

Render

The International Magazine of Rendering

December 2023



NARA's 90th Convention

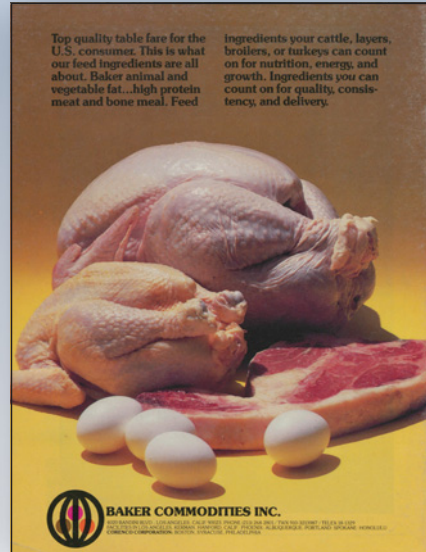
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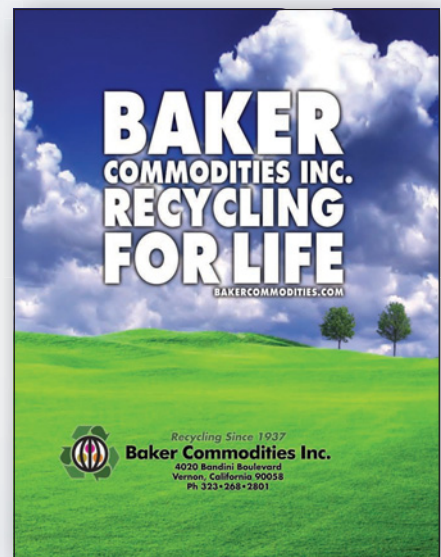
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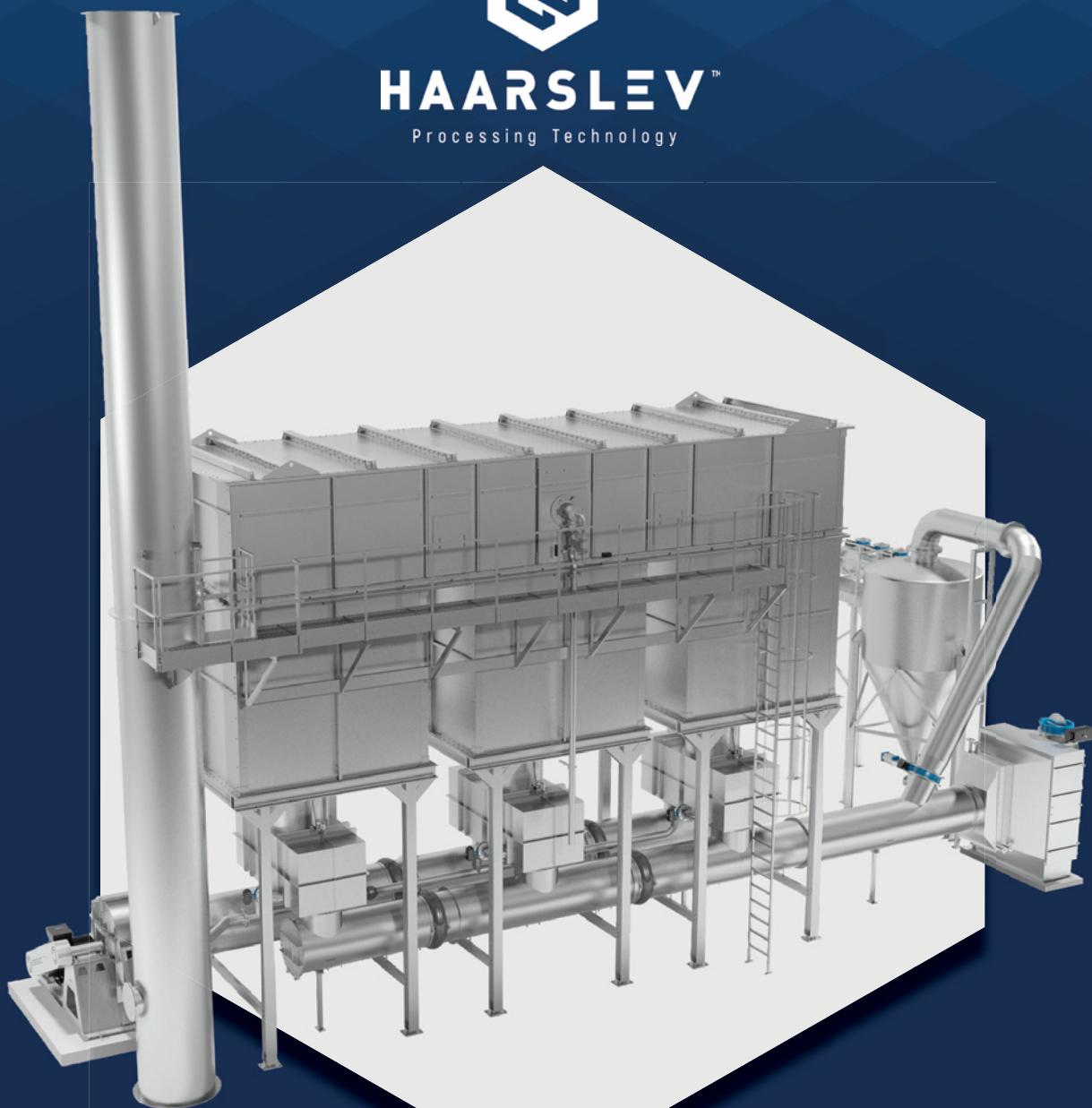
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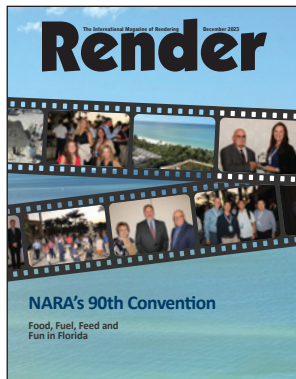


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Editorial staff

Editor and Publisher

Sharla Ishmael

Associate Editor

Ron Kotrba

Magazine Production

Raised Brow Productions

Phone: (888) 927-3634

editors@rendermagazine.com

www.rendermagazine.com

Contact the North American Renderers Association
500 Montgomery St., Ste. 310, Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 683-0155 Fax (571) 970-2279
info@nara.org • www.nara.org



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Rendering's Secret Weapon

This issue of *Render* has as much information as we could pack into it from NARA's recent convention, and we plan to follow up with more in-depth coverage on some of these topics in future issues. However, one of the most discussed items in Naples was the workforce shortage and skills gap that rendering companies are facing. Dr. Jennifer Martin quoted a couple of eye-opening statistics during the FPRF Innovate Conference:

- More than 35% of jobs in the agrifood sector (of which rendering is part) are filled by people with no prior experience or degree.
- More than 70% of frontline workers feel they don't have enough skills or training to meet job demands.

While finding and keeping employees is a struggle for most businesses right now, it's no secret that part of renderers' challenge to attract workers is the simple fact that even most young people who are pursuing a degree in agriculture are not aware this industry exists. If they do have any awareness of rendering, chances are good that knowledge does not extend beyond a truck that picks up dead stock.

I'll admit, that is about as much as I knew about rendering prior to learning that *Render* magazine was searching for a new editor a couple of years ago — and I have two degrees in agriculture, including taking an honors meats class at Texas A&M University.

NARA's communication committee initiated a task force during convention to address the challenge of reaching out to potential employees about all the amazing career opportunities in rendering, including colleges, trade schools and mature workers looking to make a change.

As the parent of a soon-to-be college graduate, I'd like to suggest rendering has a secret weapon that could be highly effective in attracting potential workers in the Generation Z demographic. It's the "S" word that you'll see a lot in this issue — sustainability. More than other generations, these

young people want their work to matter. They aren't into meaningless jobs that exist solely to make money for some big corporation. They care about the environment and societal problems and they want to work for companies that are committed to being part of the solution with these issues.

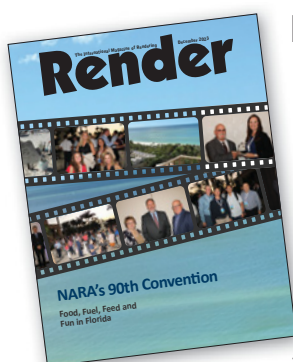
Do your recruitment efforts emphasize how rendering plays a key

role in a sustainable society? Renderers have a very attractive story to share with Gen Z job applicants — and current employees for that matter. Sustainability is more than a buzzword, it is renderers' secret weapon to attract and keep talent.

Sharla Ishmael
Editor/Publisher

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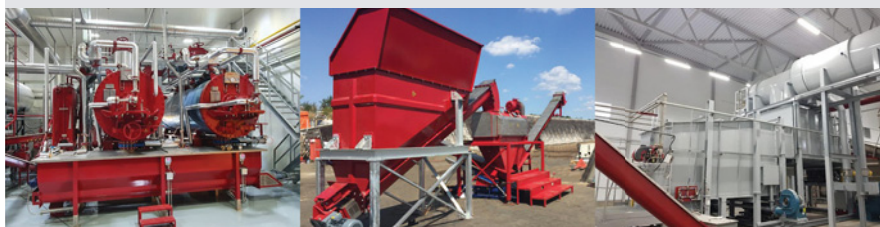
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Another Living History Moment

Shaken, not stirred, is a bartender's order and it could also be used to describe modern politics. This was on full display when House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-California, on the job for less than 10 months, was voted out of his speakership on Oct. 3. For the first time in the 234 years of the U.S. House of Representatives, a sitting speaker was ousted after a single member, Rep. Matt Gaetz of Florida, and seven other members of the House Republican majority joined every Democrat to unseat McCarthy.

Over the next 22 days, the House convened without a speaker for the longest period in U.S. history until Rep. Mike Johnson of Louisiana, No. 7 on the leadership depth chart, became the first consensus Republican speaker since John Boehner in 2011. Fourteen candidates and four nominees later, Johnson became the least experienced speaker of the House in 140 years, based on tenure. In the near term, his relative obscurity may prove to be his greatest strength because he hasn't been around long enough to make enemies, or a list of grievances filed away from years of congressional service.

Immediately, his biggest task will be to reach common ground with the Senate majority leader and president of a different party who see higher levels of government funding as needed investment, while interest rates and inflation respond to a decade of continuous spending. Johnson's predecessor, McCarthy, survived long enough to extend the debt ceiling borrowing authority for the Treasury Department, but his agreement to continue government funding through Nov. 17

proved terminal for his reign as speaker. House Republicans have a born-again revival aimed at spending cuts and reigning in deficit spending, which have defined most of the Trump and Biden administrations' stimulus era.

"Trust" and "policy wonk" are frequently recited by Speaker Johnson's peers, who all point to the same thing: while you may disagree with his personal views, Johnson himself is anything but disagreeable. As most of his colleagues say, his trustworthiness is heavily needed to repair the GOP rifts caused by the Gaetz-led eviction of McCarthy. In addition to funding the government, supplemental funding requests for Israel and Ukraine must also be addressed, as well as the annual round of supplemental funding requests for natural disasters. Additionally, major federal reauthorizations for the Federal Aviation Administration, the Department of Defense and the Farm Bill have all lapsed. In early November, Congress passed a resolution to extend the Farm Bill until Sept. 30, 2024, and President Biden signed it.

Johnson wasn't on anyone's short list — or maybe even long list — to replace McCarthy as the 56th speaker of the House of Representatives. But his task list for the remainder of this year, and for this Congress, just got a whole lot longer.

Overthrow Puts 2024 House Races Under New Spotlight

The historic overthrow of McCarthy has put new political

pressure on his successor one year away from the 2024 national election. The anonymity of Johnson coupled with his mild-mannered temperament leaves many political handicappers wondering how the House GOP will replace the most prolific fundraising speaker in history. McCarthy and his Congressional Leadership Fund super PAC raised \$259 million for GOP candidates in the last election cycle and has already raised \$78 million for 2024. With McCarthy out and Johnson in, immediately the new speaker kept intact the same fundraising staff to help. By comparison, Johnson has raised \$553,000 thus far this cycle.

What's at stake is holding onto the smallest House majority in modern political history. The current four-seat majority is the reason McCarthy is no longer speaker and is held together by 18 Republicans who represent districts President Joe Biden won in 2020. Of those 18 seats, 11 are in New York and California. A year away from election day is an eternity in American politics today, but with Trump versus Biden Round 2 — the most likely scenario next November — the fate of the House majority is more likely going to be determined by the judiciary branch, not the executive or legislative branches.

In June, a much-maligned Supreme Court ruled in *Allen v. Milligan* to deny the state of Alabama's request to allow use of a congressional map in the 2024 elections which had been found to violate the Voting Rights Act by a lower court. This ruling — along with rulings in North Carolina, New York, Ohio and South Carolina — means shifting congressional seats will continue as states rework their redistricting.

In total, as many as 12 seats could be redrawn between now and November of next year, which is more than enough for Democrats to regain the majority or, with a new leader, House Republicans to more than double their gains.

USDA Announces New Billion-Dollar Export Promotion Program

Fresh data pointing to a surging trade deficit in agriculture, including reports indicating wheat exports have fallen to

a 20-year low, have spurred action on a U.S. Department of Agriculture remake of the Trump era Agricultural Trade Promotion. USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack announced Oct. 24 the availability of over \$1.3 billion for the newly conceived Regional Agriculture Trade Promotion Program (RAPP).

Consistent with a bipartisan request from the senate agriculture committee, funding from the USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation is intended to help American producers maintain and develop markets for their commodities and use U.S. commodities to bolster international food aid. Specifically, the announcement makes funding available for the RAPP to diversify export markets.

In its release, the USDA noted that the Trump administration " ... five years ago, in reaction to the trade war with China, developed the Agricultural Trade Promotion Program to help exporters diversify their markets. The funds from ATP will expire next year and with that, many exporters are already curtailing their activities. Without being on the ground in markets, it is nearly impossible to build the trust and relationships needed to create opportunities. RAPP will address this critical loss and ensure continuity of the relationships key to market development."

Widely viewed as a shot in the arm for U.S. agriculture export promotion, more program details were announced at press time. See the Newsline column on page 33.

Meanwhile, efforts to double the longer-term investment in the Market Access Program and Foreign Market Development programs through the new Farm Bill will continue. After a lost legislative month amid turmoil atop the House Republican leadership, a one-year extension of the current Farm Bill is supported by the chairs and ranking members of the House and Senate agriculture committees. Additional time is needed as Congress faces several deadlines before the year's end. Nonetheless, broad, bipartisan support for doubling MAP and FMD continues to grow.

In recent interviews, Rep. GT Thompson, R-Pennsylvania, who chairs the House agriculture committee, continues to list additional investment in these export programs among his highest Farm Bill priorities, which is a sentiment held by the Senate agriculture committee leadership as well. Ultimately, RAPP is a needed boost, but more durable investment through MAP and FMD is imperative.

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Newly elected NARA officers include from left: Kim Broekemeier, director of protein sales with Tyson Foods Inc., second vice chair; Michael Glenn, chief financial officer and vice president of Birmingham Hide & Tallow Co. Inc., chairman; and Kevin Baker, vice president of product development with Darling Ingredients, first vice chair.



Food, Fuel, Feed and Fun in Florida

The 90th annual NARA convention and FPRF conference featured thoughtful discussions and insightful speakers on sustainability, market conditions, regulatory challenges and how rendered ingredients play a key role in providing food, fuel and feed to the world.

By Sharla Ishmael

A record crowd of over 470 attendees met in Naples, Florida, in late October to conduct the business of the North American Renderers Association in committee meetings, as well as learn from top-notch speakers at the NARA annual convention and the Fats and Protein Research Foundation Innovate Conference.

As part of the business agenda, NARA elected new leadership to serve for the next two years — including the association's first woman elected as second vice chair. Michael Glenn, chief financial officer and vice president of Birmingham Hide & Tallow

Co. Inc. in Birmingham, Alabama, was elected chairman of the association. Kevin Baker, vice president of product development with Darling Ingredients in Winchester, Virginia, was named first vice chair. Kim Broekemeier, director of protein sales with Tyson Foods Inc. in Springdale, Arkansas, was elected second vice chair. Kent Swisher was also reelected as secretary/treasurer in addition to his role as NARA's president and CEO.

Throughout the week, a common thread among the topics addressed was the issue of sustainability — what it means to the rendering industry from data collection to future workforce

needs and the experiences of renderers in other countries in how they are approaching this far-reaching concept that all businesses are now expected to integrate into their operations.

FPRF Looks at the Future

In particular, the theme of the FPRF Innovate Conference was sustainability. Dr. Laura Nobel, secretariat of the Global Feed LCA Institute, came all the way from Amsterdam to introduce GFLI to NARA members and explain why the work being done by the institute is so vital to companies operating in both the feed and food sectors. She also spoke at the International Market Forum during the convention.

"GFLI is an independent animal nutrition and food industry nonprofit institute," Nobel explained. "It started in 2019 and is based in the U.S., but our management is in the Netherlands. The idea that we had is to develop a publicly available database with life-cycle analysis (LCA) data, which includes the emissions of feed ingredients. And then with this, we hope to support the meaningful environmental assessment of these products and also continuously improve the datasets and methodology as we get more insight about LCA and everything that's surrounding it."

Currently, the GFLI database includes over 1,800 datasets covering the main ingredients for European countries and North American states and provinces as well as regional averages. The GFLI wants to ensure this LCA data is calculated according to a harmonized methodology so these kinds of environmental assessments can be used to benchmark and calculate the footprint for compound feed.

"We know that feed is a major contributor toward the actual emissions coming from a food product, such as milk or meat," she said. "So, if we lower the feed emissions, then we can also lower the food emissions. Certainly, we notice that a lot of food companies are interested in this kind of footprint. So, I think they need to have feed data as well, and we hope to fulfill that role. We're already seeing a shift in people's minds of sustainability becoming more important."

Nobel defined LCA as a systematic way to account for all the inputs and outputs of a certain system or product, within a specific boundary. For example, the GFLI database is based on cradle to farm gate or processing gate.

"So that means everything in between from the seed until you have the processed ingredients, such as a rendered product, are included in this," she added. "Then you have what most people are used to saying is the carbon footprint. That's only emissions for the carbon, the greenhouse gas emissions. But you can also have the full environmental impact — which is the one that we also include. That means also calculating water use, eco toxicity, human toxicity, and all these other impact categories that have a significant impact on the planet ... that is how you actually create a life-cycle inventory."

Of course, there is much more renderers need to know about GFLI and why it is important to contribute data in order to have accurate ingredient assessments. *Render* readers can look to the February 2024 issue for more information about the institute and how to get involved.

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Leadership runs in the Smith family. Outgoing NARA Chairman Mike Smith, right, presented his brother and former chairman, J.J. Smith, with the Don Franco Distinguished Service Award for his longtime leadership and commitment to NARA, as well as the entire rendering industry. It is the association's highest honor and seeks to recognize truly outstanding work on behalf of the rendering industry in areas of science, policy, marketing or communications.

Dr. Martin Alm, technical director of the European Fat Processors and Renderers Association, also spoke during the Innovate Conference about the EU's experience with GFLI. EFPRA represents 30 members in 25 European countries. Alm said EFPRA members decided to be part of delivering comparable sustainability data via the GFLI databank because differing calculations of carbon footprints being made 10 to 15 years ago were not comparable or necessarily accurate and, at the same time, important policies were being set for the EU Green Deal.

"EFPRA saw this as a chance to manifest and upgrade our data, using a global scheme, and to strengthen GFLI and the rules of the Livestock Environmental Assessment and Performance partnership," Alm explained.

The association started collecting data from volunteer companies and hired an independent consulting firm to calculate the environmental impact of rendered products. The calculations were peer reviewed and gave EFPRA accurate data for the GFLI database and also the scientific confirmation of the sustainable properties of rendered protein and fats. EFPRA also used the information to create a sustainability charter, which has been widely distributed and well received according to Alm.

Dr. Hélène Dieck, senior sustainability manager for Neste — the world's largest renewable diesel producer — addressed the value of a sustainability audit. She explained how sustainability expectations have increased and widened among stakeholders

in recent years, prompting the need for companies like Neste to conduct sustainability due diligence for suppliers. Dieck also shared a Neste sustainability audit checklist and explained what feedstock suppliers like renderers can expect during an audit.

Dr. Jennifer Martin of Colorado State University addressed another aspect of sustainability during the FPRF conference — sustainable recruiting and training practices. The topic arose from a sustainability working group in the Pet Food Alliance, which is overseen by Martin.

"That working group was really creative when we first met in 2017," she explained. "They said 'Yes, sustainability is important, and yes we need to work on environmental impacts of the rendering industry and telling that good story, but we also need to think about sustainability of our industry as a whole and making sure that we have a pipeline of folks who are well trained and informed on the industry so that they can step in and fill the roles that you have.'"

"More than 35% of jobs in the agrifood industry are filled by people with no prior experience or degree," Martin added. "So, the person today who you're going to hire next year may have zero experience or a degree in the space you represent. Why is that? Why would we go hire people who don't have degrees or experiences in the places we need them? One of the reasons is there's a pretty big gap in the number of jobs in the agrifood sector — the rendering and pet food industries

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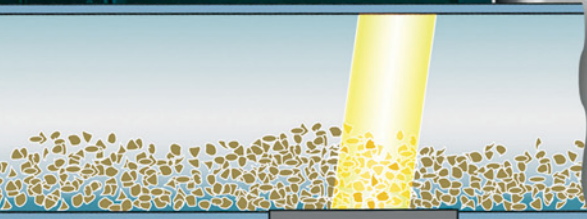
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Food, Fuel, Feed and Fun

Continued from page 10

fall in that sector — and the number of degrees from that same sector. So, if you look at the number of agriculture and food science graduates over the past five years, there's a 35% gap in number of graduates and jobs that are available — meaning we have more jobs than we have graduates. Is that a challenge or an opportunity?"

Just as problematic, surveys show over 70% of frontline workers feel they don't have enough skills or training to meet job demands. The Pet Food Alliance emphasizes focusing on solutions, not the problem, which is what Martin suggested the rendering industry needs to do in order to have a sustainable workforce. Some innovative approaches to meeting workforce demand that she mentioned were upskilling, microcredentialing and collaborative certification programs with universities and workforce development centers.

Martin was recognized for her success in guiding the Pet Food Alliance, which has seen a 400% increase in membership since its founding in 2017. FPRF honored her leadership and success in bringing

together the pet food and rendering industries through the alliance with the Fred Bisplinghoff FPRF Innovation Award.

Markets and More

The opening general session of NARA's convention featured keynote speaker Scott Shellady, aka the Cow Guy Close, who has a show on RFD-TV and often seen or heard in multiple business media outlets on television, radio and print.

"There is a concerted effort trying to get rid of farming and animal agriculture," Shellady said. "If you look at what the World Economic Forum is doing, it's a five alarm, DEFCON 5 situation."

He said the U.S. is in a technical recession now and pointed out the defense budget will be eclipsed by the interest on the national debt next year, and already that debt is 125% of gross domestic product.

"I think it's going to turn around," Shellady added. "In the late '90s, it was the internet that saved us, now it's going to be AI. It's not going to be a soft landing or a hard landing, it's going to be a long landing. Just get ready because things are going to get tough."

State of Rendering

On a more positive note, Mike Smith, outgoing NARA chairman, gave a state of the industry report that noted many positive trends for rendering. One of Smith's key goals as chairman was to encourage more committee involvement from younger, more junior staff members of NARA's membership in order to develop future association leaders. Smith noted with the addition of Zoom quarterly committee meetings in 2022, that is happening. In 2023, these quarterly meetings averaged 50 attendees with many younger people joining in.

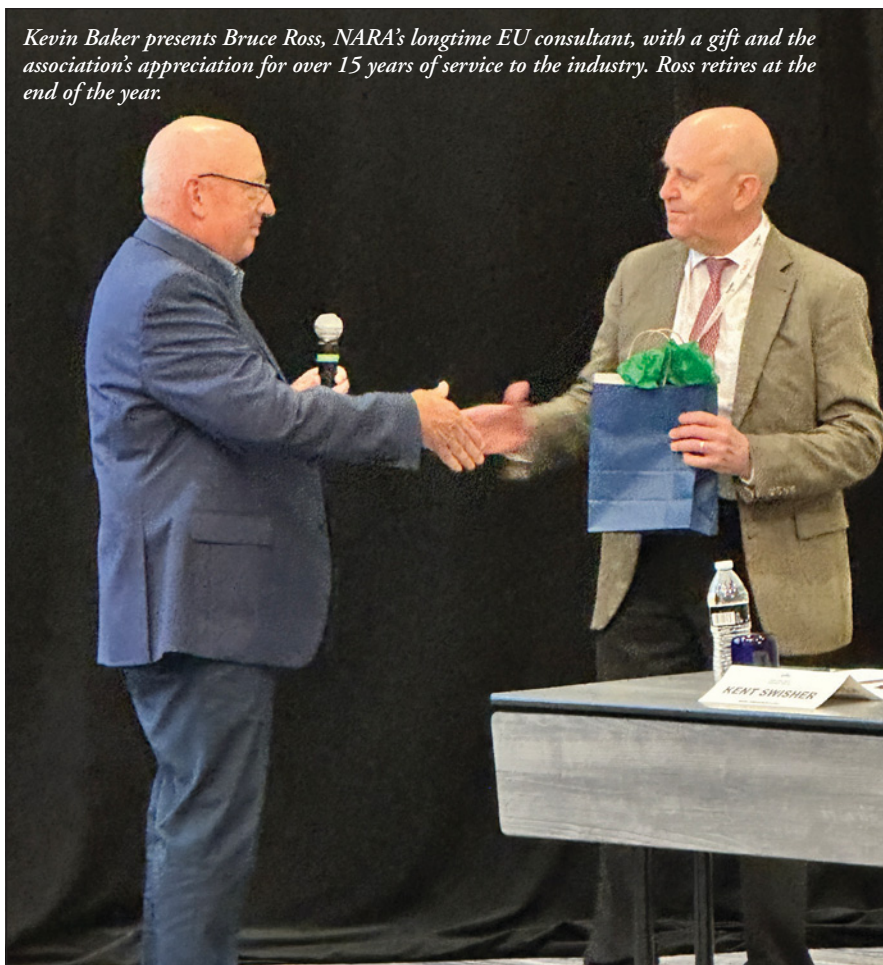
Smith noted several firsts for NARA programs during his tenure, including the first National Rendering Day and the first time three staff members were appointed to key advisory committees on ag trade. Kent Swisher, president and CEO, was appointed to the Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee; Dana Downing, senior vice president of international programs, was appointed to the Agricultural Trade Advisory Committee for Trade in Animal and Animal Products; and Charles Starkey, vice president scientific and regulatory affairs, was appointed to the ATAC for trade in grains feed, oilseeds and planting seeds — the first time NARA has had someone on that committee.

NARA has also gotten new market access for the first time since 2020 — to Chile and Colombia — for bovine meat and bone meal (MBM), and access for Peru and Ecuador is expected soon. Smith reported NARA's activities in China have maintained and expanded the market for rendered animal protein meals there. He noted challenges for NARA member companies include inflation, low unemployment and a lack of skilled workforce. Smith said the industry supports the education of trades in the schools, particularly for drivers, electricians and welders.

"We are in a rebuilding phase of the association that I find to be exciting," Smith said. "It reminds me of my early days in the industry when I was privileged to be a part of the leadership starting at the age of 25. It has been a very rewarding 30 years, and my goal is to help pass along this experience to those coming along behind us!"

During the opening session, a new

Kevin Baker presents Bruce Ross, NARA's longtime EU consultant, with a gift and the association's appreciation for over 15 years of service to the industry. Ross retires at the end of the year.



Several past NARA chairmen were in attendance in Naples, including from left: Doyle Leefers, Dave Kaluzny, Ridley Bestwick, Michael Glenn, current chairman, Mike Smith, outgoing chairman, J.J. Smith and Michael Koewler.



promotional video was debuted. NARA's vice president of communications, Anna Wilkinson, produced a video called "Hittin' the Streets," in which she interviewed members of the public, asking them to define rendering. These interviews led to educational moments for her to explain what rendering does and why it's important. Be sure to check it out on NARA's website — look on the media tab under NARA videos or on the association's YouTube channel.

Food, Feed and Fuel

Chef Pete Geoghegan, culinary director for Cargill North American Protein Group, addressed NARA members during the Industry Issue Forum with a unique presentation on the benefits of using animal fats in cooking. He even had food prepared by the hotel using animal fats to share with the group. The chef explained fat is essential to good health and energy and pointed out consumers were misled to cut it out of their diets.

"Why cook with animal fats?" Geoghegan asked. "A lot of reasons including nutrition, flavor, smoke point, solubility, texture and preservation. Most of the things you cook with are fat soluble and you can get 10 times more flavor if you start with fat and then add herbs. It makes the herbs bloom. When you cook with animal fats, you do notice something different — it's an indulgence but it doesn't scream 'full of fat.'"

He also shared his secret to the best-tasting french fries. Fry them in tallow, let them cool off a bit and then fry them again a second time.

Economist Kevin Good of Cattle Fax also spoke at the forum with his outlook for the U.S. and global livestock industry and sustainability. He said in September 50% of U.S. cows were still living in dry conditions and 35% were in drought conditions, leading to a continued delay in herd rebuilding. The U.S. cattle herd is in the fifth year of liquidation. He also said the Canadian herd continues to shrink since the bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) crisis in 2003. Mexico's cattle herd had

grown in the past 10 years but conditions are generally dry there as well.

Cattle Fax projections for 2024 U.S. protein production include a 4% decline in beef, 1.5% increase in poultry and no change in pork.

"Commodity inflation is expected to slow, but labor cost and availability will be a major headwind," Good said. "Elevated input cost has slowed the increase of animal protein supplies in the U.S. and globally. World population is growing, but at a slower rate. Meat, poultry and dairy demand is very strong. Political unrest will continue. Biofuels and renewable diesel will continue to expand. There are opportunities in our industries, you just have to be realistic on the supply side. Production will slow the next couple of years."

Along those lines, the third speaker at the forum covered the fuel side of the business. J. Alan Weber of M4 Consulting spoke on the prospects for U.S. biobased diesel. Reflecting on how fast the industry has grown, Weber said in 2007 capacity was at 1.8 billion gallons — today it's at 5.78 billion gallons. In 2007, production/use was at 500 million gallons, which has grown to 3.77 billion gallons as of 2022.

"The Clean Fuels Alliance of America's vision is that biodiesel, renewable diesel and renewable jet fuel will be recognized as mainstream low-carbon fuel options with superior performance and emission characteristics," Weber explained. "In on road, off road, air transportation, electricity generation and home heating applications, use will exceed 6 billion gallons by 2023, eliminating over 50 million metric tons of CO2 equivalent greenhouse gas emissions annually. With advancements in feedstock, use will reach 15 billion gallons by 2050."

Weber also addressed the expectations for significant growth in the sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) market. SAF has grown from 5 million gallons in 2021 to an estimated 25 million gallons annualized for 2023. He also cautioned,

Continued on page 14

Food, Fuel, Feed and Fun

Continued from page 13

"Fats and oils are the only game in town for now — they won't always be. There are multiple pathways approved for SAF, including things like alcohol to jet (ATJ). The airline industry's long-term focus is on e-fuels. They want to pursue power to liquids by 2030, but a lot of technology and innovation will be necessary for that to happen."

International Market Forum

George Chamberlain, president of the Center for Responsible Seafood and co-founder of the Global Seafood Alliance, spoke at the international market forum about sustainable aquafeeds and challenges that have emerged as aquaculture began to grow rapidly around the world — environmental and social concerns, as well as food safety, animal welfare and traceability issues.

"It turns out that seafood is the most internationally traded protein," Chamberlain said. "I would say also the most scrutinized because it is internationally traded and it's coming from many different countries that have different regulatory landscapes and all sorts of issues are happening."

In the mid-'90s, pressure from a ban on shrimp farming at the Indian Supreme Court and so-called shrimp tribunals at the United Nations by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) led to calls for consumer boycotts and all

kinds of misinformation being publicized. Chamberlain said consumers needed to know more, but only one side of the story was being told. So, GSA was founded in May 1997 to help aquaculture achieve its full potential with the understanding that sustainability is the key to the collective future. One of the many successful programs GSA has had is a Shrimp Summit, with the most recent one held in Vietnam and attended by NARA staff.

"We're going to do another Shrimp Summit next June at Chennai, India," Chamberlain added. "I hope that some of you will come and let's talk about processed animal proteins and the need to reduce climate change, and how we can work together to get this done. We're all on the same team. We think that processed animal proteins are well positioned due to their circularity and low carbon emissions. And we think that business-to-business communications through retailers is our most effective mechanism. We need these sustainability sessions. We need GFLI. We need to get everybody using the same benchmarks and developing incredible systems that the marketplace understands."

Render is planning an aquaculture theme for our June 2024 issue, so be sure to look for more from Dr. Chamberlain on this topic.

Europe, Brazil and Australia

Dirk Dobbelaere, EFPPA secretary general, updated NARA members on

declining protein production in the various species in EU member states. He also spoke on 18 case studies EFPPA has done with rendering companies around Europe that illustrate the industry's sustainability in producing animal by-products for various businesses. Dobbelaere emphasized the importance of upcoming EU elections in June 2024 and how that will determine the framework for sustainable food systems with important decisions to be made on the EU's Green Deal.

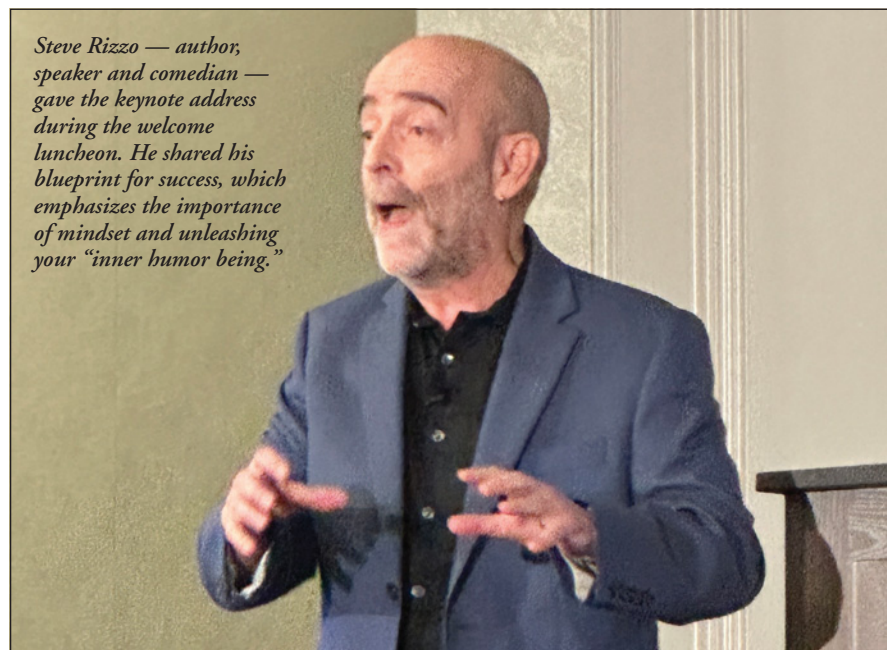
"You are all invited to Amsterdam for the 22nd EFPPA Congress at the Anantara Grand Hotel Krasnapolsky June 12-15," he added. "I hope to see you there."

Peter Milzewski, president of the Australian Renders Association told NARA members his organization is going through changes, including a new executive officer, Tim Juzefowicz, and a new brand identity, changing the logo from a cattle brand image to an image with three circles, symbolizing the circularity of rendering. ARA also completely refreshed its website and plans to strengthen its international presence through stronger messaging and increased participation in tradeshow and workshops. ARA is also developing a robust sustainability strategy, which he said is crucial in today's world.

Milzewski reported Australia's cattle herd is growing, resulting in the highest level of supplies since 2014, and the sheep flock is at its largest size in 15 years with record lamb production and exports.

"I would also like to invite you to ARA's 17th International Symposium in Brisbane, Sept. 17-19, where we will focus on sustainability and the circular economy," he said.

Lucas Cypriano gave an update on the Brazilian market and discussed sustainability programs of the Brazilian Animal Recycling Association (ABRA). Interestingly, the association developed a website to help the general public better understand what the animal recycling sector does (reciclagemanimal.com.br/). ABRA even produced a comic book for children along the same lines. It is also participating in Rios+Limprios, a large cleaning effort in Lake Palmas, which not only cleans trash from the water but also gives ABRA the chance to talk with mayors and locals about rendering and how it fits into sustainability programs.



Steve Rizzo — author, speaker and comedian — gave the keynote address during the welcome luncheon. He shared his blueprint for success, which emphasizes the importance of mindset and unleashing your "inner humor being."



Those who stuck around for the International Market Forum on the last day of convention were treated to an all-star panel of global experts. From left: Peter Milzewski, president of the Australian Renderers Association; Dr. Laura Nobel with the Global Feed LCA Institute; George Chamberlain, president of the Center for Responsible Seafood; Dirk Dobbelaere, secretary general of the European Fat Processors and Renderers Association; Dana Downing, NARA's senior vice president of international programs and Lucas Cypriano of the Brazilian Animal Recycling Association.

"We are partnering with ProBrasil, which brings together all the major protein associations to stop fighting each other and work together," Cypriano said. "And we are partnering with the Environmental Ministry (MMA) on reviewing solid waste treatment laws to get rendering classified as an essential service so rendering trucks can go where they need to anytime, plus it will allow our members to access better lines of credit and some tax reductions."

He also invited NARA members to the next Reunion of the Americas (REAM) conference that strives to bring together all the related industries in the Americas, from rendering to feed mills and pet food, as well as biodiesel, soap and cosmetics. It will be held at Plaza Mayor Medellín, Colombia, Sept. 3-5, 2024.

NARA members and guests went home with a plethora of information to think about, as well as memories made with new friends and connections in the industry from all over the world. Save the date for the next NARA convention to be held in Santa Barbara, California, Oct. 22-26, 2024, at the Ritz Carlton Bacara. **R**



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Highlights from NARA's Committee Business

The North American Renderers Association utilized a more efficient schedule this year by holding joint committee meetings in areas where there might be overlap. Here are the key topics addressed in each meeting.

APPI/Feed Regulation Committees

David Bosco of Food Safety Net Services reviewed microbiological testing data done for the Animal Protein Producers Industry so far in 2023. The APPI testing program is a voluntary platform that started in 1984 to monitor and reduce salmonella incidence in rendered products, and it also covers process control and indicator organism monitoring with Enterobacteriaceae (EBAC) and Clostridium perfringens.

Bosco said EBAC percentages in 2023 to date have decreased compared to the past three years, though all counts have been relatively stable during that time frame. For Clostridium perfringens, the percentage of “positive” samples — which includes both presumptive and confirmed positives — declined year over year and was comparable to 2021 rates. For salmonella, overall five-year trends show an increasing incidence rate, however, the three-year trend shows a reduction, with 2023 year to date being comparable to 2022.

One factor Bosco pointed out was a wide range of timing from when samples were taken to when they arrived at FSNS. The quicker the turnaround, the more likely they were to find salmonella. However, Dr. Charles Starkey, NARA's vice president of scientific and regulatory affairs, noted that Food and Drug Administration doesn't see salmonella as a hazard for livestock feed, but it is different with pet foods.

In terms of feed regulation matters, Starkey discussed the U.S. Swine Health Improvement Plan, which is to be codified in the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services in 2024. “The major premises of SHIP are good but there are some important caveats,” he explained. “For example, the feed biosecurity plan is not scientific and is bad for rendered pork products. But APHIS has no authority over feedstuffs and currently SHIP is voluntary.”

He believes it would be better to follow feed guidelines from the World Organization for Animal Health. Starkey also covered a controversial proposal from the Pet Food Institute to move pet food regulations to the FDA, effectively bypassing state regulators. NARA has pushed back on this because renderers would end up dealing with double the fees, paperwork and inspections as livestock feed and pet food would be regulated by different agencies in that scenario.

IMDC

Dana Downing, NARA's senior vice president for international programs, went over results from a survey sent to the international market development committee about guidance on priorities for international programs.

“The mandate is clear,” she said. “Develop new markets for protein internationally, expand market share in existing markets and cultivate a preference for rendered products from North America based on quality, reliability and sustainability. Also, differentiate rendered products versus other feedstocks based on performance, value and carbon intensity. Streamline regulatory burdens with both the U.S. government and trading partners. And finally, ‘right-size’ efforts on fat exports — edible and inedible.”

Continued on page 18

Downing also relayed good news from the U.S. Department of Agriculture that was released just prior to the meeting — a new Regional Agricultural Promotion Program comprised of \$1.3 billion for export promotion and \$1 billion for food aid. She updated members on the latest happenings with APHIS, including a Behind the Scenes forum with the agency set for Jan. 31 during the International Protein Producers Expo in Atlanta. The meeting is being cohosted by NARA, the Pet Food Institute and the American Feed Industry Association. Members will get a discount code to register for the meeting by email.

She also reported several firsts for NARA's international programs, including the first new market access since 2020 for bovine meat and bone meal (MBM) in Chile and Colombia. Peru and Ecuador are expected to follow soon. Downing has also created a new planning tool of 23 market access requests and the first plants have been approved for export to Indonesia since 2018. NARA plans to work on a longer-term strategy for harmonized export protocols.

Along those lines, Lucas Cypriano of the Brazilian Animal Recycling Association (ABRA) spoke to the committee about his country's approach to dealing with conflicting import requirements that led to a new Brazilian international health certificate (IHC) for meals and fats to help simplify the exporting process.

All three of NARA's regional directors and consultant were able to attend the convention for the first time since COVID-19 complicated international travel. Peng Li, the association's

regional director in Asia, told members about the many promotional programs being conducted in that region on its behalf, from seminars on aquafeeds to pet food promotions with USDA and food waste reduction campaigns.

He also discussed ongoing trade disruptions in China, and he strongly encouraged NARA members to apply for authentication of free sale certification and manufacturer permits now before the fee goes up significantly after March 2024. Additionally, exporters should hurry to apply for new licenses of poultry by-product meal (PBM) based on China's current quality standard and grading system.

German Davalos, NARA's regional director for Latin America, said feed production in the region continues to grow, with Brazil and Mexico accounting for the largest share of it. In terms of exports of U.S. fats and proteins, Mexico is easily the biggest customer in the region, buying 89% of fat exports to date and 52% of protein exports. He also covered ongoing problems with rendering plant registration renewal issues with Mexico. Davalos said paperwork is not arriving to the National Agri-Food Health, Safety and Quality Service (SENASICA) with the required time to advance and that USDA must request special favors to process the paperwork quickly. The problem goes beyond rendering companies, particularly affecting pet food companies that export to Mexico.

"My suggested solution is to ask APHIS to request SENASICA extend the registration period from one year to three years," he explained. "We will work with the petfood manufacturers

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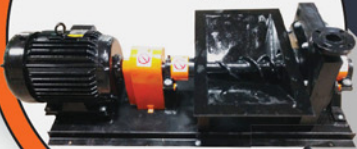
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All three of NARA's international trade team members were at the convention. From left, Peng Li, Bruce Ross and German Davalos.



Committee Highlights *Continued from page 18*

group within the Mexican Feed Manufacturers Association (CONAFAB) to present the same request. SENASICA is aware of the problems afflicting APHIS in these renewal processes and may be willing to help as it will relieve some work for their personnel. The original request must come from APHIS and be followed up immediately by CONAFAB.”

Bruce Ross, NARA’s EU consultant, gave his final report at convention as he is retiring at the end of the year after working on NARA’s behalf for over 15 years. Ross said there will be big changes in the EU in 2024 because of elections for a new European Commission and a new European Parliament, which could bring about new policies. He said the current EC has been more radical than most, which is important because the EC makes all policy proposals and sets the tone and agenda. He also pointed out the EP has been dominated by center-right parties that have toned down some of the EC ideas. So, if the complexion of the EP changes, that could also have a big effect on policy.

“So, what does that mean for NARA?” he asked. “Will the search for greater food security help renderers and what about fuels? The EU needs more and cheaper feed proteins — it is not self-sufficient. The scene has been set for more feed ban relaxations, but is it happening? In late September, there was bad news at an EC Civil Society meeting on that front. The European Fats Processors and Rendering Association pressed for use of ruminant processed animal proteins (PAP) in aquafeed to be allowed. This was supported only by the farmer/farm cooperatives organization — the meat industry stayed silent. So, the EC said there is little appetite for this. In addition, the European Food Safety Authority’s opinion on relaxing processing requirements for pig PAP to be fed to poultry was inconclusive, so there is likely to be a delay in further relaxation.”

However, Ross had better news for fats as nearly all renewable energy proposals in the “Fit for 55” strategy are in

law. All three transport fuel-related proposals promote animal fats and used cooking oil (UCO) as feedstocks for biodiesel, renewable diesel and sustainable aviation fuel (SAF). Double-counting for these materials is a continuing option in the new Renewable Energy Directive (RED III). The eligible feedstock list should be expanded before the end of 2023 and should include brown grease.

Candidates to take Ross’ role in advocating for NARA in Europe have been identified and interviewed. A selection is expected soon.

Communications

In the communications committee, the biggest news *Render* had to report was the completion of the archives project. The entire collection of issues dating to February 1972 is now on the magazine’s website to share the fascinating history of rendering with the world — thanks again to a generous donation from the NARA Central Region.

Anna Wilkinson, NARA’s vice president of communications, reported on several communications projects undertaken since the last meeting, including an informational campaign on rendering’s role in organics recycling and a brand-new “Hittin’ the Streets” video that debuted at convention in which she interviewed members of the public on their perception of what rendering is. She also introduced a new family of logos to promote the food and fuel concept that NARA champions.

Other successful projects for 2023 included the first National Rendering Day held in April; the first president’s message video featuring Kent Swisher talking about the association’s plans and strategic vision; and a couple of new Invisible Industry podcasts throughout the year. Plans for 2024 communications projects include a revamp of the NARA Green Book, a jobs page on the website to link to all member companies’ career pages and a task force to generate ideas that help promote the industry to future workers.

Sustainability and Environment

Starkey spoke during the sustainability part of the meeting on the need for NARA members to provide data to the Global Feed LCA Institute. "If we don't provide the data, they will have to estimate the data," he explained. "So that information needs to be provided if we want good data."

On the environment side of the meeting, Bob Vogler, chair of the committee, gave a comprehensive update on the latest actions from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. He said among government agencies, the EPA has the most proposals in front of the administration with big budget increases even though it's the smallest agency.

Ethan Ware of William Mullen spoke on proposed EPA action for the first-ever national drinking water standard to limit six per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). He said there is concern that PFAS could wind up in biosolids from rendering operations.

Paul Bredwell, executive vice president of environmental programs with U.S. Poultry, gave members an update on effluent limitation guidelines (ELGs), which are federal regulations for industrial and commercial facilities relative to wastewater control and treatment. EPA is supposed to release their revision to the thresholds by mid-December.

"We are preparing to respond to the enormous docket utilizing consultants during an abbreviated comment period," Bredwell explained. "Various associations, including NARA, are chipping in to pay for the consultants. It's very important because plants potentially are going to have to put in very expensive treatment technology."

Legislative Action and Biofuels

Andrew Harker of the Russell Group discussed the latest news out of Washington, D.C. He said action could be expected soon on the stalled Farm Bill. Harker also spoke briefly on the 2024 elections, pointing out there are 23 Senate seats currently held by Democrats up for election versus only 10 seats now held by Republicans. Potentially, both the House and the Senate could flip, but either way he expects tight margins to continue in Congress between the two parties.

Swisher gave an overview of the 2023 Fly In event in Washington, D.C., and encouraged members to attend the next Fly In June 10-12, 2024.

He also addressed biofuels issues and the total shift in the market from needing to export surplus fats to now being a net importer of fats in the U.S. The market changes have led to renderers switching gears to focus on export markets for protein instead. Swisher said fat prices have been down recently because production is climbing and outpacing the growth in renewable volume obligations (RVOs). Also, palm oil prices have been down and that sets the price globally for oils.

"We've got an additional 5 billion pounds of fats and oils out there — plenty to use for both food and fuel," he stated. "The good news is the market is always changing. As we all know, high prices kill high prices and low prices kill low prices."

The next quarterly NARA committee meetings will be via Zoom March 1, 2024.

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Chairman's Report

Editor's note – The following is a speech, in part, given by now former chair of the North American Renderer's Association, Michael Smith, at the 90th annual convention in Naples, Florida, this October.

This convention is special for me as I close out my chairmanship after over 30 years of service to the industry through the North American Renderers Association, formerly the National Renderers Association. It has been an eventful two years, and I am proud to have served as chairman during this time of transition.

At the end of the convention, I will hand over the chairmanship to Mike Glenn of BHT. David Levine will be retiring from Smithfield and Kevin Baker of Darling Ingredients will be taking his place as first vice chair. Thanks to David for his service and support of the organization.

During my two years as chairman, we saw staff transition and it has been great. Kent Swisher became the president and CEO and Dana Downing took his role as senior vice president of international programs. Dr. Charles Starkey has returned to the industry as vice president of scientific services and has been doing a great job. They all have hit the ground running. Anna Wilkinson was promoted to vice president of communications last year. Dara John started with the Animal Protein Producers Industry testing program and came over to NARA when it merged with APPI. Marty Covert is also a great part of the team and was hired by my dad. The international team consists of Peng Li, German Davalos and Bruce Ross. Bruce will be retiring at the end of the year, and we thank him for his years of service. Sharla Ishmael has done a great job starting out where Tina left off with *Render* magazine.

One of the biggest successes under my term as chairman has been expanding opportunities for bringing in people from the younger generation into NARA meetings. We did this by having quarterly meetings on Zoom, which allows more people to participate. Last year, we saw 50 to 60 people in each of the Zoom committee meetings. We are now starting to see the success spill over to our in-person meetings with record attendance at our convention.

The first National Rendering Day was April 21, 2023. The day was finalized during the NARA spring meetings. As a follow up, Anna Wilkinson produced a "Hittin' the Streets" video where she interviewed people on the street and asked them if they knew what rendering is.

This year, NARA staff was nominated to three key advisory committees in Washington, D.C. Swisher was nominated to the Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee, Downing to the Agricultural Trade Advisory Committee for Trade in Animal and Animal Products, and Starkey to the ATAC for Trade in Grains, Feed, Oilseeds, and Planting Seeds. Our staff is engaged and connected, and I applaud their efforts.

Programs are where NARA delivers value to our membership. NARA brings a strong place to increase our marketability, a strong voice in communications and a strong voice with our regulators. Along with that, the NARA's international activities have expanded markets for rendered products.

As most of you know, my family has been involved in the rendering industry for decades. My dad was chairman in 1992, my brother J.J. was chairman in 2012 and my chairmanship began in 2022. When my dad was chairman, tallow and meat and bone meal markets dominated. Over the decades, we have seen growth in the poultry industry while tallow and meat and bone meal markets grew much slower. We have seen tallow markets deteriorate with losses in edible tallow to fast food restaurants and losses of meat and bone meal markets due to perceptions about bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE).

At the same time, we have seen poultry meal replace a lot of meat and bone meal in the marketplace as well as the export marketplace. When my dad was chairman, we exported over 63% of our tallow production and 5% of our rendered protein meals. We produced much more tallow than we could consume domestically, but we needed our rendered protein meal at home. By the time I became chairman, this relationship inverted.

We now need our tallow at home for biofuel and our rendered protein meals need the export market. During my time as chairman, we exported only 9% of our tallow production and exported 26% of our meal production. By 2021, we became a net tallow importer, which I never would have imagined back when my dad was chairman. We have also seen massive imports of used cooking oil (UCO) to meet the biofuel demand, with China being the largest provider.

Our partners in the Fats and Proteins Research Foundation continue to protect our markets. They investigate new technologies and secure feed markets with new research.

It's been my honor to be your chairman. I have been in the industry all my life and in leadership for the last 31 years. I believe we can confront all the challenges going forward if we stay unified and look at opening doors for more opportunities. Looking at the way the energy markets have changed, we need to make new partners. The association is looking closely at our memberships, and how to grow and give back to those memberships. I believe the future is bright for the industry and for the association as can be seen by record attendance at the convention. I want to thank you for all your support to NARA.

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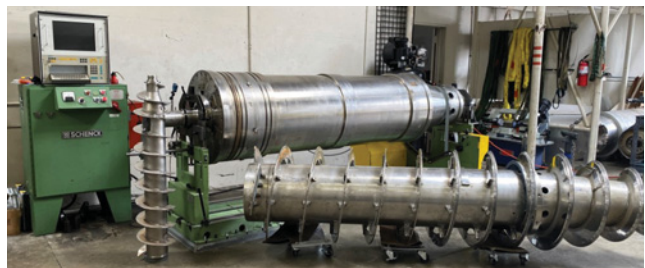
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Get Engaged with Michael Glenn



*Michael and
Jeannine Glenn*

NARA's new chair has a big goal to get more of the membership actively involved with the association from the ground up. It's something he's done during a long and unexpected career in the rendering business.

By Sharla Ishmael

As a young boy growing up in Des Moines, Iowa, Michael Glenn could not have foreseen where his professional life would take him — all the way to Alabama to work for a rendering company. As a teenager, the son of a garbage truck driver and a stay-at-home mom who sometimes worked as a cook at school, Glenn was something of a foodie. His first job in high school was working at a hotel and restaurant, while he attended a vocational school where he could study culinary arts and play on the basketball team.

After graduation, he enrolled in a local community college, majoring in accounting. It was clear to him by then being a cook wasn't going to pay a lot and an older friend of his who was a controller for a restaurant supply company encouraged him to go into accounting.

"I went to the career office — back then you had to go there and flip through the pages to see what jobs were there," Glenn recalls. "So, I was flipping through and saw a job listed for an accountant at National By-Products. I remembered National By-products from when as a kid, we'd go by on Friday and pick up my dad's paycheck and we drove by a rendering plant. My dad had heard that it was a great company and encouraged me to interview. So, I applied for the job and I got hired. My first boss at National By-Products was Mark Myers, who eventually became the president of National By-Products just before it sold to Darling."

Those who are old enough to remember the farm crisis of the '80s will recall it was a tough time in states like Iowa. Opportunities were limited. So, it made sense, eventually, that when Glenn's dad got a relocation offer in Alabama, he and his

brand-new wife Jeannine — whom he met while working at a restaurant — decided to follow.

“We said we’d give it a year and if it didn’t work, we could always go back to Iowa,” he says. “And here we are, 36 years later, still in Alabama.”

Glenn must have made a good impression on Myers. While he wanted his young employee to stay at National By-Products, Myers set up an interview for Glenn in Alabama with Owen Vickers, who was running a family rendering business called Birmingham Hide and Tallow. Glenn left Iowa on a Friday, interviewed with Vickers on the following Monday and accepted a job offer at the end of the interview. That was in 1987, and he’s been at BHT ever since — currently his role is vice president and chief financial officer.

“I was hired to transition them from a manual system to computerization and automate their data processing and bring in-house the accounting functions,” Glenn explains. “So, Owen trusted a 19-year-old kid with all that responsibility when he gave me a shot. I think it worked out well for both of us. But it wasn’t easy. The biggest thing was the culture shock of moving from the Midwest to the South. The language and thought processes were a little different and I was younger than most of the people in the office. But when you have the support of the owner, everybody knows they’re going to conform eventually.”

One of the many things Glenn appreciates about the rendering industry is how common it is to see longtime employees — as much as 30 to 50 years for some — and family businesses among both the renderers and all the supplier companies.

Taking Action

While Glenn says it never crossed his mind that he could be the chair of the North American Renderers Association, he’s honored to do it. Considering all of his previous leadership experience with the association, it’s no surprise he was elected to the highest office. Glenn served as treasurer of the NARA Eastern Region back in 2008 and then chaired NARA’s communications committee, audit and budget committee and was elected to the executive committee for two terms.

“I’m looking forward to it,” he adds. “After being on committees for a number of years, it’s helpful to probably take some direct action versus having to solely go through committees to get some things done.”

A big part of what he hopes to get done is bringing in new people to NARA’s committees and finding more room at the table for allied and associate members to contribute actively to leadership. In fact, before he became chair in October, Glenn took it upon himself to call all the different rendering members and encourage them to have a person from each company on a committee.

“I think we got up to 85% of our rendering members to have a committee position,” he says. “It was like 60% before that. There’s just some that can’t do it because of time commitment. Different companies send different levels of people to the convention. Some are owners or executives and some are upper management or middle management. And just depending upon what their day-to-day duties are, some people were willing to do it. Now we have the quarterly Zoom meetings, which have been a great move to bring more people in.

“It’s easy to complain about things and nitpick about actions others take,” he adds. “But when you step into the position and

put yourself on the line for the responsibility of it, you tend to have an actual impact versus just talking about it. I really want to get our members engaged. I think it’s hard to understand the true value of being a member of NARA until you get more involved and see exactly what’s going on at the ground level versus from higher up. On the committees, you get more interaction with the staff and the consultants and you see more of what goes on day to day. I think it opens your eyes a little bit more to the activities the association actually is undertaking on your behalf.”

Another part of the plan during Glenn’s tenure is to oversee the association’s modernization from a computerization and system standpoint. Because NARA has so many moving parts, from the magazine and communications to legislative and trade programs, not to mention event planning and all the different parts of putting on a convention and other meetings, he says getting the staff more efficient tools will pay off in benefits the members will see pretty quickly.

He also points out many people don’t realize just how small of a staff NARA has relative to other organizations. While some association websites have two pages of headshots of their staff, NARA doesn’t even fill a whole page — including consultants. Despite the small size, he says the NARA staff does a really great job and he believes the team is as well positioned as it has been in a long time to accomplish what really needs to be done. But there are challenges to overcome.

The Consolidation Conundrum

“If you go back to *Render* magazine archives and look at some of the old articles — for example, I had one pulled up from 1984 — I was reading through it and they had an annual report,” he explains. “And if you read through their information, it seems like they’ve always said increasing membership is a challenge. As our industry continues to consolidate and there are fewer rendering members, if we’re going to increase our membership we need to lean more on allied and associate members. One thing I told the staff is that we’ve got to really figure out a way to make those members feel more involved in the association.”

As of now, NARA has one associate member on every committee, which had not happened before. And there are plans to create an advisory committee of associate members whose expertise can be pulled in when issues arise. The staff continues to look for more ways to integrate all types of members into the numerous moving parts of NARA that Glenn referenced.

“We have some challenging things ahead of us, probably just because of the industry consolidation, but I think we still have long-term viability because we’re the single voice for renderers and there’s no other organization out there that can make that claim,” Glenn emphasizes. “So, when we go talk to government agencies or other trade associations and groups, they know that we’re talking only about rendering. Whereas if you’re a meat packer or you’re a complex organization that has multiple different company segments, they might have conflicting messages depending on who is speaking.

“But NARA is always going to speak for the North American rendering industry,” he added. “And this really is — I hate to use the word family, but this industry is — like we’re one big family. Everybody’s in it for everybody’s best interest. It’s not just one single company or one single person. It’s literally what we do as an industry, and I think that speaks volumes to what NARA’s main contribution is to our members.”

R

The End of an Era

New Leaf Biofuel, a community-scale biodiesel plant in San Diego, California, plans to shut down its biodiesel operations by the end of the year. The company, founded in 2006 and acquired by the rendering firm Baker Commodities in 2014, made the decision based on economic conditions combined with the difficulties of continuing to operate under heavy regulatory and neighborhood pressures. The changing U.S. biofuel landscape also played a role.

“Along with the federal Renewable Fuel Standard and biodiesel tax incentive, the [California Low Carbon Fuel Standard] worked remarkably well to stimulate the renewable industry, resulting in natural industry growth and consolidation that has accelerated in recent years with total production more than doubling since 2020,” New Leaf Biofuel stated. “Community-sized plants like New Leaf struggle to compete in this new landscape, where the major fuel refiners are now owners of renewable fuel plants with greater access to feedstock and far superior economies of scale.”

It took U.S. biodiesel producers nearly 20 years to hit production levels of 1 billion gallons per year, but the renewable diesel sector grew by 1.25 billion gallons in a single year alone from January 2022 to January 2023, according to data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Annual renewable diesel production capacity in the U.S. has surpassed biodiesel capacity and is now well over 3 billion gallons.

Despite this, the U.S. EPA failed to account for significant growth in the sector when it set the 2023-2025 renewable volume obligations (RVOs) under the federal Renewable Fuel Standard — one major contributing factor to a recent freefall of renewable identification number (RIN) credit prices between Sept. 1 and Oct. 16, according to EIA. As of Oct. 16, biomass-based diesel (D4) RINs were 90 cents and ethanol (D6) RINs were 89 cents. Both

prices were more than 40 cents lower than on Sept. 1.

“D4 RIN prices have not been this low since 2020, when EPA granted several small refinery exemptions (SREs) that reduced fuel blending requirements and RIN prices,” EIA stated. “Normally, biomass-based diesel D4 RINs trade at a premium to ethanol D6 RINs because they satisfy more RVOs. This year, the two RIN prices have moved very close together because the RVOs for biomass-based diesel and advanced biofuel were set significantly lower than production trends, meaning it will be easy for the industry to meet the RVOs.”

EIA explained that, in general, RIN credit prices are driven by two main factors: biofuel production costs, which are heavily influenced by feedstock prices, and the RFS levels set by EPA.

“On June 21, EPA set the RVOs for 2023-2025 below biofuel production trends, putting downward pressure on prices over the summer,” EIA stated. “However, higher raw material (production) costs offset the downward pressure on prices, delaying the price declines until September. RIN prices dropped in September as biofuel production costs declined and production levels exceeded the RVOs.”

Each gallon of biodiesel produced generates 1.5 RINs. And when RIN prices fall, biodiesel producers make less money. Biodiesel margins have been slim or negative in recent years, and such a rapid, steep decline in RIN prices — no matter how short-lived — is particularly hard on small producers.

While the company’s biodiesel operations are shutting down, New Leaf Biofuel will continue its used cooking oil (UCO) and grease trap services. Its Renewable Fuel Terminal in Fontana, California, is also moving forward uninterrupted. Once complete, the terminal will provide storage and truck loading for renewable diesel and biodiesel as well as rail transloading for ethanol.

“We want to recognize our fantastic

plant operations team who have kept this plant running for the past 15 years to ensure a steady supply of biodiesel to the market,” New Leaf Biofuel stated. “We are devastated that over 25 people will lose their jobs as a result of this closure.”

Meanwhile, in the Pacific Northwest, preliminary data released recently shows that in the first quarter (Q1) of 2023, biodiesel and renewable diesel contributed around 22% of the credits generated under the newly implemented Washington Clean Fuel Standard, indicating a blend rate of approximately 1.2%. In comparison, when California first implemented its LCFS, the state saw a blend rate of only 0.4% for biodiesel and renewable diesel in the first year. In Q1 2023, however, California boasted more than 50% of its diesel fuel was replaced by biobased diesel fuels.

On the other side of the country, the John Oliver Memorial Sewer Plant in Danbury, Connecticut, has begun turning fats, oil and grease (FOG) from sewer collection systems and grease separators at restaurants into biodiesel. The FOG is pumped into the plant, captured and converted in an automated and continuous flow system. It took little more than two years to construct and outfit the facility. The biodiesel project was created through a partnership with UConn, Veolia North America and REA Recovery Resources.

According to Danbury Mayor Dean Esposito, the city’s grease-to-biodiesel project was established in 2019 and will generate nearly 282,000 gallons of renewable fuel per year, of which 222,000 will be B100 and 60,000 gallons will be boiler fuel. The city of Danbury is using the biodiesel to power some trucks in the Public Works Department’s fleet. City officials noted that the volume of grease coming into the treatment plant could be enough biodiesel to fuel Danbury’s fleet of trucks for a year and still have a surplus to sell on the open market as a new revenue source for the city of \$1.3 million.

Up north, the latest Biofuels in Canada report has been released. Commissioned by Advanced Biofuels Canada and authored by Navius

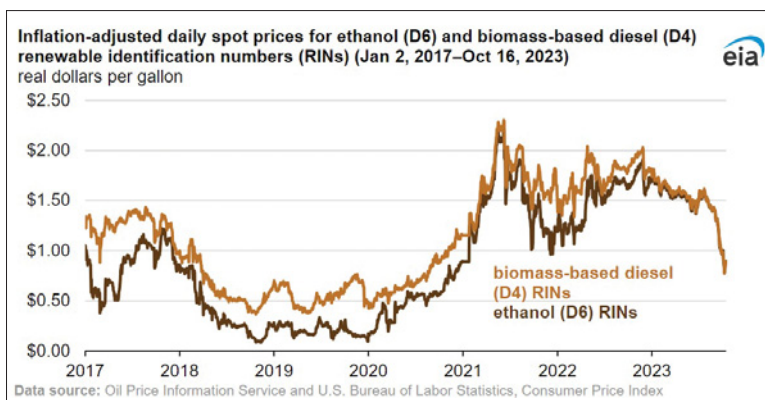
Research, the report assesses the impact of Canada's Clean Fuel Regulations and shows a significant ramp up in the adoption of low-carbon fuels. Biodiesel and renewable diesel blends totaled 3.8% in 2022, up from 3.4% in 2020 and 3.5% in 2021.

Also in Canada, Tidewater Renewables has begun commercial production of renewable diesel in British Columbia. The unit, located at Tidewater's Prince George Refinery and scaled at approximately 45 million gallons per year, produced its first volumes in October and progressed to commercial operations in early November. The company noted the unit start-up makes Tidewater Renewables the first standalone manufacturer of renewable diesel in Canada.

In Asia and Europe, a recently published USDA Biofuels Annual Report on China suggested renewable diesel and SAF producer Neste Corp. may have received fraudulent UCO volumes at its biorefinery in Singapore — specifically virgin palm oil from Indonesia exported fraudulently as UCO via China. Neste responded to the allegation, saying it takes suspected fraud cases seriously.

"Neste's recent analyses of UCO received from China do not support the USDA's assertions, hence the company believes that the reference to Neste in the USDA report is either a mistake or based on a misunderstanding," Neste stated. The biorefiner with plants in Singapore, Finland, the Netherlands and U.S. added that it does not import conventional biofuels nor renewable diesel from China or Indonesia to the European market or elsewhere. Instead, Neste produces its own hydrotreated biofuels.

"Hence, any suggestions that Neste would somehow be involved in the Chinese or Indonesian biofuels exports to Europe or elsewhere are incorrect," the company stated.



In April, the International Sustainability and Carbon Certification System GmbH publicly addressed the issue of potentially fraudulent mislabeling of advanced biodiesel being imported into Europe from China using feedstock from Malaysia and Indonesia. This summer, ISCC revealed that it had withdrawn or temporarily suspended seven certificates as a result of its investigation.

In mid-August, the European Commission officially opened an investigation to address suspected evasion of EU countervailing duties on Indonesian biodiesel imports via China and via the U.K., which was triggered by a July request from the European Biodiesel Board.

"Growing volumes of Indonesian palm oil-based biodiesel appear to be exported to China, and then reexported toward Europe," EBB stated. "The Chinese Island of Hainan, located in the South China Sea, makes an ideal green fuel hot spot for evaders. In 2022, Hainan, which has no sizeable biodiesel capacity, surprisingly accounted for nearly a third of the 2.3 million tons (690 million gallons) of Chinese biodiesel declared for exports to Europe."

R

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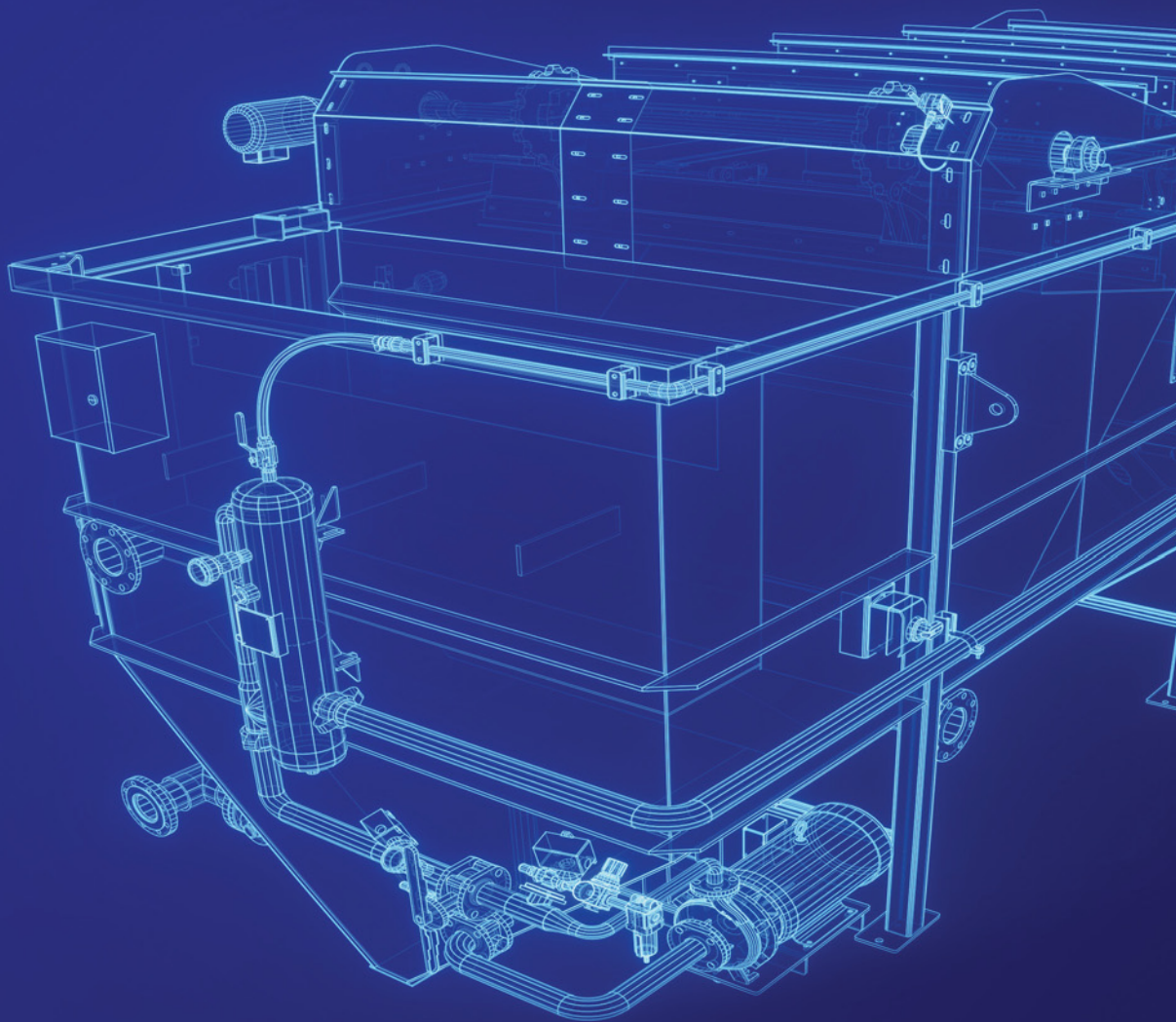
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Unions and Organizing During an OSHA Inspection or After an Accident: Part 2

As we described in Part 1 of this two-part series in the October issue of *Render*, given the intersection of workplace safety with rights protected under the National Labor Relations Act, employers should be well aware of the many ways in which the Occupational and Safety Health Administration and labor law interact. This series describes the current legal landscape as it relates to the provision of safety-related information to union representatives, rights of employees and union representatives during OSHA inspections, and the rights of union representatives during independent safety investigations.

NLRB

Under National Labor Relations Board case law, there is no rule permitting unfettered access to nonemployee union representatives for OSHA inspections. Instead, the board each time will undertake a balancing analysis per *Holyoke Water Power Co.*, 273 NLRB 1369 (1985), *enfd.* 778 F.2d 49 (1st Cir. 1985), which states that any access to nonemployee union representatives must be limited to “reasonable periods and at reasonable times, consistent with the times least likely to disrupt respondent’s operations, to allow the union’s representatives to fully investigate industrial accidents, to conduct health and safety inspections, and to conduct tests for determining the presence of toxic or hazardous fumes.”

While there is no automatic right for a union representative to be at an employer’s premises for these OSHA visits, there is case law supporting such right with the determination being made on a case-by-case basis.

Under federal OSHA regulations, however, union officials are not automatically entitled to accompany an OSHA inspection, including the walk-around, unless they are also employees at the worksite as 29 C.F.R. § 1903.8(a) explains.

“A representative of the employer and a representative authorized by his employees shall be given an opportunity to

accompany the compliance safety and health officer during the physical inspection of any workplace for the purpose of aiding such inspection.”

The regulations later specify that “[t]he representative(s) authorized by employees shall be an employee(s) of the employer.” The importance of the union official being an onsite employee (like a union steward) is stressed again in the OSHA field operations manual for inspection management.

“During the opening conference, the highest-ranking union official or union employee representative onsite shall designate who will participate in the walkaround.”

The compliance officer does have the discretion to permit a third party to accompany the physical inspection, but only if it is “reasonably necessary to the conduct of an effective and thorough physical inspection of the workplace.” (See 29 C.F.R. § 1903.8c)

“However, if in the judgment of the compliance safety and health officer good cause has been shown why accompaniment by a third party who is not an employee of the employer (such as an industrial hygienist or a safety engineer) is reasonably necessary to the conduct of an effective and thorough physical inspection of the workplace, such third party may accompany the compliance safety and health officer during the inspection.”

During the Obama administration, the agency took the position in a standard interpretation letter, also known as the “Fairfax Memo,” that even in non-union workplaces, employees could select an outside, nonemployee union organizer to act as an “authorized employee representative” during an OSHA inspection walk-around at the worksite. The Fairfax Memo also indicates that in unionized workplaces, the authorized employee representative is not required to be an employee at the worksite. The agency also took the position that these representatives are “reasonably necessary to the conduct of an effective and thorough physical inspection.”

In 2017, OSHA rescinded the Fairfax Memo as a result of a lawsuit filed by the National Federation of Independent Business. In the memo, OSHA noted that Section 8(e) of the OSH Act provides that employees during a walk-around OSHA inspection must be given the option of authorizing a representative to participate in the inspection, but that, generally, “[t]he representative(s) authorized by employees shall be an employee(s) of the employer.”

Only where “good cause is shown” and it is “reasonably necessary to the conduct of an effective and further physical inspection of the workplace,” in accordance with the requirements of § 1903.8(c), may an OSHA compliance officer allow a nonemployee to accompany a compliance officer during an inspection, including during the walk-around.

The Biden administration appears intent to revive the Fairfax Memo. In January, OSHA advised of its intention to undertake notice and comment rulemaking (RIN:1218-AD45) that “will clarify the right of workers and certified bargaining units to specify a worker or union representative to accompany an OSHA inspector during the inspection process/facility walkaround, regardless of whether the representative is an employee of the employer, if in the judgment of the compliance safety and health officer such person is reasonably necessary to an effective and thorough physical inspection.”

OSHA originally set May 2023 as its target date for issuing a notice of proposed rulemaking, which requires the agency to explain options being considered for the standard and open a public comment period. To date, however, no notice has been issued.

Until rulemaking is complete, under the current OSHA rules, employees are entitled to at least one representative who is also an on-site employee.

State Plan OSHAs

Employers must be mindful of any differences in state plan OSHA jurisdictions. In California, for example, an “authorized employee representative” must be provided an opportunity to accompany the compliance officer during the course of the inspection, including the walkaround. California Labor Code § 6314 explains:

In the course of any investigation or inspection of an employer or place of employment by an authorized representative of the division, a representative of the employer and a representative authorized by his or her employees shall have an opportunity to accompany him or her on the tour of inspection. Any employee or employer, or their authorized representatives, shall have the right to discuss safety and health violations or safety and health problems with the inspector privately during the course of an investigation or inspection. Where there is no authorized employee representative, the chief or his or her authorized representatives shall consult with a reasonable number of employees concerning matters of health and safety of the place of employment.

An “authorized employee representative” is clearly defined throughout the California OSHA regulations as “a labor organization which has a collective bargaining relationship with an employer and which represents affected employees or an employee organization which has been formally acknowledged by a public agency as an employee organization that represents employees of the public agency.” See California Code of Regulations, Title 8, §§ 347(e), 403(k).

The requirement to permit union representatives to participate in an inspection, including the walk-around, is also supported by California OSHA’s Policy and Procedures Manual, which explains:

An opening conference must be conducted with the employer’s person of highest authority or designee. In locations where employees are represented by a bargaining unit, compliance personnel must make every attempt to contact the bargaining unit representative for the location and apprise them of their right to participate in the opening conference and inspection process.

If bargaining unit representatives decline to participate in the opening conference and/or inspection, compliance personnel must legibly document the declination or inability to make contact with a bargaining unit representative in the case file in the comment section of the Inspection Report.

It is unclear, however, when notice to the union representative is expected to be provided. Notice provided by the agency before even opening the inspection at the worksite may run afoul of rules prohibiting advance notice to parties. Under the California Code of Regulations, Title 8, § 331.1, advance notice may only be provided pursuant to:

- 1) Situations of apparent imminent danger where prompt abatement is essential.
- 2) Situations when, to be effective, the inspection must be arranged to assure availability of essential personnel or access to the site, equipment, or process.

- 3) Other situations where, in the judgment of the chief or his designee, the giving of advance notice is advantageous for achieving a thorough inspection.

If a compliance officer arrives onsite with a union representative in California, employers should seek to understand the circumstances and timing of the invitation and whether advance notice was provided pursuant to one of the exceptions above.

CBA Considerations, Joint Safety Committees

Having stated all of the above, any unionized employer should first consider whether there are provisions of the CBAs at its unionized worksites that may grant the union and certain representatives access to an OSHA walk-around, and greater access to the inspection and to the OSHA compliance officer than what the law ordinarily permits.

In addition to access to OSHA inspections, in unionized settings, some employers and unions use collective bargaining to establish formal labor-management safety and health committees. Employee safety and health committees are mechanisms that employers can use to help prevent

Continued on page 32



The advertisement features a black and white photograph of two men in hard hats and safety glasses, smiling. The JBS logo is in the top right corner, with the text "JOIN OUR TEAM" below it. The main headline reads "JBS is Growing the RENDERING TEAM Grow With Us!". Below this, it states: "We take good care of our team members, with benefits like our FREE College Tuition Program for you and your children, plus:". A bulleted list of benefits follows: Competitive Pay, Medical, Dental and Vision Insurance, Paid Vacation and Holidays, 401(k) Plan, Short-Term Disability and Life Insurance, and Free Mental Health Resources with Licensed Therapists. At the bottom, it says: "Join the World's Largest Animal Protein Company! If interested, please email: Chad.Mullane@jbssa.com".

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accidents and illnesses. These committees can function as important channels in communicating with employees about safety and health issues. Safety committees also can be used to obtain active employee involvement in preventing occupational accidents and health hazard exposures.

Employers should heed caution, however, that safety committees are not a means for circumventing the ordinary obligation to negotiate with the union over terms and conditions of employment, including with respect to safety. Discussions about compensation and disciplinary policies, for example, can run afoul of National Labor Relation Act prohibitions on direct dealing and unilateral changes by management to the terms and conditions of employment.

Weingarten Rights During a Safety Investigation

During a safety investigation, particularly following a catastrophic incident or injury, employers can also be on the receiving end of requests from employees for union representation during investigative interviews to understand the root cause(s) of the incident. The current NLRB is likely to find that employees being interviewed during an investigation into a catastrophic workplace incident are entitled to Weingarten rights, particularly if the investigation seeks to determine, in part, whether employee misconduct may have caused the accident.

The board's decision in *E.I. DuPont de Nemours & Co., Inc.*, 362 NLRB No. 98, 203 LRRM 1425 (2015) is informative. In that case, an employee — who was disciplined a year earlier for an accident involving a fall and injury — was involved in another accident that resulted in injuries to himself. The employer opened an investigation into the accident, asked to speak with the injured employee, and the employee requested representation, which was denied. The employer argued that the meeting was part of a “standard accident investigation” and not intended to result in discipline. In finding a Weingarten violation, the administrative law judge, whose decision was affirmed by the board, wrote:

The Respondent argues that the May 24 interview was a “preliminary step in a standard accident — not disciplinary — investigation, and that the purpose of the investigation is to determine the cause of the accident in order to prevent its reoccurrence.” I agree, but regardless of the purpose of the investigation, the question is whether Smith reasonably believed

that he would be disciplined as a result of it. Weingarten holds that union representation is called for in an investigatory as well as disciplinary interview. It is true that such investigations are properly required and routinely conducted in the plant whenever an accident or injury occurs. By definition, the investigation into the cause of the accident is an “investigatory interview” which requires, upon request, the presence of a union representative.

Union Access to Attorney Notes, Other Privileged Information

Employers may designate work product and other documents as attorney-work product or attorney-client privileged during a safety investigation when internal or external counsel are involved but should do so knowing that under established NLRB precedent, these privileges and immunities are not absolute barriers to union requests for that same information.

The board undertakes a balancing test, prescribed in *Detroit Edison v. NLRB*, 440 U.S. 301 (1979), to determine whether a union is entitled to access attorney-client privileged information. *BP Exploration (Alaska)*, 337 NLRB 887, 888 (2002), citing *Detroit Edison Co.*, 440 U.S. 301 (1979). As the board explained in *BP Exploration (Alaska)*, an employer has a statutory duty to provide requested information that is potentially relevant and will be of use to a union in fulfilling its responsibilities. 337 NLRB at 888 (citing *GTE California Inc.*, 324 NLRB 424, 426 (1997)). However, a union's need for relevant and necessary information does not predominate over other legitimate interests. Thus, the board will balance a union's need for the information against any legitimate and substantial confidentiality interest established by the employer.

Like the attorney-client privilege, the work product privilege against disclosure is not absolute. *Sprint Communications*, 343 NLRB 987, 988 (2004). *Fed.R.Civ.P. 26(b)(3)* provides that a party may obtain an otherwise protected document by showing that it has a substantial need for the materials in the preparation of its case and that it is unable without undue hardship to obtain the substantial equivalent of the materials by other means. Even with such a showing, however, courts protect against disclosure of the mental impressions, conclusions, opinions or legal theories of an attorney, citing in *re Sealed Case*, 146 F.3d 881, 884 (D.C. Cir. 1998).

For more information, feel free to contact the authors at: AYoung@seyfarth.com, MLies@seyfarth.com or masloan@seyfarth.com.

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Regulations Published for RAPP Export Promotion Program

As part of the formal process the U.S. Department of Agriculture must follow to administer a new \$1.3 billion Regional Agricultural Promotion Program, regulations were published in the *Federal Register* Nov. 17. Then on Nov. 29, USDA published a notice of funding opportunity (NOFA), which lays out criteria for the program and application instructions. According to Dana Downing, senior vice president of international programs for the North American Renderers Association, there are a few key considerations for NARA's application for funding.

1. NARA is already an established and eligible applicant for these types of USDA foreign market development programs, and it intends to submit an application to increase its export promotion activities in key markets. The deadline for applications will be February 2.
2. The program excludes promotional activities in mature markets with the goal of diversifying markets for U.S. exports, so the U.S. is not overly dependent on its biggest trading partners, such as China.
3. One criterion for the program requires applicants to describe the industry's efforts to address diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). This is an area where NARA member companies have invested time and resources to document and substantiate their environmental, social and governance goals. Input from members is needed to help develop a DEI statement for NARA and have examples of what initiatives, goals and data the industry can use to demonstrate its commitment and progress in these areas.

NARA members can email Downing (ddowning@nara.org) their companies' DEI statement, goals and any other shareable data. She will aggregate and keep anonymous what is received to help develop a strong narrative to meet the DEI criteria in the application. Time is going to be very short to draft a DEI statement and goals for NARA, so she asks members to share those DEI resources as soon as possible.

4. USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service, the agency that administers the program, has identified three regions of special emphasis through fiscal year 2024, and \$25 million is earmarked for Africa. NARA began work last year with a market assessment of Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Senegal and NARA is well positioned to build upon the work that has already

begun there and explore opportunities in other countries such as South Africa, Ghana and Kenya.

5. Applicants for the funds must contribute at least 10% of their own resources toward its proposed activities.
6. NARA and other groups will have an opportunity to submit public comments about the rule for the FAS to consider changes to the regulation.
7. Funding decisions will likely be allocated by late spring or early summer.
8. The first tranche of funding is expected to be around \$300 million, which is more than the \$234.5 million that is currently allocated for the Market Access Program and Foreign Market Development programs. Other tranches of funding would continue for the next five years.
9. There are currently 67 MAP participants, so unless a lot of new, eligible groups apply for the RAPP funding, NARA's share could be a significant boost to its international programs.
10. Any comments to offer from this rule or the NOFA may be shared with Downing, so they can be incorporated in NARA's public comments.

"The idea of getting another new pot of money to expand programs and our footprint overseas is very exciting, but we won't have a lot of time to prepare the application," Downing explains. "I will likely be reaching out to the international market development committee members and other NARA staff members and consultants for input as more requirements for the program are known. Stay tuned."

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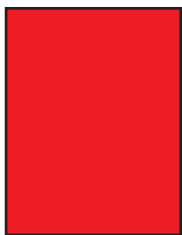
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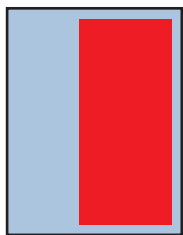
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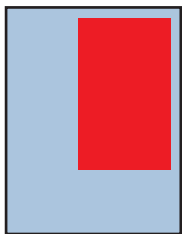
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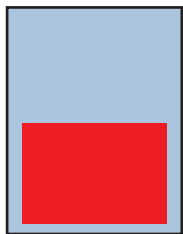
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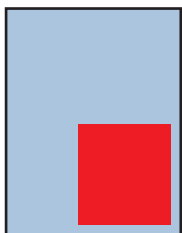
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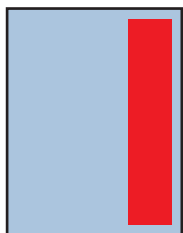
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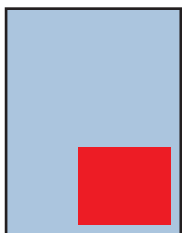
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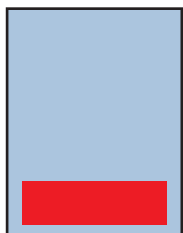
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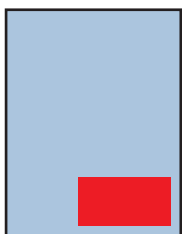
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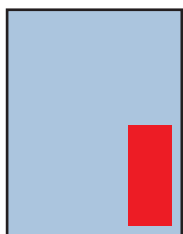
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Advertiser to furnish camera-ready art as a digital file (CMYK for color) in one of the following file formats: jpg, pdf, tif or eps.

EDITORIAL CALENDAR

ISSUE	FOCUS
February	Biofuels
April	U.S. Market Report NARA Membership Directory
June	Aquaculture
August	International Focus
October	Next Gen Renderers Preconvention Details to Know
December	NARA Convention Report

2024 ADVERTISING DEADLINES

ISSUE	AD FILES DUE
February	January 10
April	March 11
June	May 10
August	July 10
October	September 10
December	November 11



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Glenn Travels to China for Goodwill Mission

Michael Glenn, chair of the North American Renderers Association, accompanied by Dr. Peng Li, NARA's regional director for Asia, traveled to China on a U.S. multicommodity cooperators' goodwill mission in early November. He visited the China Ministry of Commerce and National Food Strategic Reserve Administration and attended the U.S.-China Agricultural Trade Cooperation Forum and a mission reception hosted by U.S. Ambassador to the People's Republic of China, Nicholas Burns (pictured above). He also visited the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and delivered a presentation on international market development.

During his time in China, Glenn also met with many contacts, including members of the U.S. Grains Council, to discuss growing support in feed and biofuel market development. He also met with

the China Gelatin Industry Association to discuss strengthening cooperation towards market access of U.S. gelatin to China and gelatin market development.

Andreoli Named Citizen of the Year

Jim Andreoli Sr. of Baker Commodities Inc. was honored Nov. 16 as the Citizen of the Year by the Vernon, California, Chamber of Commerce. The award was presented to Andreoli as part of a philanthropic event to highlight Vernon companies and special individuals for their industry leadership and long-standing commitment to local communities. Part of the proceeds go to the recipient's charity of choice. Andreoli chose the Variety Boys and Girls Club of Boyle Heights and the Children's Museum at La Habra.

Gustafson Named NAMI Chairman

Coast Packing CEO, Eric R. Gustafson, has been named incoming chairman of the North American Meat Institute. NAMI members include more than 350 meat packing and processing companies, the majority of which have fewer than 100 employees. He is a longtime member of the NAMI executive board and has been vice chair, treasurer and secretary in addition to chairing the organization's political action committee as well as the labor and employment committee. Gustafson also provided leadership to NAMI's strategic vision and nominating committees.

"Our industry faces many important and unique challenges, but in the few years I have served as an officer, the meat institute has looked inward and made bold, impactful changes to its structure to better drive continuous improvement and serve members," Gustafson said. "I am proud of these accomplishments and look forward to continuing this work and serving as chairman in an exciting time for the industry."

Read Passes

James Wesley Read passed away Oct. 10 at age 95, surrounded by his family. Read was a longtime NARA member who worked at the family business, Plymouth Fertilizer Co., with his father Ivan and brothers Lester and Jay. After Plymouth Fertilizer was sold in 1999, the three brothers started farming together. When the farm equipment was sold, James and his son Bob established JB Fish — a fish farming operation specializing in tilapia. With the assistance of Jamie Baca, a faithful friend and hired man, he continued to operate JB Fish until his recent decline in health.

Read was the fifth of seven children. He was a lifelong Plymouth, Indiana, resident and graduated from Lincoln High School, where he also met his high school sweetheart, Barbara Ann Hendrix, whom he married in 1948. Together they raised five children, four sons and one daughter. He is survived by sons, James L., Thomas I., and David A., daughter-in-law, Karen E. Read, numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren along with their spouses. Also surviving is his sister Ellen Snyder.

AFIA Welcomes Staff Changes

The American Feed Industry Association announced the addition of Madison Wyman as its policy communications specialist, effective Nov. 13. In this newly created position, Wyman will collaborate with AFIA's policy team to communicate with and deepen stakeholders' understanding of AFIA's legislative, regulatory and trade policy positions. In addition, Wyman will prepare grassroots advocacy campaigns on domestic and international policy issues and support the association's media requests and crisis communications activities.

Daisy Rodriguez has been promoted to manager of meetings and events for AFIA. She has been with the organization for four years as part of the meetings and events team. She has taken on additional responsibilities relating to supporting

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AFIA's board of directors recently and will be expanding her role with the team.

IFIF elects Chair, Treasurer

The International Feed Industry Federation has reelected Ruud Tijssens as IFIF chair for the 2024 to 2025 term of office at its 36th annual general assembly. In addition, Bruno Kaesler was also elected to a second term as IFIF treasurer. IFIF is made up of national and regional feed associations, feed-related organizations, and corporate members from around the globe representing over 80% of the feed production worldwide.

Wind Joins Clean Fuels

Clean Fuels Alliance America announced the addition of Cory-Ann Wind, a leader behind Oregon's groundbreaking Clean Fuel Program, to its staff. Wind, who spent three decades at the forefront of environmental progress, will assume the role of director of state regulatory affairs beginning Jan. 8, 2024, with a primary focus on the West Coast.

NCC Elects New Officers, Day Installed as Chair



The National Chicken Council installed the four officers that will guide the organization through 2024 during NCC's 68th Annual Conference in Washington, D.C. Randy Day, retired CEO and special advisor to the Perdue Farms board of directors, will serve as 2023-2024 Chairman. Day led the company's senior leadership team, which includes Perdue Foods, Perdue AgriBusiness, and Perdue Farms corporate functions.

Bill Griffith, Peco Foods' chief operations officer, will serve as vice chair. Griffith has more than 25 years of management experience in the food industry. Prior to joining Peco, he worked

for Keystone Foods U.S., where he served as president for three years.

New to the officer corps is David Jackson, chief operating officer of Simmons Foods, Simmons Prepared Foods, Simmons Pet Food and Simmons Animal Nutrition, who will serve as NCC secretary-treasurer. Jackson joined Simmons in 1991 and has over 32 years of poultry and pet food experience. In addition to the three new officers, Mike Brown was elected to a 13th term as NCC president.

Smithfield Foods, Price Chopper Donate Tons of Food

Smithfield Foods, in partnership with Price Chopper, donated more than 32,000 pounds of food to Harvesters — the community food network in Kansas City — to fight hunger in local communities. The donation, which included ham, smoked sausage, pork chops and other Smithfield products, will provide over 130,000 servings of protein to individuals facing food insecurity in a 26-county area of northwestern Missouri and northeastern Kansas. Following the donation, team members from Smithfield's Kansas City, Martin City and Princeton, Missouri,

operations volunteered at Harvesters, packing more than 600 bags for the food bank's BackSnack program.

Smithfield's Helping Hungry Homes program has provided hundreds of millions of protein servings in all 50 U.S. states, as well as in Poland, Romania and Mexico, since 2008. In 2022, the company donated nearly 25 million servings of protein to food banks, disaster relief efforts and community outreach programs across the U.S. To reflect its continued commitment to fighting food insecurity, Smithfield has pledged to donate 200 million servings of protein by 2025.

Smithfield Foods Awards College Scholarships

Smithfield Foods awarded more than \$740,000 to 13 schools in seven states to fund educational scholarships for the 2023-2024 school year. The scholarships are need-based and awarded to eligible dependents of full-time and retired Smithfield employees. Students can receive up to \$7,500 annually in scholarships to participating colleges and universities for four years.

R





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UNFORGETTABLE ADVENTURES & EVENTS

Convention's numerous special events and experiences were so popular this year, there simply wasn't room for everyone. From tasty bites and fashion arts to golfing, deep sea fishing, sailing, and sand sculpture building, attendees mastered new skills, developed relationships with one another, and formed memories that'll last a lifetime. Thanks to all who participated!



DEDICATION TO CANINE COMPANIONS

Attendees raised \$45,000 for this outstanding organization, which trains service dogs for wounded veterans. Thanks to everyone who contributed and participated in the Silent Auction, Mulligans for Golf, Raffles, and Dog Contest. We hope everyone loves their Pet Toons and congratulations to Jeannine Glenn for winning the honor of naming a Canine Companion! She chose "Penny."



SUSTAINABILITY TAKES CENTER STAGE

This year's speakers shared many captivating presentations, all of which shared a common theme—sustainability. A big thanks to all of the presenters for offering valuable insights on the hugely positive impact rendering has on the environment, as well as on the economy at all levels—local, state, national, and international.

A Special Thank You to the Outstanding Sponsors and Exhibitors of NARA's 90th Annual Convention.

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VanAire

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West Coast Reduction

Wilbur-Ellis Nutrition

Williams Mullen

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December

National Grain and Feed Association CEC 2023

Dec. 3-5, Louisville, KY • ngfa.org

National Aboveground Storage Tank Conference & Trade Show

Dec. 5-7, The Woodlands, TX • nistm.org/

January

Association of American Feed Control Officials Midyear Meeting

Jan. 23-25, Chattanooga, TN • aafco.org/events/meetings/mid-year/2024-midyear-meeting/

International Production & Processing Expo

Jan. 30- Feb. 1, Atlanta, GA • ippexpo.org/

National Cattlemen's Beef Association CattleCon

Jan. 31-Feb. 2, Orlando, FL • convention.ncba.org

February

Clean Fuels Conference 2024

Feb. 5-8, Fort Worth, TX • cleanfuelsconference.org

USDA 100th Annual Agricultural Outlook Forum

Feb. 15-16, Arlington, VA • www.usda.gov/oce/ag-outlook-forum

Animal Co-products Research and Education Center Spring Meeting

Feb. 27-28, Clemson, SC • fprf.org/projects/acrec/acrec

March

NARA Quarterly Committee Meetings

March 1, virtual • nara.org/about-us/events

Pacific Coast Renderers Association Annual Meeting

March 7-9, Carmel, CA • nara.org/about-us/events

Animal Feed Regulatory Program Standards Meeting

March 18-20, Mobile, AL • www.aafco.org/events/seminars-and-workshops/animal-feed-regulatory-program-standards/2024-afrps-meeting/

April

Pet Food Forum

April 29-May 1, Kansas City, MO • www.petfoodforumevents.com

NARA Spring Meeting

April 29-May 3, Vancouver, BC • nara.org/about-us/events/

Meeting information could change so visit the listed website for updated information.

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