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# The Food Industry Center

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

## A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

### OUR MISSION

The Food Industry Center will develop leaders for tomorrow's food industry. Through research, educational programs, and industry collaboration, it is a leading source of knowledge on how food reaches consumers efficiently and contributes to safe and healthy lives.

### ABOUT US

The Food Industry Center (TFIC) was founded in January 1995 at the University of Minnesota as one of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Industry Studies centers and the only one that studies the food industry. TFIC has had an illustrious 22 year history of conducting research on the food industry and offering forums on current industry topics and best practices. Originally established as The Retail Food Industry Center, the Center changed its name to The Food Industry Center in 2001 to accurately portray the breadth of food industry studies the Center conducts.

We have a number of things to share with you this year about the accomplishments of our students and faculty working in food marketing and more broadly on consumer food issues. Our doctoral students continue to obtain academic positions as we help 'grow the seed corn' for the next generation of educators and researchers in universities. Our graduate students are researching various topics including the effects of fruit and vegetable price inflation on the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program; the effect of changes in the SNAP program and point-of-sales nutritional labeling on food consumption; valuing investments in apple breeding programs; analyzing various risk management programs in dairy production; and examining issues related to food waste measurement and household behavior.

We continue to have discussions with the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences (CFANS) and the Carlson School of Management (CSOM) on mutual collaborative opportunities. I taught a course on Agribusiness and Food Marketplace for MBA and agricultural science graduate students for the second year. Two-thirds of the students were working for food companies while pursuing graduate degrees.

And, I was part of a Business by Carlson panel on WCCO Radio on the topic of Agribusiness Matters: How Farming and Business Strategies from Field to Fork Are Changing Locally, Nationally and Globally. Other panelists included



Perry Aasness from Minnesota Agri-Growth Council and Paul Vaaler from the Carlson School of Management. WCCO radio announcer Dave Lee was kind enough to take the students who came down to sit in the audience on a tour of the radio studio, which was a lot of fun.

Other presentations included a panel on food trends with Kris Kowalski and Mary Kowalski of Kowalski's Markets as part of the Twin Cities Finance Executives, Inc. (FEI) Chapter and a session on food geography at Classes Without Quizzes, a program of the CFANS Alumni Society.



## A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR *(Continued)*



Business by Carlson Panel at WCCO Radio Studio



Mary and Kris Kowalski discussing current food trends

Each year a number of organizations go out of their way to help students attend their programs including the Minnesota AgriGrowth Council annual meeting, Land O'Lakes networking event at their annual meeting, Ralph K. Morris Foundation events, and similar activities.

This August, I am teaching a one credit course called The Business and

Science of Food Systems, which will be offered during the same week with two other, one credit classes called Focus on Food Production and Food Production, Manufacturing, and Supply. The courses are being taught through a collaboration with the School of Public Health, Humphrey School of Public Affairs, and College of Veterinary Medicine. Students include those graduate students funded as part of the MNDrive (Minnesota Discovery, Research, and Innovation Economy) Initiative funded by the state legislature. Students will learn about Minnesota's agricultural and food economy through visits to industry research and development laboratories and production systems. The goal is to learn more about public-private collaboration in research and innovation.

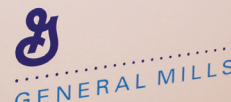
The undergraduate food marketing class had students who were involved in three course projects: studying an individual food sector using market data, offering an interactive workshop on controversial topics in food, and developing a marketing plan based on a conjoint analysis using a panel of Midwest consumers on a food product. Workshops were impressively creative on topics ranging from food waste to food insecurity. The products

University of Minnesota students at Minnesota AgriGrowth Council annual meeting. Shuoli Zhao, Marc Schober, Mario Carillo, and Fanda Yang (left to right)



9:45 am - 10:45 am  
Leveraging Digital In-Store

Sponsored by:



and food services students chose for conjoint analysis included bottled water, coffee capsules, beef, yogurt, and food truck service examining attributes such as packaging, nutritional content, and country of origin.

We continue to have students participating in the National Grocers Association (NGA) marketing plan competition. I moderated a panel at NGA on the use of digital media in retail grocery stores. Other panelists included Michael Needler, Jr. from Fresh Encounter, Inc.; Jim Lukens from Media Solutions; and Joe Michaels from TEBO. There is a lot of work being done using digital media to educate consumers in-store to help increase purchases. And, Cindy Sorensen of Midwest Dairy Association who has worked closely with the Center over time was chosen as Woman Grocer of the Year by the Women Grocers of America. This was an honor that was well-deserved!

In this annual report, you will learn more about our student activities and center events for the July 2016 to June 2017 time period. The contributions we receive from our sponsoring members including Midwest Dairy Association, Old Dutch, and SUPERVALU are leveraged to support our many activities like those listed throughout this report. They also allow us to leverage competitive grants to support undergraduate and graduate student activities.

### Michael Boland

Director, The  
Food Industry Center

Feel free to contact Mike Boland at [boland@umn.edu](mailto:boland@umn.edu) or 612.625.3013 about any issue.

# FOOD INDUSTRY LEADER IN THE CLASSROOM

The Food Industry Leader in the Classroom luncheon series invites food sector professionals into the classroom to meet with University and food sector students to share their knowledge about working in the sector. This past year, we had the following speakers.

On October 11, 2016, Kyle Punton from Kemps spoke about supply chain management issues in dairy including ice cream. Later that month, Ann Kliethermes from fairlife spoke about building a dairy brand.

On January 25, 2017, Aaron Riippa from General Mills spoke about marketing and risk management issues at General Mills. He also discussed the new opportunity for students to learn more about General Mills and careers.

On March 1, 2017, former NGA team member and alumnus Kim Tam spoke about her career in digital marketing



Kim Tam

and the unexpected turn of events in her career thus far. She had several good words of wisdom about careers and how sometimes unexpected news can turn to your benefit.



Ann Kliethermes



Kyle Punton



Aaron Riippa

## THE NGA SHOW 2017

The topic for this year's case study completion at the National Grocers Association was marketing to millennials at Harps Foods retail stores in Arkansas. Kennedy Janssen, Crystal Siemers-Peterman, Rebecca Steen, and Brooke Wentz were the team members this year. While the students were getting tired of being studied as millennials, they developed an idea called, "Harps Steps for a Cause." The strategy was to link data on exercise and health with Harps' reputation within the communities where stores are located and allow customers and employees to identify charities that would be the recipients of donations from customers rounding up their purchases and donations from Harps.

Their solution tied in with values and local and community participation.

A number of schools participated this year including Louisiana State University, St. Joseph's University, Arizona State University, Cornell University, North Carolina State University, Utah State University, University of Georgia, University of Illinois, Fresno State University, Western Michigan University, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Auburn University, University of Alabama, and Portland State University.



Brooke Wentz, Crystal Siemers-Peterman, Rebecca Steen, and Kennedy Janssen (left to right)



Students at Jer-Lindy Dairy Farm



Dave Hartman

On a beautiful day in early October, University of Minnesota students participated in a Day of Dairy with Midwest Dairy Association. They visited RedHead Creamery and Jer-Lindy Dairy Farm in Brooten.

In April 2017, we worked with Midwest Dairy Association on a retail grocery career and education on the dairy industry. Dave Hartman and others from Coborns spoke with 25 students about the dairy supply chain, e-commerce and grocery delivery. Vicki Wredberg of Coborns and Cindy Sorensen of Midwest Dairy Association spoke about careers. The retail grocer operates 56 stores in the Midwest and has a successful grocery delivery operation.



Vicki Wredberg and Cindy Sorensen (left to right)



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