



## **Consumers Stake in Today's Food Production: Meeting Growing Production Demands with Integrity**

### **April 11-14, 2011**

#### **1. Background**

"Consumers Stake in Today's Food Production: Meeting Growing Production Demands with Integrity" was the theme of the 2011 Annual Conference of the National Institute for Animal Agriculture conducted April 11-14, 2011 in San Antonio, Texas.

The National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA) is a non-profit, membership-driven organization that unites and advances animal agriculture: the beef, dairy, equine, goat, poultry, sheep and swine industries. NIAA's membership is comprised of farmers, ranchers, veterinarians, scientists, state and federal officials and business executives.

NIAA is dedicated to programs that work toward the eradication of diseases that pose risk to the health of animals, wildlife and humans; promote a safe and wholesome food supply for our nation and abroad; and promote best practices in environmental stewardship, animal health and welfare.

#### **2. Purpose and Design of the Conference**

NIAA agrees with a statement issued by the International Federation of Agricultural Producers: *"For centuries, family farmers have been raising livestock for human consumption. They are conscious of their responsibilities towards the animals in their care. Indeed, good animal welfare practices reward farmers with good animal productivity. Animal welfare must be safeguarded in the production of farm animals in the breeding process, when designing housing, in feeding and in production systems, as well as during transport and slaughter. As the distance between farmers and consumers grows with increasing urbanization, consumers know less and less about the way farm animals are raised. However, consumers do care about how their food is produced, including how farm animals are treated. Increasingly, they require assurances that the well-being of animals is being taken into account in livestock farming*

*practices. Farmers realize that animals welfare has also become a global concern in a context of increasing market globalization."*

In general, the image of the family farm with its red barn, a few chickens in the yard, some pigs in the mud and cows grazing in the field is no longer accurate. Today, U.S. animal agriculture is a dynamic, highly efficient, specialized industry. Only in America can 3% feed 100% of the population as efficiently as we do. While many of today's consumers are aware of the efficiencies of today's producers, they are generally unaware of farmers' relationship to their animals, and how meat, milk and eggs are produced on today's farms.

In addition, farm groups, commodity organizations and most agricultural check-off programs have spent 25 years and billions of dollars refining and repeating their modern message: American agriculture is a business, and farmers and ranchers are business people. In the process, cowboys became beef producers, dairy farmers became dairy producers and hog farmers became pork producers and so forth. Recently, however, "producer" groups and researchers have learned that most U.S. consumers don't want their eggs, milk, meat and other agricultural products from "producers." Instead, consumers want their food from "farmers and ranchers."

The term "factory farming"—which was invented in 1964 by a British author—has shown up with increasing frequency in media monitoring of both traditional and online/social media and is being used to discredit livestock production. Research conducted using Beef Checkoff funds shows the number of Americans familiar with the term "factory farming" has increased since 2008, rising from 49 percent to 64 percent. The website [www.organic.lovetoknow.com](http://www.organic.lovetoknow.com) states "Intensive livestock farming—also known as *factory farming*—is designed to yield the highest profit from the least amount of labor and costs." Yes, it appears that, in addition to challenges arising from what people don't know, it's also what they believe they do know but isn't true that is widening the disconnect between today's consumers and animal agriculture.

NIAA is concerned about the disconnect between today's consumers and animal agriculture, as this disconnect is not in the best interest of the consumer or U.S. animal agriculture.

The purpose of NIAA's Annual Conference was to bring together leaders in animal agriculture and agribusiness to discuss the growing importance of involving consumers as stakeholders in food production and to work collectively to develop consensus on key issues. Areas considered included the food supply, food security, food safety, animal agriculture's importance in the ecosystem and effective ways to communicate with consumer stakeholders.

The conference featured two plenary sessions in which experts identified the elements of a stable food supply, with conference participants then working in committees and councils to develop a direction for needed research, information, development and production methods to meet the food production challenge.

The Planning Committee for the Annual Conference represented a cross-section of NIAA's membership.

### **Annual Conference Planning Committee Chair:**

Dr. Nevil Speer, Western Kentucky University

**Annual Conference Planning Committee Members:**

Dr. Leonard Bull, Bull Mountain Enterprises, Inc.  
Mike Bumgarner, Ohio Farm Bureau Federation  
Jim Carroll, Dairy Farmers of America  
Kathy Cornett, McCormick Company  
Glenn Fischer, Allflex USA, Inc.  
Dr. Tony Forshey, Ohio Department of Agriculture  
Dr. Robert Fourdraine, Wisconsin Livestock Identification Consortium  
Travis Justice, Arkansas Farm Bureau Federation  
Kevin Maher, GlobalVetLink, L.C.  
Bill Medley, Farm Credit Services of Mid-America  
Dr. David Meeker, National Renderers Association, Inc.  
John Saunders, IMI Global, Inc.  
Dr. Annette Whiteford, California Department of Food & Agriculture

The Agenda for the Annual Conference was as follows:

**Tuesday, April 12**

**8:00 – 10:00 a.m. Session I: Elements of a Stable Food Supply**

**Opening Remarks: Dr. Robert Fourdraine**, Wisconsin Livestock Identification Consortium and NIAA Chairman of the Board

**Moderator: Dr. Nevil Speer**, Western Kentucky University and NIAA Annual Conference Planning Committee Chair

**Food Security and the Implications of World Food Economy and the Role of Animal Agriculture:**

**Dr. Douglas Southgate, Jr.**, Professor of Agricultural, Environmental, and Developmental Economics, The Ohio State University, and author of *The World Economy*

**The Overarching Demand for Food and Implications for Resource Use and Ecosystems**

**Dr. Frank Mitloehner**, Associate Professor and Air Quality Extension Specialist, *University of California-Davis, Davis, Calif.*

**Consumers' Perceptions and Role in Understanding Current and Future Production Practices**

**Mr. Charlie Arnot**, CEO, Center for Food Integrity, Kansas City, Mo.

**10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Session II: Species Committee Meetings**

**Bovine Committee**

**Equine Committee**

**Poultry Committee**

**Small Ruminant Committee**

## Swine Committee

**1:30 – 5:00 p.m. Session III: Issues Council Meetings**  
**Animal Care Council**  
**Animal Health Emergency Management Council**

**Wednesday, April 13**

**8:00 – 11:30 a.m. Session IV: Issues Council Meetings**  
**Animal Agriculture Advocacy Council**  
**Animal Identification & Information Systems Council**  
**Emerging Diseases Council**

**1:00 – 4:30 p.m. Session V: Building Consensus and Developing Solutions**  
**Moderator: Ms. Carrie Lee, Anchor, FiOS1 News, Long Island, N.Y.**

**Producer Perspectives and Initiatives on Increasing Food Production with Integrity: Hickman's Family Farms**  
**Mr. Clint Hickman, Vice President of Sales & Marketing, Hickman's Family Farms, Buckeye, Ariz.**

**Legal Challenges and Ramifications of Food Production Systems and Food Safety**  
**Mr. Chris McDonald, Partner, Shook, Hardy & Bacon L.L.P., Kansas City, Mo.**

**Addressing Consumer Concerns with Modern Food Production: Bringing Producers, Academia and Health Professionals Together**  
**Mr. David Schmidt, President & CEO, International Food Information Council, Washington, D.C.**

**The European Perspective on Initiatives to Increase Food Production Capabilities in Responsible Systems**  
**Dr. Peter Groot Koerkamp, Professor in Biosystems Engineering/Agrotechnology & Interim Professor in Animal Production Systems, Wageningen University, The Netherlands**

### **3. Information Gleaned from General Session Speakers<sup>1</sup>**

Highlights from the presentations of the eight experts who spoke during the two General Sessions were:

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<sup>1</sup> *Full presentations can be viewed and heard online at:*

*<http://animalagriculture.org/Solutions/Annual%20Conference/2011/Proceedings.html>*

- As economies throughout the world create wealth, consumption of animal protein (including dairy) will increase. The challenge will be to feed 9 billion people in 2050.—*Dr. Douglas Southgate Jr.*
- Assuming a 52% supply growth between 2009 through 2050, then total growth in food demand is predicted as follows: population of 7.96 billion in 2050 would require a 27% growth in food demand; population of 9.15 billion would require a 52% growth in food demand; and a population of 10.46 billion would require a 73% growth in food demand.—*Dr. Douglas Southgate Jr.*
- The more efficient/intensive we are, the better for our environment. The conflict occurs when other societal needs are considered.—*Dr. Frank Mitloehner*
- From a greenhouse gas perspective, research shows that corn-fed animals will produce less methane than grass-fed animals. This is contrary to what the public believes and contrary to what the public is told. —*Dr. Frank Mitloehner*
- U.S. livestock are responsible for 3.4% of U.S. greenhouse gases and not the global livestock figure of 18% as stated in the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization report "Livestock's Long Shadow" which was released in November 2006. The world media applies the 18% figure to the United States, but this is not accurate. —*Dr. Frank Mitloehner*
- Some media urge consumers who want to make a difference in the carbon imprint to eat less meat and/or to go meatless on Mondays. One TV station stated a person who eats one hamburger and drives a Prius is equal to that person driving a Hummer. This, however, is an "ill-advised statement." —*Dr. Frank Mitloehner*
- In the United States, transportation accounts for 26% of total anthropogenic greenhouse gases while electricity accounts for 31%. Livestock production accounts for only 3% of total anthropogenic greenhouse gases. —*Dr. Frank Mitloehner*
- Intensive agriculture is sustainable agriculture.—*Charlie Arnot*
- The media is always looking for a villain, a victim and a vindicator. We do not want agriculture painted as the villain.—*Charlie Arnot*
- We need to hold each other accountable when public trust is violated. If agriculture's voice is not the first voice in the discussion, then we all operate at the lowest common denominator.—*Charlie Arnot*
- Animal agriculture cannot educate its way to public trust. Animal agriculture must reframe and readdress who we are and what we do and communicate messages that are "ethically sound".—*Charlie Arnot*
- Consumers say they trust farmers but say that aren't sure today's producers of agricultural products are "farmers"—those who they perceive to share the values of farmers.—*Charlie Arnot*

- Consumer preferences/demands change over time. For example, chickens ran free and ate on the ground until consumers voiced concern about them eating “stuff” off the ground and caging chickens was the solution to this concern. By 1967, 40% of commercial layers were caged and, by 1978, 90% of commercial layers were caged. Today, the tide has turned and many consumers want eggs from cage-free chickens.—*Clint Hickman*
- Regulations applicable to animal agriculture is a growth industry of its own. There’s even a “Chicken Bill of Rights” that every human who comes in contact with the chickens must follow.—*Clint Hickman*
- Fees for biosecurity and voluntary oversight by USDA in our plants alone total about \$1 million a year. These are voluntary fees to assure the public our food is safe coming off the farm.—*Clint Hickman*
- Branding clothing and vehicles lets consumers know our business and opens the door for conversations that let us tell our story to interested consumers. .—*Clint Hickman*
- Many consumers start with opinion—much of it from mommy bloggers—before they get to the science, if they get to the science. Thus, we need to curry favor with opinion makers and let them see firsthand what we do and how we care for our animals.—*Clint Hickman*
- Agriculture is under severe criticism, and the public is much more susceptible to these pitches. They listen to arguments not based on science and the real world. Arguments are sometimes the sole agenda for animal activists.—*Chris McDonald*
- Animal litigation can have one reason: To abolish animal agriculture. An issue of HSUS Quarterly stated “Litigation. . . is just one more tool HSUS can use against farmers and ranchers to achieve its end goal of putting a stop to animal agriculture.”—*Chris McDonald*
- Plaintiffs have increasingly been turning to nuisance theories in agricultural/environmental toxic tort cases. These can be individualized. I anticipate more public nuisance cases.—*Chris McDonald*
- Global business means increased litigation risks. “Big food” will be a target.—*Chris McDonald*
- To protect a brand, company and the industry, you should be proactive. Develop meaningful crisis management plans, anticipate emerging risks, manage supply chains and control documents and records.—*Chris McDonald*
- You are only as strong as the weakest link in your supply chain.—*Chris McDonald*
- Taste, freshness and safety top consumers’ list of important food attributes.—*Dave Schmidt*

- Uniting efforts to communicate with consumers can be beneficial. Fifty-eight professional societies, universities, government agencies, industry and commodity groups formed the Alliance to Feed the Future. Its mission: To multiply the impact of separate efforts that build understanding of food production and technology issues among stakeholders to balance the public dialogue on modern agriculture and large-scale food production. The Alliance to Feed the Future is helping change consumers' perceptions of processed food.—*Dave Schmidt*
- Three issues of sustainability are people, planet and profit. Due to place, culture, time, perception and other factors, sustainability differs among countries.—*Dr. Peter Groot Koerkamp*
- We have three ways of striving for sustainability: 1) optimal use; 2) improving process and product; and 3) system innovation. System innovation will move the needle the most. The challenge therefore is how to deliberately strive for system innovation and transition into animal husbandry to attain "integral" sustainability. How do we design new husbandry systems that transcend common oppositions and dilemmas?—*Dr. Peter Groot Koerkamp*
- Animal agriculture must meet the needs of the animal, the consumer and the farmer, and with this come challenges.—*Dr. Peter Groot Koerkamp*

#### 4. Consensus Points

The following points of consensus were identified during the two-day Annual Conference:

1. Animal agriculture must continue to produce food, milk and fiber in responsible and sustainable ways and continue to earn and maintain a social license by doing what is right.
2. Approaches to animal care must be continually evaluated and updated, using science as a basis with appropriate consideration to ethical and societal values and expectations built into the equation.
3. Because public perceptions affecting one segment of agriculture are often easily transferred to another, agriculture needs to speak with one voice on important issues. Fragmentation is not an option.
4. Animal health efforts should be focused on diseases that affect the greatest number of animals and have the largest economic impact, not the "what ifs."
5. Approaches to animal care must be continually evaluated and updated, using science as a basis with appropriate consideration for ethical and societal values and expectations.
6. Because public perceptions affecting one segment of agriculture are often easily transferred to another, agriculture needs to speak with one voice on important issues. Fragmentation is not an option.



7. To build trust with consumers and help them understand animal agriculture, communication must center on shared values coupled with scientific data from sources perceived by consumers as reputable and unbiased.
8. To more effectively communicate with consumers, it is important to learn, understand and integrate the “language of the consumer” into communications.
9. Those involved in American food and fiber production and delivery in general—and animal agriculture in particular—must do a better job of **listening and speaking** with the consuming public, using venues and language appropriate to age and lifestyle of the consuming public. Open, frequent, continuous and bi-directional dialogue—allowing for differences in experiences, values and expectations—must take place in formats and time restrictions conducive to effective delivery of the agricultural message. Messages should be age- and experience-specific and should start no later than with individuals ages 5-6 years.
10. Animal agriculture must better educate retailers and other supply chain entities about challenges and how they are being addressed.
11. Since NIAA is high on the credibility ladder, the organization should leverage its credibility in alliance and communication efforts. NIAA should continue to pursue appropriate alliances with groups and initiatives that further the purposes of NIAA in communicating science-based and factual information. Specific areas to explore and develop include:
  - A full definition of what NIAA can provide to these alliances.
  - A complete definition of NIAA members and constituency; the ability to develop, assimilate and pass pertinent information up and down the food chain.
  - Ways to ensure the diversity of NIAA is used as a strength, since it can also become a weakness.
  - Exploring means and methods of more fully distributing the vast amount of information generated during NIAA events.
  - What NIAA should and should not do in order to avoid duplication of other organizations.

#### **Consensus Points Specific to Species Committees and Issues Councils:**

1. Continued emphasis should be placed on high-risk populations of horses in order to be most effective in ensuring a high level of good health.
2. World demand: Food and production needs must be considered on a situation basis — village poultry and integrated systems both play significant roles.
3. Poultry health funding should be risk based rather than public perception based, with consensus needed regarding criteria and focus of efforts.



4. Movement to comprehensive and integrated swine surveillance programs is strongly supported by the swine industry and swine veterinarians.
5. USDA should provide surveillance data to the National Surveillance Unit for additional epidemiological analysis.
6. Funding for Animal Disease Traceability is a top priority to States, Tribes and animal agriculture.
7. Manual recording of Official ID is a concern to all segments of the industry as it relates to cost and accuracy.
8. Collection of official identification at slaughter is a significant issue that needs to be addressed.
9. Better communication is needed between USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA Veterinary Services, U.S. Food and Drug Administration, harvest facilities and auction markets concerning residue traceability and ID collection and reporting.

## **5. Future Directions**

Given NIAA represents a wide array of animal agriculture participants and is in a unique position to provide a forum for the development of consensus and solutions to key issues in the industry, the organization will continue to pursue meaningful ways to provide support to its members and others in the industry. These include symposia, the development of fact-based information, and the dissemination of communication pieces to assist in ensuring all stakeholders, including consumers, have the information necessary to fully understand the evolving technologies and practices in modern food production.

### **General Session Speaker Biographies:**

#### **Charlie Arnot**

Charlie Arnot is CEO of the Center for Food Integrity and President of CMA, a consulting company with offices in Missouri, Iowa, Indiana, and Ohio. The Center for Food Integrity is a national non-profit organization dedicated to building consumer trust and confidence in today's food system.

In his role as President of CMA, Arnot and the CMA team work with companies and associations across the food system in issues management, public relations, strategic facilitation, and marketing communications. The CMA team also writes the dairy, beef and hog industry insider

columns in *Feedstuffs*, the nation's leading agribusiness newspaper, and contributes frequently to other food system publications.

Arnot spent ten years as vice president of communications and public affairs for Premium Standard Farms; he worked for a public relations agency, was an award winning radio journalist, and worked in video and film. Arnot grew up in southeast Nebraska and graduated from the University of Nebraska with a Bachelor of Journalism degree.

### **Peter Groot Koerkamp**

Peter Groot Koerkamp has been a professor in Biosystems Engineering at the Farm Technology chair group since 2005 and is currently the interim chair holder at the Animal Production Systems group, both at Wageningen University, The Netherlands. Besides, he is employed at Wageningen Livestock Research, the research institute for animal production in Lelystad. He studied agricultural engineering (MSc, 1990), obtained his Ph.D. in 1998, with honors, on ammonia emissions from welfare friendly housing systems for laying hens and was senior researcher on a wide range of environmental issues and welfare for livestock production systems until 2003. Nowadays he focuses on design methodology for integral sustainable animal production systems and integrating knowledge and understanding from various disciplines like welfare and health of animals, animal physiology, environmental impact, engineering, innovation studies and societal studies.

### **Clint Hickman**

Clint Hickman is the Vice President of Sales and Marketing for his company, Hickman's Family Farms, based in Buckeye, Arizona. He graduated from the University of Arizona with a Marketing degree and has never worked anywhere else. Currently he is Chairman of the Consumer Marketing Committee with the American Egg Board. He also has just been elected President of the Pacific Egg and Poultry Association.

### **Chris McDonald**

Chris McDonald is the firm's General Litigation Division Managing Partner. He practices in Shook, Hardy & Bacon's Agribusiness and Food Safety Group, and its Environmental and Toxic Tort Practice Group where he brings his legal and technical background to bear on high-stakes, complex litigation and enforcement matters. He primarily represents clients in environmental and toxic tort cases involving personal injury, property damage and medical monitoring, and has served as lead counsel in defense of claims brought by EPA and/or state enforcement under the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, CERCLA, and other environmental statutes. Some of Chris' recent matters include representing companies in separate litigation where personal injury and property damage claims have been asserted for the application of biosolids as fertilizers, personal injury and medical monitoring claims focusing on drinking water, and cases involving various nuisance claims.

Chris is a frequent speaker at national and regional conferences on issues relating to toxic tort, environmental, agribusiness, food safety, and crisis management matters. He received his Juris Doctor from the University of Texas School of Law and a Bachelor of Arts in Biology from the University of Kansas.

## **Frank Mitloehner**

Frank Mitloehner, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of Animal Science and an associate air quality cooperative extension specialist at the University of California, Davis. Dr. Mitloehner serves as director for the UC, Davis Agricultural Air Quality Center. His current research activities are in the area of air emission estimates and emission mitigation from livestock facilities. He earned his M.S. degree in Agricultural Engineering and Animal Science from the University of Leipzig in Germany and his doctoral degree in Animal Science from Texas Tech University.

## **David Schmidt**

The Board of Directors of the International Food Information Council (IFIC) in Washington, DC elected David Schmidt as president & CEO effective January 1, 2006. Schmidt also serves as President and CEO of the International Food Information Council Foundation. Previously, he held the positions of executive vice president, vice president and director and has been a frequent speaker on a wide range of food safety and nutrition issues.

Prior to joining IFIC in 1993, Schmidt served as the first Bush Administration's director of external affairs for the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. There he addressed a number of controversial food safety and nutrition issues and managed the inspection agency's media, legislative and consumer education programs. Schmidt also gained a thorough understanding of the food industry in previous sales positions with leading food and beverage firms including Oscar Mayer Foods, Pepsi-Cola USA and Canada Dry Corporation.

David also serves on the National Advisory Board for the Center for Risk Communication Research at the University of Maryland, on a steering committee for *America's Heartland*, and participated on the steering committee on Reinventing Agricultural Education for the Year 2020. He also served the town of Leesburg, Virginia from 2000-2004 and in 2008 as a Town Councilmember.

Schmidt holds a B.A. degree in Business Administration from Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee and has completed graduate business studies at the University of New Orleans.

## **Douglas Southgate**

Douglas Southgate is an economist with a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin and has been a professor at Ohio State University since 1980. He has worked in sixteen African, Caribbean, and Latin American nations for the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the U.S. Agency for International Development Bank, and various private clients and has written four books and numerous journal articles and scholarly papers on tropical deforestation, water resource development, and related topics. The second edition of *The World Food Economy*, which Dr. Southgate wrote with a pair of colleagues, was published recently by John Wiley & Sons, Inc.