

Renderers Tackle Complex Issues

By Tina Caparella

The National Renderers Association (NRA) held its annual spring meeting in April to continue moving forward on defining rendering as sustainable and update its members on upcoming regulations and international markets.

During the Sustainability Committee meeting, the tenets of rendering were described as producing safe food/feed, community and employee responsibility, environmental stewardship, and responsible productivity. Some metrics being examined include the industry’s investments in odor control, employee retention, rendering’s carbon footprint calculator developed at Clemson University, renewable fuels produced and used, and rendering’s contribution toward keeping grease out of municipal sanitary sewage systems. In addition, rendering’s diversion of material from landfills and providing other industries (i.e., food animal producers) a service so they can be sustainable need to be highlighted. Steve Kopperud, SLK Strategies, noted that all major food animal producer groups are implementing sustainability programs but are seldom including rendering in the matrix. On the flip side, the American Feed Industry Association has just launched the “public” side of its sustainability plan after years of internal work and rendering is an important part of the program.

“Using animal by-products means using less land, water, and pesticides for growing vegetable forms of feed ingredients,” said Sustainability Chairman Ross Hamilton, Darling Ingredients Inc.

It was announced in NRA’s Feed Regulatory Committee meeting that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) cited the *North American Rendering Industry Code of Practice* in its Sanitary Transportation of Human and Animal Food final rule released in early April. The reference was given as an

example of industry third-party programs that help meet the new regulation’s requirements (see “FSMA Sanitary Transportation Rule Finalized” on page 14). Stan Gudenkauf, American Proteins Inc., commended Dr. David Meeker, NRA scientific services, for his hard work on new FDA regulations on behalf of the rendering industry.

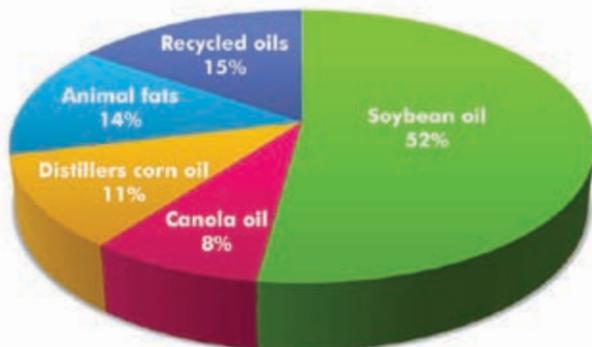
Biofuels Committee Chairman Doug Smith, Baker Commodities Inc., pointed out that animal fat and used cooking oil use in biodiesel has increased over the years and now accounts for 29 percent of all feedstocks (see chart 1). In addition, 31 percent of all feedstocks used to produce renewable diesel are animal fat and used cooking oil because they are more economical feedstocks and have a greener carbon footprint (see chart 2). Smith shared a biodiesel infographic that shows the value of using animal fats in biodiesel.

“We have made an impact on their industry and we’d like to continue that relationship,” Smith commented. He added that the current blender’s tax credits expire at the end of this year, which coincides with the end of the current Congress’ term. NRA and the National Biodiesel Board are working to extend the tax credits for future years.

After an extensive update from Environmental Committee Chairman Bob Voger, Valley Proteins Inc. (see Tech Topics on page 36), Michael Koewler, SRC Companies, informed the group on activities in California. The state’s Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery, or CalRecycle, is earmarking \$200 million in funding each year for the next 10 years for landfill diversion, causing waste management companies to look at collecting fat and bone material.

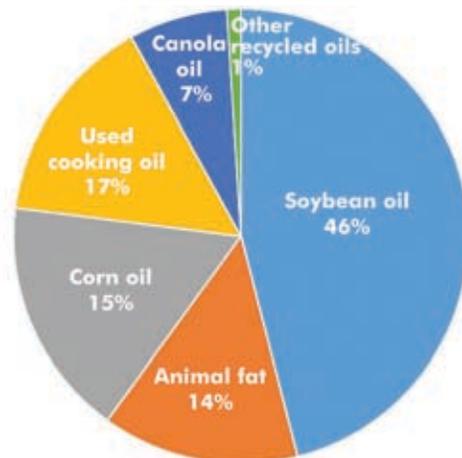
“CalRecycle should be technology neutral,” Koewler stated. California renderers are trying to educate the department on

Chart 1. Estimated feedstock use in biodiesel, 2015 (January-November)



Source: Energy Information Administration 22M survey.

Chart 2. Estimated feedstock use in biomass-based diesel (renewable diesel), 2015



the importance of rendering by using the federal Environmental Protection Agency's Food Recovery Hierarchy chart that places the importance of diverting food scraps to feeding animals above landfilling. On the flip side, the California Air Resources Board has recognized the importance of rendered products to the biofuels industry in their legislation and grants. National efforts on food waste recycling have been escalating the last few years so the NRA Legislative Committee has put the issue on its radar screen to ensure rendering is treated fairly in any future legislation.

International Markets

NRA's International Market Development Committee focused on the challenges and opportunities for exports of rendered products. Peng Li, NRA regional director for Asia, said, "China will continue to be very important for our industry." The country just approved the importation of inedible tallow from the United States so renderers can now apply to export to that market. Li noted that China's feed industry is challenged but its soap industry is stable. He added that Indonesia is the most important market for animal proteins as the twelfth largest feed producer in the world.

German Davalos, NRA regional director for Latin America, reported that exports of animal fats from the United States (US) into Mexico were down in 2015 due to competition from South America. Some good news is that Costa Rica has opened its borders to ruminant meat and bone meal for use in pet food and poultry, pork, and aquaculture feed. Nicaragua formally approved the product's acceptance in March while other Central American countries "verbally" allow imports of US ruminant meat and bone meal but have not put it in writing.

Focusing on the European Union (EU) was Bruce Ross, Ross Gordon Consultants SPRL, who informed NRA members that the US Trade Representative is now working on negotiations to get US tallow back into the EU for industrial purposes. Meanwhile, used cooking oil from the United States is going into the EU in large quantities. However, some organizations are looking at curtailing that, including the Federation of Oils, Seeds, and Fat Associations that added used cooking oil and used cooking oil methyl esters to its list of "banned

immediate previous cargos." Ross said this action could raise shipping costs, particular for barges on internal waterways. The federation claims the action is over concern about the "lack of transparency and traceability of used cooking oil origination."

Ross shared that the European Commission's latest report shows bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) continues to be at very low levels in the 28 member countries, with 11 cases being reported in 2014 out of nearly 2.3 million animals tested. Only three cases were classical BSE, with the rest being atypical BSE.

Dr. Romina Hennig, US Department of Agriculture (USDA)/ Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), updated committee members on regulatory matters in Mexico for ruminant meat and bone meal and the China tallow market. APHIS has been participating in discussions with Mexican officials as they attempt to revise its outdated animal by-products regulation put in place in 1999.

"Everyone here has a stake in this and is willing to help APHIS with any export issues," Kent Swisher, NRA international programs, told Hennig.

USDA has been working with Chinese officials with NRA support for a number of years to gain market access for US tallow. Hennig stated that a protocol has been signed, a Chinese questionnaire completed, and with the assistance of NRA, requested information has been submitted to China. The first US facility has been approved and assigned a registration number, and a health certificate has been agreed upon so USDA anticipates the flow of tallow to China is imminent. **R**



Dr. Romina Hennig explains USDA's efforts toward opening international markets for rendered products.



Kent Swisher, NRA international programs, shows the matched government funding the industry receives to promote rendered products overseas.

