

Australia's Rendering Leader Retires



On December 31, 2012, Graeme Banks stepped down as executive officer of the Australian Renderers Association (ARA) after 37 years at the helm. He began his service to the rendering industry in 1975 when the association was known as the Australian Meat and Bone Meal Shippers and Producers Association and the main issues facing the industry were either freight related or pertaining to efforts lifting export restrictions on rendered products. Banks is also national secretary of the Australian Skins, Hides, and Leather Exporters Association, a position he will retire from on March 31, 2013, after the group's annual general meeting.

Dennis King, Southern Downs Management Services, has been appointed to both positions vacated by Banks.

Banks and his wife, Lynette, are well-known and highly regarded by rendering industry members around the world, having attended many rendering conferences both in the United States and in Europe representing the Australian industry.

Never one to shirk responsibility and always a busy man, Banks is currently national president and New South Wales president of Retina Australia, an organization whose main aim is raising funds for research to find cures for inherited retinal diseases (genetic blindness). Lynette suffers from retinitis pigmentosa. Banks is also actively involved as chairman of Parramatta Legacy, an organization devoted to supporting families of deceased servicemen and ex-servicemen. He is also highly regarded within the Australian Orchid Council, as a past president and current fellow as well as regularly judging at international events, roles he will continue in the future.

King began his career in rendering in 1988 at John Dee, an integrated beef plant, where he was marketer of all co-products and involved in the operations side of rendering and hide processing. In 2004, he began his own consulting company, Southern Downs Management Services, during which he worked mostly with Australian Dehydration Technologies, which has just finished building a new rendering plant to demonstrate their patented technology.

Schoenberg Passes

Richard C. Schoenberg, former general manager of West Coast operations for The Dupps Company, Germantown, OH, passed away in late December at the age of 80.

Schoenberg began his rendering career in the family business in Oregon. After a stint in the United States Navy, he went back into rendering by joining Keith Engineering in California. During his time with Keith, Schoenberg, along with help from other industry leaders, worked diligently to perfect and improve the continuous rendering systems that still populate rendering plants all over the world today. He joined Dupps in 1972 and served as general manager of West Coast Operations until he retired after 37 years in 2009. He then served The Dupps Company as a valued advisor until the time of his death.

In 2007, Schoenberg was presented with the prestigious "Tallowmaster Award" by the Pacific Coast Renderers Association, which honors individuals for their distinguished service and outstanding contributions to the United States rendering industry.



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H.J. Baker Receives Certification

H. J. Baker's poultry feed additive facility in Fort Smith, AR, has earned the Safe Feed/Safe Food certification, a voluntary, third-party-certified initiative designed for feed mills and feed ingredient-related facilities in the United States, Mexico, and Canada. The program establishes comprehensive standards of excellence that go beyond existing regulations to show leadership and maximize food and feed safety. The Safe Feed/Safe Food program is administered by the American Feed Industry Association.



H. J. Baker's Fort Smith facility manufactures feed ingredients for poultry and has more than 20 locations throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico. The company is headquartered in Westport, CT.

JBS Purchases XL Foods in Canada

In mid-January, JBS USA's Canadian subsidiary, JBS Food Canada, Inc. purchased certain Canadian operations of XL Foods. Under the agreement, JBS acquired the following assets: a beef packing plant in Brooks, AB, with capacity to process 4,000 head of cattle per day; a 1,000 head per day beef packing plant in Calgary, AB; a feedlot in Brooks with a one-time capacity to feed 70,000 head of cattle; and 6,600 acres of farmland adjacent to the feedlot.

The agreement between JBS and XL Foods further permits an exclusive option to purchase the operations of XL Foods in the United States (US), pending regulatory review by US authorities. The US operations will continue to be operated by XL Foods during the option period.

JBS will not assume any of XL Foods' debt or liabilities.

Biogas Facilities Emerge in the West

Clean World Partners has opened its \$14 million anaerobic digester system in Sacramento, CA, while Agri Beef Co. has completed a new biogas plant as part of its Washington Beef facility's water treatment system.

With the help of a \$6 million grant and feasibility funding from the California Energy Commission (CEC) in June 2012, Clean World Partners' "organic waste recycling center" will convert up to 100 tons of food waste per day collected by Sacramento-based Atlas Disposal Industries from area food processing companies, restaurants, and supermarkets into renewable natural gas. The facility currently processes 25 tons of food waste per day. Groundbreaking for the larger capacity system took place in January.

"The CEC's support has been critical to our success so far," said Michele Wong, chief executive officer of Clean World Partners. The renewable natural gas produced by the digestion system will be used by Atlas Disposal Industries' clean-fuel fleet as well as vehicles from area jurisdictions and agencies.

Agri Beef's new biogas plant captures methane from an anaerobic lagoon to be used in the steam boilers at its Washington Beef processing facility in Toppenish, WA, reducing the processor's use of natural gas by about 20 percent.

After it acquired Washington Beef in 2003, Agri Beef began making investments in and around the plant, with water treatment identified as an area of opportunity. In order to make use of the anaerobic lagoon's methane, the water treatment lagoon was completely redesigned by adding belowground vents while trapping the gasses under a specially designed cover that encapsulates the lagoon. The captured gas is then pushed through a series of pressurized containers and a storage system, eventually being burned in the plant's boilers.

Spooner Bestowed Top Honor

William Spooner, Kurrajong Meat Technology, Australia, has been appointed an honorary member of the Order of Australia for his service to the country's meat and rendering industries. Instituted in 1975, the order is a pre-eminent way Australians recognize achievements and service of their fellow citizens.

Spooner joined the CSIRO Meat Research Laboratory as a microbiologist. Before setting up his own company, Kurrajong Meat Technology, in 2004, he was with Australian Meat Technology and Food Science Australia.

In 1991, Spooner initiated the first training school for personnel in the Australian rendering and allied industries. He continues to run these workshops, which are an integral part of the Rendering Industry Accreditation Program, with over 720 people having attained recognized accreditation in hygienic production of rendered animal proteins. Also since 1991, Spooner has been a driving force in coordinating the Australian Renderers Association's biennial international symposium to inform and educate the industry.

During the height of the bovine spongiform encephalopathy crisis in the early 1990s, Spooner developed and negotiated a standard to validate the effectiveness of heat treatments in destroying pathogens in the rendering process, ensuring safe finished products. This process is now accepted as a third party audit system by countries importing rendered products from Australia. He also developed the Australian rendering industry's code of practice that went into effect in 1996, which was accepted by the government and later became the Australian Standard for the Hygienic Rendering of Animal Products.

Additionally, as a member of the World Renderers Organization's Scientific Advisory Panel, Spooner's work has been invaluable, particularly his latest contribution, the production of the organization's best practice guidelines, which he addresses in "International Report" on page 26 in this issue of *Render*.

