inception, the goal of USPOULTRY has been to serve the poultry and egg industry and its members. After 75 years of evolving though, we are not resting on our laurels ... or feathers, per se! We continue to find new and innovative ways to serve our members.

Early on, association leaders recognized the importance of continuing education for managers to keep up with the rapid changes and advancements occurring in the industry. This is demonstrated through USPOULTRY’s International Poultry Expo, part of the International Production & Processing Expo, which will also be celebrating its 75th anniversary in January 2023. It can further be seen in our Seminar Program, including the oldest, still-running seminar, the Poultry Processor Workshop, which was established in 1958. Another ongoing legacy has been USPOULTRY’s Research Program, with more than \$34 million reinvested back into the industry in the form of competitive research grants. Additionally, the USPOULTRY Foundation allocates funds to more than 30 schools, including six schools with poultry science degrees, to recruit students into poultry-related courses or degree programs.



BY GWEN VENABLE

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Technical services are also provided to the industry via USPOULTRY’s Environmental, Food Safety and Production, and Worker Safety / Risk Management Programs. Another unique service USPOULTRY provides to sister trade associations is IT support, built on the IT expertise USPOULTRY developed to manage the International Poultry Expo and its own activities. Furthermore, the Education Program has been expanded to include extensive training and learning mechanisms. At present, USPOULTRY’s comprehensive list of annual conferences, workshops and clinics help keep every segment of poultry and egg management informed and up-to-date, with new programs being created to meet new challenges. The Communications Program has also evolved to include a multi-tiered approach to internal and external communication. Communication materials are offered through a variety of sources, including print, digital and video formats. Communication outreach has been extended even further through social media outlets, with new communications opportunities being considered on a regular basis.

USPOULTRY continues to be as dynamic as the industry it serves, constantly evolving and offering innovative ways to provide research, technical services, learning experiences and communication to meet the challenges of the future.

Gwen Venable is executive vice president, communications, at U.S. Poultry & Egg Association gvenable@uspoultry.org.



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Chris Luke
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lukec@bnpmedia.com
(908) 917-4171

Laurel Metz
Northeast Region
metzl@bnpmedia.com
(248) 833-7300

Pam Mazurk
Int'l Sales Manager
mazurkp@bnpmedia.com
(847) 226-6729

Wayne Wiggins, Jr
Midwest/West
wwiggins@wigginscompany.com
(415) 337-6130

Chris Ward
MidAtlantic/Southeast
cbwmedia.llc@gmail.com
(678) 833-7309

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EMBRACING A MULTI-HURDLE APPROACH FOR FOOD SAFETY IN POULTRY

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IMPLEMENTING MULTIPLE STEPS FROM FARM TO PLANT MAXIMIZES RISK REDUCTION FOR SALMONELLA IN POULTRY PRODUCTS.

BY BILL POTTER, PH. D.
TECHNICAL ADVISOR, ELANCO FOOD SAFETY

Foodborne pathogens continue to pose a significant threat to American consumers. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates *Salmonella* bacteria alone cause about 1.35 million infections, 26,500 hospitalizations and 420 deaths in the U.S. every year.¹

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) announced in the fall of 2021 a new initiative aimed at reducing *Salmonella* illnesses linked to poultry production and processing. As stated by USDA Deputy Undersecretary Sandra Eskin, "Reducing *Salmonella* infections attributable to poultry is one of the department's top priorities."

FSIS is initiating several key activities to gather the data and information necessary to support future action and move closer to the national targets of reducing *Salmonella* illnesses by 25%.

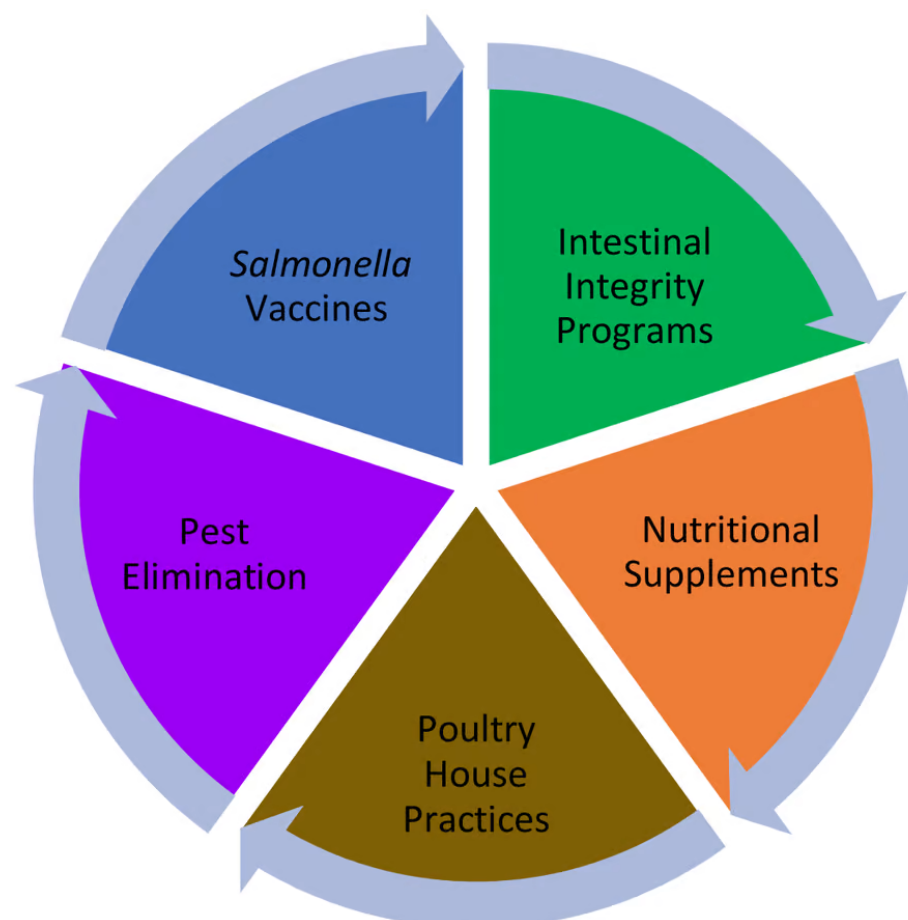
The USDA FSIS is seeking stakeholder feedback on specific *Salmonella* controls and measurement strategies, including pilot projects in poultry processing plants, with a key component being to encourage preharvest controls to reduce *Salmonella* coming into the processing plant.²

SALMONELLA REDUCTION PREHARVEST 360° HOLISTIC APPROACH

With the renewed focus on preharvest interventions to reduce *Salmonella*, many interventions warrant a closer look and deeper evaluation. This is where poultry producers and live operations managers play a crucial role. One way to describe effective preharvest *Salmonella* controls is to take a "360 degree approach." These are the five key components:

- **Vaccines** can be used to build *Salmonella* immunity and offer protection throughout the life cycle, including the progeny.
- **Intestinal integrity programs** should be used to support bird immunity and reduce opportunities for *Salmonella* to colonize.
- **Nutritional and functional feed supplements** help mitigate *Salmonella* colonization while improving bird performance.
- **Integrated Pest Management programs** reduce external *Salmonella* vectors through the use of insecticides and rodenticides.
- **Farm and poultry house best management practices** reduce *Salmonella* proliferation through effective management of water, bedding material, biosecurity, and cleaning practices.

PREHARVEST MULTI-HURDLE SALMONELLA REDUCTION







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A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY TO REDUCE SALMONELLA IN POULTRY PRODUCTION

Reducing the risk of *Salmonella* in poultry products is an enormous responsibility that can't be placed on the plant alone, as pathogen reduction is most successful when multiple steps are implemented along the entire continuum from farm to plant. Improved technologies in *Salmonella* quantification and detection preharvest have made measuring the impact of preharvest interventions more possible than ever before. New pathogen quantification lab methods have now made it more practical to begin bio-mapping earlier in the process, beginning when birds enter the plant and continuing all the way to final product.

By reducing *Salmonella* infections in live-bird operations, poultry producers can decrease the likelihood that *Salmonella* will be a plant problem, thus making plant interventions more effective.

Poultry companies need and should expect support from vendor partners to help develop new processes, technologies and ideas to address pathogen concerns. Vendors of preharvest food safety technologies can offer services such as serotype lab analysis to verify vaccine effectiveness, field evaluations to understand the impacts of feed additives and vector analysis to measure the effectiveness of insecticide rotations on reducing farm pests.

¹[cdc.gov/salmonella/](https://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/) [Internet]. Washington: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 2022 [cited 2022 May 16]. Available from <https://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/>.

² USDA launches new effort to reduce salmonella illnesses linked to poultry [Internet]. United States Department of Agriculture; 2021 [cited 2021Nov6]. Available from: <https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2021/10/19/usda-launches-new-effort-reduce-salmonella-illnesses-linked-poultry>

FILM CHOICES

EXPAND TO ENHANCE SUSTAINABILITY

LIGHTWEIGHT SUBSTRATES CAN BE RECYCLABLE, COMPOSTABLE AND/OR CONTAIN RECYCLED CONTENT.

BY HALLIE FORCINIO
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Flexible packaging plays a vital role in protecting and preserving the freshness of meat, poultry, and seafood products and preventing food waste. Mono- and multilayer barrier films and laminates also deliver shelf impact and product differentiation, convenience features such as easy-peel/reseal and a positive sustainability profile.

Although the light weight of films and laminates automatically imparts sustainability advantages versus heavier rigid packaging, many flexible substrates are sourced from petrochemicals, contain more than one material and are challenging to recycle. With plastics viewed negatively by many consumers, the demand for more environmentally friendly substrates is pushing innovations in the industry. At least one supplier believes the interest in sustainability is causing a shift in the package design process. Instead of designing the package and then fine-tuning it to improve its environmental attributes, sustainability data is being used to guide design decisions from the beginning.

Innovations include compostable, renewably sourced and recycled-content materials. One pilot project provides barrier shrink film with 100% recycled content. The process converts plastic waste into basic chemical elements and then repolymerizes it into food-grade material, which is recycled post-use to create a circular loop. The first adopter of the film, Cranswick PLC, a UK meat and poultry supplier, uses it to wrap whole-bird products. The modified-atmosphere package extends shelf life, allowing the use-by date to be doubled to 14 days. The effort is part of Cranswick's Second Nature commitment to become the world's most sustainable meat business. It also makes progress toward an EU target for all plastic packaging to be reusable or recyclable in a cost-effective manner by 2030.

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Westaway Sausages Ltd., another sustainability pioneer from the UK, adopted paperboard trays in 2016 and shifted from polyvinyl chloride (PVC) cling film to compostable polybutyrate adipate terephthalate (PBAT) in June 2020. The fully certified (EN 13432) compostable packaging earned the Innovation of the Year Award in the UK Packaging Awards 2020 competition. The PBAT film composts in home and industrial settings. "It breaks down completely to leave just valuable biomass and no harmful residues," says Charles Baughan, managing director at Westaway Sausages. He adds, "In our testing in our garden compost, this took less than 60 days."

Branding advises consumers the packaging is certified compostable. Messaging has evolved from on-pack disposal instructions to a printed message on the film itself. "We are now looking at a four-color logo on the film," Baughan says. He predicts, "There will be a nationally recognized logo in the future similar to the scheme being introduced in Ireland."



ONE PILOT PROJECT PROVIDES BARRIER SHRINK FILM WITH 100% RECYCLED CONTENT. THE PROCESS CONVERTS PLASTIC WASTE INTO BASIC CHEMICAL ELEMENTS AND THEN REPOLYMERIZES IT INTO FOOD-GRADE MATERIAL, WHICH IS RECYCLED POST-USE TO CREATE A CIRCULAR LOOP.

Based in rural southwest England where home composting is above the UK national average, the change to compostable packaging puts the company in sync with consumers and ahead of looming deadlines. Baughan explains, "The weekly collection of food waste from all households will be mandatory by the end of this year (2022) in England. Furthermore, certified compostable packaging will be included in this waste stream by the end of next year. This will provide for a countrywide consistent approach to waste management." The change to compostable packaging also differentiates the company in export markets, a substantial part of its business. "We export to a number of island nations that have strict legislation on import of plastic packaging," Baughan says.



The adoption of compostable packaging has been good for business. Overall, sales are up 36%. In some export markets, Baughan says, "We have seen sales more than double. We see people are choosing brands that share their values." As a result, the company is tripling its capacity to 15 tons per day.

Westaway considered PVC and polyethylene (PE) films but determined recycling rates were poor. Baughan explains, "We realize that not all packaging waste ends up where it should. PBAT is a solution to the issue of fugitive waste." The PBAT film offers the same shelf life as PVC or PE films, may protect product color better and works well on the frozen retail packs that ship to export markets. "The film . . . remains flexible at very low temperatures [and] is better than PVC in this respect," he says.

Since it introduced PBAT film, Westaway Sausages has expanded its use to more products. "We are also using the new film and trays to cut logistics and temperature-controlled distribution costs and achieve better shelf utilization," Baughan says.

Sustainable innovations haven't stopped with the adoption of PBAT film. Westaway Sausages has launched a certified compostable bag. Made from potato starch, it can serve a dual purpose as a liner for a food waste caddy.

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CONTACT US

PH: (248) 362-3700 | MAIL: 2401 W. BIG BEAVER RD, TROY MI 48084

PUBLISHING/EDITORIAL STAFF

EDITORIAL

Chris Luke | Group Publisher
lukec@bnpmedia.com | (908) 917-4171

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

Andy Hanacek | Editor-in-Chief
hanaceka@bnpmedia.com | (847) 405-4011

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

Elizabeth Parker | Website Managing Editor
parkere@bnpmedia.com | (248) 839-7156

Cory Emery | Art Director emeryc@bnpmedia.com

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

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MN, MO, MT, NE, NV, NM, ND, OH, OK, OR, SD,
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wwiggins@wigginscompany.com | (415) 377-6130

Laurel Metz | Account Manager | MA, NH, Ontario
metzl@bnpmedia.com | (248) 833-7300

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

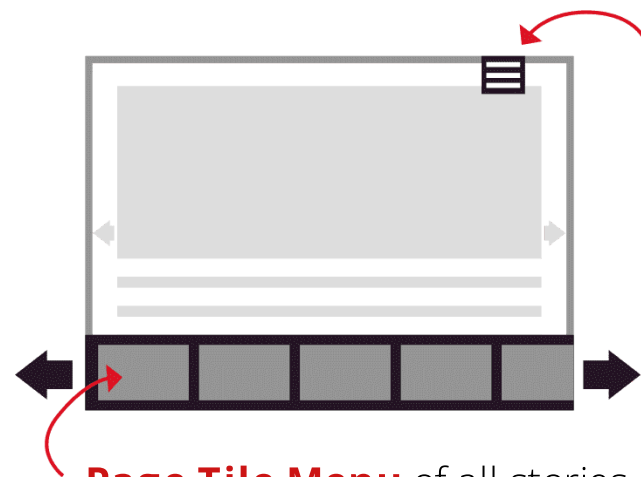
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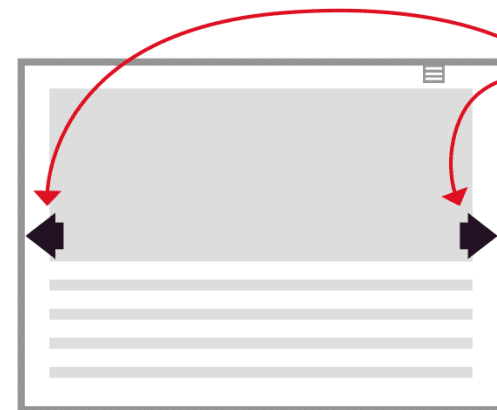
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