

AMSA in the Next Century – Part One

MELVIN C. HUNT*

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, members of the 1996 Reciprocal Meat Conference. It is indeed a pleasure to welcome you here to the 49th Reciprocal Meat Conference. I am delighted to see an excellent turnout.

Anyone recognize a familiar ring to those opening statements? They are nearly identical to the welcome given by R.C. Pollock, then General Manager of the National Live Stock and Meat Board, to the participants of the 2nd RMC at the Hotel Stevens in Chicago, June 15 and 16th, 1949. You may find his welcome on page three of the Second RMC Proceedings.

These are exciting times for the American Meat Science Association — it is especially exciting for me to have a role in helping shape the future of this society and the RMC, but it is critically important for those of us at this meeting to further define the role and scope of AMSA — our mission, vision and objectives of the future and the mechanism where by we can accomplish them. Again, welcome to this historic meeting, and please accept these challenges.

I can't think of a better place for us to do this — to meet, work and reciprocate — Provo, Utah — Brigham Young University — the heart of Mormon country. Many people come to this area to trace family lineages, to help define their history and to bring their past into focus. For the second time in AMSA's history, we are meeting at BYU — the first time was in 1976 — but this time we are meeting to bring a focus to our future.

The need for a session dealing with the future role and scope of AMSA at this RMC was clearly identified at the initial program planning session prior to the ICoMST/RMC in San Antonio last year. Dr. Mandigo, chair of AMSA's Long-Range Planning Committee, and I have been charged with bringing you up to date on AMSA's planning for the future. We have not had a main session dealing with AMSA Business Affairs for several years. But this is especially important this year because AMSA members will be asked to approve

significant changes to the AMSA Constitution and By-Laws and to endorse a strategic plan at the business meeting tomorrow morning.

Our major aim is to stimulate thought and discussion about AMSA's Business Affairs to prepare for the AMSA Business Meeting. We will do this in three ways: 1) I will present some background information, 2) Roger will present the essence of the proposed strategic plan, and 3) the AMSA Board of Directors will answer your questions concerning the strategic plan and changes to the Constitution and By-Laws. Then, we all can make informed decisions at the Business Meeting on Tuesday.

Perhaps we should read some of the business meeting minutes from the 1948 and '49 RMC's, some 17 years before the formation of the AMSA. They too were focusing on goals to meet for only the second time in history, commonality of purpose, and hope for a Meat Science organization in the future. Mr. W.H. Tomhave stated that many organizations have come into existence as the result of despair or desperation. He did not consider their situation dire, nor do we consider it so now. Rather, he considered their activities to be based on destiny, success, and mission. I think he would be happy with us because many of you have helped this Board of Directors and our Long-Range Planning Committee to redefine and refocus our objectives and to state just what this scientific society can and should be. We firmly believe that not since the initial RMC in 1948, and the formation of the AMSA in 1964 has this organization been faced with so many opportunities.

Dr. Mandigo and I could not have designed a better setup than that presented by Dr. Kinsman. His review of AMSA's past, present and future makes it unnecessary for us to repeat many pertinent points in AMSA's evolution. We do need to emphasize, however, that AMSA, like most other organizations, has been involved with futuristic planning for several years. F.C. Parrish chaired the first committee called Long-Range Planning, and now R.W. Mandigo has even more AMSA members serving on this committee which has guided AMSA planning on several fronts. Many of you here completed the Membership Survey of 1995 and many of you participated in the reciprocation planning sessions last year in San Antonio. Since that time, we have had ad-hoc committees (composed of members new to long-range planning) on seven segments of planning that have interfaced with the

*M.C. Hunt, *President, American Meat Science Association, Kansas State University, Weber Hall, Manhattan, KS 66506-0201.*

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planning activities of the Coaches Association and the potential for partnerships with NCBA, NPPC and others.

The Board of Directors has spent much of its time this year on industry reorganization — every meeting in fact, with conference calls, an extra board meeting, assistance from Parliamentarian Dr. Steve Goll and the Parliamentary Committee, and visitations with NPPC, NCBA, NAMF, AAMP and AMI. I hope it's clear that what is being proposed is not one person's opinion but a multitude of ideas from numerous AMSA committees, meetings, and conversations that have evolved over several years.

It became clear early on that we needed "Mission and Vision" Statements for AMSA. These two statements are non-existent in our current Constitution. This Mission Statement, we believe, reflects what you have told us. *"The Mission of the AMSA is to promote the discovery and application of the best scientific and technological principles in all educational, research, governmental and industrial forums for all elements of the meat sciences."*

The Vision Statement further expands on the Mission Statement. *"The AMSA as an independent, scientific organization, will be the primary source of credible, science-based information for all elements of the meat sciences. By working across disciplines and animal species, the AMSA will become the premier professional society for those with careers associated with meats. Its members will lead education, research, technology transfer, and public service and recognition activities, and its clientele will benefit from accurate objective information."*

I assume all of you have read these statements that were in the materials sent to you before this meeting. But I believe it is good to hear them read aloud.

Now, what about objectives for the organization? Previously, we had six objectives, and these we modified slightly. One objective was added.

- *"Promote the application of science and technology in the production, processing, packaging, distribution, preparation, evaluation and utilization of all types of food products from all animal species;*
- *Stimulate and provide forums and other media for the exchange, discussion, and dissemination of information and ideas;*
- *Develop and sponsor activities designed to promote the transfer of technology by encouraging the adoption of sound and useful research and educational techniques;*
- *Develop and deliver educational/training programs for the various industrial segments of the food chain;*
- *Promote the coordination of educational, research, development and service activities in meat science and related areas;*
- *Foster high standards for education and ethics in science;*
- *Promote recognition of those engaged in the various multi-species fields of meat science."*

Even with these seven objectives, it is obvious that we can't be everything to everybody. But, there is lots of room for AMSA member activities within these objectives. A quotation from someone during the last year said "We are involved in a process — not an event" and that certainly characterizes the current situation.

Industry reorganization has left some voids. Can AMSA fill them? Is there really a need for an independent, credible, scientific group interested in muscle foods? We believe so, Chuck Schroeder believes so, NPPC believes so, and so do numerous others in the meat industry. In fact, we have been asked by key leaders, — is there any one organization capable of doing what AMSA can do? The answer may be yes, but none seem to have the total package or the desire to cover as many bases as AMSA. AMSA's membership is a unique linkage of key components of the meat and livestock industries. But major questions remain — Can AMSA adapt to change? Can we mix business and science? Can we deliver specifically-designed programs? Can we create profitable industry partnerships? Can we balance volunteer leadership and service with organizational needs for faster and more reliable response? And can we maintain the loyalty within the society equal to the legacy of years past? I've been told that one cannot sell the "spirit" of an organization. But, I firmly believe there are lots of companies, organizations, movements out there that would love to have the spirit and camaraderie of this organization. It is the intangible component that has made this group special and successful.

This Board of Directors has spent a lot of time pondering these questions, and yours truly has even lost a little sleep thinking about these issues. We believe the answer to all the questions is yes if— *if all of the AMSA membership believes it is the right thing to do.* We, along with inputs from Long-Range Planning, have proposed Constitution and By-Law changes to the membership that will enable AMSA to meet these challenges. The Strategic Plan gives you an idea of the course ahead — that you need to endorse. Without positive actions on these two fronts, we must totally rethink our future.

Now, something on the lighter side. First-year dues for AMSA in 1965 was \$5.00. The next year, the Board of Directors increased dues 100% — to \$10.00. Please know that the Hunt regime has not doubled your dues. Nor are we going to take nearly so long for you to work out Constitutional changes — in 1965, it required the entire afternoon and evening sessions. If I quit and Roger doesn't get too long-winded, we'll get it done in less than 70 minutes.

Please listen closely as Dr. Mandigo outlines the proposed changes and plans. I believe it will show that we are truly "involved in a process — not an event." The Board of Directors and Roger and I will then attempt to answer your questions.

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ROGER W. MANDIGO*

Let's look at the strategic plan, which will serve as the focus for the AMSA future. The Board of Directors needs a consensus and sense of the membership's thoughts. This can best be accomplished through adoption of the Strategic Plan and through regular up-dating of that plan. The important AMSA mission points include:

- The AMSA needs to grow and expand as a science-based organization.
- AMSA is an independent organization serving multi-species meat and muscle foods.
- We should expand our educational role, particularly in youth programs, meat judging and evaluation, and in technology transfer and training for industry.

The AMSA has many strengths to build upon, including membership and leadership which are highly committed to AMSA. The Sustaining Members Program has grown and will certainly be a vital part of the future strength of AMSA. AMSA has been a active part of the delivery of several Short Courses and this unique strength of AMSA will become a cornerstone for future growth. The Meat Judging Programs have been a very visible strength of our program and the many people who have come through these programs are a strength that we have built upon. The Reciprocal Meat Conference and the Meat Industry Research Conference have filled vital needs for current technology and issues in the education of members and the broader effort to provide an industry forum for learning. Newsletters and research guideline papers are also a significant strength of the AMSA.

Key Elements in the Strategic Plan

Employment of an Executive Director

This change in the organization of the AMSA will permit the start of a paid permanent staff to assist the Board of Directors and the various committees to implement the programs of the AMSA. This will provide the continuity and impetus to develop and aggressively expand the *partner pro-*

grams which are a key element in the planned growth of the AMSA. This will reduce the work load of the Secretary-Treasurer and lead to a *Business Office*. The size and scope of the Business Office will be clearly tied to member services and to the outreach programs with potential partners of AMSA.

Sustaining Member Program

The AMSA Sustaining Member Committee has developed a forward looking plan for greater involvement of the sustaining membership program. Of critical concern is the services that we provide these important players in the programs of AMSA. Which services AMSA should provide to the industry is a very important question.

Partnership Programs

The term *Partnership Programs* grew out of our old relationships with the National Live Stock & Meat Board. In the last several years, the reorganization of the livestock industry has brought about changes in the way we interact with beef, pork, lamb and the many industry organizations. As we move forward with these relationships, the AMSA has a unique opportunity to interface with many organizations. These will take the form of partnerships which provide unique opportunities to work with and provide specific programs where the AMSA and the partner have common interests and program needs. In some cases, the AMSA is likely the best organization to provide certain services and take leadership roles for development and delivery of these programs. The AMSA is the unique multi-species organization at this time and in the foreseeable future concerned with education programs, training and technology transfer. We need to build on these potential opportunities for the betterment of the live stock and meat industries. Many of the activities and programs delivered by the AMSA to the National Cattlemen's Beef Association [NCBA] and to the National Pork Producers Council [NPPC] will continue and grow where needs can be matched with services that AMSA can deliver to these programs. Likewise, we will be able to develop additional partnerships in areas of livestock production, slaughter, fabrication, processing, marketing, youth and consumer education.

*R.W. Mandigo, Chairman, AMSA Long-Range Planning Committee, University of Nebraska, A213 Animal Science, Lincoln, NE 68583-0908.

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Endowment Program

The AMSA *Endowment Program* has been growing and is poised for significant, exciting new activities. The effort to expand the Endowment will concentrate in two areas. The first involves the general AMSA programs area and has been in place for several years. This campaign to raise two million dollars in endowments by the year 2000 can provide a considerable measure of stability for the AMSA. The second area of effort is to build a new campaign for the Meat Judging/Evaluation and Youth Programs. These two efforts will put each activity on a sound base for the future.

Short Course Program

The training of both new and experienced people is an on-going need in the meat industry. Good training and technology transfer programs build on the educational expertise of the members of the AMSA. Short courses on technological specific topics and the need for training HACCP Programs offer a unique opportunity for the AMSA. Through the networking ability of AMSA, its ability to manage the details and finances of short courses, there is a great opportunity to build through an aggressive short course program. This program will be successful but requires the expertise of many members and a willingness to participate and contribute to the team efforts. Through the AMSA Short Course Committee and the Business Office, assistance to members

who need the extra services and support to put on short courses can be obtained. Program materials, speakers and other arrangements can be a significant input from AMSA to members planning short courses.

AMSA Advisory Council

This new element in the organizational structure of the AMSA brings to focus an advisory group to the Board of Directors. The Advisory Council would include representatives from the various Partnership Programs, members from the various trade associations, members from the Platinum Sustaining Members group [those with five consecutive years of participation] and others appointed to the Advisory Council by the Board of Directors. The advisory group would be chaired by the Past President.

The *Strategic Plan* is the collective thinking of the AMSA today. It is a focus and sense of direction for the leadership to follow. To function properly, the strategic plan will evolve with the organization and its members. It will serve as the blueprint for the future. Is it the right plan and direction for the AMSA at this time? The Long-Range Planning Committee has recommended it to the Board of Directors. Both groups are recommending it to the members for adoption. If the membership agrees, then certain changes in the *AMSA Constitution and By-Laws* are needed to implement the Strategic Plans and most importantly, instruct the Board of Directors to proceed!