Don Tyson Passes Away

Don Tyson, former chairman and chief executive officer (CEO) of Tyson Foods, Inc., and son of founder John W. Tyson, passed away January 6, 2011, at the age of 80 after a brief illness.

The Tyson family moved to Springdale, AR, from Olathe, KS, in 1931 to enable John W. Tyson to develop his business of hauling produce from Northwest Arkansas to the larger markets in the Midwest. By the time Don Tyson was a teenager, his father had started hauling chickens to those same markets and became involved in other aspects of the poultry business.

After high school, Tyson attended the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, studying business and agriculture, but left before graduating to join his father in the family business in 1952. He was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters degree by the University of Arkansas in May 2010.

Through most of the 1950s, Tyson worked with his father to grow the family business, then known as Tyson Feed and Hatchery, supplying feed and baby chicks to local poultry producers in Northwest Arkansas. In 1958, the company became "vertically integrated" by building its first chicken processing plant in Springdale, AR, with Don Tyson overseeing the construction and then becoming its first plant manager. The company soon began to grow by acquiring other area poultry operations, and then went public with its initial public offering of stock in 1963 under the name Tyson's Foods, Inc., the company name until 1972 when it was changed to Tyson Foods, Inc. The company continued to grow through the 1970s and 1980s with Don Tyson leading a series of acquisitions including Val-Mac, Lane Poultry, and the 1989 purchase of Holly Farms, which more than doubled the size of the company and made it the largest poultry producer in the United States.

Don Tyson moved up progressively in the company leadership, being named president in 1966, and then becoming chairman and CEO in 1967 when his father and step-mother were both tragically killed in an automobile-train accident in Springdale, AR. He continued to serve in these positions until 1983 when long-time Tyson executive Leland Tollett was named president. In 1991 the company named Tollett president and CEO with Tyson remaining as chairman until 1995 when he officially "retired" and Tollett was named chairman and CEO. Tollett, along with another long-time company team member, Donald "Buddy" Wray, had worked alongside Don Tyson throughout these years growing and running the company.

In the late 1990s the company continued to grow, most notably with the acquisition of Hudson Foods in 1998. By this time, Don's son, John Tyson, had succeeded Tollett as chairman of the board of the company and Don Tyson was named chairman emeritus. Don Tyson continued to provide guidance and support for the company's leadership team, including Tyson's 2001 acquisition of IBP, Inc., a purchase engineered by John Tyson. As a result of the acquisition, Tyson Foods, the largest poultry producer in the world, also became the largest beef processor and second largest pork processor, with annual revenues jumping from approximately $7.5 billion to more than $24 billion.

Don Tyson created and led the Tyson Family Foundation, which among other things provides scholarships for post secondary students from communities where Tyson Foods has operations. He has been a well-known philanthropist in Arkansas and elsewhere, supporting countless causes, primarily in the fields of education, conservation, and the arts.

Tyson is survived by his son, John, and three daughters, Carla, Cheryl, and Joslyn; his sister-in-law Barbara Tyson; and two grandchildren.

A public memorial service is being planned. Memorials may be made to The Billfish Foundation, The Mayo Clinic, and the Dale Bumpers College of Agriculture, Food, and Life Sciences at the University of Arkansas.

Baker Plant Damaged by Fire

In early December, firefighters battled a two-alarm fire at the Baker Commodities, Inc., rendering plant in Tukwila, WA, near Seattle. The plant was not operating at the time of the fire, which occurred on a Sunday, and a cause has not yet been determined. No injuries were reported.

According to Dennis Luckey, executive vice president, Baker Commodities, "there was a great degree of fire damage to the building roof and moderate damage to equipment. Our best estimate is we should be operating again by the end of February." Meanwhile, all customers are being serviced, with raw material being transferred to Baker's Spokane, WA, facility almost 300 miles away.

The company's grease processing plant at the site of the fire is in full operation after being down for several days following the incident.

Cargill Donates Arkansas Property

After a lengthy and thoughtful process, Cargill Meat Solutions Corporation has donated its Booneville, AR, property to the Petit Jean Regional Foundation. The property includes 19 acres of land, improvements including a refrigeration plant, and miscellaneous items located on the site. The property will be utilized for job creation activities in the Booneville community.

A major fire at the facility on March 23, 2008, resulted in Cargill shutting down meat processing in Booneville. Donation of the property to the Booneville community through Petit Jean Regional Foundation will provide the potential opportunity to identify possible lessees that could use the facility and create local jobs.

Tallow Spills into Houston Channel

A shore-based storage tank owned by Jacob Sterns and Sons, Houston, TX, was breached in early January, causing approximately 250,000 gallons of beef tallow to spill, according to the U.S. Coast Guard.

An estimated 15,000 gallons of tallow entered the Houston Ship Channel via a storm drain, causing roughly three-quarters of a mile of the most northern portion of the Houston Ship Channel to be closed. No inbound or outbound ship traffic was delayed and no refineries were impacted. Due to the nature of the product, the environmental impact is expected to be minimal, the U.S. Coast Guard stated. The clean-up was complete in four days and the cause of the incident is under investigation.

Noah's Ark Pays Fine for Discharges

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and Noah's Ark Processors, LLC, reached an agreement in mid-December that resolves alleged violations of water quality laws and rules at Noah's Ark's meat processing plant and animal hide storage building in Dawson, MN. The company agreed to pay a $20,000 civil penalty and complete a number of corrective actions.

An inspection August 25, 2009, documented blood-contaminated water and untreated manure discharging from the facility to the ground, and discharges of animal hide salting leachate discharging from the hide building. Noah's Ark Processors has stopped the discharges and worked to recover contamination, applied for permits, and submitted reports on recovery work and plans to prevent future discharges.

Alleged violations include operating without appropriate industrial stormwater, wastewater, and industrial by-product permits, failure to notify the agency of the discharges and provide requested information, and lack of a stormwater pollution prevention plan.

NRA's Meeker Appointed to Ag Committee

Dr. David Meeker, senior vice president of Scientific Services, National Renderers Association (NRA), has been appointed to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary's Advisory Committee on Animal Health. The committee advises the Secretary of Agriculture on actions related to prevention, surveillance, and control of animal diseases of national importance. In doing so, the committee considers the implications of public health, conservation of natural resources, and the stability of livestock economies. Meeker was one of 20 individuals appointed.

Dr. David Meeker

Other appointees include Dr. Andrew Goodwin, a professor of aquaculture at the University of Arkansas; Dr. Howard Hill, a veterinarian and pork production virologist from Iowa State University; Dr. Donald Hoenig, state veterinarian from Maine; and various other veterinarians, livestock producers, and farmers from across the United States.

California Has New Ag Secretary

Karen Ross of Alexandria, VA, has been appointed secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, subject to state Senate confirmation. She has served as chief of staff with the U.S. Department of Agriculture since 2010. Previously, Ross served as president of the California Association of Winegrape Growers from 1996 to 2009, and was the vice president of Government Relations for the Agricultural Council of California from 1989 to 1996. Ross served as a member of the California State Board of Food and Agriculture from 2001 to 2009.

New Australian Rendering Plant Online

Craig Mostyn Group has invested $10 million to upgrade its red meat rendering plant at its Talloman facility in Hazelmere, Western Australia, signaling its commitment to Western Australia's meat industry. The new plant came online in December and tallow quality improved immediately.

"With collection material in the old high-temperature process, bleaches were from 0.5 to 2.5 red refined and bleached color," said Andrew Bennett, divisional manager for Talloman. "The bleaches in the first three weeks in the new plant have been from 0.2 to 0.5 red."

The low-temperature press dewatering system by Rendertech of New Zealand uses a Haarslev fine crusher and twin screw press, Bliss hammermills, three GEA Westfalia separators, and Rendertech driers, waste heat evaporators, and pre-cooker. The state-of-the-art facility will reduce gas usage by almost 40 percent, translating into annual fuel cost savings of more than $1 million. The new system also significantly improves wastewater quality as nutrients are recovered as saleable product. Other savings will be realized by the reduction in usage of chemicals and electricity in the wastewater treatment plant, and reduced carbon dioxide emissions.

The new plant will service the majority of the red meat industry in Western Australia, processing about 100,000 metric tons a year of abattoir and boning room material into meat and bone meal and tallow.

Headquartered in Western Australia, Craig Mostyn is an Australian family-owned business founded in 1923 that employs about 350 people. Although its main business is in service rendering and farming and processing pigs, the company is also a major exporter and importer of seafood, a marketer of food service products, a trader in protein, and an exporter of fresh fruit.

Meat and Poultry Fact Book Released

The 2010 edition of the American Meat Institute's *Meat and Poultry Facts*, the industry's leading statistical book, is now available at www.meatami.com/ht/d/StoreMO.

The 39th edition contains the latest statistics on production, consumption, prices, imports, exports, employment, wages, and much more. The 54-page book was compiled by John Nalivka, president of Sterling Marketing, Inc.

Nalivka noted in his introduction that 2010 was much more positive than 2009 as the uncertainty of demand became less of a burden on the markets. He did point out, however, that while cattle producers realized gains in net returns, herd building has not been initiated as producers still face uncertainty in the market and regulatory environment as well as changing producer demographics.

Pilgrim's Pride, JBS Appoint New Leadership

William W. Lovette took the helm as president and chief executive officer (CEO) of Pilgrim's Pride Corporation on January 3, 2011. He succeeds Don Jackson, who resigned from the company January 2, 2011, in order to assume the position of president and CEO of JBS USA, which is majority owner of Pilgrim's. Lovette will report directly to Jackson, who will continue to serve on Pilgrim's Pride's Board of Directors. In his new role, Jackson will continue reporting to Wesley M. Batista, who will remain as chairman of Pilgrim's and JBS USA Holdings, Inc.

Lovette brings more than 27 years of industry leadership experience to Pilgrim's. Since 2008, he has served as president and chief operating officer of Case Foods, Inc. Before joining Case, Lovette spent 25 years with Tyson Foods, Inc., in various roles in senior management, including president of its International Business Unit, president of its Foodservice Business Unit, and senior group vice president of Poultry and Prepared Foods. While at Tyson Foods, he served on the boards of Tyson de Mexico, Cobb-Vantress, Inc., and EFS Network, Inc.

In other news, Pilgrim's Pride has introduced a redesigned logo, packaging, and Web site as part of the company's rebranding compaign. The company's previous logo featuring the familiar Pilgrim hat has been replaced with a modern image of a chicken in red with "Pilgrim's" written in blue beneath the bird.

The new consumer-friendly Web site, at www.pilgrims.com, features an expanded recipe section, coupons, product nutrition information, and updated links for investors, media, job seekers, and customers about the second-largest chicken company in the United States.

EPA Completes Framework for GHG Emissions Permitting

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued the final series of actions in late December 2010 that will ensure the largest industrial facilities can get Clean Air Act permits that cover greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions beginning in January 2011. These actions are part of EPA's approach to GHG permitting outlined in the spring 2010 tailoring rule.

The first set of actions will give EPA authority to permit GHGs in seven states (Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Idaho, Kansas, Oregon, and Wyoming) until the state or local agencies can revise their permitting regulations to cover these emissions. EPA is taking additional steps to disapprove part of Texas' Clean Air Act permitting program and the agency will also issue GHG permits to facilities in the state. These actions will ensure that large industrial facilities will be able to receive permits for GHGs regardless of where they are located.

In the second set of actions, EPA issued final rules that will ensure there are no federal laws in place that require any state to issue a permit for GHG emissions below levels outlined in the tailoring rule.

EPA has worked closely with the states to ensure that the transition for GHG permitting is smooth. States are best suited to issue permits to sources of GHG emissions and have experience working with industrial facilities. EPA will continue to work with states to help develop, submit, and obtain approval of the necessary revisions to enable the affected states to issue air permits to GHG-emitting sources.

Beginning in January 2011, industries that are large emitters of GHGs, and are planning to build new facilities or make major modifications to existing ones, must obtain air permits and implement energy efficiency measures or, where available, cost-effective technology to reduce their GHGs emissions. This includes the nation's largest GHG emitters, such as power plants, refineries, and cement production facilities. Emissions from small sources, such as farms and restaurants, are not covered by these GHG permitting requirements.

The first reports of GHG emissions are due March 31, 2011, using EPA's electronic reporting system. Facilities are required to report if they have total installed capacity of 30 million British thermal units per hour or greater and emit 25,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e) or more annually from all stationary fuel combustion sources. CO_2e primarily includes carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide. Emissions from biofuels, including rendered fat, are excluded in calculating the 25,000 CO_2e reporting trigger.

The registration process had to be completed by January 30, 2011, for facilities that must report GHG emissions for 2010. For more information, go to www.epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/ghgrulemaking.html.

Company news can be sent to Render magazine by e-mail at editors@rendermagazine.com, or by fax at (530) 644-8429.