

## From Your President...



In preparation for writing my final letter as PAMP President, I took a few minutes to reflect on the last few years and how much things have changed in such a short amount of time. Here we are, two years into the pandemic, and things are finally starting to return to some semblance of normal. Yet, never did I expect to be president for three years and so much has changed within that time frame. I'm happy that we will finally be able to gather once again as an organization and I look forward to seeing you at the upcoming convention. Of course, just like in every other aspect of our lives, we've had to once again deal with changes to our plans. Maybe it won't be quite like we envisioned and how it has been in years past, but it'll be good to gather and commune with our colleagues in the industry. So, I implore you to come up to the show, get away from your business for a bit, learn with others and spend time with people that love this industry as much as you do. It's been an honor to serve our organization over the last few years. Thank you for allowing me to be your president.  
*I hope to see you all in May.*

**Yours in Great Meat,  
Nate Thomas - President**

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# MEAT THE FAMILY

*The Pennsylvania Association Of Meat Processors is ready to gather again!!* After two long years and not being able to have the convention, we are excited to be with family and friends in State College **May 12-15th**. We have put together a great list of educational classes on Friday and Saturday. Our supplier members that plan to exhibit will offer a range of services to our operators - **a warm welcome and a big THANK YOU to the following suppliers and their continued support to PAMP.**

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**The showcase will be held on Friday from 3-7 and Saturday from 10-1.**



We hope you plan to attend a few of the fun events during the convention. We have a wine tour, the PA Beef Council Butchers Competition and several receptions. There is also the Product Competition that we encourage you to enter a product or two. Winning is great in this competition, but it can also be a learning tool to take the judges' comments and build on that to make a better product. So if you are new to the convention or have been coming for a long time and never entered this competition, we hope you do, you won't be disappointed.



Again, we look forward to seeing everyone and hope you enjoy the great convention we have planned.

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# HOW HIGH IS TOO HIGH?

Perusing my local grocery store's meat department recently, I noticed 80/20 ground beef at \$7.99 per pound, which was up by more than a dollar a pound in the last week or so. It seems like prices of nearly everything are higher these days and in early

It is a function of our economic system that when prices rise above a tolerable level demand starts to shrink. When will meat and poultry reach that point? Well, we may already have reached it. The first consumer reaction to higher prices is not a stoppage of purchases but a lessening of them. Consumers may also switch to less expensive but similar items, which has always raised ground beef sales. So, expect to see a sales slippage in the higher priced beef cuts. Will consumers stop buying beef entirely? No. But they may switch to less expensive proteins.

In the final analysis, like other times of drought coupled with inflation, as John Nalivka explains, there will be a reduction in the cow herd and subsequently number of commercial cattle available for slaughter forcing higher beef prices.

Please remember, war or no war, you put a bull with a cow, and you get a steak 23 months or so later. It will probably take that long for the beef side of the protein industry to recover to more conventional times and prices.

Reprinted from Mack Grave's Blog  
"Meat Your Markets" from [meatingplace.com](http://meatingplace.com)

March, in his State of the Union address, our president forewarned us they are going higher yet.

Certainly, gas is higher and other food items besides meat and poultry continue to rise. Is it corporate greed forcing these prices up, the Ukrainian War, something else — or a combination of it all?


Unlike a few posturing politicians, I don't think it's blatant corporate greed. I do think that costs are up for meat and poultry producers as well as processors, retailers and food service operators for a variety of well-documented reasons led by inflation which are passed on up the food chain to consumers.

Is it a worthwhile meat marketing exercise to explain to consumers the reasons for higher meat and poultry prices, or will such efforts be met with an "eyes glazing over" moment as consumers don't care why, they just want prices to recede? Or, has the Ukrainian war overshadowed it all and provided an excuse not to explain? There are a myriad of factors influencing meat and poultry production costs that consumers need to understand. These factors must be communicated in a way that will hasten understanding and dampen consumers' desires to cut back purchases.

Various meat industry trade groups have tried to explain the causes of higher prices to politicians, with little effect, but not so much to consumers. Consumer education starts with explaining how the drought has impacted production. And, as my friend and cattle industry guru John Nalivka of Sterling Marketing predicts, the drought creates a scenario of lower cattle numbers and when hitched to the herd liquidation we saw in the West this past year, creates the "perfect storm" for higher beef prices. But there's more.

Higher feed costs for grains and how those farmers must also raise prices to continue their livelihoods and how higher gas prices impact feed and animal transportation costs serve to fan the flames of higher beef prices. Adding to the problem is the lack of labor and the ability to retain production workers in this escalating worker-wage environment. The overarching cost determinant forcing higher prices is inflation-induced. How high inflation will go and what the current administration and Federal Reserve will do about it are currently unexplained, but something needs to be done. All of these and more have caused food prices to rise and, to remain in business, meat and poultry companies must raise prices commensurately.

While some politicians are shouting "corporate greed," that is more a function of increasing margins, not necessarily increasing prices. Consumers need to know the facts about increasing costs causing increased prices. In my view, using beef checkoff dollars to explain these facts is a better use of these funds than lecturing consumers that beef is what's for dinner, because it clearly is not for those who are contemplating cutting back on higher-priced beef purchases.



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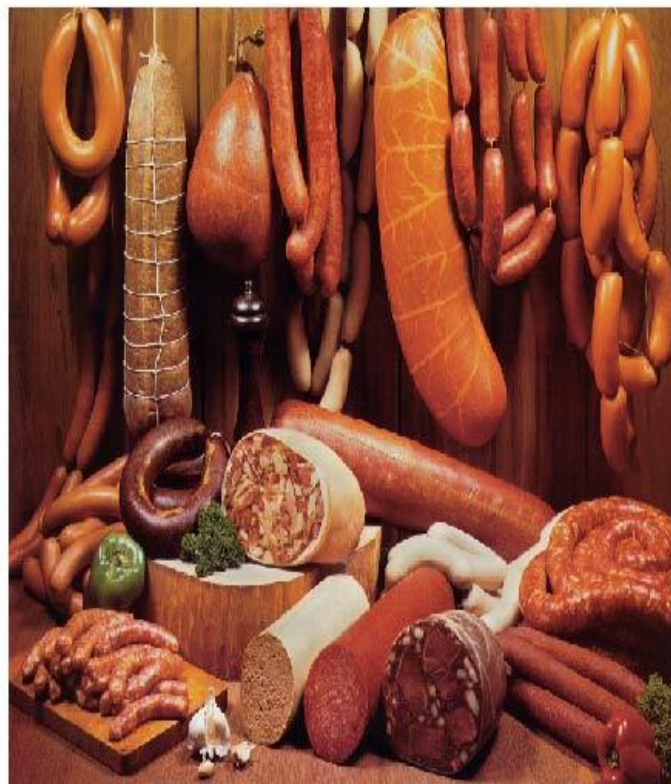
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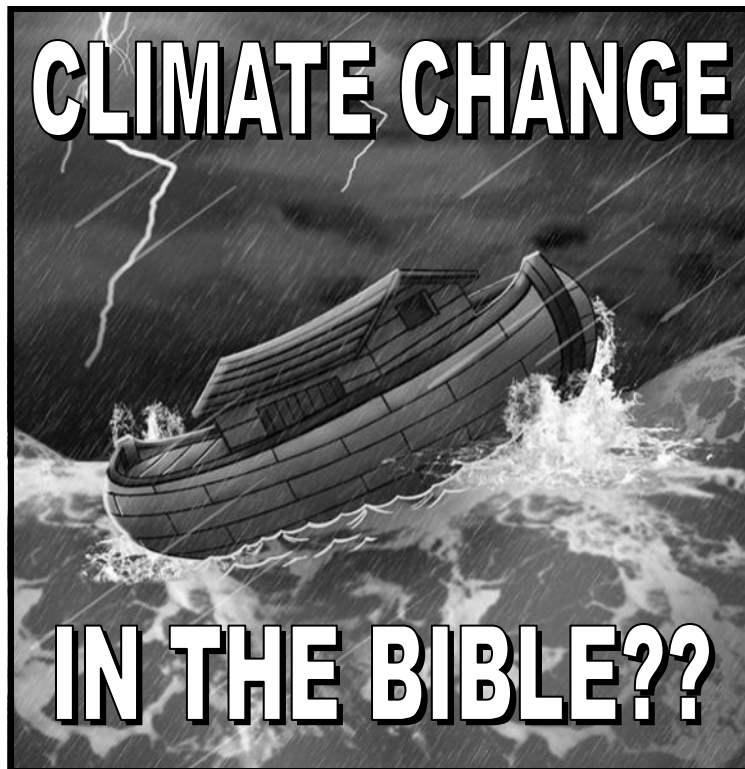
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In my ongoing search for current and historical facts about climate change, I've been reading a lot of research online and books, and listening to podcasts and audiobooks during my daily commutes for sales calls.

Maybe because we are in the Easter Season, it dawned on me that I should also consider what sort of climate change has been recorded in Scripture.

The most famous story about changing climate you may have learned in Sunday school or from the musical turned into a movie, "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" is the biblical account of the Pharaoh's dream that only Joseph is able to interpret. It concerned the seven plentiful years in Egypt that were followed by seven years of severe famine. The famine was so bad that Joseph's family had to migrate to Egypt or starve.

There are also numerous, lesser known records of climate changes in the Old Testament. For example, in the account of Abraham, penned by Moses sometime around 1500 B.C., it records, "Now there was a famine in the land; so Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a time, because the famine was severe in the land." These cycles of change have clearly been around since Adam and Eve were evicted from the Garden of Eden.

Oh, and there was that "little rainy season" in Noah's day. If you're currently inclined to be fearful of rising ocean levels, don't forget the astounding account of relentless worldwide torrential rains and massive tectonic shifts releasing "the springs of the deep" causing ocean levels to temporarily rise above the highest mountain peaks as an act of judgment from God. You might ask, "Where could that much water come from?" Some of that mystery is becoming less mysterious as recent scientific discoveries have estimated that there is more water stored in the porous layers of the earth's crust than in all of the oceans combined.

Of course an act of divine judgment is not the same as what's being described today as global warming. But the Bible and other historical records show us that the earth's weather patterns have ebbed and flowed from time period to time period. We're experiencing some of that ever-changing climate even now in our lifetimes, such as periods of drought followed by periods of plentiful moisture. The National Weather Service has records of the snowfall totals for Colorado dating back to 1882. The 2020-2021 snowfall totals were 23" above the annual norm. Just four years prior, in 2017-2018 period, the snowfall was 30" behind the annual norm. For 140 years, the historical data has shown a constant up-and-down, round-and-round, cyclical pattern.

If you hold a Biblical worldview as I do, you likely believe that the world is not going to end by catastrophic climate change. Things like the ice caps and glaciers all melting, causing the ocean levels to again rise and flood the land will not produce our ultimate demise. Proverbs 8 declares, "When the springs of the deep became fixed, when He (God) set for the sea its boundary so that the water would not transgress His command ... He marked out the foundations of the earth." In His omniscience, God knew exactly how many people would eventually inhabit the earth and He planned and created the earth to sustain the population with food, water and resources. But just because God has a plan, it doesn't mean we trash the earth and the environment or think of it as disposable. We have to be responsible stewards of God's gifts.

In the "parable of the talents," Jesus instructs us to be faithful with the resources God has given us. I think this means we manage God's creation with thoughtful, responsible dominion. We take care of what we've been given and make it our priority to leave the earth a better place for future generations. We can do just that, without being browbeaten by alarmists and fearmongers.

If you celebrate the season, I hope you had a blessed Passover and Resurrection Sunday!

Reprinted from Gregory Bloom's Blog  
"The Meat Business" from [meatingplace.com](http://meatingplace.com)

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# FIND A WAY TO TRULY DISCONNECT

Recently, I wrote about my desire to work on being less busy in 2022 and beyond. I had several people reach out privately afterward and tell me it was a topic that resonated with them as well. Seems we are all too busy. All the time. And it's taking a toll.

I mentioned in a previous blog that I had planned my first ever two-week vacation. I am happy to be writing this blog from my balcony in Oahu as I listen to the many sounds of the city of Honolulu and watch for rainbows over the Ko'olau Range.

I am five days in and the anxiety of being away has finally subsided. I have not done one bit of substantive work, though I have checked emails a few times (mostly to clean out the ones I will never read or respond to). I actually left my phone in the room when I went to the pool today. I am 400 pages into the first book I have read for pleasure in what feels like years. I am fully embracing Island Time and what it means to have no schedule.

If you regularly take vacations and truly disconnect, you may be thinking "what is the big deal?" I admire you. Keep up the good work. Keep being a role model for those around you. Because statistics show that you are an anomaly.

Even pre-pandemic, Americans struggled with the idea of taking full advantage of their vacation time. We have all seen the data on unused vacation days and how difficult it is for people to disconnect when out of the office. Post-pandemic, the world of virtual work has made disconnection even more difficult. We can literally work from anywhere. But with burnout at an all-time high, people need their vacation time more than ever. So why is it so hard to take this much needed time off? And how can we make it easier for people and also normalize these very important mental breaks from work?

Our industry is one of daily execution. Whether on farm where the animals need to be cared for or in the processing plant where the line must keep moving and the mountain of meat must get to its intended destination (sell it or smell it!), someone has to be there to do the work. This is the basic DNA of the meat industry, and it will never change. Work ethic is rewarded, including showing up every day to do the job you have been hired to do.

Those supporting the industry aspire to the same "nose to the grindstone" work ethic. And often, by way of efficiency or necessity, there is only one person doing a particular job. Thus, if you aren't there, the work goes undone or piles up until you return. The implication? Taking any amount of time off can feel like punishment when you return and must spend the next few weeks working overtime just to catch back up.

Now, more than ever, we need to fix these systemic issues in order to support our employees' mental health. And to begin, we must lead by example. Take time off. Truly disconnect. Leave your devices at home (gasp!) or at the very least, turn off your notifications and alerts. Believe me, your team will notice. And they will feel good that you trust them to handle things while you are out.

Secondly, reassure teammates that you've got their back while they are out. Especially those who are individual contributors in roles that aren't typically cross-trained. Knowing that I have a group of col-



leagues ensuring that the work doesn't pile up these two weeks (you know who you are, and I appreciate you!) is priceless. The trust and good will this experience is building will make our team better. And they are getting to learn more about what it is that I actually do every day. I view that as a win-win!

This vacation is a bucket list trip for me — one I have saved and waited many years for — and I feel truly blessed to finally be enjoying it. But the lessons I am learning about the value of true disconnection from work can translate to any time away from the office, whether it be a long weekend or an extended staycation. If you have additional tips and tricks for disconnecting from work, please share them in the comments.

Reprinted from Angie Krieger's Blog  
"Pearls of Pork" from [meatingplace.com](https://meatingplace.com)

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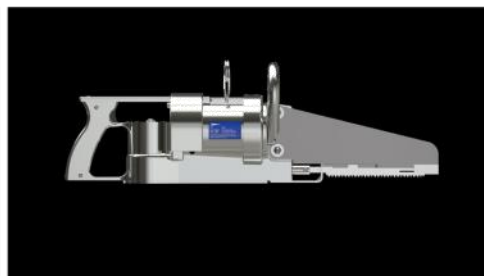
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# DON'T FEED THE BEARS

With COVID-19 seemingly further behind us with each passing day, many aspects of our lives are beginning, once again, to change. But this time in a more welcome direction. Indeed, we are now beginning to see less COVID-19 mandates, less COVID-19 masks,

and less COVID-19 hospitalizations. But as the pressures exerted by the challenge of COVID-19 upon our professional lives continues to ease, there are now new pressures to pounce and take their place.

When COVID-19 was roaring across America, the federal food safety inspection agencies (FDA and USDA) changed many of their inspection priorities. On the FDA side, the agency for all practical purposes stopped visiting food facilities and conducting routine inspections. Now, after nearly two years of hibernation, the agency is awakening and coming out of its proverbial cave. From an inspection standpoint, the bear is on the hunt. And, as this powerful creature begins fanning out in its search of its next food facility prey, the bear is very, very hungry.

Indeed, the FDA inspections we have been watching unfold over the course of the last six months have been quite intense, in many cases lasting three to four weeks instead of three to four days. The paradigm appears to have shifted as well, moving from "we educate before we regulate," to we regulate "in order to educate enforce."

And, like a hungry animal which becomes excited from the smell of blood, when the agency sees something objectionable, it increases the agency's hunger and the inspection intensifies. In some cases, this

cycle continues for so long that, when the agency does finally leave, the company feels as if it's been left in tatters.

So, how do you avoid feeding the bears? First, don't give the bears an opportunity to feed. In my opinion, inspections are different now than they were two or three years ago. It is almost as if FDA are reinventing the inspection process, while at the same time conducting swab-a-thons, spending countless hours observing sanitation and production, and looking tirelessly for violations. In some cases the agencies are finding them because, while the bear was in hibernation, some organizations became more complacent.

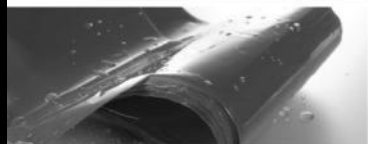
Now is the time to check your programs, make sure they are being tightly followed, that your employees are adequately trained, that you are devoting enough time to sanitation and quality control, and that your operations and programs will be the best they can be when the bear finally arrives. You might also consider conducting your own swab-a-thon. This way, if there is anything in the environment which might send the agency into a wild frenzy (like a resident strain of *Listeria*), you can get rid of it before the agency arrives. The same can be said for USDA, which is increasingly coordinating with FDA in dual-jurisdiction facilities and conducting its own swab-a-thons during Food Safety Assessments as well.

On this Monday morning, close your eyes, just for a moment. Somewhere on the horizon, you might hear a roar. Just like when dealing with a real bear, make sure that there is nothing left in your operations or programs for the bear to stop and feed on. If you do a good job now, the bear will move along quickly and focus, instead, on its next set of prey.

Reprinted from Shawn Stevens' Blog  
"Legally Speaking" from [meatingplace.com](http://meatingplace.com)



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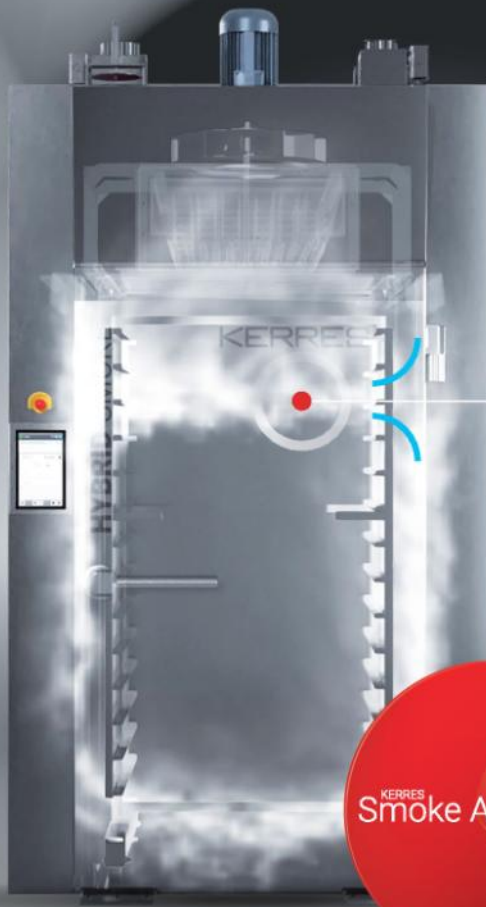
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**Are you looking for a new trick pony?**

### **Or are you staying with the same ol' horse?**

Have you looked back on your life pre-pandemic yet? Or take a moment to list the differences in where you go, who you see, what stores you go into, and what you buy? Take a minute to reflect.

Customers' loyalty depended on price, product, location and a store's personality. Nowadays, e-commerce calls the shots. Data-driven, omni-focused personalization and the ability to shop in your pajamas are just a few reasons why online shopping is so popular. Companies must understand what makes online shoppers love and return to their brand; the bottom line is at stake. It is five times less expensive to retain a customer than acquire a new one. Businesses that focus on what these shoppers want are the ones that make it.

Over the past couple of years, consumer beliefs and behaviors have changed more rapidly than ever before. After COVID-19 was first detected in the United States, the pandemic set in and our lives and livelihoods were forever changed. Every routine we had in our day-to-day lives was upended. And people usually do not change their deeply ingrained habits. Whether it is steak frites every Friday at your favorite bistro, the Sunday matinee, or flying every holiday to see your parents, it's all reasonably set in stone.

These massive changes in daily life represent a rare moment in history, causing many companies to re-focus to find new marketing advantages. Consumers could no longer stick religiously to their tried-and-true habits, which left a whole lot of room for a company to find and influence you. The COVID-19 crisis is unfortunately still not over, and still is causing consumers to change their behaviors. In the United States, many consumers have tried a new brand (think toilet paper in April and May of 2020), online groceries, restaurant delivery, a new store, and upticked their cable bill to watch the latest movies and series. COVID may be the reason for all this change, and any company with a good marketing team will work its magic to hold on to these new consumers, vying for your loyalty in today's pandemic lull.

With gas and meat and just about everything else we buy, prices are soaring. Have you chosen a different path?

My query is simple: What has changed in your buying habits?

Live well ...

Reprinted from Michael Formichella's Blog  
"Chef's Table" from [meatingplace.com](http://meatingplace.com)

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In 2007 Joe Cloud joined forces with farmer, author, and food activist Joel Salatin to save one of the few remaining independent, USDA-inspected meat processing plants in the Mid-Atlantic, T&E Meats. They purchased the plant, built in 1939, from the then-current owners, Tommy and Erma May, who had owned the business for

thirty-five years. Joe and Joel purchased the plant with the goal of serving local farmers who wanted to make their meat products available to local consumers.

At the time Joe and Joel purchased the plant, the business was a three-tiered operation including a slaughter and processing plant, a retail butcher and grocery shop, and a wholesale meat and grocery delivery business serving small and remote grocery stores in Virginia and West Virginia.

By 2011, T&E Meats had closed the retail and wholesale operations to focus solely on the meat slaughter and processing in support of the company's mission to "help farmers feed people."

When Joe and Joel first purchased the business, T&E served only four local farmers who sold their meats under their own private labels. Now, T&E serves over 60 farmers who brand their own meats as well as many farmers and other clients who bring animals for processing for their own personal use.

T&E is recognized as a unique resource in the local food community, working with farmers to promote the availability of a healthy grass-based red meat supply, while at the same time educating and providing customers with the highest quality professional processing and packing services

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# SUPPLIER SPOTLIGHT

**Visko  
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ViskoTeepak is a food-packaging supplier with more than four decades of service to the meat and poultry processing industry. Today, our packaging materials and brands are mainly offered in Germany, Canada and the USA.

The ViskoTeepak story began in 1952 with Gunnar Eriksson enjoying a smorgasbord on a ferry between the Åland Islands and Stockholm. On that trip, Mr. Eriksson noticed on his plate a piece of sausage in an artificial casing. Einar Söderman, Mr. Eriksson's friend who was also on the trip, had been working with a casing producer in Sweden and knew that what they were looking at was cellophane casing made from cellulose. Gunnar Eriksson became so interested that he took a piece of the casing with him to a laboratory in Helsinki. Thus the story of the greatest casing company began.

ViskoTeepak took its current form in the beginning of 2007 after the big merger of Visko and Teepak. Today we're one of the world's leading international manufacturers of cellulose, fibrous and plastic sausage casings for the food industry. With our seven production and conversion plants together with five sales offices around the world, we employ approximately 1,100 people

ViskoTeepak is one of the world's leading manufacturers of artificial casings (cellulose, fibrous and plastic) for the food industry. We also offer the highest-quality collagen casings through our partnership with some of the best collagen producers in the world. We have the largest selection of fibrous casings in the world and are able to manufacture the widest range of fibrous casing diameters, including both the smallest and largest casing sizes. All our products come with excellent caliber consistency and processing properties.

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**PAMP SCHOLARSHIP:** Find the application on our website or contact Renee to receive a copy. Rules will also be provided.

**SUPPLIER SHOWCASE:** Suppliers that are planning to exhibit, find the Exhibitor Service Kit Information on our website. All shipments or items needed for the showcase will need to go through General Exposition Services. The Penn Stater will not be accepting any shipments or any out-going shipments.

**2022 DUES:** We would like to say Thank You for all of your support and we look forward to the 2022 convention. Dues need to be paid in order to attend convention.

**CONVENTION REGISTRATION:** Operator and Supplier registration forms can be on the PAMP website.

**BUTCHER'S CONTEST:** PA Beef Council & Northeast Beef Promotion Initiative are happy to host the Best Beef Butcher Contest again this year. See our website for Agenda, Rules and Application.

**BOARD SEATS:** We will have several board seats opening up this year. Please consider being a board member. There are 2 meetings each year. One held in the fall and one during the convention. If needed there could be zoom meetings or committee meetings. Those are usually done over zoom or emails. If you are interested, please email Renee or reach out to a current board member.

**CONVENTION SCHEDULE CHANGE:** We have combined the Excel Spreadsheet/Product Costing session to Thursday ONLY!! It will run from 10-1. Sorry for any inconvenience.



## CLASSIFIEDS

If you would like to add items, feel free to email or call me with the details. Also, be sure to let me know if any items need to be removed to keep the listings current. Classifieds for Operators ONLY.....No Suppliers.

**FOR SALE:** Commercial Ham Presses, \$25 each, Call Gary Karas @ 724-468-5811 - kountrykows@windstream.net

**FOR SALE:** Globe Slicer - Model 725 - Manual or Automatic Runs on 110 - Like New in excellent condition. \$2,500.00. Call Floyd @ 570-254-6921

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**FOR SALE:** SPIROCUTTER (Ham Slicer) #T-2000. Serial# 20304; Used; good to very good; rarely used. Please contact us for pictures. Asking price: \$5,500. Contact Mark Eifert @ 570-253-5899

**FOR SALE:** BRINE INJECTOR MACHINE  
Spec: 21 Needle Gunther Brine Injector; Asking Price: \$8,500 OBO; Condition; good - runs well; Contact: Mark Eifert; Phone: 570-253-5899; Pictures on PAMP website and available by email by request.

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