

The Food Industry Center

Fall 2010 Newsletter

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Minnesota Grown

Minnesota Grown was the main theme at this year's 2010 Food Career Networking event – in more ways than one. Guest speaker and University alumni Paul Hugunin, Program Manager of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Minnesota Grown program, offered attendees an insightful presentation on the variety and economic value of food and other natural products grown in Minnesota. His co-speaker, Casey DeRosier, spoke about her creative contributions to the program's marketing initiatives as a University of Minnesota intern.

Casey also represented the dual meaning at this year's event by showcasing the talented students grown in University of Minnesota classrooms. She personified the hundreds of students specifically trained in food industry knowledge who are preparing for industry careers. To introduce current industry leaders to their future colleagues, this year's event featured speed networking sessions. Participants shared questions, experiences, and business cards in the 10 minute sessions, enabling students to interact with different sets of industry attendees.



Paul Hugunin and Case DeRosier at the 2010 Food Career Event



Students and Industry Professionals at speed networking sessions

Students were particularly interested in learning about the various career paths of industry professionals, with some commenting that although their academic program prepared them for entry level positions, they were seeking more information on career planning. Happily the afternoon's events paid off -- over 80% of the participants, students and professionals, said they expanded their professional networks by attending the afternoon networking session.

This year's TFIC Networking event was a collaborative initiative with the Department of Food Science and Nutrition; the College of Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resources Sciences Alumni Office; the Department of Applied Economics; and the Minnesota Chapter of the Institute of Food Technologists. The joint event was the University's opportunity to showcase its many talented students studying Agricultural and Food Business Management, Applied Economics, Food Science, Nutrition, and Public Health to the University's many food industry partners.

The Food Industry Center

Director's Column



Robert King

Welcome to my first “Director’s Note” column. This past July, I was named Director of The Food Industry Center (TFIC) as Jean Kinsey transitioned out of that role in anticipation of her retirement. While there have been some very important changes in TFIC over the past few months, much also remains the same. We are building on the solid foundation that Jean established during the 15 years she served as Director.

Changes here at the Center have included some very significant departures. While Jean remains involved with Center activities as Director Emeritus, we miss the energy, insight, and ideas that benefited us all when she was here every day. We also miss the strong analytical skills and energetic research provided by Dr. Koel Ghosh, who moved into a new position with the National Center for Food Protection and Defense. Koel’s accomplishments at TFIC were many, including her 2009 report “Food Companies in Minnesota: How Many Are There?” Finally, I want to acknowledge John Johnson, who has co-chaired and chaired our Board of Executives for the past five years. John is retiring as the Chief Executive Officer of CHS, Inc. at the end of 2010. We wish him well and thank him for his many contributions to TFIC.

We also have a very important new arrival. In August, Dr. Tim Beatty joined the Department of Applied Economics faculty as an Associate Professor and Associate Director of TFIC. Tim, who was previously a Reader at the University of York in the U.K., has conducted outstanding research on issues related to the economics of food, nutrition, and health. He brings with him special expertise on the analysis of large data sets on consumer choices – data sets that are critical for strategic and operational decisions throughout the food industry.

Some things do stay the same. Associate Program Director Lisa Jore and Research Fellow Dennis Degeneffe continue to make significant contributions to all aspects of the Center’s programs. Lisa keeps our programs and communications running smoothly. Over the summer, she revamped our web site and this fall, she organized our local foods workshop and the networking event that followed in the afternoon. Earlier this year she established our new Food Thought blog that provides ongoing commentary, research, and news articles on current food industry issues – we hope you will join the discussion!

Dennis plays a central role in several center research projects, including the Continuous Food Safety/Defense Tracker project that has received so much media attention after the Gulf Oil Spill. Dennis also serves as the key liaison to our Program Leadership Board and chairs the University Food Industry Coalition, whose 13 university program members meet twice annually to advance a collaborative agenda of industry-focused academics and research. Finally, Dennis has taken the lead in establishing our new Student Affiliates program (see article below).

Our mission continues to be to develop leaders for tomorrow’s food industry and to be a leading source of knowledge on how food reaches consumers efficiently and contributes to safe and healthy lives. The Center remains an educator and independent voice to the food industry; providing academic thought leadership through balanced perspective, research, and primary data collection to advance knowledge on the food industry. Industry insight and collaboration continue to inform our research as we focus on four key strategic issues: food and health, sustainability, food protection, and education.

I look forward to the work that lies ahead. I also look forward to the opportunity to interact with you, the students, industry professionals, and colleagues who are the reason TFIC exists.

Stay Connected



Our online blog community offers thought leadership, research, and news on industry issues.

blog.lib.umn.edu/tfic/foodthought



Join The Food Industry Center group on LinkedIn to meet and network with other industry and student professionals.



Read news articles and research from our faculty, staff, and students on our Delicious bookmark page

Learning the Business

A new initiative started by The Food Industry Center early this fall, is seeking to foster a high level of involvement between students with aspirations for careers in the food industry and the learning resources they need to be successful future leaders. The TFIC Students Affiliates program is open to University of Minnesota students interested in pursuing any field in the food industry from supply chain management to nutrition education.

As an Affiliate, students may take advantage of a variety of University opportunities that will help them gain greater insight about the food industry and career planning. Affiliates will be considered for selection as a University of Minnesota intern at the NGA Annual Convention - an opportunity that gives students the chance to expand their professional networks through mentoring sessions, moderating information sessions and participating in a newly formed case study competition. Student affiliates may also assist with Center research projects or events and receive assistance with career planning in the food industry field. The Affiliates group will also help plan and organize industry speaker presentations and coordinate their career planning efforts with other student organizations on campus.



November 2010 Student Affiliates Planning Meeting

If you have career, internship, or research opportunities that you would like to share with TFIC Student Affiliates or are a current student and would like to join the Affiliates program, please contact Dennis Degeneffe or Lisa Jore at The Food Industry Center.

What do the Midwest Dairy Association and The NPD Group Have in Common?

Please join us in thanking the Midwest Dairy Association and The NPD Group in becoming new Sponsoring Members of The Food Industry Center.



The mission of Midwest Dairy Association is to implement programs that help increase sales and demand for dairy products

and ingredients and help improve the economic well-being of Midwest dairy producers. Midwest Dairy is a non-profit organization directed by dairy producers in Arkansas, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota and eastern Oklahoma. They represent more than 11,000 dairy farmers, about 20 percent of all U.S. dairy operations.

To learn more about their organization, dairy farming, and nutrition and health information related to dairy products, visit the MDA website. Midwest Dairy became in a Sponsoring Member in August.



The NPD Group's Food and Beverage division joined The Food Industry Center as a Sponsoring Member in October. NPD tracks the food and beverage consumption of consumers for at-home and away-from-home purchases in the U.S. and Canada. They also track consumer behavior, attitudes, and usage motivators as it relates to diet, nutrition, food safety, and brand awareness. With this information they provide custom survey and market

research analysis services to their clients. Learn more about The NPD Group's Food and Beverage research on the NPD website.

The Sponsoring Membership program plays an integral role in the Center's educational and research success. Sponsors receive a variety of benefits including participation on the Center's industry advisory boards providing input into the Center's research and programming, complimentary participation in Center events, advanced briefings on primary research, and more. If you would like more information on the Sponsoring Member Program or would like to become a member, please contact Lisa Jore by e-mail or by phone at (612) 625-7019.

Lessons about Local

What current trend in the food industry can gather a diverse crowd of industry, state and local government, public health, nonprofit, academic and student workshop participants? Local foods. On, Wednesday, October 6th, the Center hosted “Lessons from Case Studies on Local Foods” – a workshop presenting findings from an Economic Research Service -funded study of local foods supply chains. The study on which the workshop was based is titled “Comparing the Structure, Size, and Performance of Local and Mainstream Food Supply Chains” and offers findings from case studies on the structure of local foods supply chains of five product-place combinations across the United States.

The study identifies how local foods supply chains differ from today’s mainstream supply chains. Ultimately, local products fill a unique market niche as a differentiated product. From a performance standpoint, producers receive a greater share of the product’s retail price when they participate in a local food supply chains. However, they also become responsible for other duties such as processing, distribution, and marketing – unlike their role in a mainstream supply chain.

The workshop presentations stimulated lively discussion on issues presented in the research. Through audience

questions, the workshop continued to debate what the definition of “local” is or should be. Knowledgeable workshop participants also raised issues of the impacts of then-pending food safety legislation on small farmers, the importance of entrepreneurship in local food systems, and the challenges of establishing a processing and distribution infrastructure that can operate efficiently while serving a small producer. In discussions regarding access to food origin information, the role of emerging technologies was raised suggesting the ability of smart phone bar code readers to identify product origins and enable access to information on how, where, and by whom food was produced as we shop.

The workshop was sponsored by the Healthy Foods, Healthy Lives Institute; Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture and the USDA’s North Central Region (NCR) Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program, highlighting the

University’s interdisciplinary approach to research and outreach on current food and sustainable agriculture initiatives.

To read the full report and individual cases studies, visit the Center’s Local Foods Case Studies webpage.



Larry Lev leads a panel discussion at the local foods workshop



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