



2018 MWFPFA CONVENTION RECAP

Curtain Closes On Another Successful Convention!

The Midwest Food Products Association wrapped up another successful Annual Convention and Trade Show (our 114th!) Thursday, November 29th. It was attended by over 900 conventioners and featured over 130 exhibitor booths.

Held at the Kalahari Resort & Convention Center in Wisconsin Dells, WI, and in conjunction with the 91st Annual Processing Crops Conference, the event had something for everybody. Convention goers enjoyed two days of listening to experts within the industry discussing food safety education, drones in the workplace, strategies to find and retain talent and water regulations.



The ever popular **Processing Crops Conference** returned for its 91st year and again presented a full program. Annually, the conference presents research on better crop varieties and improved agricultural practices that benefit producers, consumers and the environment. Speakers this year included representatives from private industry and the Universities of Wisconsin and Minnesota. Topics covered included snap bean disease management, neonicotinoid insecticides, nitrogen credits, sweetcorn breeding and the future of processing crops in the Midwest, among others.

One conventioneer commented: “The convention was a terrifically well-organized show. From an attendee point of view, it came off without a hitch. I know it must be a daunting undertaking every year. Even following a tried and true format, a convention like that is a mega production. Great venue, great food and outstanding trade show. “

Another said: “My team all had good learning experiences and gave very positive feedback. I know these events take a tremendous amount of planning and management and are difficult to execute. It certainly all seemed to come to gather very seamlessly.”

At the convention’s outset attendees heard from Charles Arnot, of the Center for Food Integrity, who provided thought provoking insight into how the food system lost consumer trust and what can be done to restore it.

Another keynote speaker, former Green Bay Packer general manager Ron Wolf (pictured speaking at right) shared some wonderful anecdotes with sports personality Justin Hull, talking about his days with the Packers Super Bowl bound 1996 team. He told us how he arrived at the decision to trade a first-round pick for an unknown and unproven Falcons arm named Brett Favre.



Mr. Wolf graciously took time after his appearance to sign Packer memorabilia and have his picture taken with convention participants.



Attendees were captivated with the stories presented by Alaskan hunting guide Bill Molls (L) as he took an enthralled audience on expeditions for brown bear, grizzly bear, moose, and caribou. His presentation took place during the **Thursday Safety Breakfast** where he informed us that “Adventure Begins When Things Go Wrong.”

There’s nothing like the humbling vastness of Alaska to push a person to his limits and make him understand his strengths and vulnerabilities. It was evident that Molls has proved himself and for 20 years he has spent weeks at a time helping others prove themselves as well.

Industry show vendors reported appreciable traffic at their booths, producing new leads and quality time with current customers. Exhibitors were presented with a wide array of opportunities to listen, learn and connect with food industry professionals from throughout the Midwest.



Vendors employed a number of unique devices to attract customers including a virtual reality fork lift demonstration, fresh-baked chocolate chip cookies and a magician!

The luncheons, receptions and cigar tent produced many compliments regarding their quality and the networking opportunities presented.

MWFPA members say one of the most valuable benefits of their membership is the opportunity to meet and dialogue with food processing leaders.



As such, the convention again featured an invitation only **New Exhibitor Meet & Greet Reception** held early Tuesday evening. It allowed new attendees to inquire about ways they and their company could become more involved in the MWFPA

community. Twenty-two freshman exhibitors were able to socialize with members of the MWFPA Board of Directors, AMO Committee, and the Convention Committee over refreshments. It was also a great place to begin networking with their peers.



The All Industry Reception held Tuesday evening at the Wisconsin Brew Pub provided plenty of additional opportunities for networking and socializing between processors and vendors.

This was one of several activities, including the packed **Chairman's Reception**, held Wednesday evening, which offered participants the opportunity to discuss new products, in addition to providing time for industry friends and acquaintances to relax, have fun and celebrate all the past year's accomplishments.



Wednesday evening not only provided convention goers and opportunity to meet and greet during the Chairman's Reception, but was also an occasion to assist the MWFPA Scholarship Fund by participating in our fifth annual silent auction. A total of \$7,950 was raised which will assist the children of association members in reaching their educational goals after high school.

The MWFPA Board of Directors and the MWFPA Human Resources Committee is grateful for the support of those who bid on items, as well as those who generously donated items and cash for the auction.

Those supporters are as follows:

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New to the convention this year was the inviting of college and technical college students to walk the floor, have lunch and attend a meeting to speak with representatives of our processing companies.

Eight companies agreed to have someone on hand to talk about career opportunities with the students. Renk Agribusiness Institute assisted us in recruiting students to attend.

Pictured at right is Sky Sheng, a student at the University of Wisconsin, as she discusses employment opportunities with Brian Burbach of Bonduelle USA.

Thanks to all of you who volunteered to meet with students. Those companies that participated were: Birds Eye, Bonduelle USA, Bush Brothers, Chippewa Valley Bean, Del Monte, Lakeside, McCain USA, and Seneca.



2017 Safety Awards

Winners of the 2017 MWFPA Safety Contest were recognized during the Safety Breakfast on Thursday at the convention.

Participating food processing plants in Illinois, Minnesota and Wisconsin competed in the contest. Awards are based on OSHA data with monthly reports of incident rates for participating plants.

Al Bodden (pictured at right), MWFPA Safety Committee Chairman from Del Monte-Cambria, WI, provided a brief presentation on member facility safety trends and then awarded plaques to winners in the following categories:



FIRST PLACE AWARDS FOR EACH OF FIVE CATEGORIES:

EMPLOYER-UNITS REPORTING <75,000 EMPLOYEE-HOURS

Chippewa Valley Bean, Menomonie
Del Monte Foods, Mendota Field Dept #108
Del Monte Foods, Sleepy Eye Field Dept #206

EMPLOYER-UNITS REPORTING >75,000 BUT <150,000 EMPLOYEE-HOURS

Seneca Foods Corp, Oakfield

EMPLOYER-UNITS REPORTING >150,000 BUT <250,000 EMPLOYEE-HOURS

Lakeside Foods, Belgium

EMPLOYER-UNITS REPORTING >250,000 BUT <400,000 EMPLOYEE-HOURS

Seneca Foods Corp., Blue Earth

EMPLOYER-UNITS REPORTING >400,000 EMPLOYEE-HOURS

Lakeside Foods, Manitowoc Dist Ctr

1,000 DAYS WITH NO DISABLING INJURIES AWARDS

Seneca Foods Corp., Cambria

1,000,000 HOURS NO DISABLING INJURIES AWARD

Seneca Foods Corp., Cambria

GREATEST IMPROVEMENT RECORDABLE INCIDENT RATE

Del Monte Foods, Rochelle #199

HONOR ROLL FOR EACH OF FIVE CATEGORIES RANKED ACCORDING TO INCIDENT RATE IS AS FOLLOWS:

EMPLOYER-UNITS REPORTING >75,000 BUT <150,000 EMPLOYEE-HOURS

Seneca Foods Corp., WI Central Ag

EMPLOYER-UNITS REPORTING >150,000 BUT <250,000 EMPLOYEE-HOURS

Lakeside Foods, Brooten

EMPLOYER-UNITS REPORTING >250,000 BUT <400,000 EMPLOYEE-HOURS

Del Monte Foods, Cambria #208

Lakeside Foods, Owatonna

Ryder, Beaver Dam (now Pinnacle Foods)

EMPLOYER-UNITS REPORTING >400,000 EMPLOYEE-HOURS

Birds Eye, Darien

Seneca Foods Corp., Montgomery Plant & FD

Congratulations to our safety winners!

Cash Prize Giveaway & Big Prize Raffle

Over \$2,000 in cash prizes were awarded, in addition to iPads, two 43" Hi Definition LED televisions and a \$3,000 travel voucher!



Andrew Bennett, Seneca Foods won the \$3,000 Grand Prize Travel Voucher. Pictured at left with Andrew are, from left to right, MWFPA Intern Stephanie Oliphant and MWFPA Exhibit Manager Ann Barrett.

Twenty-five exhibiting companies sponsored the Big Prize Raffle. Following are the processor attendees who walked away with cash and some great prizes:

Big Prize Raffle Winners

Hunter Lemke, Seneca Foods
Norb Hughes, Seneca Foods
Jill Bennett, Seneca Foods

Earl Nations- Del Monte
Andrew Bennett – Seneca Foods
Dan Goebel – Lakeside Foods
Dan Wilson – Del Monte

Expo Cash Winners

Staci Robinson-Bubolz, Lakeside Foods
Mark Hobbs – Seneca Foods
Erica Kunze – Lakeside Foods
Geoff Beranek – Seneca Foods
Shue Her – Lakeside Foods

Jeremy Herman – Lakeside Foods
Jerry Zaske – Seneca Foods
Earl Nations - Del Monte
Dave Rohwite – Lakeside Foods
Lori Schwoerer – Lakeside Foods

MWFPA Board of Directors/Annual Membership Meeting

The MWFPA Board of Directors held two meetings during the convention.

There were two presentations made at the meeting. Kathy Yoss and Dan Sapiro of Hays Company who provided an overview of MWFPA's membership insurance program and the benefits the program brings to MWFPA.

Jed Colquham and Paul Mitchell from the University of Wisconsin provided a presentation on what a viable future looks like for the specialty crop industry in the Midwest.

During Thursday morning's meeting of the Board, Jon Brekken (far right in photo) of Seneca Foods was recognized for his time and service as Chairman of the Board during 2018.



Joe Breid of Bush Brothers, who is retiring, and Bob Porter, from Layton Systems, who is stepping down from his director position with the association, were recognized for their commitment and service to MWFPA during their long association with the organization.

Three new individuals will take their place on the Board during 2019. They are: Brad Krings of Bush Brothers (replacing Joe Breid); Dean Becker of A & K Development (replacing Bob Porter) as the AMO representative to the Board; and Jeff Griep of B & G Foods.

“We are excited to welcome some fresh faces, and new board members, but it is always a little bitter sweet, as that always means some individuals that have helped build this organization are stepping down” said MWFPFA President Nick George.

The convention featured the annual membership meeting held in conjunction with Thursday’s breakfast. The membership nominated Jim Knetsch, Del Monte Foods as the new chairman of MWFPFA’s Board of Directors. Rob Anderson of Bondeulle USA was selected as vice-chairman and Mark Enter of Lakeside Foods was named secretary/treasurer.



The meeting gave President Nick George (L) an opportunity to outline the association’s financial position and review the past year’s accomplishments.

The fiscal health of the association has a direct impact on every member. According to George, the MWFPFA Board of Directors takes an active role in the financial matters of the association and seeks professional advice as needed.

Copies of the 2018 MWFPFA Annual Report were distributed and Nick provided an executive report covering the Association’s activities during the year.

One the highlights of Thursday’s luncheon was the chance to honor Reggie Sikkink, account manager at Kaman Industrial Technologies. Reggie is retiring from the industry after 29 years of service. He started with Kaman in 1989 and worked as a Branch Manager and then later as an Account Manager.

Reggie was an aggressive advocate for the food processing industry. He would often comment how important food processors are to Kaman Industrial Technologies.

In his honor, NTN Bearing contributed \$500 to the MWFPFA Scholarship Fund. Thank you NTN Bearing and Reggie for your contributions!



As it has in years past, the convention ended on a humorous note to the stylings of comedian John Branyan (L). The comic delivered the laughs as he shared with us some of his humorous real life experiences.

The staff of MWFPA would like to thank all the members and industry supporters who attended this year's convention. Feedback is always welcome, and planning is already underway for next year's convention, which will be held at the Kalahari Resort in Wisconsin Dells, WI, December 3-5, 2019. See you next year!