

ISSUE VII

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HORMEL FOODS



ALL STAKEHOLDERS

AT THE TABLE AT HARVARD

CREATING THE FOOD SYSTEM OF THE FUTURE

.....

THE PROJECT SPAMMY[®] EXPERIENCE

10 YEARS OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN GUATEMALA

.....

EXPANDING SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

PROTECTING WATER QUALITY

SPECIAL SUSTAINABILITY ISSUE



OUR FOOD JOURNEY™

Inspired by the food we make and the
difference we can make in this world



Inspired People.
Inspired Food.™





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UNITED TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

We believe that good business and good stewardship go hand in hand and that building social value and creating economic value are not competing goals. Our team gets to live and bear witness to these beliefs every day. But don't just take our word for it.

If being one of the 100 Best Corporate Citizens for the 11th consecutive year (according to Corporate Responsibility Magazine) and in Forbes' opinion, one of the World's Best Employers don't convince you that Hormel Foods is a great place to call home, let the stories in this issue take you on a journey of who we are and how we make a difference.

Looking for suggestions? Working with Harvard University, we presented the Small Change, Big Impact Food Summit, a first-of-its-kind gathering where we shared innovative ideas meant to help us create a better food system for everyone. Find that starting on page 27. You'll also want to flip to page 18 and read about the spirit of Justin's and our many inspired team members. The namesake of the Justin's® brand is at it again, giving back to a community that helped him find his way.

This issue also takes a look at a few of the initiatives that are helping us chart our course for the future, such as reducing sodium in products (page 63), partnering to improve our watersheds (page 58), turning our attention to the strength of solar power (page 54) and what it takes to reduce the amount of packaging used (page 64). "What's Inside" on page 12 is a quick read, not to mention an eye-opener for curiosity seekers who want to know more about what makes our products so good.

When you're done with this issue, please pass it on. And as we work on our next issue of Inside Hormel Foods, which will be dedicated to the innovation that happens daily here, be sure to visit our website – HormelFoods.com – and follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.

Stay inspired,
The Hormel Foods corporate communications team

On the cover: A Guatemalan resident, whom team members met while on a Project SPAMMY® trip.
2019 celebrates the 10th year of the program. Learn more about this one-of-a-kind experience on page 22.

**WE ALL HAVE
STORIES TO TELL.**

**IN FACT, EVERYONE
HAS A STORY.**

We love telling stories on the pages of Inside Hormel Foods magazine, and we hope you enjoy reading them. Join our editorial team by telling us about your favorite people, places and food, and those who inspire you. Maybe you will see your story on the pages of a future issue.

Thanks for helping us keep the stories alive.



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freelance writers



Mary Burich

Mary Burich has been writing for enjoyment — and to make a living — most of her life. Back in the day, a number of journalism awards from St. Bonaventure University nudged her toward a career path that has included lending communication expertise to major organizations such as Fisher-Price, Delaware North, KeyBank, Hormel Foods and Rich Products. Mary's days often consist of putting words in other people's mouths, a passion that has resulted in local and national awards for her and the companies she keeps. Her work can be seen and heard in a large number of media outlets, including USA Today and NPR.



Mary Ladd

Mary Ladd is a senior editor at Attention Span. Her writing has appeared in: Alta Magazine, California Magazine, Playboy, Time Magazine/Extra Crispy, Health, the San Francisco Chronicle, KQED, and in four anthologies. She belongs to the San Francisco Writers Grotto and has appeared as a Community of Writers guest reader in nonfiction and memoir at Squaw Valley. Mary worked with Anthony Bourdain on his San Francisco TV shoots. Her "Wig Diaries" book, co-authored with AP illustrator Don Asmussen, is forthcoming in October 2019. She is an active member of BAYS (Bay Area Young Survivors) and was a top fundraiser for AIDS Walk San Francisco.



Nevin Martell

Nevin Martell is a D.C.-based food, travel and lifestyle freelance writer who has been published by The Washington Post, The New York Times, Saveur, Fortune, Travel + Leisure, Runner's World and many other publications. He is the dining editor for DC Modern Luxury and the author of seven books, including "The Founding Farmers Cookbook: 100 Recipes for True Food & Drink," "It's So Good: 100 Real Food Recipes for Kids," the travelogue-memoir "Freak Show Without a Tent: Swimming with Piranhas, Getting Stoned in Fiji and Other Family Vacations," and the small-press smash "Looking for Calvin and Hobbes: The Unconventional Story of Bill Watterson and His Revolutionary Comic Strip." His latest work, "Red Truck Bakery Cookbook: Gold-Standard Recipes from America's Favorite Rural Bakery," was published in 2018.



Alyssa Shelasky

Alyssa Shelasky is a Brooklyn-based writer. Her work in food, travel and lifestyle can be found in New York Magazine, Self, Town & Country, Conde Nast Traveler and Bon Appetit, among others. She's the author of the best-selling memoir "Apron Anxiety: My Messy Affairs In and Out of the Kitchen" and the upcoming "How To Not Get Married." She loves coastal Maine and her daughter, Hazel Delilah, and wishes she never discovered *Justin's*® dark chocolate peanut butter cups.



Claire Stremple

Claire Stremple is an award-winning public radio and print journalist. Claire was the Solutions Journalism Network's health fellow in 2018 and is a former producer for Oakland Voices, a community journalism project. She is also an alumna of the Mesa Refuge residency. You can hear her stories on the "KHNS Local News," "Alaska News Nightly" and NPR.



Ethan Watters

Ethan Watters is a senior editor at Attention Span Media. He's an author, journalist and trend spotter who has spent the last two decades writing about culture and social psychology. Most recently, he penned "Crazy Like Us: The Globalization of the American Psyche." Prior to that, he wrote "Urban Tribes: Are Friends the New Family?," an examination of the growing population of the "never marrieds." Ethan is a contributor to The New York Times Magazine, Outside, Discover, Men's Journal, Details, Wired and "This American Life." His writing on the new research surrounding epigenetics was featured in the 2003 edition of "The Best American Science and Nature Writing."

We're Inspired by Small Towns and Big Hearts

BY KATIE GABRIELSON



Beloit, WI



Nestled between the Rock River and Turtle Creek lies Beloit, a beautiful Wisconsin town near the Illinois border. In the early 19th century, several hundred Ho-Chunk Indians called the Rock County area home. They soon abandoned their settlement in 1832 after the Black Hawk War. A very interesting part of Beloit's history is that Private Abraham Lincoln set up camp in Beloit during the Black Hawk War.

In 1836, Dr. Horace White arrived from New England and began to buy up the land around the Rock River. Before you could blink an eye, several family and friends were populating the rolling landscape. Schools and churches began to develop, and in 1846 the cornerstone of Beloit College was laid. Fast forward to today, and this once small town is now a blooming city buzzing with activity year-round.

Beloit's riverfront is a treat in the summertime. You can go for a walk, play tennis, watch the boats go by, play in the park with your family or just sit and relax on a bench or dock. Everyone takes pride in keeping this beloved area clean and neat.

Friends of Riverfront is a community group that was formed in 1995 to preserve and protect the lovely banks of the Rock River. There is a group called the Bloomin' Bunch whose members plant flowers and gardens along the riverfront. They also put on several

events in the summer for residents to enjoy, drawing the town together for an evening of fun that includes concerts, dancing in the park or a movie night on the big lawn.

The Beloit Plant has been a part of this blossoming community since 1972. In the last 45-plus years, the plant has contributed to the sustainability of the community in many ways.

The team at the plant gives many monetary donations to the United Way and Relay For Life organizations. They participate in the Adopt A Highway program and have many volunteers from the plant who help keep the interstate clean. They also conduct school-supply and clothing drives to help those in need.

Most recently, the Beloit Plant was recognized as the first runner-up in the Sustainability Excellence in Manufacturing Awards Program at the 2018 ProFood Live conference. The initiative that earned this award was a solid-waste-stream improvement project that resulted in 120 tons of material being diverted from the landfill, compared to the year prior. The entries were judged on environmental impact, social significance, project efficiency, cost-effectiveness and originality or adaptive reuse of technology.

The Beloit Plant is also proud that the company's SPAMMY® product is made there. SPAMMY® is the fortified poultry product that Hormel Foods created to support the

nutritional needs of children in Guatemala. Since the inception of Project SPAMMY® in 2010, the Beloit Plant has produced over 19.5 million cans of SPAMMY®. Each year, Hormel Foods donates more than 2 million cans to Guatemala and holds three to four employee engagement trips for team members and their guests to learn more about the project and engage with the families and children who are receiving this product. In addition, the company has helped open 24 chispa centers, which are learning centers for children.

"I will tell you that the trip to Guatemala with Project SPAMMY® was the experience of a lifetime and definitely changed my life. I have a new outlook on life," said Dipal EauClaire, former human resources manager at the Beloit Plant. "We had a few people who had gone on the trip before and were close to the chispa center they had started. We decided to go in and see how the kids were doing, and they were so much more upbeat and active, thanks to the involvement of Project SPAMMY®." Learn more about Project SPAMMY® on page 22.

The desire to give back and keep Beloit a wonderful place to live is very apparent throughout the entire community. You can feel the energy and vibrancy of the town the minute you step foot there. It is no wonder the people who live in Beloit love to call it home.

We're Inspired by Family Farms

Unsung Heroes Feeding the World

by Rick Williamson

We've all heard the cliché "working for peanuts," but in southwest Georgia, farmers are making the peanuts work for them.

"Peanuts are always the crop that seems to be most profitable for us and that we can count on year in and year out," said farmer Jimmy Webb. "We are peanut farmers. We grow cotton and we grow corn, but we're peanut farmers."

And it's those peanuts and peanut farmers that are the backbone of the area.

"The peanut means survival, and it means making a living. Nobody's getting rich, but we are able to survive, maintain and live comfortably," Webb added.

"If it weren't for peanuts, it would be difficult to make a profit with just cotton and corn," said Bob McClendon, a peanut farmer who has been at it for 43 years and counting. "Our standard of living in southwest Georgia would change tremendously if it weren't for the profitability of growing peanuts."

"To be a farmer is like owning any other business," McClendon said. "I do the same things Hormel Foods does. I budget, and we look at where we've been and where we are

going. You don't know where you're going unless you know where you've been."

Both McClendon and Webb will tell you it is more than dollars and cents when it comes to peanut farming. Passion and a lot of hard work make it all worthwhile.

"We are only about 2 percent of the population, and we're feeding the rest of the 98 percent," McClendon said. "With technology and bigger equipment, we are able to feed more people."

He continued, "The most important thing is to take care of the land. You want to leave it better than when you got it. The real satisfaction is seeing the job done and being able to produce a good crop every year."

"I put my heart and effort into making the peanuts that go into that jar," Webb added. "I tell people to work hard when you have to, relax when you can, but know there are going to be times when you have to go, and you have to go hard. There're times that it's seven days a week. A lot of times I tell folks it's Monday every day. We have to get it done."

It may be hard work, but that's just fine with McClendon. "At my age, I've worked 53 years since college. I do it because I enjoy doing it."



WHAT'S INSIDE

Let's take a look at some of our favorite
Wholly® guacamole snack cups and what makes them delicious!

SUNFLOWER AND/OR
SAFFLOWER OIL

SEA SALT

TORTILLA CHIPS

CORN FLOUR

HASS AVOCADOS



DISTILLED VINEGAR



Holly from the design team says this is her favorite *Wholly*® guacamole snack cup variety!

SALT



DEHYDRATED ONION



GRANULATED GARLIC



WATER



JALAPENO PEPPERS



JALAPENO
PEPPERS



WATER



ONIONS



LIME JUICE



SALT



GRANULATED GARLIC



TOMATOES



HASS AVOCADOS



SERRANO PEPPERS



DISTILLED VINEGAR



DEHYDRATED CILANTRO





WATER



DEHYDRATED ONION



GRANULATED GARLIC



JALAPEÑO PEPPERS



DISTILLED VINEGAR



SALT



DEHYDRATED RED BELL PEPPERS



HASS AVOCADOS



Inspired

by Chef Victor Scargle

It's no secret by now that the life of a culinarian consists of long hours and many variables in conditions that are often very hot. After doing this for three decades, I've found there's always a need for inspiration on different levels. There will always be the idea that there are bills to pay, but I think you will find that most people in the industry don't get involved to get rich!

The inspiration I find when things are hectic and seem out of control is the garden or farm. Growing up on the central coast of California and working on both coasts have given me a deep appreciation for great products and the work and risk that go into creating them.

I've been very fortunate to live in the Napa Valley since 2003. It allows me to have relationships with some amazing farmers. In 2003, I started to learn about biodynamic farming from Jeff Dawson at Copia, the American Center for Food, Wine and the Arts, in Napa, Calif. The knowledge continued with Boisset Farmer Joe Papendick. It's great to have these two knowledgeable farmers to break it down for us in the kitchen.

At first they started with a simple approach

of: "Taste this peach, taste the best peach at the farmers market and taste the best peach from your purveyor. Then tell me which is best." It was a product-first approach, backing up to how it was created. In this way, we learned by experience how different ways of farming can lead to different tastes and textures.

The biodynamic process has many layers to it, and for me, it's inspiring to see all of the effort that is put in when the result won't come for months. The energy that goes into the preparations for the soil, biodynamic sprays and planting cycles is incredible.

Any chef who has the opportunity to work around such amazing products and watch the transformation from seed to product on the plate would be inspired to create something so extraordinary.

When things are chaotic in the kitchen, there's nothing more inspiring than a walk in the garden, tasting items along the way. It helps you clear your head, inspire new dishes and build excitement for events or day-to-day activities.

Chef Victor Scargle has worked his magic in an array of upscale and famous kitchens, but he's all about getting down and dirty. He currently serves as executive chef at The Estate Yountville in Yountville, Calif., overseeing culinary direction at Vintage House and Hotel Villagio, bold and glamorous accommodations in the heart of Napa Valley. He's inspired by biodynamic farming, cycling, seasoning food while it's cooking (not when it's on the table) and the apple of his eye – his teenage son.

A Brand Built with HEART & SOUL

Taking a look inside Justin's
by Ethan Watters



“When you name your brand after yourself, you can never have a bad day,” said Justin Gold, founder of Justin’s, a company known for its naturally delicious nut butters and organic nut butter cups. “You’ve got to bring your best every day, which is inspiring and awesome, and also exhausting.”

Not having a bad day doesn’t seem to be much of a problem, at least on this day. The morning starts at 6:30 a.m. when he leads some out-of-town guests to the Centennial Trailhead in the foothills a mile from his home in Boulder, Colo. His constant companion, a short-haired blue canine named Mobi, is at his side. The hike starts at daybreak and is pretty much straight uphill. When the weather is good, Gold takes this route on a weekly basis. He usually runs it, but today, in deference to his panting visitors, he’s taking it easy.

After 20 minutes, as the sun begins to rise, two views appear. To the east, the skyscrapers of Denver begin to glint and sparkle. To the west, the ever-rising peaks of the Rocky Mountains fill the horizon. The early light turns the sky pink and the dry grass a brilliant gold. Each view is so breathtaking, it’s hard to decide which way to look. The location of the hike, on the border where civilization meets nature, is a useful metaphor for Gold’s passion for creating a food system that sustains a healthy balance between the two worlds.

Today the natural world seems to be smiling on Gold. Rounding a bend, he points out a herd of mule deer bucks about 50 yards up the trail. At the next turn, he stops and takes in a rainbow streaking across the sky. “Are his hikes always like this?” the visitors want to know. “No, I called in some favors,” he said.

He stops at a rocky outcropping. “This is one of the places I like to stop and meditate. I have a mantra, it’s simple and kind of silly. I say to myself, ‘I think I can, I know I can, I’m already doing it.’ It’s just about reinforcing a groundswell of creativity, productivity, execution and confidence. And it is really just showing gratitude in the moment.”

Back home an hour later, after making his family-famous kale smoothies for his two young children and wife, Gold sets off on the three-block walk to his office on Pearl Street, one of downtown Boulder’s main thoroughfares. The office is quintessential bohemian Boulder. Multiple dogs roam the office, and there’s not a tie or suit jacket in sight. Cold-brew coffee and kombucha are on tap.





Photo: Justin Gold,
Founder of Justin's

Gold is the first to acknowledge and be grateful for his accomplishments. At only 41 years old, he oversees a business that he started, molded and nurtured, watching it rocket to success. He's proud of his hard work, but also admits that he's had more than his share of good luck. He also admits that there were times when the rocket engines looked like they were going to flame out and the whole enterprise would fall back to Earth.

STARTING UP

Being a newbie to the food business, Gold had to withstand a withering series of rejections and technical roadblocks, particularly in the early days. Hearing him tell the story, it becomes clear that his success wasn't simply about perseverance and not taking no for an answer. He approached every setback as a puzzle from which to learn.

The year after jars of *Justin's*® nut butters had made the initial jump from the farmers market to Boulder-area grocery store shelves, Gold had a eureka moment while on a mountain-bike ride. He realized that athletes would love a lightweight, portable protein option in the form of single-serving squeeze packets of almond butter. He believed so strongly in

the idea that he borrowed against everything he owned to buy the equipment to make the packets, then convinced a local grocery store to stock them alongside its energy bars and gel packs.

Gold was certain the new format would be a winner, but for a moment it looked as though the effort had been a colossal mistake. The buyer at the store called to tell him to come pick up the product; his squeeze packets just weren't selling.

Gold was devastated, and as a last resort, he pleaded with the store to move his packets next to the jars of peanut and almond butter. Suddenly, Justin's packets started to sell. Because of the context provided by the packets' new location, customers didn't have to try to figure out what purpose these unfamiliar little containers served. They got it. The inexpensive single servings also proved to be a great sample size. Once customers tried the small squeeze packs, they often came back to buy a whole jar.

Because he has his name on every one of his products, Gold has an intimate relationship with his brand. The naming was more accident than hubris. He started making his nut butters just for himself but found his

hungry housemates were always helping themselves. So, he labeled his jars with his name to remind them to keep their hands off. It was when that tactic failed to work that he first realized he might have created a product for a wider market. One of his roommates even convinced his own father to be an early investor.

"I didn't understand the value of a brand persona. You're in control; you create the company that you want to go to work at, and then all of a sudden the company becomes an expression of who you are," he said.

"There is a virtuous cycle, the brand becomes your idealized self, and that's the blessing."

But he didn't do it alone. Gold has had many supporters and mentors. The town of Boulder itself played a key role in his story.

"I call it the Boulder trifecta," he said. "One, Boulder has a high concentration of successful natural food companies with people who were willing to share best practices. Two, a community of residents that supports not only natural and organic, but local. And three, a vibrant angel investment network that was willing to take the risk with me. I feel like I had help the whole way."



GIVING BACK

For all of this assistance, Gold knows that expressing gratitude is not nearly enough, so he spends a good deal of his time paying it forward. On this day, he helps a nonprofit reimagine school lunch offerings. Later, he devotes an hour to mentoring an intern from Rwanda who is working on a business plan to start a peanut butter business in her home country.

In the late afternoon, Gold drops by the Boulder farmers market, one of the first places he sold his nut butter 14 years ago. There he walks by a younger version of himself — a young man hawking samples of his own nut butter mixes. He stops to say hello and taste the product. He already knows the man. In fact, he has a meeting on the books for the next morning to give him some free advice.

While Gold has transitioned from the role of mentee to mentor, he knows he still has more to learn and more to achieve. That's what made him most excited about his partnership with Hormel Foods, which began two years ago. That affiliation with Hormel Foods, Justin said, "gave us the opportunity to really benefit from its best-in-class food safety and operational systems."

These days, Gold's goal is to make the Justin's® brand a household name. He's driven not by the money or simply success for success' sake; he knows that it's only by proving his business' worth on a national scale that he can have the platform to meaningfully influence the food system.

"At the end of the day, it all comes down to the consumer," he said. "The consumer drives everything. If we don't win in the marketplace, then everyone has the right to say, 'Hey, look, what you're doing isn't working. The vision you guys have for the future of food just isn't reality.' But if people continue to support Justin's and we continue to grow, then we can have a voice and credibility. That's where real change can occur."



THE PROJECT SPAMMY® EXPERIENCE

As told by Frank Kubesh
Written by Kelly Braaten

MONDAY

My daughter and I flew from Minneapolis and met the other trip participants and the Food For The Poor representative, Leann, in Miami to catch our flight to Guatemala. When we arrived in Guatemala, we were greeted by several Caritas representatives (one of the company's in-country partners), and we traveled to our hotel. We had dinner as a group that evening and had the chance to learn more about each other. Tired from traveling and knowing that we were meeting early the next day to begin our adventure, we went to bed early.

TUESDAY

On Tuesday, we began the day by visiting the Caritas warehouse, which is where the SPAMMY® product is stored before it is distributed, and also learned more about Project SPAMMY®. Hormel Foods developed SPAMMY®, a shelf-stable poultry product that is fortified with vitamins and minerals, to help prevent childhood malnutrition in Guatemala. The company donates more than 2 million cans of SPAMMY® each year and has also helped open learning centers for children and provided scholarships.

After learning more about the program, we visited a nearby home to experience what the living conditions are like for many people. It was very eye-opening to see these conditions compared to what many of us are used to. For example, fire pits are used for cooking at many homes instead of stoves, and buckets of water – instead of washing machines – are used to hand-wash clothing.

We then visited a learning center called a chispa center. At these centers, children develop skills at different stations. Hormel Foods has helped open more than 20 chispa centers in Guatemala. We were able to play with the children at the different stations, and I was so impressed with them! It was very enjoyable playing and communicating with them, even though we didn't speak the same language.

That afternoon we traveled to a community center where we helped take the height and weight measurements of children who receive SPAMMY® to monitor their progress, distributed SPAMMY® and other food items to families and also played with children who were there. It was enjoyable to help hand out food, and it was also special when the children came up to us and gave us hugs before we left, even though we had just met them.

That evening our group went out to eat, and we reflected on the day. Reflection each day is an important part of the trip. It is interesting hearing everyone's experiences and perspectives!

Project SPAMMY®
Hormel Foods





2019 celebrates the
10th year of the program.

WEDNESDAY

On Wednesday, we traveled to a remote village to paint the inside of a home for a family. The woman whose house we painted has 12 children, and she was very grateful we were there. While we painted her home, she made tortillas that she sells in the community to help support her family. It was great to do a service project and to help someone who needed it. Painting the home took a lot of teamwork, and it was also fun at the same time. It was very satisfying to see our finished project.

Later that day, we visited another home and played with children at another chispa center. We then traveled to the Villa de las Niñas Girls' Home where they greeted us with necklaces they had made and escorted us to a gymnasium. We were seated in the front of the gymnasium and treated to a wonderful performance of music and dancing. The Villa de las Niñas Girls' Home is a boarding school for older girls from the poor villages surrounding Guatemala City. Hormel Foods provides scholarships for several students to attend the school, and we had the opportunity to meet them after the show. It was interesting hearing about their background and what they would like to do when they finish school. Several of them are interested in becoming doctors – a career they might not have imagined if it weren't for furthering their education at this school. Needless to say, they are extremely grateful to receive scholarships from the company to attend the school. That evening we enjoyed dinner at the hotel with the group and reflected on our day.

THURSDAY

We started the day by visiting the Centro Vocacional San Jose school, where we met several boys who are the recipients of the company's scholarships. Once again, it was touching to meet them and learn about their aspirations and plans.

We then went to a vocational center for women who are learning how to make various arts and crafts to sell. We were each paired up with one of the women, and we made a craft together. My partner had made an additional craft prior to our arrival and proudly presented it to me as a gift before we departed.

After a bus ride to the historic city of Antigua, we served a hot meal to over 100 men. Upon returning to the hotel, we had dinner as a group at a restaurant and shared our final thoughts and reflections.



Frank Kubesh

Director of finance – Refrigerated Foods

Frank attended the University of Northern Iowa and began working at Hormel Foods right out of college. He has been with the company for 34 years. Frank and his wife, Monica, live in Austin, Minn. They have two children: Karla (who recently graduated from Iowa State University with a degree in animal science), and Ben (who lives in Los Angeles and works at a technology start-up company).

FRIDAY

We were up bright and early Friday (4 a.m.) to catch our bus to the airport. It was nice spending some final time in the airport with everyone before our flight to Miami.

Some of the biggest takeaways I have from this trip are to be grateful for what I have, and that Project SPAMMY® is definitely making a difference in the lives of others. I enjoyed sharing this experience with my daughter and would encourage any employee who is interested in going to do it. The necklace I received at the girls' home hangs prominently in the room where my family eats most of our meals and reminds me of the lives we touched that week. The trip was truly a life-changing opportunity. Experiencing firsthand the commitment Hormel Foods has made and the difference Project SPAMMY® is making for so many people makes me extremely proud to be part of the company.



PROJECT SPAMMY® FOCUS AREAS:

- **Nutrition** – Hormel Foods developed SPAMMY®, a shelf-stable poultry product that is fortified with vitamins and minerals, to help prevent childhood malnutrition in Guatemala. Each year the company donates more than 2 million cans of SPAMMY®, which helps thousands of families.
- **Education** – Hormel Foods has helped open more than 20 chispa centers where children develop skills at six stations: English, computer, psychomotor development, arts and crafts, imagination and sports. In addition, the company and its employees have provided several scholarships to further the education of children.
- **Engagement** – The company provides opportunities for its employees to learn more about the program and to help out through annual employee engagement trips. The company hosted three engagement trips in 2019 and will hold several in 2020 as well.

ABOUT GUATEMALA:

- Guatemala is located in Central America and has a population of over 16 million.
- The country has one of the highest rates of chronic malnutrition (based on stunting or low height-for-age criteria) in the world.*
- Chronic malnutrition in young children can cause impaired brain development, weakened immune systems and a higher risk of developing diseases later on in life. For more information about stunting, please visit thousanddays.org/the-issue/stunting/.

*According to USAID [usaid.gov/what-we-do/global-health/nutrition/countries/guatemala-nutrition-profile](https://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/global-health/nutrition/countries/guatemala-nutrition-profile)

Hormel Vital Cuisine® 500 Shake



Hormel Vital Cuisine® 500 Shakes deliver great taste, **22 grams of protein**, and **520 calories** in each container. They also meet IDDSI Level 2 / Nectar Consistency for those with swallowing difficulties.

- ✔ Powerful Nourishment
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SMALL CHANGE BIG IMPACT FOOD SUMMIT

CREATING A TRANSPARENT,
SECURE, SUSTAINABLE FOOD
SYSTEM FOR THE FUTURE
THROUGH COLLABORATION.

PRESENTED BY



HARVARD
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Chairman of the Board, President and
CEO of Hormel Foods Jim Snee, giving
the Food Summit keynote.



ALL STAKEHOLDERS

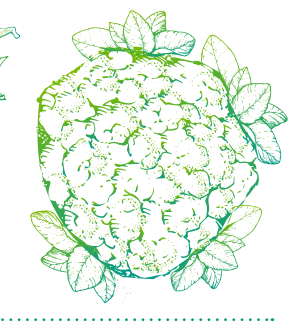
AT THE TABLE

by Mary Ladd



PIONEERS AND LEADERS ROUNDTABLE

Professor of Agriculture and Business at Harvard Business School David Bell; CEO of Grocery Manufacturers Association Geoff Freeman; JUST, inc.'s Jim Borel; Chairman of the Board, President and CEO of Hormel Foods Jim Snee



“We’re talking about really important topics, in an intimate environment with thought-leaders, from across industry, who care.”

— Executive Director of Conscious Alliance Justin Levy

Harvard University, known around the world as a hub for learning and sharing ideas, served as the ideal location for the first-ever Small Change, Big Impact Food Summit, a conference conceptualized, planned and presented by Hormel Foods and Harvard University Dining Services. The summit brought together leaders from many areas of the food world to work together toward a better food system and a healthier planet.

Over two days, this invitation-only summit offered panel discussions and presentations on food security, food waste, culinary arts, sustainability, the impact of foodservice, the future of food and farming, and agricultural innovation.

Co-creating the summit is yet another step on the path of *Our Food Journey™* at Hormel Foods. Given the company’s role in helping to feed America and the world for over 125 years, our leaders are well aware of the challenges ahead. For example, by 2050, the world’s population will have grown to approximately 10 billion people. Meeting the challenge of feeding everyone well and sustainably will require foresight, continuous innovation and the ability to work with all stakeholders in an interconnected food system through an open and productive dialogue.

Jim Snee, president, chief executive officer and chairman of the board of Hormel Foods, opened the conference.

“It’s so much more powerful when you do things together, cooperatively, collaboratively,” he said. “We’re doing great things as an organization, but hearing

what’s happening in other parts of the food world is incredibly powerful. The passion, the journey, the stories from so many different individuals and their commitment to doing the right thing tell me that this summit is the right thing to do.”

Chefs, CEOs, industry leaders and change agents from academia, exciting start-ups, foodservice, food producers and nonprofits gathered at the summit, with the shared goal of fostering constructive dialogue, exploring case-study insights and forging new collaborations toward an improved food future.

Gina Asoudegan, vice president of mission and innovation for Applegate, attends many industry events and trade shows. Yet she found the summit uniquely valuable because it allowed her to hear from a variety of stakeholders who aren’t often in same room.

“It’s rare in our everyday lives that we’re exposed to a variety of perspectives on a particular issue,” said Asoudegan. “I work for a food company and am around people in that world. I’m not necessarily engaging on a daily basis with farmers or with policymakers or other parts of the supply chain.”

“Food really is that common bond,” Snee said. “It brings people together. It is woven in all walks of life and it’s going to be critically important, as it has been in the past.”

Snee also shared why Hormel Foods wanted to help bring this summit to life, acknowledging how important stories can be.

“There’s so much good that’s happening. We need to tell our story at events like the summit, because storytelling is incredibly powerful.”

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TheFoodImpactSummit.com

SMALL CHANGE
BIG IMPACT
**FOOD
SUMMIT**



DIRECTIONS IN SUSTAINABILITY

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE INAUGURAL SMALL CHANGE, BIG IMPACT FOOD SUMMIT

by Mary Ladd

Progressive ideas on sustainability came to the fore at the summit, presented in panel discussions by chefs, restaurant owners, nonprofit leaders, retail outlets, foodservice providers and globally recognized food brands.

Hormel Foods saw an opportunity for collaboration and shared thought leadership when approaching David Davidson, managing director of Harvard University Dining Services, to co-create this first-of-its-kind summit. The partnership: one of the largest and most admired food companies in the world teaming up with one of the most prestigious universities in the world — both steeped with knowledge, an innovative approach and a sense of responsibility to the greater food world. It was a match made in food heaven.

One of the driving ideas behind the summit: More can be accomplished by collaboration than by going it alone. Crista Martin, director for strategic initiatives and communications for Harvard University Dining Services, framed this idea of collaboration by asking her panelists, “What is the partnership that you need to forge to make a bigger impact?”

Through a series of panel topics curated by Hormel Foods partner agency Attention Span, food industry stakeholders shared ideas, plans and dreams to feed our world now and in the future, using seemingly small changes to make monumental differences.



FUTURE OF FOOD PART 2:
EVOLVING THE CULINARY ARTS

Chef and Co-Owner of Trade/Porto/Saloniki Jody Adams; Executive Chef and Partner of The Swill Inn/Chit Chat Lounge Lamar Moore; Chef and Owner of Savory LLC Kenneth Temple; Culinary Director of Junzi Kitchen Lucas Sin; Director of Culinary Operations at Harvard University Dining Services Martin Breslin



INNOVATION IN AGRICULTURE

Assistant Manager of Mogler Farms Janae Metzger; President of Vermont Creamery Adeline Druart; Deputy Director of National Young Farmers Coalition Martin Lemos; Specialty Buyer of Costa Fruit & Produce Jim Stringer

IT'S THE SOIL THAT MATTERS

Convoy of Hope's Jason Streubel, aka "Dr. Dirt," made a stirring statement on the inseparability of food from soil.

"Because if [a nutrient] is not in the soil, it doesn't get to the plant, and if it doesn't get to the plant, it doesn't get to the person," Streubel said. "How is it that we can breathe in and out? It's because of the nutrients that we have that allow us to be able to breathe in and survive and be nerdy scientists like me. But food is life. And ultimately that comes from the soil. So if you feed the soil, you feed the world. Food is soil, food is life."

FARMERS NEED TO BE PART OF THE CONVERSATION

Applegate's Gina Asoudegan opened her panel by acknowledging that although she attends many large conferences, this was the first time she has seen a farmer on the agenda. That's surprising, she said. "There is no future of food without farmers, and it's just so fundamental, but they're not in many of the conversations."

Jim Stringer, specialty buyer for Costa Fruit & Produce, said he's seen how

farmers are "some of the smartest people, [from] water usage to methods of conserving topsoil." One area of focus getting increased attention: microorganisms within the soil. "We are just starting to understand how they improve the health of the soil, which improves the health of the plants, which increases productivity," he said. "Everything is interconnected."

Vice President of Mission and Innovation at Applegate
Gina Asoudegan



Surely Dr. Dirt would approve.

Another relevant point is that all of this costs money, and yet Americans in general probably spend the lowest percentage of their income on food, according to Stringer.

REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE & TECHNOLOGY

Later, when asked for her perspective on the role of technology and how it can meet many of the challenges we face in the food system, Asoudegan spoke about her work with regenerative agriculture.

"Some would say regenerative agriculture is where different species are grown on the same farm," she said. "It's one of the most effective tools we have to sequester carbon." Asoudegan also shared the ways that technology serves to help these same farms that use regenerative practices, measuring soil health and biodiversity. This provides a financial carrot for farmers, because "They can see that the soil is healthier and therefore more productive," no doubt a strong business incentive.



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FOOD WASTE: WASTE NOT, WANT NOT

CEO of Goodr Jasmine Crowe; Director of Operations at Commonwealth Kitchen Ismail Samad; Founder and CEO of Rock and Wrap it Up! Syd Mandelbaum; CEO of Spoiler Alert Ricky Ashenfelter; Executive Director of Food For Free Sasha Purpura

“How do we sustainably nourish a growing population?”

— Former Executive Vice President of DuPont Jim Borel

WASTE NOT ...

Maureen Timmons, director of dining services at Northeastern University, explained the ways that composting remains a tool for menu planning and tackling food waste. Timmons checks Northeastern’s compost bins daily, because what has been composted offers clues to what her student customers are eating and — more to the point — not eating. She speaks about waste daily with her staff and stakeholders. Having students learn about food waste gives them a skill and mindset that they can use in the “real world” after graduation.

EVOLVING INGREDIENTS & NEW STANDARDS

For fast-casual chains such as the ever-popular Shake Shack (which has international locations that include a mall in Dubai), menu ingredients have evolved. Jeffery Amoscato, vice president of supply chain and menu innovation, said its beef is now free of antibiotics and hormones, and its bread manufacturer now provides a line of non-GMO products, including non-GMO potato buns, a Shake Shack signature item. “We made sure that anywhere we opened globally, we’re adhering to the same standards.”

Costco was cited as an example of where customers who are willing to pay more for organic items will shop. Chef Dave Megenis said, “There is success for companies like Costco, who sell the most organic and non-GMO products in the country. There’s definitely demand.” Product managers may want to take notes at the possibilities that Costco’s vast consumer base presents.

Megenis continued, pointing out that the standards held by the specialty markets Whole Foods and Earth Fare have spread throughout the industry. “These companies have set a standard for certain ingredients and sub-ingredients that they allow in their stores. So companies are now saying, ‘Well, we follow the Whole Foods list.’”

PLANT-BASED MEAT

The patterns of “flexitarians” who primarily eat plants but occasionally eat fish and/or meat are worth watching because this way of eating has become mainstream. Similarly, consumers may not fully embrace the flexitarian label but find they want to add more plants to their diets — that mindset is defined as “plant curious.” Data suggests that there are 80 million flexitarians.

For John Ghingo, it was something of an exciting pivot and leap to become the president of Applegate after working for big global brands such as Nabisco and Kraft Foods. That’s because Ghingo sees natural and organic food as a thrilling space with



UNLEASHING THE POTENTIAL OF FOODSERVICE

Former Vice President of Culinary Innovation at McDonald’s Dan Coudreaut; Vice President of Supply Chain and Menu Innovation at Shake Shack Jeffrey Amoscato; Director of Dining Services at Northeastern University Dining Services Maureen Timmons; Vice President of Procurement at Nuovo Pasta Dave Megenis

SMALL CHANGE
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FINDING FOOD SECURITY: ACROSS CAMPUSES, COMMUNITIES, & CONTINENTS

Executive Director of Conscious Alliance Justin Levy; Executive Director of Be Strong Ashleigh Cromer; Senior Director of Agriculture and Food Security at Convoy of Hope Jason Streubel; COO of The Greater Boston Food Bank Carol Tienken

so much potential for action: “The change in the industry, the change for the food world is going to happen in the natural, organic, sustainable food space,” he said.

His imagination was similarly sparked by a visit to a regenerative farm, and he seemed to hope that the audience members will go home with a key takeaway no matter where they work and what they eat: “Get one step closer to where your food comes from.”

Hungry Planet achieved similar success when feeding 1 million students in Los Angeles and Santa Barbara, Calif., and there was not a single complaint from students, teachers and families. “The food was that good,” he said.

Fresh from an Innovator of the Year award as the director of dining services for Boston College — which is akin to winning an Emmy or Oscar, Beth Emery shared how she engages her customers on campus. She’s seen a major change recently in this work, as students take more of a peer-to-peer approach to impacting their food options. Their engagement helps her team greatly: “The more that I got the students involved

in our strategic planning and our ideation, the more likely we were going to be able to implement. The key piece in the last five years in this space has been growing students’ interest in sustainability.”

FROM MICRO TO MACRO

Jim Borel, a former executive vice president at DuPont, currently advises startups like Neogen, a “precision agriculture” company using data and analytics to help farmers make more efficient decisions.

“What’s happening in the microbiome will start to take shape in a way that will make animals healthier and reduce greenhouse gases and, in some cases, help with productivity, so you’ll get more protein per animal.” While Borel is involved with several companies in food science and biotech, there is a unifying theme to his interests — applying technology to answer a very big question: “How do we sustainably nourish a growing population?”



FUTURE OF FOOD PART 1: FROM PLANT PROTEIN TO URBANIZATION

CEO of Hungry Planet Todd Boyman; Director of Dining Services at Boston College Beth Emery; President of Applegate John Ghingo; CEO and Editor in Chief of Attention Span FWD Josh McHugh



CHANGEMAKER PROFILE

MAUREEN TIMMONS

WELL-SCHOOLED IN CHANGE

by Mary Ladd

Director of Dining Services at Northeastern University Maureen Timmons was a panelist on the “Unleashing the Potential of Foodservice” panel at the Small Change, Big Impact Food Summit at Harvard University.

From grass-fed burgers and kale-stem pesto to ideas like using 25 percent less sodium and removing trays from dining halls, Maureen Timmons is passionate about feeding over 20,000 guests at 31 locations in her work as the director of dining services at Northeastern University in Boston.

Timmons has seen how foodservice offerings have become more sophisticated over the years. “When I first got there, the food was average. I went from culinary school, and I thought, ‘What is going on here? This is madness!’ We looked at every single kind of food that we served.”

Years ago, a kale-stem pesto recipe would not have been a possibility, and yet, “It tastes amazing,” Timmons said. “You can put the kale-stem pesto on fresh vegetables or different grains.” And there’s even more good news.

“It’s something that would have gone in the compost bin but is now a highlight on campus.”

The pesto, symbolic of Timmons’ hard work and change-making abilities, is one of the reasons she

received a Changemaker Impact Award at the recent Small Change, Big Impact Food Summit. Hormel Foods and Harvard University Dining Services envisioned and organized the first-of-its-kind meeting, bringing together culinarians, food producers, academics and others interested in sharing ideas about how to make our global food supply available and sustainable for all.

Timmons was invited for her expertise and democratic approach to the food offerings available at Northeastern. She loves to work with students and faculty, and for 15 years has operated a campus food advisory board (FAB) that lets students participate in an ongoing dialogue between stakeholders.

“The fact that you get college students to show up at 7 o’clock in the morning for breakfast is pretty incredible, no matter what you’re doing,” she said. “The students say, ‘Here’s what you’re getting right, and then here are some big questions.’”

Even plastic bags and plastic 2-ounce to-go cups have been evaluated by the student population, with an eye to using greener practices.

Timmons explained more about FAB. “It could be a project they’re working on. One example is the Swipe to Care project, where students donate their extra meal swipes to other students who may be in need to address food insecurity on campus. Or it could be removing the trays from the dining halls. We discuss and try to see how we can advance their projects — which we love to do.”

CHANGEMAKER IMPACT AWARDS WERE ALSO PRESENTED TO:

- › Junzi Kitchen Chef Lucas Sin
- › Which Wich’s Courtney & Jeff Sinelli
- › Private Chef Kenneth Temple (Winner of Chopped TV show)
- › Convoy of Hope’s Bill Whitworth & Jason Streubel



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TIMMONS' WORK, CHECK OUT HER TEDx TALK, "THE HIDDEN SUPERPOWER OF FOOD."

With training from The Culinary Institute of America (CIA) and Johnson & Wales University, and a doctorate in higher education from Northeastern, Timmons works with other change-makers via the interdisciplinary Menus of Change University Research Collaborative (MCURC), which has members throughout the country using 24 principles to create health-minded, sustainable and delicious menus. This important collaborative, co-led by the CIA and Stanford University, uses a "culinary-centric initiative that brings chefs, food experts and key academic leaders and innovators around a table of enhanced vision, dialogue and sharing."

Meanwhile, at the summit, Timmons talked about change as a member of the Unleashing the Potential of Foodservice panel.

"Because I work for the university, and everyone I deal with is a contractor, I'm always trying to use that mission alignment of 'Come with me. We're going to make a change. We're heading in the student direction. We're heading in the university direction.' So that's obviously been a part of my job every single day."

Timmons' work confirms that while students still want their burgers and pizza, today's foodservice operations must also embrace kale-stem pesto, whole-grain pizza crust, lettuce "buns" and grass-fed beef — so eaters can find the exciting and delicious wherever they are on campus.

Timmons accepting her Changemaker Impact Award, recognizing an industry leader, organization or company making an impact through its work or partnership.

SMALL CHANGE
BIG IMPACT
FOOD
SUMMIT

CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

by Mary Ladd

THE OUR FOOD JOURNEY™ SMALL CHANGE, BIG IMPACT CHALLENGE

Hormel Foods commits
\$16,000 to fund projects
proposed at summit to
improve our food system

During finalist presentations at the *Our Food Journey*™ Small Change, Big Impact Challenge, the audience was rapt as speakers from student-run groups, nonprofits, start-ups and small businesses offered stellar ideas on topics ranging from promoting bug protein to feeding kids in need.

Hormel Foods initially funded the Impact Challenge with \$10,000 in grants to fund ideas that, no matter how big or small, could have a positive impact on our food system. The ideas addressed sustainability, transparency, food insecurity, food deserts, nutrition and reducing food waste. Hearing the pitches, the audience gained new perspective, a heavy dose of reality and an equally healthy dose of hope.

Several finalists happily greeted friends from the community, including summit panelists, attendees and fellow applicants. Yet new friendships were also formed, which increases the potential for future professional collaborations.

Audience members dried their eyes after Conscious Alliance presented disconcerting facts about hunger at the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. A presentation by the Cambridge Public Schools Food & Nutrition Services Department moved members of the Hormel Foods team to fund the department's \$6,000 request for a food vacuum sealer that will allow schools to include freshly prepared food in a new weekend backpack program. This grant was above and beyond the initial \$10,000 commitment.

Things were more lighthearted during a back-and-forth between judge Jeff Sinelli, the founder and chief vibe officer of Which Wich Superior Sandwiches, and presenter Melissa Martinelli of Superfrau, who was an immigration lawyer before becoming a self-described "food waste warrior." Superfrau's mission is to tackle food waste in the form of a refreshing, light beverage in cucumber-lime, peach-mango and lemon-elderflower flavors. The drink, made from upcycled surplus whey from yogurt and cheese makers, promotes gut health. After Martinelli confessed that she's "obsessed with whey," Sinelli said, "No whey!" She responded with a perfectly timed zinger. "Whey," she said, as the audience laughed.

The remaining grant winners were announced after difficult deliberations.

FINALISTS

Brooklyn Bugs
.....

Cambridge Schools
Food & Nutrition
Services Department
.....

Conscious Alliance
.....

Convoy of Hope
.....

Drink Superfrau
.....

Food [the] Voice –
a Podcast Portal
for the Food World
.....

FooFii
.....

Fresh Truck
.....

New Entry Sustainable
Farming Project,
by Tufts University
.....

Power of Change





CHALLENGE JUDGES AND WINNERS

Director of Strategic Initiatives and Communications at Harvard University Dining Services Crista Martin; Executive Director of Conscious Alliance Justin Levy; Vice President of Consumer Insights and Corporate Innovation at Hormel Foods Scott Aakre; New Entry Food Hub's Ginger Turner; Founder and Chief Vibe Officer of Which Wich Jeff Sinelli; Harvard University Student Christi Lee; Partner at Prince Lobel Tye LLP and Former U.S. Ambassador Hon. Robert Barber; RD of Cambridge Schools Food & Nutrition Services Department Mellissa Honeywood; Executive of Residence at Attention Span Media Elizabeth Fastiggi; Product Manager of Fidelity Labs Neal Doyle; Chief Strategy Officer of Attention Span Media Garrett Law

GRANT WINNERS

Power of Change

Harvard student Christi Lee received \$1,000 for the 50 Cents Challenge, a campaign that enables Massachusetts students to donate to hunger-relief efforts through local food banks.

Tufts University's New Entry Sustainable Farming Project

New Entry netted a \$4,000 prize to use for a farmer training program for new and immigrant farmers. The project's produce goes to 500 underserved people.

Conscious Alliance

Justin Levy's organization was awarded \$5,000 for its program that helps move food to where it's needed most: into the hands of hungry kids.

Cambridge Public Schools Food & Nutrition Services Department

The school was awarded \$6,000 for a food vacuum sealer that will allow schools to include freshly prepared food in a new weekend backpack program.

The judges announced they would provide mentoring resources for all of the finalists, an offer that was augmented by Hormel Foods executives and other industry leaders. The mentoring will include phone meetings, emails and ongoing support to help these organizations further their meaningful work. The mentorship gesture reflected the collaborative spirit of the inaugural conference.

EXPLORE THE SUMMIT

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THE *Science* OF FOOD SAFETY

WHERE TASTE MEETS QUALITY

by Ethan Watters

Driving down a nondescript industrial road in Austin, Minn., you might find yourself slowing down to admire a striking building with a facade of glass and red panels. Backing onto Wolf Creek and a forest of white oak and ironwood trees, it would be easy to mistake the building for a high-end architectural firm. Instead, this is the new multimillion dollar, 52,000-square-foot research and development laboratory of Hormel Foods.





Inside, everything feels new. Sun streams into large open workspaces. But don't let calm, stylish surroundings fool you. The microbiologists and chemists perform a herculean amount of work in this new facility. Every year, more than 800,000 tests are performed. Weighing anywhere from 2 ounces to 80 pounds, the samples tested come from up and down the supply, processing and distribution chains, and typically include everything from ingredients to the final packaged product. The testing is serious and meticulous, and that's as it should be. This rigorous process is at the heart of the commitment of Hormel Foods to provide consumers with safe and nutritious food.

Despite the workload, the vibe inside the R&D building is calm and workmanlike. In the heart of the facility, microbiologists and chemists in white lab coats run a variety of tests and assays. As the names suggest, the microbiology lab focuses on general microbiological and pathogen testing, while the chemistry lab focuses on chromatography and general chemistry analysis. The work requires top-of-the-line equipment that must be constantly tested and calibrated.

"We're able to collaborate on projects with many areas of the company because we have everything we need here," said Sally Staben, manager of the chemistry and microbiology labs. "We can help bring new products to life, working with product developers, marketers and package designers."

In 2017, the lab earned the coveted ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation, a critical accomplishment for any lab. Simply put, adherence to the standard demonstrates the lab's technical competence. According to R&D lab administrator Marco Garcia, the nearly yearlong process culminated with a two-day on-site inspection.

"This accreditation is the gold standard for labs," Garcia said. "It has been a huge team effort. All 45 of us in the R&D building pitched in. It also took a great deal of support from others in the company. It's proof that Hormel Foods really believes in the functions this lab provides."

Aside from routine testing for nutrition and food safety, the chemists and microbiologists at the Hormel Foods R&D labs have become major players in food industry trends. Consumers increasingly want simple, easily understandable ingredients in their food – so-called

clean labels. Hormel Foods has responded by removing or reducing additives and preservatives. In 2017 alone, the company initiated seven clean-label projects, and six clean-label projects were completed. Those completed in 2017 included *Hormel® Natural Choice®* snacks and *Stagg®* chili.

But changing a recipe or the packaging of a food product that will eventually feed millions of people is no simple task. Any change in the ingredients – reducing salt, for instance – means the product has to be carefully tested to ensure the food is safe when it leaves the processing facility, plus during transportation, on the store shelf and over time in the homes of consumers.

The same goes for any changes in packaging. The team at Hormel Foods aggressively looks for ways to reduce packaging material in order to cut back on waste. But before new packaging can become a reality, it must pass a challenge test at the R&D lab. The product and package must pass the company's rigorous testing protocol to be approved for production.



“What we do is intentionally introduce a pathogen or spoilage bacteria to a test sample of the product and repackage it,” said Aaron Asmus, director of food safety validation and laboratory services. “Then we hold it for the shelf life of the food and then test it. We have developed certain failure criteria in regard to both the rate of growth and extent of growth of these bacteria that the product must achieve in order for it to pass.”

In another part of the lab, the focus is on nutrition. Consumers are increasingly reading labels and rightfully expect the vitamin, carbohydrate and protein measures to be accurate. In addition, they may want to avoid allergens, various types of fats and other ingredients. Measuring these properties accurately is not an easy task, but technology saves the day. Tools such as an inductive coupled plasma mass spectrometer have the ability to separate parts of any food product on a molecular level, ensuring the packages’ nutritional information and product claims are accurate.

“Hormel Foods doesn’t shy away from investing in new technology,” said Dove Mullins, chemistry lab manager, demonstrating the workings of the mass spectrometer. “Of course, technology is only as good as the team that runs it. Fortunately, we have a great team here.”

Hormel Foods has had a food safety lab for nearly 80 years, and that’s allowed the company to pioneer ways to cook and package food for the world’s growing population. While changes in the food industry continue to accelerate, Asmus believes Hormel Foods will keep innovating the preparation and packaging of food. The company will also evaluate scientific advances, including new technology that can rapidly identify pathogens from their DNA.

On a wall in the lobby of the R&D facility is a quote from Albert Einstein that reads, “To raise new questions, new possibilities, to regard old problems from a new angle, requires creative imagination and marks real advance in science.” Einstein’s quote should hit a chord for any Hormel Foods team member. The sentiment lines up nicely with company patriarch George A. Hormel’s most famous admonition: “Originate, don’t imitate.”

BY THE NUMBERS

NEW FACILITY
OPENED:

2016

SIZE:

52,000

SQUARE FEET

TEAM
MEMBERS:

45

TESTS
PERFORMED
ANNUALLY:

+800,000

HORMEL FOODS
**BEGAN LAB
TESTING:**

1937

EARNED ISO/IEC 17025
ACCREDITATION:

2017

THE
SMOOTHEST
WAY TO

PB&J



NOW IN THE
FREEZER AISLE!







LET'S • BEE • REAL

**We need bees to survive.
Here's how to join the hive-minded.**


by Alyssa Shelasky

Say the word “bees!” and many people around the world will think “ouch!,” or maybe they’ll hear an imaginary buzzing sound or smack their lips at the thought of sweet, sweet honey. What they probably won’t dwell on is the need to ensure the future of these very helpful insects.

That’s because many of us, including the biggest *Justin’s*® nut butter superfans out there, have no idea why beekeeping is so important. Even fewer of us may realize that beekeeping at home is a wonderful way to bring love to our world and to our environment. There are so many positive, beautiful, Earth-generous benefits of keeping bees. But frankly, we humans tend to be a little bit — well — bee-hind the times.

Justin’s, a Colorado-based company that specializes in nut butters, goes out of its way to be especially kind to the world’s natural pollinators. Its outreach reaps benefits for the organization, not to mention anyone who eats.

“If you love food as much as I do, then you should love bees as much as I do. Bees are responsible for one in three bites of food we eat, including almonds, honey and cacao — three of my favorite forms of food.



But with honeybees dying off at a rate of around 40 percent per year, we can't afford to sit idly," said Justin Gold, founder of Justin's. "That's why our team bee-lieves (sorry, had to) pollinators need us as much as we need them, and this cause will continue to gain much needed attention."

A large number of fruits and vegetables rely on natural pollinators.

Almonds are not self-pollinating. They require cross-pollination between different varieties, so orchards are planted with multiple almond tree types in alternating rows. Honeybees and other pollinators move pollen between these trees and within flowers in order to pollinate almond blossoms, which, when fertilized, become the almonds we love.

However, that perfect pastoral image may be at risk.

Pests, pathogens, poor forage and pesticides have had their way with pollinators. The problem is serious and poses a significant challenge that we need to address to ensure the sustainability of our food production systems, avoid additional economic impacts on the agricultural sector and protect the health of the environment.

Why is this topic so important to our Earth and our future? Albert Einstein has been quoted as saying, "If the bee disappeared off the surface of the globe, then man would have only four years of life left." And let's face it, Einstein was a smart guy.

Honeybees are a critical element of our food supply. Without them, we would see a devastating decrease in healthy foods like fruits and vegetables. If you're not into those things, think about this: Even coffee beans require honeybees for pollination.

BEE-POSITIVE CHANGES YOU CAN MAKE

Want to help? There are a series of things you can do.

Start by asking yourself if you can become a beekeeper. It all depends on your living situation and home life, of course, but basically, anyone can start keeping bees.

If you decide to go for it, the first step is to get some bees. You'll need to decide whether package bees, nucs, catching a swarm or buying an already started hive is the right choice for you. Each has pros and cons, so do the research. There are courses online and offline and several how-to articles around. Contact local beekeeping associations. They'll appreciate the support and will probably be glad to give you some advice.

In fact, beekeepers love to buzz about with kindred spirits — aka other beekeepers. That being said, they'll assure you there's no single way to keep bees. In fact, beekeepers like to argue (with love, of course) about the best methods. Let this be a comfort: You don't have to be perfect, and there's no one right way or wrong way. You BEE you.

Beekeepers will also tell you the personality of every hive of bees is different. You never know what you're going to get, which is kind of fun but a little risky. There are hyperactive bees, aggressive bees, polite bees, dancing bees, mean bees, cute bees, even funny bees. Think of them as family members; you can't choose them, you just love them.

If beekeeping at home feels out of reach, you can still get in the game by planting native plants and eliminating chemicals that hurt pollinators

from your gardens so bees can live and pollinate. You can talk to friends about the environmental issue at hand, prep yourself to speak at schools and throughout your community, and host homemade honey taste tests in your kitchen or at local events. By all means, buy honey — for yourself and all your family and friends — from a hardworking (and local) beekeeper.

If you're inclined to make a financial contribution, consider one of the nonprofit organizations that is championing pollinators. Justin's supports the Xerces Society, a recognized international leader in pollinator conservation.

Justin's supports its national programs, including the restoration of 400,000 acres of wildflowers, the training and educating of more than 70,000 pollinator conservationists and the strengthening of pesticide bans across the country.

Closer to home, Justin's has teamed up with the People and Pollinators Action Network. The group provides funding for pollinator habitats and campaigning for pollinator-friendly policies in Colorado. Justin's helped with the installation of the first local pollinator garden and provided funds for scholarships and classroom visits for more than 800 children who will learn about pollinator conservation, in partnership with Growing Gardens.

It's about increasing awareness by creating a scalable and impactful program.

The team at Justin's wants to lay a foundation for a more sustainable future and a healthier food system.



Educate friends and community members about issues facing bees.



Don't apply chemicals that hurt pollinators to your garden and lawns.



Can you keep bees? Learn about what it takes and if it's right for you.



Plant regionally appropriate native plants.



Make a financial contribution to a nonprofit pollinator organization.



Buy honey — for yourself and for gifts — from a local beekeeper.

ZERO WASTE GOES TO SCHOOL

Join the zero-waste movement at home and at universities across the country
by Mary Burich

If your mother ever told you not to waste food, she may well have been ahead of her time. Recent statistics from organizations such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations shed light on the scope of the problem. And it's a behemoth. Somewhere between 30 and 40 percent of food worldwide is lost or goes to landfills as refuse. In the United States and other wealthy nations, the scale tends to tip toward the high end.

It's bad news on at least three fronts. "This amount of waste has far-reaching impacts on food security, resource conservation and climate change," reported the USDA.

Tony Finnestad, a professional chef who caters to the Foodservice division of Hormel Foods, is keenly aware of the situation. In fact, he's made it his business to aim for zero waste at work and in his own kitchen. His commitment begins with food, but it extends to other consumables, fueling his lifestyle choices.

"It's one of the things I'm passionate about," he said. "It's an important issue in the restaurant and food industry, and at home as well."

Finnestad and his wife have been striving for a zero-waste lifestyle for at least a decade. They work hard at using all their food and avoiding throw-away items like paper towels, plastic grocery bags and disposable dishes

and cutlery. Coffee grounds don't land in the trash; they enrich their soil, which they use to grow some of their food. Recyclables are taken to a collection point in their town.

"It's a movement that's becoming more popular," Finnestad said, pointing to Rick Bayless, a celebrity chef who comes amazingly close to zero waste in his restaurants. Even in his day-to-day work at Hormel Foods, Finnestad is seeing customers take giant — and creative — steps toward reducing their carbon footprints.



WELL-SCHOOLED

A number of American colleges and universities deserve high marks for their efforts at reducing food waste and diverting as much as possible from the solid-waste stream. At sporting events, picnics and carefully planned meals, students are learning lessons outside the classrooms that will serve them for life, and the Earth even longer.



UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

Students at the University of Connecticut (UConn) have a wide assortment of extracurricular activities, to say the least. Even so, the school's Tasty Waste event doesn't disappoint. Started in 2017 as a way of bringing attention to the worldwide problem of food waste, the free dinner makes use of products that might otherwise be discarded. Sadly, an inconsequential flaw can be enough to kick an ingredient or food item out of the supply chain.

"We work with local businesses and farms to get ingredients that would be rejected or are about to expire," said Chef Rob Landolphi, UConn's assistant director of culinary development. "We even found ice cream that wasn't up to the manufacturer's specifications. It might not have enough chocolate chips, for example."

Suffice it to say, all of the items are safe to eat.

In addition to a dinner made memorable by the likes of homemade steak-and-ale pie, strawberry bread pudding and fruit-infused water, speakers from the university and national organizations come in to round out the educational piece, according to Landolphi. "We want students to understand that what they don't eat at each meal becomes food waste, and that has far-reaching and serious implications."

The Tasty Waste meal is well on its way to becoming an annual tradition at UConn, but it's far from the only initiative in place. All dining halls have Green Restaurant Association certification, something unique among American colleges and universities. Used cooking oil is turned into biodiesel fuel, pulverizing machines in dish rooms finely chop food waste, extracting nonpotable or "gray water." As the largest user of Connecticut pro-

duce, UConn buys locally as much as possible. There's an organic farm on campus, not to mention a hydroponic/aquaponic system, and a new relationship with a company started by UConn alums that uses a natural process to turn organic material into renewable energy.

"Three of our dining facilities are using this system for food waste so far," Landolphi said.

Still, the spirit of Tasty Waste is not to be overshadowed. For instance, Landolphi is challenging the culinary team to take a second look at items that were once considered scraps: celery ribs, broccoli stems and more. The results have yielded cucumber-peel chutney and potato croquettes made from carrot peels and the ends of cheeses. The dishes are favorites of UConn diners.

"We can use 90 percent of our food," he said.



UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

As the executive chef charged with feeding the 10,000 students who live on the University of Michigan's flagship Ann Arbor campus, Frank Turchan has been witnessing an awakening among his constituents. In addition to increasing demand for international cuisine, healthy options and trendy items — ramen is huge right now — students are eating up Turchan's efforts toward reducing food waste and keeping other foodservice items from going to landfills.

"More and more students are coming on board," he said. "They're increasingly aware of the need to be aware of what we're throwing away and to enact change."

Michigan's kitchens are organized to allow for pre- and postconsumer waste streams, which are funneled to a local facility for composting at the rate of about 90 percent of the food waste from the campus. Protein portion sizes have been trimmed back to reduce waste. Finally, students dine from small plates; serving trays are no longer part of the landscape at Michigan.

"Without trays, students have to make a conscious decision to go back for more," Turchan said.

The efforts are not only reducing food waste, they're cutting back on costs. Extra funds are going toward local sourcing of beef,

pork and chicken, and sustainability in general. Making good on its promise, Michigan is the first Big Ten school to be recognized as an Ocean Hero by the Marine Stewardship Council.

Students are helping to lead the way, too. They began a relationship several years ago with Food Gatherers, a 30-year-old nonprofit founded in Ann Arbor as Michigan's first food-rescue organization.

"Food that would otherwise go to waste is labeled and dated for donation to Food Gatherers," Turchan said. "We were donating 8,000 pounds a year. Now we're down to 1,000. We're making progress."



UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

The University of New Hampshire (UNH) is upping its game around foodservice waste, so it's fitting that it honed in on the university's new stadium. The sporting venue's concessions program was targeted for 90 percent diversion from day one.

"It was our first zero-waste initiative," said Bill McNamara, executive director for hospitality services at UNH. "And it's working."

For starters, plates, cups and utensils are compostable. Candy is bought in bulk and put in compostable packaging. "We have trash cans, but there is very little need for them," he said.

Believing sorting to be the biggest challenge, McNamara worked with UNH's marketing and communication staff to develop a campaign to educate guests about what to do with their castoffs. For the first few

games, volunteers — nicknamed bin guards or goalies — hung out by the barrels and taught people how to sort. These days, a custodial crew goes in after each game to make sure everything was separated correctly.

Similar efforts are underway elsewhere on campus, including at all of UNH's picnics — one of which welcomes nearly 10,000 guests. At the same time, the team is laser-focused on food waste in its dining halls.

"We're always fine-tuning production, analyzing what people take and what gets left behind," McNamara said in a recent food waste reduction presentation at the Menus of Change conference. The annual gathering, developed by The Culinary Institute of America and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, focuses on nutrition, public health, environmental stewardship and

social responsibility.

UNH's results are measurable. For the 2017 academic year, the amount of waste per diner was 1.7 ounces per meal, down from 2.2 ounces the year before. Given 3 million-plus annual meals, the savings are stacking up. Contributing to the success are movements such as skinning down portion sizes and eliminating serving trays.

"We're encouraging people to come back as often as they like instead of taking more than they can eat," McNamara said. "The objective is to reduce waste in the first place."

What is uneaten goes back to the dish room to be composted. As extended breaks approach, perishables are donated to a local food pantry.

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

Think you can't make a difference? Think again. Little things add up to big results in a myriad of areas. Here are a few simple ideas from the kitchen of Hormel Foods Chef Tony Finnestad.



WOOF

No doggy? No problem. Restaurant servers are well-equipped with take-home containers, the ones we used to call doggie bags. One of Finnestad's friends asks for a container before she begins eating. It's her way of controlling her portion and getting an extra meal out of the deal. Want to go a step further? Bring in a reusable container from home for your leftovers.

ALL IN THE FAMILY

It might seem fancy to serve plated meals to your guests, but that leaves room for food waste if they can't finish everything or if they avoid certain items due to allergies or preferences. Instead, consider serving your meal family style or as a buffet, allowing guests to take only what they want and can finish. Leftovers can then be sent home with guests or packed up and put in your fridge. After entertaining, you'll welcome a precooked meal.

TYPE-A FRIDGE

Packing up your leftovers won't do much good if they get shoved to the back of your refrigerator or freezer, or if you can't remember the contents of each package and when you put it there. Label your containers and keep older items toward the front so they get used first.

"P" IS FOR PLANNING

Before effective refrigeration and the busyness of our world, home cooks made daily trips to the market. Needless to say, that's not practical today. However, you can plan meals for the week — check sales and use in-season produce — and buy only the ingredients you need as a way of reducing potential waste. Also, pay attention to what you're throwing away each week, and keep that in mind when you return to the store for your next shop.

DATE NIGHT

When produce begins to look less than picture-perfect, consider freezing it for use in sauces, stews, muffins, etc., down the road. Overly ripe bananas can be frozen and used for bread later on. Peel your fading apples and cut them up for applesauce. Remove bad spots on tomatoes and peppers and chop them up for quick spaghetti sauce. The life of much fresh produce can be extended by freezing, and in fact, the flavors can be wonderful since you are freezing the items at the peak of ripeness. Plus, you'll save time with ingredients that simply need to be thawed and put in your favorite recipes.

GOOD, BETTER, BEST

Improvement Awards Recognize Global Workforce

by Mary Burich

A team from the Austin (Minn.) Plant of Hormel Foods was all smiles when recognized for efforts at reducing water consumption and claiming the grand prize in the Sustainability Best of the Best awards program.

By changing a washing process, the plant is now saving nearly 9 million gallons of water a year. That's enough to fill 180,000 bathtubs or a swimming pool that's 2,403 feet long, 50 feet wide and 10 feet deep. Even more, the feat was accomplished without a capital expenditure.

Tom Raymond oversees environmental sustainability at Hormel Foods, including its Sustainability Best of the Best global program aimed at bringing to light the Earth-friendly work being done throughout the enterprise.

Since 2008, the company has been inviting employees to quantify and package environmental sustainability accomplishments and enter a friendly competition that's stronger than ever. There's no big cash prize to be claimed. And yet, 40 to 60 teams submit projects every fall.

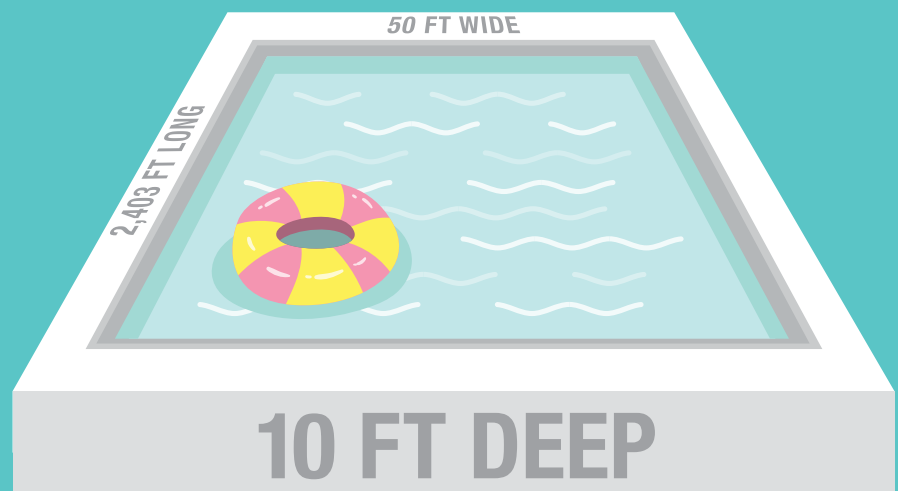
"We don't limit the amount of applications that will be reviewed," Raymond said. "In fact, we encourage as many team submittals as possible. At its heart, the Sustainability Best of the Best program is designed to reward and recognize the hard work that people do to hit our goals."

In what is described by Raymond as a "great partnership between the Corporate Office and our plants," industrial, mechanical and electrical engineers at the headquarters of Hormel Foods work with team members at production facilities to find opportunities to improve the environment and help the company achieve its 2020 environmental goals.

9 Million Gallons of Water =
Enough to Fill 180 Thousand Bathtubs



OR



Notable projects have touched on areas ranging from lighting to solid waste and virtually everything in between. The company's Beijing (China) Plant was the first international winner several years ago. Its submission, titled Project Blue Sky, documented an initiative that was in response to a government mandate to reduce the use of fossil fuel.

"Not only did the plant move from coal to natural gas, they made sure they were optimizing everything in the process – boilers, production downtime and more – to make the project a win all the way around," Raymond said.

Project Blue Sky resulted in an annual reduction of 7 million tons of carbon dioxide. According to the EPA, that equates to more than 17 billion passenger miles in an automobile.

Lloyd Brandon, corporate manager of Six Sigma and a 35-plus-year Hormel Foods employee, remembers the dawn of the Sustainability Best of the Best award. Leading up to its founding, Hormel Foods had a Process Best of the Best program in place as part of the company's continuous improvement process. That arm of Best of the Best is still flourishing, as is a third category aimed at celebrating innovation.

While Raymond oversees the sustainability component of Best of the Best, Brandon is responsible for the administration of the process and innovation awards. The two confer on dates and other logistics, allowing the three components of Best of the Best to run on parallel tracks.

All three involve the evaluation of proposals and the subsequent narrowing of each field to one.

"The first round results in the top 10, followed by the selection of the final four," Raymond said. "The winner is invited to Austin, along with the winner of innovation and the final four of Process Best of the Best, to present to the executive team."

Employee recognition is of paramount importance, and with good reason. This work is important to Hormel Foods.

"Our end goal is to reduce our environmental-resource needs and enjoy the financial savings that come with that," Raymond said.

According to Brandon, "Our company is focused on being a good corporate citizen. This process helps elevate that to all of our team members."

7 Million Tons CO₂ =
17 Billion Passenger Miles



x17 Billion



HERE COMES THE SUN

By Nevin Martell



The sun is rising over a new era at Hormel Foods — in more ways than one. That’s because the company is increasingly relying on solar power as an environmentally friendly, renewable energy source. It’s part of a companywide goal to achieve a 10 percent reduction in nonrenewable energy use by 2020 (based on 2011 levels). As of the end of 2018, the company achieved this goal.

This initiative is an all-around win, according to Tom Raymond, director of environmental sustainability for Hormel Foods. Using solar energy instead of nonrenewable sources helps the environment, makes long-term financial sense, supports the wider community and demonstrates to consumers that the company is working hard to reduce its impact on the natural world. “We are serious about being stewards to the planet,” he said.

The shining beacon of this program is the company’s co-sponsorship with Westar Energy of its debut community solar garden in Hutchinson, Kan. Featuring 4,000 solar panels on 7.5 acres dotted with native flowers, the array helps power the company’s Dold Foods facility 50 miles away in Wichita. The majority of *Hormel® Natural Choice®* uncured bacon products are manufactured there. Approximately 20 percent of the solar garden’s 2 million kilowatt hours of electricity generated annually is directed to Dold Foods, accounting for roughly 2 percent of the facility’s overall usage.

“IT HAS TO DRIVE OUR ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY GOALS AND MAKE GOOD FINANCIAL SENSE FOR THE ORGANIZATION.”

Tom Raymond



That facility is not blazing a clean-energy trail alone. Other locations also subscribe to community solar gardens to support renewable energy. A third party owns, erects and maintains the panels, but the plants are major beneficiaries of its energy output. “Supporting community solar gardens helps build the renewable profile of our energy supply and gives us the opportunity to show leadership in renewable energy,” said Coulter Wood, senior environmental engineer and energy manager at Hormel Foods.

Going forward, Hormel Foods will continue to expand its use of solar energy. In fact, the company recently unveiled a solar garden at its Swiss American Sausage Company location in California. The new solar array consists of approximately 2,000 panels constructed on both roof and ground space. When choosing which plants harness the power of the sun, Raymond said he looks at two main components. “It has to drive our environmental sustainability goals and make good financial sense for the organization,” he said.

Solar isn’t the only renewable energy source Hormel Foods relies on. The company has also announced a virtual power purchase agreement for wind energy. The new wind farm will be located near Milligan, Neb., and construction is expected to be completed in 2020. When the project is completed, Hormel Foods will be powered by nearly 50 percent renewable energy.

This increasing reliance on clean, renewable energy is just one element of the multifaceted, environmentally conscious approach to doing business at Hormel Foods. Concurrently, the company is working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy use by 10 percent, and product packaging by 25 million pounds by 2020 (based on 2011 levels).

The company’s 2020 goals for solid waste sent to landfills and water use have already been surpassed, and additional projects are being implemented to continue to reduce these numbers.

It’s all part of the company’s efforts to ensure a future as bright as the sun.

Approximately
20%

of the Hutchinson, Kan.,
solar garden's

**2 MILLION
KILOWATT HOURS**

of electricity generated
annually is directed to

DOLD FOODS.

The majority of
Hormel[®]

Natural Choice[®]

uncured bacon products

**ARE MADE AT
DOLD FOODS.**



EXPANDING SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

HORMEL FOODS JOINS WITH PRIVATE AND NONPROFIT GROUPS TO PROTECT WATER QUALITY

Soybeans glowed in the sun on both sides of Minnesota Highway 218 through Blooming Prairie, heading north toward Minneapolis. It was a hot, dry August day, but Steve Lawler of the Mower Soil and Water Conservation District just made it rain 1 inch on the Krell family farm. On one small corner of the farm, anyway. He was demonstrating how different soil management techniques retain rainwater. If that sounds dry, it's because the subtext is the interesting part — better rainwater retention means more nutrients stay in the soil. For farmers, that translates to better yields.

by **CLAIRE STREMPLE**







The Krell family

This demonstration was part of a Cedar River Watershed Partnership farm event, where a coalition of private, public and nonprofit groups addresses challenges to water resources in the Cedar River Watershed, like flooding and sedimentation. The watershed starts in southern Minnesota and extends across much of eastern Iowa, eventually joining with the Iowa River and feeding into the Mississippi River.

The partnership's event was held at the Krell family farm, bringing local growers together to show what a better future for farmland can look like. Justin Krell is a fifth-generation farmer. He works the land alongside his father, Rodney Krell. For a man

who walks through generations of tradition every time Justin's boots hit the earth, he's not afraid of trying something new. "If we can change our practices and get better yields, that's a win-win," he said. So far, it's working on his farm.

He watched as Lawler turned on an overhead hose to simulate rain. The sprinkler began to douse thick slabs of sample dirt taken from different fields. Under each sample hung two buckets, one for the water that runs off the top — taking vital nutrients with it — and another for what seeps through the soil and is absorbed into the earth. After a few minutes, water sluices into different buckets.

Justin Krell talks about dirt the way a Silicon

Valley entrepreneur with a Minnesotan accent might. The big idea he's touting is a technique called strip tillage.

When you say "increasing yield" to farmers, their ears might perk up a bit. Those words mean dollar signs in the world of price-volatile corn. What Lawler knows is that these farmers have every reason to be conservative with their methods. You can't just tell farmers to risk a year's profit on a new idea, you have to show that it works. The proof is in the buckets — traditional management loses a lot of dark, soil-rich water off the top, but strip-tilled soil soaks it in.

NEW MATH

“Ten years ago, if we wanted 200-bushel corn yield, we’d go out and apply 200 to 220 pounds of nitrogen.” Justin Krell said that was common practice. “Now, we’re raising 240-bushel corn, and we’re going out with maybe 150 pounds of nitrogen.”

Strip tillage is part of the change. The Krells use a different method of tillage than their neighbors do. The strip-till machine only disturbs the top 8 inches of soil, rather than sinking long blades deep into the ground and turning up huge clods of black dirt. Having machinery and fields that look different is a big risk in a close-knit community where many people do the same job.

But less nitrogen to produce more grain means more money in the bank. It’s thanks in part to technology that Justin Krell is saving money and keeping his soil healthier.

It’s a bonus that this kind of money-saving management means there’s less nitrogen potentially in the watersheds.

PROCEEDING WITH EXCITEMENT

With demonstrations like this one, the Cedar River Watershed Partnership hopes to bring everyone to the table in a spirit of teamwork. The morning’s tillage demonstration was designed so that farmers could see for themselves what the tools are and how they might work. In short, they’re opening up resources for farmers and giving them opportunities to see how things work before having to make investments themselves.

They’re also offering resources. “This is a value-add to the grower – free technological assistance to help address concerns and financial assistance for change management,”

said Brad Redlin with the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program.

Redlin explained that a nongovernment group will come out to participating farms and help farmers decide on methods to increase compliance with new state water-quality rules. “We want to create space for one-on-one, site-specific solutions. How they want to do it, not how anyone is telling them to do it,” he said.

Another value of the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program is recognition and a 10-year contract with the state that the farm will be considered in compliance with new laws that may be passed.

For people like the Krells, farming isn’t just a livelihood, it’s a life. It’s not just how you farm that they’re talking about, it’s how you live. It’s emotional. It leads to identity and honor in a small community.

MEMBERS OF THE CEDAR RIVER WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP:

- Central Farm Service
 - Hormel Foods
- Land O’Lakes SUSTAIN
- Minnesota Department of Agriculture
- Mower Soil and Water Conservation District
- Environmental Initiative, a nonprofit that convenes and facilitates the partnership

Steve Lawler’s demonstration of different soil management techniques



REWARDING CHANGE

The coalition wants to get farmers certified with the state to show that they have progressive water practices. “We want to recognize growers for great work and give people certification,” Redlin said.

Justin Krell’s farm has this coveted certification, and he said it wasn’t hard at all. He’s willing to put his reputation behind the idea, too. He told the group, “This is a collective effort of everyone who lives in the watershed, working toward keeping the land safe, beautiful and productive for generations to come.”

The collaboration began in 2017 and is convened and managed by the Environmental Initiative, a local nonprofit. Hormel Foods is a founding member of Cedar River Watershed Partnership. “It’s right in our backyard,” said Tom Raymond, director of environmental

sustainability at Hormel Foods.

What’s in it for Hormel Foods? To Raymond, the answer couldn’t be more obvious. The company has already met its 2020 goal to reduce water usage by 10 percent based on 2011 levels and is working toward achieving additional reductions. This focus on conserving water in its operations and facilities also extends to producers in the Hormel Foods family, so it’s in keeping with the company’s values to help fund an initiative that encourages farmers to get certified with the state for water quality.

This is more than a move to give producers access to better practices. It’s also part of a movement to better represent farmers and give them more opportunities to share their stories.

“Thirty years ago, nearly everyone had a grandpa who was farming. As that’s

changed, there’s less people with connections to agriculture,” Justin Krell said. So, the challenge is communication between people who work the land and people who eat the bounty.

“I don’t know a single farmer who isn’t a steward of the land, because ...,” Justin Krell gestures to the lush green fields behind him, “This is our land. We live here. We live and breathe this. So, we’re not going to mistreat it. I think that’s one of the bigger misconceptions with the public.”

According to Justin Krell, better water management is just better business. No one needs to tell a farmer that being a good steward of the land is a solid long-term economic strategy, but in a high-risk livelihood like farming, traditional methods can be hard to replace with new wisdom. “Sometimes,” he said, “You have to step up and blaze the trail.”



Representatives of the Cedar River Watershed Partnership





LESS IS MORE

CLEANING UP LABELS

by Nevin Martell

Take a look at the ingredient list on a jar of SKIPPY® natural creamy peanut butter spread or a package of Applegate Naturals® no sugar bacon. Each has only four ingredients, and you'll recognize all of them. The bacon includes nothing more than pork, water, sea salt and celery powder, while the peanut butter has only roasted peanuts, sugar, palm oil and salt. There are no chemicals with unpronounceable names or ingredients with unknown purposes.

These products are part of a wider clean-label initiative that has been underway at Hormel Foods for over a decade. It involves using only those ingredients that are familiar to consumers and not utilizing any artificial colors or flavors, resulting in a cleaner label.

The effort to strip out unfamiliar and unnatural ingredients was partially driven by a desire to be transparent with consumers and partially driven by consumers themselves, according to Melissa Bonorden, a research scientist with Hormel Foods. "They want to understand what they're eating," she said.

When a product is targeted for clean labeling, the process takes over a year to complete. First, every ingredient is examined to determine its functionality within the recipe. Team members ask, "Can any of them be deleted entirely, replaced with a natural alternative or given some context on the label

to inform the consumer that it is used as a preservative or for coloring?"

A small-scale batch of the new version of the product is made at a research and development facility. After it is honed there, a full-blown plant trial is undertaken. Then the manufacturing costs are scrutinized, while the marketing department examines the product again to make sure it meets expectations in regard to flavor and color. "We want it to taste just as good, if not better," said Bonorden.

Before it hits shelves again, the labels of the products may be redesigned to highlight natural and organic attributes.

Hormel Foods initiated 47 clean-label projects in 2016 and another seven in 2017. Those completed in 2017 included Hormel® Natural Choice® snacks and Staggs® chili. Additionally, the company rolled out a number of innovative products – including Hormel® Fire Braised™ meats, Hormel® Natural Choice® meats and Hormel® FUSE™ patties – which are 100 percent all-natural with no added preservatives, no artificial colors, no nitrates or nitrites added, and have no gluten-containing ingredients. Some of these initiatives include products that are for the foodservice channel and are being served in restaurants, hotels, hospitals and more.

Alongside these efforts is a companywide sodium-reduction initiative that has been in

place for approximately 30 years. This is a supplement to the company's efforts to offer sodium-reduced alternatives to many of its most-loved products. However, Hormel Foods has stepped up its oversight in the last decade by building a computerized system to track the amount of sodium in each product, working to monitor changes over time. "We can now track it and report on it in a more objective way," said Bonorden.

Currently, there are eight product categories undergoing sodium reduction, and there are plenty of success stories to tout. CHI-CHI'S®, Herdez® and La Victoria® tortillas have had their sodium reduced by 28 percent, Hormel® Canadian bacon is down 27 percent, and Hormel® Compleats® microwave meals have dropped 19 percent.

The goal is to reduce sodium by 15 percent in select product lines. At the end of the day, though, flavor trumps all else. "Taste is always the driver," said Bonorden. "And sodium does drive taste."

However, with products as good as SKIPPY® natural creamy peanut butter spread and Applegate Naturals® no sugar bacon, nobody is missing the excess sodium or the ingredients with unpronounceable names. Well-loved brands such as these are proof that sometimes less is more.

THINKING INSIDE THE BOX

Our Efforts to Reach an Ambitious Packaging-Reduction Goal

BY ETHAN WATTERS

The mind-bending complexity of how food is packaged is something most consumers don't pay much attention to. Consider the fact that there are over 11,000 distinct materials used to package Hormel Foods products. Figuring out exactly how to make those materials maximally efficient and sustainable falls to an elite group with an ambitious goal: In 2012, the packaging development team was challenged to reduce total packaging material by 25 million pounds by the year 2020. With only a year to go, the team's job is getting more difficult.

The task boils down to this: examining each one of those 11,000 packaging components, finding ways to eliminate some and figuring out how to use the rest more efficiently. This might mean changing a package so shrink wrap is no longer required or eliminating a paper sleeve. It might mean reducing the weight of a plastic jar slightly or redesigning a shipping box so there's no empty space.

A job on the Hormel Foods packaging research and development team, which is comprised of eight members, comes with some substantial expectations.

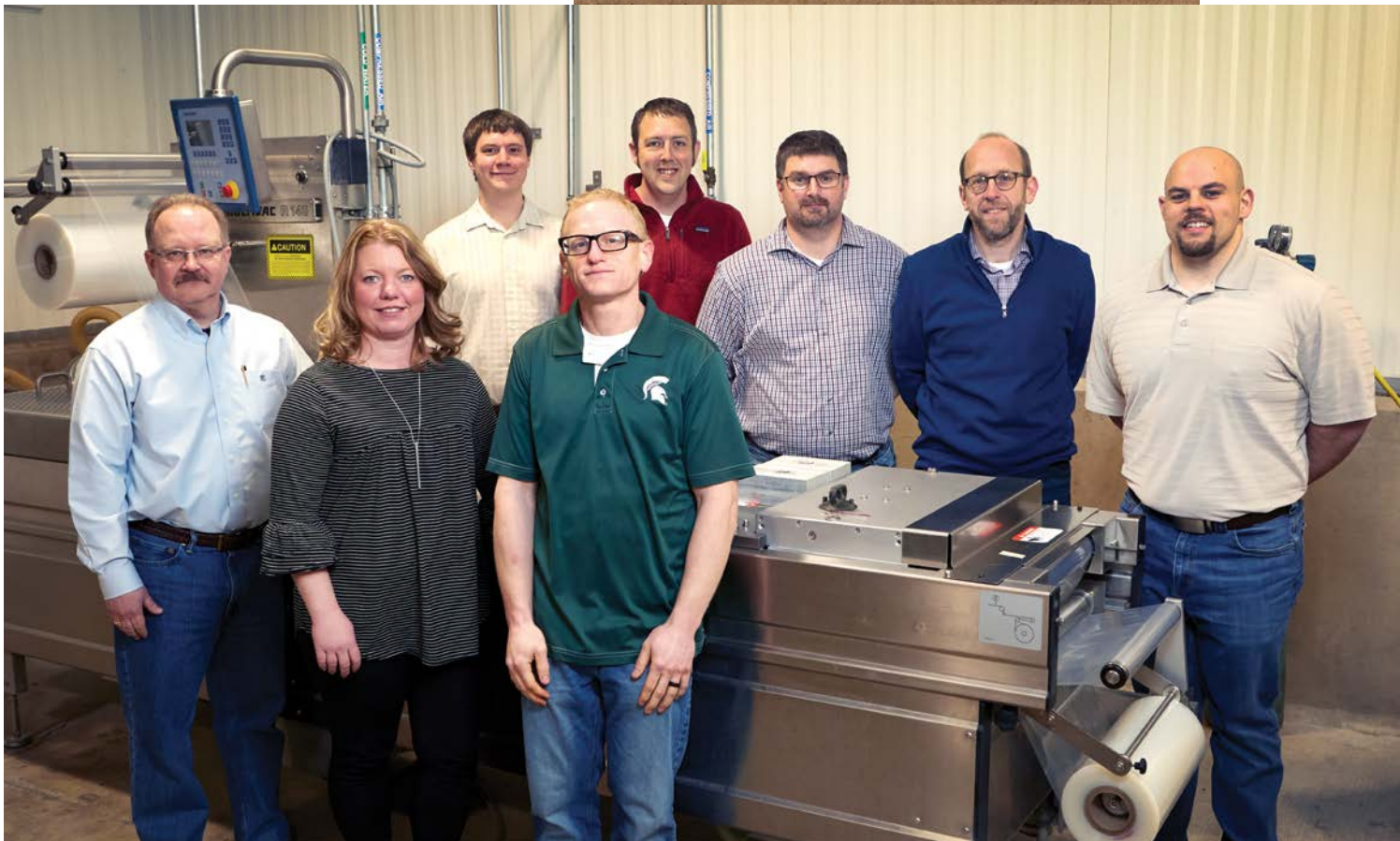


“ We take our role in producing sustainable food very seriously. We’re committed to building a sustainable future. ”

- Dan Miller

Every year, each team member is expected to lead a series of projects that cumulatively eliminate 500,000 pounds of packaging material. This task is a lot more involved than just coming up with an initial idea — it also means mobilizing company resources and decision-makers, then managing the change process until the redesigned package is headed out the door. Success at the end of each year is measured by one unforgiving question: How many hundreds of thousands of pounds of material did our projects save?

“We take our role in producing sustainable food very seriously,” said Dan Miller, director of research innovations. “We’re committed to building a sustainable future.”



The Hormel Foods packaging team

“ We won’t make a change if it impacts either quality or the safety of the product. Those are the forefront things that we always keep in mind, and if either is at risk, we aren’t going to do it. ”

- Dan Miller



Reducing packaging weight by 25 million pounds was a tall order to begin with, but the challenge is compounded by the fact that Hormel Foods had already, long before 2012, pioneered practices and technologies to make its packaging some of the most efficient and cost-effective in the industry. The motivation to keep optimizing is a confluence of environmental and business goals. Less material used in packaging means less money spent. Similarly, reducing a product’s weight and size creates savings during its transportation and storage. Lightweight, efficient packaging is also increasingly appealing to sustainability-minded consumers conscious of the environmental impact of the foods they choose and the waste their production, packaging and consumption create. Even more, when consumers buy Hormel Foods products, they expect the value of the purchase to be contained in the meal or snack — not in the jar, pouch or wrapper.

When you produce as many products and as much food as Hormel Foods does each year, even small changes can have a big impact. Just eliminating some extra space in Jennie-O® turkey burger cartons, for instance, saved more than 175,000 pounds each year. A redesign that removed

23 percent of the corrugated shipping box for Hormel® Compleats® meals saved 1.2 million pounds.

Each year the packaging R&D team selects the projects with the biggest potential impact and collectively shepherds 40 to 60 of them to completion. That means keeping pace toward the 2020 goal gets harder year over year. “You start by picking the watermelons, and then you move to the grapefruits,” said Miller, using a farm metaphor. “Soon you’re down to picking grapes.” That is, to become more innovative over time, the team has had to look for increasingly fine-grained improvements.

Some projects can still create large savings. In 2017, decreasing the weight of the cap on the SKIPPY® peanut butter jar reduced total material used by over 790,000 pounds. But many changes are now on a smaller scale, like the redesign of the display case for Hormel® Black Label® bacon, which saved 91,000 pounds.

Changing a package, particularly any part that touches the food, is never simple. Even the smallest tweak requires a combined effort of many team members across the company and an extensive review. A new shipping box must prove that it will keep its integrity over the course of travel. Even more important, a jar, can or

pouch containing a food product must show that it can keep the food safe throughout its shelf life.

“There are two things that we won’t do,” said Miller. “We won’t make a change if it impacts either the quality or the safety of the product. Those are the forefront things that we always keep in mind, and if either is at risk, we aren’t going to do it.”

When it comes to testing these changes, Hormel Foods has a huge advantage in its new state-of-the-art R&D lab. While many food companies farm out their food safety and testing work, Hormel Foods has cutting-edge equipment and a dedicated staff always on hand.

“We have a lot of capabilities here that people don’t know about,” said Miller. “We only have to walk down to the R&D facility to talk to a scientist about how a particular product behaves so we can make sure that product stays perfect for consumers. That helps us make changes relatively quickly. But having those resources in-house also means that the knowledge we gain with each project can be applied to the next.”

One challenge the group faces is that packages change along with consumers’ eating habits. “Consumers want portability and smaller portions,” packaging engineer Chad Donicht explained. “They want just the right size so when they open the package, food isn’t wasted. That’s where a lot of the fast changes are coming right now.”

The packaging R&D team believes it’s on track to meet its challenge. “We’re at 99 percent of our 2020 goal of 25 million pounds,” said Miller. “And we’re planning on getting there.”



Projects to Achieve Packaging Minimization:

Peanut Butter Jar Cap Optimization

We reduced the cap weight for our *SKIPPY*® peanut butter jars, which resulted in less plastic and a more efficient packing method. These changes resulted in a material reduction of over 790,000 pounds.

790K pounds of material saved

Bacon Display Case Redesign

We implemented a new design for our *Hormel*® *Black Label*® fully cooked bacon display case, which reduced the square footage of the corrugated material needed. This change resulted in a material reduction of over 91,000 pounds.

91K pounds of material saved

▷ Savings are estimated annualized savings based on a full year of volume.

LEADING THE WAY

MEET CHANGE-MAKERS IN THE FOOD WORLD

by Mary Burich

All of us eat to live, and some of us arguably live to eat. But far fewer of us help everyone eat healthier, more readily, more sustainably. The latter are the rare entities whose work revolves around making our food landscape better in so many ways.

Meet two of the leaders who are shaping our food world. We salute them for their vision, their determination and their hunger to feed all of us — mind, body and soul.



Joe Swedberg

Farm Foundation

In his position as chairman of the Farm Foundation, Joe Swedberg is involved in something he believes can truly make a difference.

The 85-year-old foundation, described by Swedberg as a “no-partisan, nonlobbying convener for food and agricultural issues,” has partnered with the Pew Charitable Trusts for the purpose of convening a broad group of organizations and companies interested in developing a sustainability definition and framework for the use of antibiotics in animal agriculture. What makes the initiative unique, Swedberg said, is the diverse group of people sitting around the table.

“We have many of the major players,” he said.

Members of the task force represent producer groups, processors, retailers, foodservice operators and pharmaceutical companies, among others.

“In today’s environment, our coalition is a prime example of what can get done when people actually sit down at the table together and concentrate on the things they can agree upon rather than their differences.”

The group set about the task of creating a

definition for antibiotics stewardship in livestock and developing the core components of a sustainable program. According to Swedberg, the issue has wide-reaching implications for the food and agricultural industry, in addition to human health.

“We’re all interested in being able to responsibly use antibiotics when needed for people and animals, as well as preserve them for future generations,” he said, adding that Farm Foundation and Pew have kept the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Department of Agriculture “in the loop.”

In fact, the FDA and the USDA gave Farm Foundation their blessing during the discovery phase of the project.

In 2015, Farm Foundation approached the FDA, offering to assist in reaching out to producers, veterinarians and feed producers on their roles in implementing new guidelines and regulations relating to the use of medically important antibiotics used as growth promotants. That was the starting point for the work of the task force.

Hormel Foods was among the first companies to embrace the effort, joining Farm

Foundation at the initial meeting with the FDA to make the announcement.

For his part, Swedberg built a 34-year career with Hormel Foods, rising to the level of vice president of legislative and regulatory affairs. His time with the company and his background as the son of an Iowa farmer have prepared him well for his current role.

“Growing up in food and agriculture, and being exposed to sales, marketing and then the legislative/regulatory aspects have exposed me to a broad scope of our business,” he said. “Plus, I was located in Austin, Minn. I knew the issues. I lived them.”

Though he retired from the corporate world in 2015, Swedberg is anything but retired. His passion now is to help bring forth a set of best practices for antibiotics use.

“My dream, my hope is that someday when you look at the website of anyone involved in the food and agriculture sector, there will be a similar antibiotic stewardship and practice message, based on the work we are now doing.”



Jasmine Crowe

Goodr

Jasmine Crowe won't soon forget the first time hunger was too close for comfort – or perhaps better put – complacency. Her college roommate had just moved from New York City to Atlanta, and the two women were catching up. Savannah opened her fridge to get a glass of water for Crowe, and that's when she “saw the light,” literally and metaphorically speaking.

“There was a bright light shining in my eyes from the [mostly empty] refrigerator. This was the day hunger became deeply personal to me,” she said. “Savannah had fallen on hard times, and I had no idea.”

Young, bright, educated and socially conscious, Crowe is giving food insecurity a one-two punch with her organization, GoodrCo. What sets her initiative apart is her use of blockchain technology via an app that connects the dots between businesses that have food and organizations that need it. “If we can use technology to meet our future husband or wife, we can use it to fight hunger,” she said.

Even before Crowe reunited with her college friend, she was well aware of the prevalence of food insecurity in her country; the widespread problem CNBC once dubbed

“America's dirty little secret.” In fact, she had already launched Sunday Soul, a weekly family meal of sorts for Atlanta homeless people. Not only did Crowe do the cooking, she saw to it that music, dancing and eventually linens and flowers were part of the bargain as Sunday Soul grew and expanded to other major U.S. cities.

However, Savannah's plight showed her hunger isn't merely a street issue, and that made her more determined than ever to throw down the gloves and brace herself for the fight of her life.

For the record, her opponent is a formidable one. According to Feeding America, nearly one in seven Americans goes to bed each night on an empty stomach. More than 42 million people – half of whom are children or seniors – suffer from hunger in what Crowe described as “the richest country in the world.”

As she put an increasing amount of brain power toward the task of eradicating hunger, she came to realize it wasn't a question of too little food to go around. For starters, her restaurant work during school showed her how much serviceable product was going directly to landfills instead of to food banks and shelters. More than that, statistics from

well-regarded groups such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations backed her up. Somewhere around 40 percent of food is wasted, a phenomenon that has social, economic and environmental implications, Crowe asserted.

“Hunger is a logistics issue,” she said. “We have to first eliminate the access barrier that keeps people from obtaining food.”

Goodr uses an app to get food that would otherwise be wasted to people and organizations that use it to feed the hungry. Transportation barriers are eliminated. As a bonus, the app allows businesses to track and account for their donations.

Crowe charges businesses as any waste-management service would, but there is no cost to the receiving parties. In addition, tax write-offs are available to those donating, as is federal protection from liability. Even better, everybody gets to eat.

“This food that is going to waste is so much more than waste,” she said. “It is power, it is change, it is treasure.”



Be sure to visit HormelFoods.com to meet more of the extraordinary people who are setting a table for the world.

GIFTS THAT GIVE BACK

MAKE SOMEONE'S DAY AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE

by Katie Plumski and Mary Burich

Everybody loves giving and receiving gifts for birthdays, anniversaries and other special occasions, but coming up with an ideal present is not always easy. Let's face it, whether you're browsing store aisles or surfing the internet, the process can be exhausting. While you want your gesture to be special, sometimes you simply cave and reach for the nearest sweets sampler or gift card.

We get that. So, this year, we're making a pact to choose gifts from companies and organizations that make giving not only easy, but meaningful. We've even thrown in a few Earth-friendly products for good measure. Here's a list of some of our favorites. We hope you'll find them to be a perfect fit for anyone on your list.

HEIFER INTERNATIONAL

Simply put, Heifer International wants to end poverty and hunger throughout the world. Its initiatives include supplying communities with farm animals and funding education, women-owned businesses and sustainable methods of producing food, primarily in the world's poorest countries.

Make a contribution in just about any amount to purchase an animal (or a share of one) for an at-need community, to send a young girl to school or to help a village have clean water. If you like the idea of putting something delightful in a box, browse Heifer International's Marketplace, which offers a wide assortment of beautiful and unique items. Gift cards are available, too.

Heifer.org



This image is courtesy of Heifer International



BEE'S WRAP

Founded in 2012 by Vermonter Sarah Kaeck, Bee's Wrap offers a natural alternative to plastic and other throwaway food storage wraps. The company starts with organic cotton, infusing it with beeswax, organic jojoba oil and tree resin, which results in a product that's reusable, washable and compostable. As a bonus, the prints and designs are too cute for words.

For about \$10, you can get your hands on a sandwich wrap, but you probably won't want to stop there. By the way, don't forget to join the Bee's Wrap email list. You'll get 15 percent off your first order and be able to stay in touch with a really cool company.

Beeswrap.com



REUSABLE FOOD-STORAGE BAGS

Kick the plastic-bag habit for good, and encourage your giftees to hop on the reusables train. A number of companies offer bags that are leakproof and airtight, and can even withstand the torture of boiling, freezing, microwaving and dishwashing machines. Not only are they helpful to the planet, think about how nice it would be to stop running to the store and spending money on throw-away food-storage bags.

Search for "reusable food-storage bags" on Amazon.com and other online shopping sites.





COMPOST BIN

Encourage your friends and family members to make use of unwanted food scraps with one of the many aesthetically pleasing compost bins on the market. Crockes are available in a wide variety of sizes, shapes, colors, materials and price points that encourage at-home cooks to keep them in sight – and top-of-mind – when peeling apples and disposing of expired salsa, for example. There is often little or no odor associated with composting, but to be safe, you can go for a bin with a charcoal filter.

Search for “countertop compost bin” on Amazon.com and other online shopping sites.

LOCAL HONEY

It's delicious and nutritious, it supports the all-important beekeeping industry, and it even promises to alleviate allergies. That pretty much makes locally sourced honey a rock-star food and gift. Research has shown that honey contains many vitamins, minerals, amino acids and antioxidants that are beneficial to humans. Not only that, people who eat local honey are ingesting regional pollen, which may well make them less sensitive to it (and thus, sniffle-free) down the road. In the meantime, you haven't lived until you've added a teaspoon of honey to your afternoon tea.

Visit honey.com/honey-locator to find locally sourced honey near you.



EDITOR KATIE SAYS, “ONE OF MY FRIENDS GAVE ME A BRAVELET THAT SUPPORTED BREAST CANCER RESEARCH WHEN MY MOM PASSED AWAY THREE YEARS AGO. AND I HAVE WORN IT EVERY DAY SINCE. IT WAS SUCH A MEANINGFUL GIFT!”

BRAVELETS

Everyone needs an extra measure of strength and encouragement from time to time. Bravelets understands that well. The company manufactures jewelry and accessories that symbolize hope, strength and courage, each one a reminder to be brave in the face of adversity. Even more, you can designate a cause you'd like to support, choosing from a list of hundreds. Bravelets will donate 10 percent of the purchase price of your selection and include a certificate with your gift.

Bravelets.com



WARBY PARKER EYEGLASSES

Warby Parker started out with the dual purpose of offering designer-quality eyeglasses at an affordable price and helping those who don't have access to corrective lenses. The company has grown tremendously – it now has nearly 100 brick-and-mortar stores, plus its online center – while staying true to its founding principles.

If you're shopping online, take the quiz to find out which frames best suit the shape of your face and your tastes, then have up to five trial selections sent to you at no cost. Two-way shipping is on the house. Prescription eyeglasses start at \$95, sunglasses at \$175, and many insurance plans are accepted. As if that's not enough, for every pair you buy, Warby Parker will work with a partner organization to make sure someone in need gets a brand-new pair of glasses. To date, more than 4 million pairs have been donated throughout the world through the Buy a Pair, Give a Pair program.

Warbyparker.com

FIRE DEPARTMENT COFFEE

Who knew a cup of joe could do so much more than jumpstart your day? Fire Department Coffee is run by – you guessed it – firefighters who happen to have a head for business, a taste for great coffee and a heart for heroes who need help. There are signature blends and spirit-infused varieties of coffee, along with mugs and a calendar that's downright hilarious. Fire Department Coffee offers special pricing and free shipping to firefighters and first responders. Plus, 10 percent of the price of your purchase will benefit the Fire Dept. Coffee Foundation, a charitable organization that helps first responders who are injured on the job or facing serious health challenges.

Firedeptcoffee.com

GRAPHIC DESIGNER ECHO SAYS, "WE HAVE A BUNCH OF COFFEE ADDICTS IN THE STUDIO, SO WE TAKE TURNS BRINGING IN DIFFERENT KINDS. THE FIRE DEPARTMENT COFFEE (ORIGINAL FLAVOR) HAS BEEN A HIT!"



A SPRINGBOARD FOR INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS FOSTER A RICHER, MORE UNIFIED ORGANIZATION

by Mary Burich

American entrepreneur Malcolm Forbes once called diversity “the art of thinking independently together.”

With that idea in mind, Hormel Foods has for years been dedicated to creating a culture of inclusion and diversity, uniting an extensive and global workforce focused on feeding the world.

In her new role as director of talent development for Hormel Foods, Erin Freshwater is impressed with the company’s commitment to inclusion and diversity, including its employee resource groups (ERGs) – coalitions “formed around common interests, issues and/or a common bond or background,” according to the highly regarded university MIT.

The ERGs of Hormel Foods speak volumes about the company’s desire to make all workers feel welcome, accepted and free to be who they are on the job and off, Freshwater said.

“We have a strong commitment to ERGs, evident in the number and their areas of focus,” she said. “As we continue to build a culture of inclusion, it’s important to have ERGs that have different perspectives beyond the obvious ones.”

THE ROAD TO HORMEL FOODS

Freshwater is new to Hormel Foods, but she is no stranger to her job responsibilities. She has spent the past 15 years focusing on talent development, inclusion and diversity, and the management of ERGs in a variety of industries.

She’s finding the culture of Hormel Foods in sync with her passions, especially where the ERGs are concerned.

“People involved are very passionate about inclusion and how we develop and retain talent,” Freshwater said, adding her belief that inclusion is the more critical part of the equation. Any company can recruit a diverse workforce; it’s the inclusion piece that makes the real difference, she offered.

“Diversity is important, but creating an inclusive environment – that’s the thing,” she said. “Inclusion leads to retention of diverse talent, which is essential to our company thriving in the future.”

She’s met with the ERGs, and is impressed by their progress and focus. She’s also filled with ideas on how to make them even more integral to the company’s strategy and long-term goals.



Historically speaking, the ERGs started out as a means of support at Hormel Foods. They were groups of people with common demographic traits or characteristics coming together in rooms where they knew they belonged.

Like all vital organizations, ERGs are not static. They are constantly changing, working on being better tomorrow than they are today. For example, some years later, ERGs are now helping the organization recruit and retain diverse team members, not to mention connect with varied customer and consumer bases. And there is even more that can be done, Freshwater said.

CONSTANTLY EVOLVING

Hormel Foods has nine ERGs, each of which is dedicated to one of the following: women, African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic team members, military veterans, young professionals, experienced hires and agricultural resources. HProud & Allies is an ERG that promotes a safe and equitable work environment for all team members, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Membership in each group is open to all team members across the company. There are no prerequisites.

HIRE (Hormel Integrating Relevant Experiences) is the newest in the array of ERGs. It began as a way to help experienced individuals assimilate quickly and begin making contributions immediately. It emerged in large part as a response to the promote-from-within practice at Hormel Foods. Processes and systems in place at Hormel

Foods are often focused on the many workers who come to the company directly from school and experience long, successful careers.

As important as that is, “There are times when we need to bring people in from the outside to augment the experience of the Hormel Foods family. We looked at our systems, which tended to be focused on hiring people right out of college and helping them build their careers,” Freshwater said.

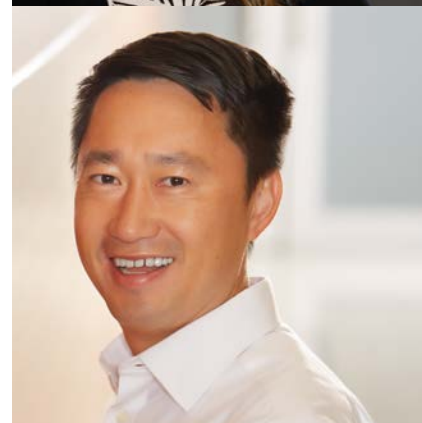
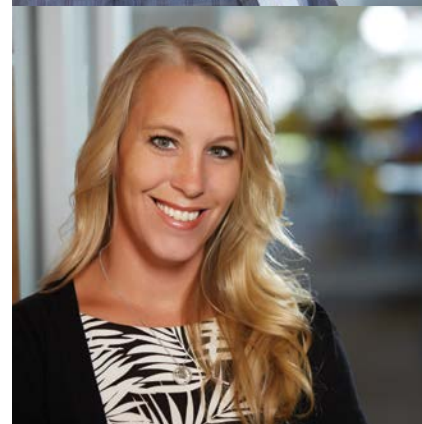
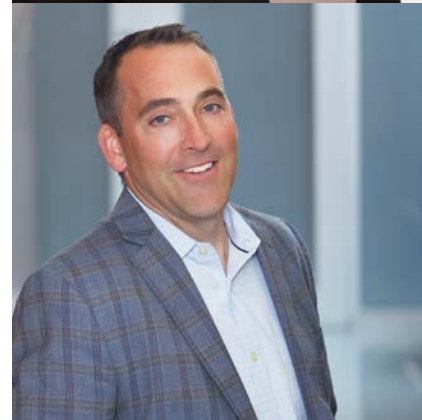
A revamped orientation and a navigation program whereby new-hires are matched with a mentor of sorts are helping to fill the void. In addition, HIRE gives experienced talent a voice to make positive changes at Hormel Foods, drawing on their backgrounds with other organizations.

SUPPORTING YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

At the same time, HYPE (Hormel Young Professionals Enterprise) is working to support and empower the younger workers of Hormel Foods. Given that 40 percent of the employee base is between 21 and 36, it’s a worthwhile endeavor.

HYPE considers ways to make the work environment more attractive to our young professionals, Freshwater said.

“We’ve leaned on HYPE pretty heavily to come up with ideas to help retain our younger talent,” she added. Topics such as compensation, paid time off, leaves and housing are hot ones. HYPE has provided counsel to the organization, in some cases enlightening leaders about issues such as child care.



Are ERGs a necessary component of a company's inclusion and diversity platform? Freshwater summed it up this way.

"Ideally, there would be no need for ERGs," Freshwater said. "But we still live in a world where many issues are faced by certain segments of the population. We want to be truly inclusive with people who may be different from us, and so we continue working toward that end."

The endeavor is not only important, it's rooted in the company's values and its culture.

"I'm confident that at Hormel Foods we are committed to creating a sense of belonging where everyone feels respected and valued. Our people are essential to our continued success, and we want each person to be empowered with opportunities, be treated fairly and have a voice to make things better for the future."

EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS AT HORMEL FOODS



HAARG
*Hormel African
American Resource Group*



HAPA
*Hormel Asian-American
Professionals Association*



H-FARM
*Hormel Food and Agriculture
Resource Members*



HIRE
*Hormel Integrating
Relevant Experiences*



HMVET
*Hormel Military Veteran
Engagement Team*



HProud & Allies
*Hormel Professionals
Representing Out and United
inDividuals & Allies*



HYPE
*Hormel Young
Professionals Enterprise*



Nuestra Gente



Women's Insights Network

WORD ON THE STREET

We have fans across the country and around the world, and many share their stories with us! Here are some recent ones, courtesy of our consumer response and engagement team.



David
from Kentucky

"I wanted to thank you for such great meals for while I am on a diet. I have found that your *Hormel® Compleats®* meals are just the right amount for me and have helped me lose 45 pounds so far, and I will continue to lose. My favorites are the spaghetti and meat sauce and chili with beans. I also have purchased the turkey and dressing, chicken and mashed potatoes, and roast beef and mashed potatoes. All of them are great. Again, thanks for helping me on my weight loss journey and I will continue to purchase your dinners to help me on future weight loss."



Kala
from Michigan

"One of my favorite things about summer is having my husband grill me turkey burgers. I have him grill me a few at a time — a quick, easy and healthy lunch throughout the week. I love that they are healthy and lean; however, they have so much flavor, and are never dry. Great product!"



Freddy
from New Mexico

"You guys rock! It became my turn to host Easter dinner, at the last minute. Yesterday, I had 30 people invade my home and their request was turkey. I bought two 15-ish pound *Jennie-O®* turkeys from Sam's Club. I was pleasantly surprised when I opened them. They were incredibly clean out of the bag. I expected to spend a long time prepping them, and to my surprise, it was quick and painless. They came out spectacular and I was complimented by all. Bravo to Jennie-O for making my life easy."



Julie
from Kentucky

"I just wanted to let you know how great your products are. I was at church a few nights ago talking with two sisters. Their mom will be 100 in December. We were discussing what she has done to live such a long life and the topic soon led to her diet. I learned that she eats *SPAM®* classic twice every day. I thought the company might want to know they have been a part of Ms. Linnie's journey."



Rebecca
from California

"I just wanted to send this to thank you for developing the *Hormel® Natural Choice®* snack packs. As a diabetic, I struggle to find snacks that are within the 15 grams of carbs I am allotted for a snack during the day. I discovered the ham/cheddar and turkey/cheddar snack packs the other day, and both are under the 15-gram mark. They were not only delicious but also helped curb that hunger between meals. The grocery store I went to only had those two types, but if you have other varieties out there under 15 grams, please keep on making them! I do appreciate the convenience of having these ready to toss in my lunch bag during the work week."



Kari
from Florida

"I would like to tell you how much I love your products! I've purchased your fresh products for a very long time. Love the mashed potatoes, cinnamon apples and mac and cheese! But now for the awesome part! I am a married mom of two and recently underwent extensive spinal surgery! My kids are grown, 23 and 20, but still live at home because they are in college. Everyone in the house has helped tirelessly with cleaning, cooking and errands due to my incapacitation. I am the primary cook in the family. They all try, but let's just say we've had to order takeout a lot!!! Your fresh items, however, have been an enormous help! Not many people can mess up a microwave meal! I just want to thank you for all you've done to make our lives easier!"



Eric
from Utah

"Gotta give credit where it's due to Hormel Foods! Mary's chili verde is the best canned product I've ever eaten and is in fact better than some chili verde I've had in Mexican restaurants."



Daryl
from Hawaii

"Hello, I just wanted to share how much my family loves *SPAM®* products. My family eats *SPAM®* products in a number of ways, but the most common is thinly fried in a pan until one side has a bit of crisp to it. We can get so possessive that my 18-year-old son will write his name on a can in the pantry to ensure he gets some before we run out of stock. I say stock because we always buy in bulk. Breakfast, lunch or dinner, I have dishes that call for *SPAM®* products and everyone loves it! Thank you for bringing families closer through food and for creating a product that creates many nostalgic moments. No matter which flavor we buy it in, we always get the same great taste and texture. THANK YOU! I wish you all many more successes and a wonderful year."



Michelle
from Texas

"I'm lovin' the marketing ad inclusive of the deaf community with the hearing for sharing a sandwich. Thank you! I'm looking forward to sharing and paying it forward."

CHECK IT OUT

Celebrities, Festivals, Shoutouts and More!



Image: today.com/food

Today.com spotlighted some cool creations from the SPAM® brand's restaurant month, including this SPAM® musubi wrapped in gold that was a favorite of FoodBeast.



Image: instagram.com/lindseyvonn

Olympian Lindsey Vonn revealed her love of Justin's® P.B. cups during a photo shoot.

"Today" show hosts Willie Geist and Jenna Bush Hager devoted some air time to chatting about Geist's peanut butter portrait, which came to him courtesy of the SKIPPY® brand and Hormel Foods.



Image: instagram.com/bellahadid

American model Bella Hadid posted photos of her impeccably stocked refrigerator, revealing her love of Justin's® and Applegate® products!



Image: instagram.com/livekellyandryan

"Live with Ryan and Kelly" went behind the scenes on Instagram TV with Kelly Ripa and her husband, Mark Consuelos, to show the couple reading fan mail while eating SKIPPY® peanut butter straight from the jar.



Image: [instagram.com/johnmayer](https://www.instagram.com/johnmayer)

American singer and songwriter John Mayer is a big fan of *Justin's*® maple almond butter.



Image: Art Streiber, [poeple.com](https://www.poeple.com)

Country music legend and actress Dolly Parton let *People* magazine in on a secret: She's all about making fried *SPAM*® classic on the weekends.



Image: [thewrap.com](https://www.thewrap.com)

Kelly Ripa and Ryan Seacrest dished about how much they like *Justin's*® products on their show, "Live with Kelly and Ryan."



What I wouldn't give for pbj right about now 🤔🤔

Image: [youtube.com/watch?v=7L24fFfAYg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7L24fFfAYg)

QuestLove, frontman for The Roots, the house band for "Late Night with Jimmy Fallon," shared our snackable #SpreadTheLove portrait made with *SKIPPY*® peanut butter.



Image: twitter.com/Applegate

"Today" hosts Kathie Lee Gifford and Hoda Kotb sampled *Applegate*® products on the air.



Image: twitter.com/DonnieWahlberg

Donnie Wahlberg, "Blue Bloods" star and singer from the boy band New Kids on the Block, is a fan of the *SPAM*® brand.



Image: youtu.be/QLGlallo1x8

Pro-footballer Frank Clark let his Instagram followers know about his affection for *Jennie-O*® taco seasoned ground turkey.



The Kitchn dubbed *Wholly®* guacamole's homestyle dip the best store-bought guacamole around.

Image: thekitchn.com

Wholly Guacamole Homestyle, \$4.99 for eight ounces

Of all the brands, this one tastes the closest to homemade. It's bright with lime, but not too much, with plenty of small chunks of avocado, onion, and tomato interspersed throughout the purée. It has just enough spice to keep it interesting, and the salt is balanced.

TASTE TEST

the kitchn

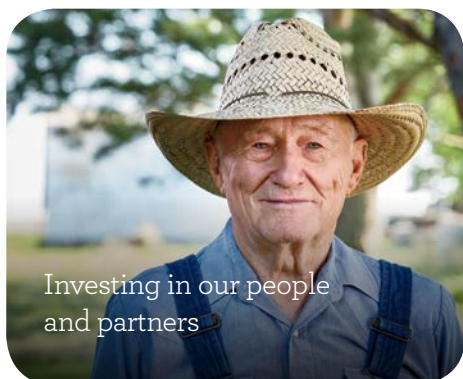


Stay up to date on Hormel Foods happenings by following us on social media!

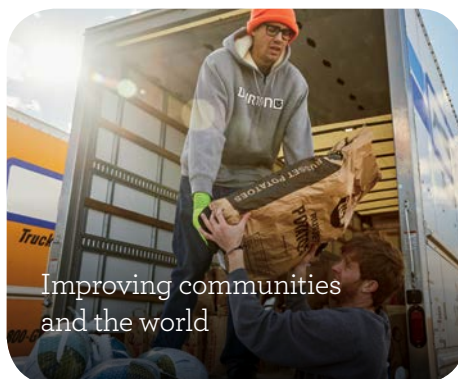


OUR FOOD JOURNEY™

Inspired by the food we make and the difference we can make in this world



Investing in our people and partners



Improving communities and the world



Creating products that improve the lives of others

Bold Thinking. Bold Innovation. Bold Ideas.

We are a company unlike any other, one that truly understands our position in the world and the difference we can make. While we are committed to many worthy causes, it is our core business — efficiently producing delicious and safe food for the world's growing population — that makes us most proud.

“We know that building social value and creating economic value are not competing goals. While *Our Path Forward* is our compass, *Our Food Journey™* is our North Star.”

James P. Snee
Chairman of the Board, President
and Chief Executive Officer

To learn more, visit
hormelfoods.com/our-food-journey



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