



## Beef Industry Deeply Concerned by Inhumane Treatment

“This caught everyone’s attention — 143 million pounds of beef going back two-years! What was the USDA doing? They are supposed to be on the job. Inhumane handling of animals is not a practice the industry accepts,” says **Tom Pyfferoen**, president of the **Minnesota Cattleman’s Association** about the Hallmark/Westland beef recall.

In February, USDA recalled 143.38 million pounds of beef from Hallmark/Westland Meat Packing Co. The USDA’s Food Safe-

ty and Inspection Service classified the recall as Class II rather than Class I since there was only a remote probability of adverse health consequences. The recall followed the public release of video secretly recorded by the Humane Society of the United States that showed workers at the Chino, Calif. processing plant mistreating downer cows.

“Beef producers are deeply concerned. We strongly support animal welfare practices and we were appalled by the mistreatment of downer cows at the plant in California. Consumers need to know that this was not a food safety situation, but a violation of federal laws on handling non-

ambulatory livestock,” says **Ron Eustice**, Minnesota Beef Council executive director. “This was an unfortunate and avoidable situation that forced one company out of business and may cause others to exit as well. All of us in animal agriculture need to absolutely make sure that rules are followed and that we treat our animals humanely. Hidden cameras will be used more frequently in the future as the result of this ‘success’ by the animal rights movement.”

He continues, “If inspectors had been doing their job, this never would have happened. USDA

needs to be held accountable in this regard to make sure it doesn’t happen again.”

### Beef Quality Programs

Both Eustice and Pyfferoen say the industry has done much to improve beef quality, safety and beef handling over the years. They note that the meat packing industry has worked with animal welfare scientific advisor Dr. Temple Grandin to improve animal handling at facilities. In addition, the beef industry conducts two-hour Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) training programs for producers and veterinarians. The BQA program addresses best management practices, including animal handling,



“We conduct this training for both beef producers and dairy producers. The key for producers is to manage more carefully, monitor the health of their animals and market more expeditiously,”

says Eustice. The Minnesota Beef Council conducts BQA programs in Spanish, too. “In the Morris area, there are 200 Spanish-speaking employees working on area dairy farms,” notes Eustice.

**Tom Rosen**, president of **Rosen’s Diversified Inc.**, which owns a beef processing plant in Long Prairie, Minn., believes most USDA inspectors do a good job, but admits that as in anything some individuals will do a better job than others. “I can’t believe what went on in the holding pen area in California. It was just plain wrong,” says Rosen. He continues, “We have strict rules regarding cattle handling at our plant and we hired a full time person to monitor humane handling issues in our company.”

### Downer Law Introduced

A bill introduced in the U.S. Senate would make it illegal for downer animals to be slaughtered for food under any circumstances. Facilities caught allowing such animals into the food supply would face hefty fines on the first violation. A second violation would result in a one-year suspension of federal inspection services, effectively shutting the facility for that time. A third violation would lead to permanent closure.

Under current law, animals that go down after they pass an initial inspection at meat facilities still can be legally slaughtered for food if an on-site USDA veterinarian approves them in a second examination.



## Beef Industry Task Force Formed

**M**embers of a new Beef Profitability Strategic Task Force will work to enhance the state’s beef industry and maximize its profitability. The task force will address several key objectives such as determining what role, if any, the state should play in developing a source/age verification program; identifying the research needs of the beef industry; reviewing Minnesota’s regulation and taxation of the beef industry; and considering ways to encourage young farmers to enter into beef production in Minnesota. The task force will make its recommendations

to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. The beef cattle industry contributes more than \$2 billion and 21,000 jobs to the state. Minnesota ranks 6th in beef production with 1.05 billion pounds of beef produced in 2006. Minnesota had 25,000 cattle farms in 2006, down from 37,000 in 1990.

Task force members are: **Glen Graff, Dr. Bethany Lovaas, Thomas Pyfferoen, Donald Schiefelbein, Andy Siira, Dr. Lynn Aggen, Ron Lemer, Michael Lorentz, Joe Nelson, Laree Walker, Dick LeCocq, Jill Pesek, Michael Gunderson, John Swartz.**

### Inside:

- **Member in Focus — Midwest Food Processors Assoc.**
- **MNSCU Plans for Future Workforce**
- **State Gears Up for More TB Testing**
- **Legislative Wrap-up**



## MINNESOTA AGRI-GROWTH COUNCIL



The Minnesota Agri-Growth Council is a unique trade association whose mission is the promotion of Minnesota agriculture with elected officials, the general public, media, and the farm community. The Agri-Growth Council's 200 members represent the entire food and agriculture sector, from agribusinesses and processors to producer-based commodity organizations. The Council is based in St. Paul and has been working to promote Minnesota agriculture since 1968.

### MAGC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### EXECUTIVE BOARD

**Chair: Joe Swedberg**, Hormel Foods Corporation  
**Vice Chair: Kristin Weeks Duncanson**, Minnesota Soybean Growers Assn.  
**Secretary: Jim Bareksten**, Governmental Affairs Director, CHS Inc.  
**Treasurer: Michael Zumwinkle**, Cargill  
**Immediate Past Chair: Paul DeBriyn**, President & CEO AgStar Financial Services

#### DIRECTORS

**Allen J. Anderson**  
**Mark Davis**, CEO, Davisco Foods International Inc.  
**Randal J. Doyal**, CEO, Al-CORN Clean Fuel  
**Meg Freking**, New Fashion Pork  
**Roger Gilland**, Gilland Feedlots/Minnesota State Cattlemen's Assn.  
**Michael Helgeson**, CEO, Gold'n Plump Poultry  
**Gene Huguson**, Commissioner, MN Dept of Agriculture  
**David E. Johnson**  
**Steven Krikava**, VP Govt Affairs, Land O'Lakes, Inc.  
**Allen Levine**, CFANS Dean, University of Minnesota  
**Jerry Larson**, Larson Farms  
**Pat Lunemann**, Twin Eagle Dairy/MN Milk Producers Assn.  
**Ron Offutt**, CEO, R.D. Offutt Company  
**Adolph Ojard**, CEO, Duluth Seaway Port Authority  
**Tom Rosen**, President, Rosen's Diversified  
**Nick Sinner**, Executive Director, Red River Valley Sugarbeet Growers Assoc.  
**Dr. Michael Swanson**, Chief Economist, Wells Fargo Bank MN  
**Jim Winter**, ECOLAB

#### STAFF

**Daryn McBeth**, President  
**Nichole Deyle**, Program Manager

Minnesota Agri-Growth Council  
 408 St. Peter Street, Suite 20  
 St. Paul, MN 55102  
 Phone: (651) 905-8900  
 Fax: (651) 905-8902  
 E-Mail: [Info@agrigrrowth.org](mailto:Info@agrigrrowth.org)

Visit our new Web site  
[www.agrigrrowth.org](http://www.agrigrrowth.org)

# MAGC Member IN FOCUS

**Member:** Midwest Food Processors Association (MWFPA)

**Website:** [www.mwfpa.org](http://www.mwfpa.org)

**Headquarters:** Madison, Wisc.

**History:** The MWFPA is a trade association representing food processors in Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. It began in 1904 as the Wisconsin Pea Packers Association. Over the years, it changed as its members changed, eventually becoming the Midwest Food Processors Association in 1988 when the three state canning and freezing associations merged.

**Membership:** MWFPA currently has 17 large processing members operating over 80 plants in the three-state region, and about 250 associate member companies that serve the industry.

**Mission:** To enhance and promote the business interests of the Midwest food processing industry; to be the foremost recognizable legislative voice in the three-state area; to espouse the objectives and concerns of the food/vegetable processing industry; to involve members in association activities and promote activities that assure the safety, quality and nutrition of our member's products.

#### MWFPA Activities:

- Sponsor a yearly convention that brings in over 800 processors and affiliated industry representatives (this year it will be held in Madison, Wisc. and next year in Rochester, Minn.).
- Award scholarships to students studying agriculture or food science.
- Fund processing crops research through the Universities of Illinois, Minnesota and Wisconsin.
- Organize seminars and workshops on current industry issues (just finished a Food Processor Safety Conference and will hold an SQF 1000 & 2000 workshop in April and an OSHA 10-hour Compliance seminar in April).
- Communicate with members through regular newsletters and reports.
- Address policy issues through a number of issue committees.

#### Q & A With Nick George, President

##### What are key trends in your industry?

*Food safety has always been the first priority of the food processing industry and there is no doubt that the US food industry is the safest in the world. Recent foreign food concerns and fresh produce recalls have focused more attention on this issue. National and regional wholesalers and retailers are demanding that safe quality food procedures be in place and that all ingredients be tracked and audited. Processors are putting more money and resources into this side of things and it is reflected at our trade show and in our programs.*

##### What's new with the association?

*The canned and frozen industry has consolidated over the years and is still a force in the Midwest where we produce and process more sweet corn, snap beans, green peas, pumpkins, potatoes, and cranberries than anywhere in the U.S. These companies have been growing and changing and the association is trying to meet member needs by offer-*

*ing more food safety courses that apply across the food processing industry. In addition we are taking positions on bills and regulations that impact the general food processing industry. An example is the obesity legislation that has been introduced in a number of states and in Washington D.C. over the last couple of years.*

##### What are your legislative priorities?

*At the federal level we are working to eliminate fruit and vegetable growing restrictions that were put in the last two federal farm bills; working for parity with fresh produce in government food programs; and promoting food inspection legislation that won't cripple the industry with duplicative and restrictive regulations. At the state level we are supporting boiler operator legislation in Minnesota and a host of water regulations in all three states. The food processing industry cannot exist without an adequate supply of clean, affordable water and a cost effective way to discharge it. Many water rules, though well intended, are often impractical, costly and cause more harm than good.*



## MN State Colleges & Universities System Seeks Ideas to Support Future Ag Workforce

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system (System) is one of the largest workforce providers in the state. More than 88 percent of graduates get jobs related to their field of study and more than 80 percent of graduates stay in Minnesota to work or continue their education. In order to remain the largest workforce provider in the state, the System is looking at ways to target resources towards specific industries and their future workforce needs. In recent years, for example, the System's Board of Trustees established several centers of excellence such as the "Minnesota Center of Excellence in Manufacturing & Engineering," "360°, Manufacturing and Applied Engineering," and the "Center for Integrated Health Science Education and Practice."

Dick Joerger, System Director for Agriculture and Business Program Coordination, has the task to further develop a work plan within the System to address the workforce education needs in the agriculture, food and natural resource industries. Joerger, who joined the System this past October after a career as a teacher educator and researcher at the University of Minnesota, plans to meet with industry leaders over the upcoming months to further understand the workforce education and training needs of their employees.

"My job is to help colleges, universities, and agri-industry partners envision and create enhanced and new programs which can be delivered in a variety of formats for easier student access. With input from industry leaders, we may discover the need to offer new programs. For example, new programs or courses may be viable to support the emerging wine industry, agricultural communications, and

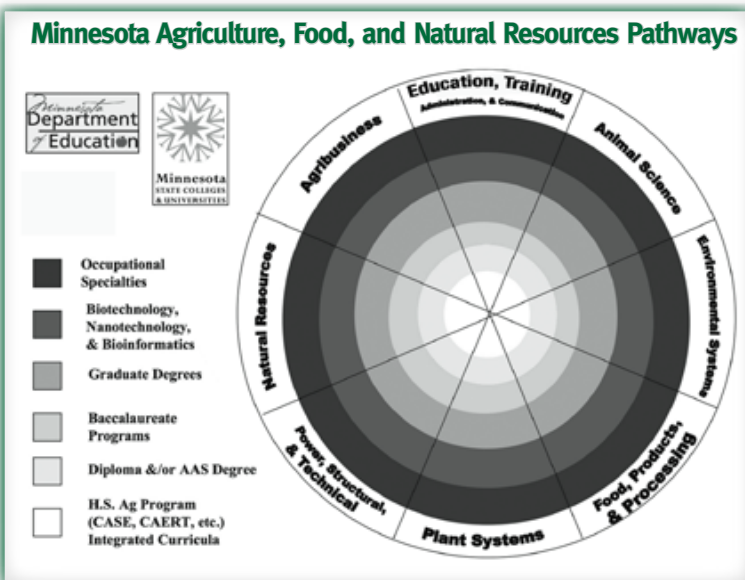
today's lifestyle farmers," says Joerger. He plans to further study and share ideas from innovative education programs for agriculture from within Minnesota and across the country. He welcomes input from Agri-Growth members and he may be reached at 651-297-1484 or via email at: [richard.joerger@so.mnscu.edu](mailto:richard.joerger@so.mnscu.edu).

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system has been a primary provider of education and training for individuals who work in a number of different career pathways in our agricultural industries. The Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources career cluster is comprised of eight pathways in Minnesota. ([URL:www.careerclusters.org](http://www.careerclusters.org)). The pathways include careers in: animal systems; agribusiness systems; environmental service systems; food products and processing systems; natural resource systems; plant systems; power, structural and technical systems, and; education, administration, communications, and leadership. There are a variety of System programs ranging from semester-long content specific certificate programs of 15 credits, to one year diploma, two year associate degree, and four year baccalaureate programs. Programs include agribusiness management, agricultural production operations, farm business management, bio-energy, taxidermy, floriculture, landscape management, equine science, and logging. The System also features four-year programs in agronomy, agribusiness, and food science. They also partner with the University of Minnesota in offering a 2+2 program that leads to a degree in agricultural education.

The System also features a nationally-regarded farm business management education program. More than 75 instructors and five

Regional Deans of Management Education work with over 3,000 farm operators to provide high quality farm management education. Details of the program can be found on management education website at [www.mgt.org](http://www.mgt.org).

The graphic is a draft of a conceptual model for depicting the pathways.



## State Gears Up for Increased TB Testing

The downgrade of Minnesota's bovine TB status from Modified Accredited Advanced (MAA) to Modified Accredited (MA) is a serious issue for the beef and dairy industry in Minnesota. Under MA status, USDA requires all breeding animals (any animal not going to a feedlot or to slaughter) to be tested for bovine TB within 60 days prior to shipment out of state and a whole herd test within the previous 12 months.

At this point nobody knows how many animals may have to be tested. There's a chance all dairy herds selling milk will need to have a whole herd TB test, but a smaller surveillance program may also be acceptable. The Minnesota Dept. of Agriculture has submitted a targeted dairy surveillance proposal to the federal government. In any regard, increased testing demand will likely tax the system.

"We're worried that more testing will be required than there are veterinarians available to do the testing," says Jim Collins, director of the University of Minnesota Veterinary Diagnostic Lab. The current skin test method requires the vet to inject the animal in the skin with Tuberculin and then come back to read the results 72 hours later. Animals reacting to the test need to be retested with another skin test that has to be read within 72 hours. "There are other technologies available," says Collins. "We're looking at a gamma-interferon blood test, which would give results more quickly." He is evaluating how much more space, personnel and handling equipment might be needed to accommodate the increased testing demand.

Minnesota Board of Animal Health (BAH) officials are hopeful, that Minnesota will be granted split state status, but that may take up to a year, as it did in Michigan. Under split state status the majority of the state would upgrade its status, while the core area affected by TB (a small area in north-western Minnesota) would remain MA. "It could take a year, but we hope to have split state status before fall calves are sold, otherwise there will be a lot of unnecessary testing of beef calves," says

TB Testing continued on page 6

# 19th Annual AgPAC Golf Tourney and BBQ

Monday, June 16, 2008  
Valley View Golf Club  
Belle Plaine, MN



## Schedule

11:30 A.M. Registration and box lunch  
12:00 P.M. Shot-Gun Start (18 holes)  
4:30 P.M. Social Hour  
5:30 P.M. BBQ and Prizes

*\$80/participant – corporate checks allowed*

Register now by completing the registration form on the reverse side of this flyer or downloading a form from [www.agrigrowth.org](http://www.agrigrowth.org)

## Plan to make an AgPAC contribution

*(Personal check made payable to MN AgPAC)*

\$50 - Suggested Minimum Contribution  
\$100 - FRIEND  
\$200 - MEMBER

Hosted by:



**Minnesota  
Agri-Growth Council**

408 St. Peter St. Ste 20 St. Paul 55102  
651.905.8900 ~ 651.905.8902  
[info@agrigrowth.org](mailto:info@agrigrowth.org)

MN AgPAC is a political fund registered with the MN Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board and affiliated with the Minnesota Agri-Growth Council. AgPAC receives contributions from individuals and other authorized entities concerned about food and agricultural issues in Minnesota. AgPAC cannot accept corporate contributions. AgPAC is seeking contributions that will enable its participation in the campaign process on behalf of Minnesota's agriculture and food production/processing community.

# 19th Annual AgPAC Golf Tourney and BBQ

Monday, June 16, 2008  
valley view Golf Club  
Belle Plaine, MN



## Registration Form

Name:	
Company:	
Address:	
City, State, Zip:	
Phone:	
Email:	

◇ Count on me for the entire day. I will golf and attend the social/ BBQ.

**Payment:** \_\_\_ golfers x \$80 each = \$ \_\_\_\_

- ◇ Enclosed is my check made payable to Minnesota Agri-Growth Council
- ◇ Please invoice me

Name	Company/ Affiliation
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

◇ I will attend the evening social and BBQ only.

**Payment:** \_\_\_ of guests x \$30 each = \$ \_\_\_\_

- ◇ Enclosed is my check payable to Minnesota Agri-Growth Council
- ◇ Please invoice me

◇ Sorry, I cannot attend.

However, I want to be sure that agriculture's voice is heard. Enclosed is my personal check for \$ \_\_\_\_ made payable to MN AgPAC.

**Complete and return the registration form via mail, email or fax to get signed up!**



408 Saint Peter Street, Suite 20 Skyway, Saint Paul, MN 55102  
651.905.8900 (phone) • 651.905.8902 (fax)  
• [info@agrigrwth.org](mailto:info@agrigrwth.org)



## Minnesota Agri-Growth Council, Inc.

408 St. Peter Street  
Suite 20 Skyway  
St. Paul, MN 55102

*Address Service Requested*

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### April

- 4 .....Board Meeting
- 28.....Policy Luncheon

#### June

- 3 .....Legislative Wrap-up
- 16 .....AgPAC Golf Fundraiser
- 27.....Board Meeting

#### September

- 2 .....Gala Event
- 19 .....Board Meeting

#### October

- 30.....Annual Meeting & Conference

### **TB Testing** ...continued from page 3

**Bill Hartmann**, state veterinarian and executive director of Minnesota's BAH.

**Minnesota State Fair** officials are watching the situation closely. "We're working closely with the Board of Animal Health and want this cleared up as fast as they do. We don't want TB spreading from place to place," says **Steve Pooch**, the fair's deputy general. The Minnesota State Fair will again require all animals to be tested negative for TB within 2 months of the show and health papers will be checked at the gate. "The downgrade in TB status could severely decrease our open class dairy and beef show numbers," says Pooch. "We get a lot of exhibitors from western Wisconsin and Wisconsin officials have told us that if we don't have whole herd and whole state testing of the dairy herds, then any Wisconsin cows showing at the Minnesota State Fair won't be allowed to come back home." Pooch and Hartmann intend to meet with Wisconsin officials to further discuss concerns and seek resolutions.

A growing group of northwest Minnesota counties are demanding urgent

action to protect cattle herds from bovine TB. Their county board resolutions urge a significant reduction of free-ranging white-tail deer and elk in the core area.

Saving cattle is more important than providing deer hunting opportunity in that area, believes **Larry Zea**, an area representative for the Minnesota Beef Council. He noted the economic importance of beef to the area, "The Bagley sale barn had 4,764 head of cattle go through it on a recent Thursday. That's about \$2.5 million in one day in this one industry."

DNR officials are seeking approval for an emergency rule allowing landowners or tenants in deer management area 101, which is considered the TB management zone, to take deer without a permit or license provided each deer taken is submitted for TB testing. The rule was expected to be in place by the end of March and to extend at least through May 15.

In recognition of the importance of eradicating bovine TB in the state, **Governor Pawlenty's** budget, released in March, included additional funding for BAH in the supplemental budget.

## Save the Date & Register Now!

**June 3, 2008**  
**MN Agri-Growth's Annual Legislative Wrap-Up**

Come join the Agri-Growth Council for the annual Legislative Wrap-up session reviewing the 2008 Minnesota Legislative Session. This year's wrap up session will feature a panel discussion among key legislators, administration officials, and lobbyists. Come learn the inside story to what passed this session, and what to expect for next year!

To RSVP call 651-905-8900 or send an email to [nikki.deyle@agrigrwth.org](mailto:nikki.deyle@agrigrwth.org). Registration is \$40 for Agri-Growth members and affiliates or \$45 for non-members.

**When: Tuesday, June 3, 2008**  
**11:30 Registration**  
**11:45 Lunch**  
**12:30 – 2:30 Panel Discussion**  
**Where: Crown Plaza Hotel\*, St. Paul**

\*Parking is available in the Crowne Plaza parking ramp for a fee. However this ramp is unable to accommodate tall SUVs and trucks, but the Victory Ramp one block west on Wabasha has ample clearance.