International Award Lecture
Norman Marriott

[1]For our next session

[2]We have the distinct opportunity to hear from our international award winner, Dr. Norman Marriott, professor at Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University. We are honored that Dr. Marriott can be with us today to share his perspectives.

[3]First I'd like to take a minute and thank the sponsor of this session, which is the Solae Company. We really appreciate Solae's support of this award and this session this morning.

[4]I'd like to first introduce Dr. Marriott and we appreciate his presence here today. He is the 2006 AMSA International Award winner. Norm was born on a livestock and grain-producing family farm in Missouri. He obtained a B.S. and M.S. degrees at the University of Missouri. He then served four years with the Swifton Company and six years with Safeway Stores. After receiving his PhD from Texas A&M University, Norm remained in Texas for three years teaching and conducting research. In 1979, he joined VPI and, that's Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University with responsibilities in extension, research and teaching. He was among the first of the newer breed of extension specialists that were expected to achieve scholarly accomplishments in all three of these missions with result in international recognition. Norm believes that the world is his classroom. His international service has supported this proclamation. Norm has shared his expertise in meat processing, sanitation, and distribution with nine different countries and has presented his research results at meetings in sixteen countries. He has volunteered with organizations such as the Winrock Foundation, ACDI, VOCA and AID. Norm has been instrumental in educating the world about HACCP through seminars and workshops that he's organized and conducted in several nations around the world. His efforts were instrumental in upgrading the safety, quality, and efficiency of meat operations in several of the former Soviet block countries. Norm has been active in the meeting of ICoMST through his attendance and presentation of research results at nineteen different meetings over the years. He's also served on two planning committees for the U.S.-hosted ICoMST meetings. Norm Marriott has reached out to the world through his educational outreach. He is truly deserving of the AMSA International Award. Let's welcome Dr. Norm Marriott, AMSA's 2006 International Award winner. At this time, I'd like to call Chris Swenson from the Solae Company forward to present Dr. Marriott with the 2006 International Award. Chris? Thanks to Solae for sponsoring the award. Okay, thank you very much Chris. And with that I will turn it over to Dr. Marriott. Thank you Randy. Could we turn the mic on please? Can you hear? Okay, okay.

[5]Thanks very much Randy and first I would want to start out by thanking Solae for their support of this award. They had done this

for several years and it certainly is appreciated. Also thanks to Dr. Herb Ackerman for nominating me for this award and I'd like to thank those who wrote letters of support but I really don't know who did expect one person, so I'll thank him, Dr. Wes Shilling, former grad student of mine. So I will thank him. Also thanks to the universities that made all this possible at Missouri. Let's see my committee was Don Nomin, Harold Hedrick, Bill Stringer, Steve Fabriski, Milt Bailey and Bob Marshall. And then at Texas A&M University thanks to Gary Smith, there's Earl Carpenter, Thane Dutson for the opportunities that they provided and the direction. And also thanks to colleagues that I've had the opportunity to serve with in Virginia, Bob Kelly, Paul Graham, Jim Claus when he was there, Christine Alvarado, and when she was there, so appreciation there. And the next thanks I want to give will probably be a little bit different than some of the rest of you. Many of you I know when you give recognition you recognize your wife. I'm going to recognize two. I'm not a bigamist or polygamist but I do want to recognize my late wife Sandra that gave tremendous love and support until her death in 1992. And then for the past ten years someone that came into my life that's been a wonderful blessing, my present wife, Dory Marriott. And so I do want to recognize those. I guess also, well now I don't guess, I feel strongly too that we need to thank God for the blessings that's he's given all of us. And so with that in mind, why we'll tackle this topic that I entitled "Perspectives in International Service". And I'm going to follow a trend somewhat like most recent award winners have done and I'm not going to give you a technical lecture. And the reason is first of all, that work has been published in refereed technical journals. And I question that you'd want to listen to all of it anyway. So we'll skip that part. Also, I don't think that I want to talk about consulting that I've done in other countries, because in some cases it's confidential and I'm not certain again, that would be of too much interest. So we'll bypass that. As far as what Randy mentioned, affiliation with the International Congress of Meat Science, again those nineteen presentations or whatever they're all in the proceedings. So I don't think we need to touch on that. Now what I do think that would be worthwhile talking about is a little bit about international service to the less developed and developing countries. And so that's what I'd like to talk about primarily. And what I'd like to do is somewhat gear this to those that have not gone that direction. Young people that are just starting your career path or maybe those that are near the end that decide they want to make some other contribution before they hang it up entirely. So what I would like to do if possible is talk a little bit about some perspectives in international service as they apply to international service.

[6]And I guess the first thing we need to question, we need to ask is why international service? And incidentally in my view, it's a question we really need to ask because there are mixed reactions to international service. I know at our institution and I think as far as the entire country's concerned so I think we first need to ask the question why. Well the first suggestion I'm going to make is moral

considerations. In my view, we need to share the good fortune that we experience with others and hopes we can help them. So I would suggest first of all that we consider the moral aspects to determine if this is something that we want to delve into. Also I'm going to suggest we have professional obligations whether we spend or use it to international service or whether we do it with graduate students or volunteer work through our church or community or whatever, but in my view we do have professional obligations or professional obligation. Also I think we need to consider that in some cases it can actually be a professional requirement. I doubt very much if I would have ever advanced to full professor rank if I had not been able to demonstrate some international recognition at the institution that I serve. Now, this is a two-edged sword. Because I found out after doing all this and you know getting the salary increases and the promotion to professor, all of a sudden I was being asked a question, you know, it's great that you're doing all this in other countries. What are you doing for Virginia? And so that's something you may be, if you delve into this, as faculty members or as members of a company in industry, that sometime you may be asked well what are you doing for us? So I think that needs to be, needs to be considered. I think we also need to consider our personal goals and convictions. Because in my view, if international service is something that you want to delve into, then chase that dream, follow it. Also if it's your conviction that you need to share what knowledge you might have with others, all of that desire or that conviction. Also I would suggest from the overall standpoint of addressing this, maybe what we need to do is ask a question that was asked in the book of Genesis in the Kane and Able encounter when the question was asked, am I my brother's keeper? My suggestion is the answer is yes.

[7]Well let's take a brief look at, as I see it, some of the rewards and sacrifices and both are involved. One is I think all of us appreciate international recognition. If we do something we would like for it not to be just recognized maybe in our department or in our company but, you know, throughout the world. And so in my view that is, that's one of the rewards is that you become internationally known. And one of the, I guess, warm fuzzy feelings that I sometimes experience is especially if I go to another country and I'm able to go visit someone that I know from that country or see someone at the airport or whatever, it's, to me and it may or may not affect you that way, but it is sort of a warm fuzzy feeling. Well the other suggestion is priority considerations. Because let's face it, there are only twenty-four hours in a day. There are only seven days in a week. And as I see all of us have to assign priorities. And for you that might be interested. I think you need to consider, is this is a high enough priority I want to delve into or should I be looking at something else? Okay, other considerations. And again I'm going to sort of run the gamut a little bit on this one as far as consideration. Maybe I'll relate a little bit the good, the bad, and the ugly, but to me one of the considerations you need to is something like this.

[8]Some of you may recognize who this is. This picture was taken a few years ago but they don't look a lot different. On the right is Olla Broken, his wife Inga, and Inga's mother. I had the opportunity I guess it was maybe the first time I was in Norway, at least one trip in Norway. I had the opportunity to not only see them but I stayed in their home. And to me when you say other considerations, I think if you really want to learn more about people in other countries, if possible rather than stay in a nice hotel, stay with the people, if you have an opportunity stay at a bed and breakfast or whatever. And Olla and Inga did have a very nice house and they certainly welcomed me and it was a wonderful experience. And I, it's experiences that we may not ever accomplish if we don't involved in some way with international service.

[9]Also you have the opportunity many times to see clean modern plants. And then later on I'll show you the other side. But many times, you know, we can see things that others are doing that we can maybe benefit from even in this country. And I maintain that anytime we do any kind of work like this, not only do we teach others but we probably teach ourselves even more than we do others. And so to me this is another consideration, the opportunity to see a lot of different plants.

[10]Another opportunity that I consider somewhat unique and this is not related to the professional service, but what you're looking at over there in the left is a church that is located close to the borderline between Armenia and Turkey. What I was told, this church was built before the time of Jesus Christ. And I can tell you as a result of visiting it, that it has a dungeon in it. In fact, I was in the dungeon, not very long. But I was in the dungeon for a while and also in the back there's a sacrificing pit that is still being used. And I guess something like this, I probably would have the same effect with you as it did with me. It was somewhat viewed with awe to be inside a church that we were told was actually built before the time of Christ.

[11]And then of course there's the other side, you probably will recognize the Eiffel Tower and if it hadn't been for international service, I probably would have never seen that but it happened to be that I was on a trip. And I was returning and anyway when I was returning, I had a layover in Paris because of the airline connections, and so I had an opportunity to go see something like this. So there's that side as well.

[12]Even more important to me especially since I like to eat, is the opportunity to interact with people in other countries. I won't say a whole lot about this other than the fact that one of these, a couple of these I'll point out later, but here was an example where we were working with a small organization related to value-added products. And one thing I liked about it is that they do put emphasis on the food and drink and I enjoyed it and I think they did too.

[13]Now, other considerations. What do you think about that? When you have the urge to go and that's a facility available to you. Not that's bad, that bad everywhere but this can be part of reality. I think it's pretty well self explanatory. The commode's not in real good condition. But as I say there's several considerations and you know is this what you want? Are you willing to endure that?

[14]Now another consideration I would suggest in working with countries that are emerging, unless you know their language and we can't really know the language of all the countries we visit. There are two people that are very important to you that I will show here. On my left is the interpreter. Her name's Guyana. She was a good one. The best that I ever worked with and I can tell you this. That she not only made the experience more pleasant but it, she made it more doable. And then of course on the right, Armand. Armand was the driver. And again in a lot of countries, you need those two people and especially the interpreter.

[15]Be prepared and a consideration here, be prepared to see some things that you might not necessarily see in this country. You don't see any fences there. You see the cattle grazing close to the road. You see someone there that is attending them. And there are many people in some of these other countries and some of you may know this, but they keep their cattle in the city or the town or village or whatever, up in the barn or lot at night and daytime, why someone takes them out and stays with them while they graze.

[16]You also need to be prepared for something like this. This happened to be in Russia, in Kursk, spelled K-U-R-S-K that is, I don't know, somewhere maybe a hundred and seventy-five miles south of Moscow. My understanding was that when I was there I was the first American to be in that area since the 1800s. But at least I was working there with an organization to work on value-added products. And one of the things I guess that sort of surprised them is they were surprised to know that I knew how to, for example, cut meat and, you know, convert a live animal to carcass and such as that. And I tell you, we had to work under some very severe conditions. If you'll just look there, it's the outside. The temperature there is probably at this time about ninety degrees Fahrenheit. And also when I was preparing to do this, my thought as far as stunning was concerned the best stunning device would be a rifle. And they all claimed they didn't have one. So I don't think I'm even going to go into too much detail as far as how this animal was stunned but it would not necessarily be approved by, you know, some of the organizations in this country. Incidentally if you're worried about my health and safety, you might notice that there is me with a knife in my hand. So I did survive.

[17]Now, here's a story that I guess you probably need to know because I guess you might say that it ended up that I was not quite as good at milking as XXX indicated. But when I visited this organization that had the land and was interested in the value-added.

One of the things they did as far as I was concerned is they started testing me. They wanted me, for example, to drive their tractors. And I, you know, I knew how to drive a tractor. So I drove the tractors. They're, they had something similar to our jeeps here in this country. I drove that. They had a cow that they used, it was not a dairy operation on this farm. But they had a cow that they used to, for milk, for the family. And so they wanted to find out if I knew how to milk a cow. So I sat down out in the wide open and milked a cow. And what I found out apparently was that they observed, they thought I was able to milk a cow quicker and with less effort and so on then the person normally had that responsibility. And of course, you know, not only I guess Russia but a lot of other countries, you know, they're competitive and I guess they saw a need to teach me a lesson. So what they said they wanted to do and I decided to offer myself as a sacrificial lamb, they decided that they wanted me to have a milking contest with the lady you see on the left. Now this is a lady that for years had milked cows, was very good at it. They do have milking machines that I think you can probably see part of one there. And that is, of course, in the outside. But anyway they set it up for me to have a contest with her. And I knew before, just as soon as I agreed or even before I agreed, I knew that I was going to come in second. And sure enough, first of all, I mean she had, it'd been years since I'd milked a cow. And so she had that experience over me plus the fact that they gave her a cow that based on what I observed and others mentioned, when she milked the milk just came in a constant stream. And on this cow here she probably you know, suffered from mastitis. It was the most difficult cow I ever milked in my life. So guess who, guess who lost? Well, of course, again I think some of the considerations in work like that you've got to offer yourself as a sacrificial lamb. And when it's over you've got to be a good sport.

[18]So I congratulated her and we were friends until I left.

[19]Well other considerations. Many times in other countries you never know exactly who you rub noses with and this happens to be in Armenia. It's a U.S. embassy. And it wasn't unusual at all for me to go into the embassy for meetings or whatever and see the ambassador there. Also I ate many meals especially the noon time meal at the, at the embassy here. And so that's part of it. Another thing I want to share lest I forget to later on, you don't see it here. But at this embassy every day during the week there was a long, long line. I never attempted to count but a long line of people waiting, trying to get over here into the United States. Now to me there's a message there.

[20]Well also other considerations. Some of the plants you'll run into don't look exactly like some of ours here. This happens to be the entrance into a small meat plant, a very small plant.

[21]This happens to be the entrance into a large meat plant. And incidentally that's not owned by, you know, Cargill or Smithfield or

any of those. Okay? But sometimes that's what you see. That's what you have to work with.

[22]What do you think about that as cutting block? And you that are, that have talents in microbiology, why you might think a little bit about the count that you might get from a swab from something like this. Now also note this is a very dark picture. Thomas asked me when he received this PowerPoint presentation. He said, do you want me to try to lighten it up and such as that? And I asked him not to do it. I wanted you to see it more as it is because lighting sometimes was a real problem. And I'll have more examples for you. So again these are untouched from slides taken by yours truly.

[23]Example of a grinder. I doubt very much if anybody would be able to use that even in a custom plant in this country.

[24]And that's not upside down. That picture's not upside down. That's the way they were hanging the carcasses. And incidentally, a lot of the countries that I worked with, the way they fabricated the carcass is not like we do. It would, it would be hanging from the rail. And you just simply start cutting cross sections from the neck all the way up. And when you went into the store to buy something, why, you know, you would buy one or more of the cross sections that were cut. And incidentally that was one thing that I was asked to do one time was select the cut of meat in the store. And of course I looked and looked and finally I decided on a cross section going through the longest part of the rib eye.

[25]And then of course when you look at the cases. Again this is a few years ago. But you can see that there are displayed merchandise in many cases a little different then here. So we had the opportunity to experience what those in other countries experience.

[26]Other thing I wanted to point out, two things and three or four things in this picture. First of all, dark. It was a little bit lighter maybe then it shows up in the picture, but you may or may not be able to see me, but I was giving a lecture there. Beside me is the interpreter. And I guess is already finished and there's a person asking a question. So you got to be prepared not only for questions that might be asked but also these kind of conditions. And also and I've done it two different ways. I've given lectures and whatever where I spoke slowly enough that the interpreter, interpreters that went along, which is a more efficient way. I've also in many cases spoken in maybe two or three sentences at one time. And then I would stop and the interpreter would go ahead and give the, in whatever language. One thing I learned is that some interpreters you can trust and others can't. Guyana, I trusted her all the way. I had an experience an interpreter in Bulgaria that I became very suspicious when my answer was a short sentence. And when she translated it, it was probably I don't know, eight or ten sentences. So and I found out later on when questioning her why, she wanted to give them her view and so they ended up getting her answer rather then mine.

[27]Something else that as far as other considerations, many times I've found that in this kind of work you're called upon to do things maybe a little bit differently. This happens to be a building the American University of Armenia I believe is what it's called or maybe it's a Euro van, whichever. But anyway, I remember giving some guest lectures for the Peace Corps, the workers that were working in that area and also at a, they called it an international convention. I didn't think it was quite international, although there were people I guess from more countries then just, in fact I know there were people from more countries then just Armenia. But at least this was a facility where we used for delivering lectures such as that.

[28]And then I guess the other thing as far as considerations for several years now in most countries you have access to your friend the computer. That was my link to the outside. This was actually the office that I used, in this case it was in Europe and Armenia in what would be the equivalent of our U.S. Department of Agriculture. And for people that have accused me of working in the dark, why you can see a little bit of indication of light but I guess that that criticism or statement would be justified.

[29]Okay, now that we have gone through some of the considerations, well let's take a look at some of the possible opportunities for those that want to serve. Now I don't want to be insulting some of you that, you know, past award winners and some of you that have done a lot of international service. This is not necessarily for you. You probably know more than I do. This is more for people that have not had any international experience that would want to consider it. What are possible opportunities? And I won't mention all of them. I'll mention just a few of them to think about. One is university/industry affiliation. Because all of you know that most universities and in fact I guess all XXX institutions work with one or more countries outside of the United States. So that's one. And also industry more and more because as you know many of these companies that at one time was just in the United States have become global. So there are many opportunities here through university or if you work in industry through your company. Another I thought should be mentioned is USDA AID. And the reason I mentioned these is because I've been on assignments for both. I've been on USDA assignments where I've worked for a short period of time. And USDA replaced or let's say reimbursed the university for my salary while I was doing it. I've also done one or two short USAID assignments. And so these are certainly opportunities. Consulting, this is some of the earlier exposure actually I got to international service was through consulting. Companies in this country that hired me to do something in another country. And then Randy I guess had mentioned that I'd done some work in this area. At one time it was called VOCA and now it's ACDI/VOCA. And again it's an organization that obtains funding through donations as well as some government grants. And their main purpose is to serve countries especially those that are more in the developing process. And then of course the Winrock Foundation. Similar, a lot of you

probably are familiar with this. Again I have worked with the Winrock Foundation. In all of these as far as I know, I don't know of any exception. If you do this to those last three that are mentioned, your expenses will be taken care of you that you donate your time. And then the Peace Corps. I would say that based on my experience in one or two countries I was, I was very impressed with some of the people in the Peace Corps. I thought not only were they knowledgeable but they were, they were dedicated. The other thing I liked about them is that they wouldn't hesitate to, if they encountered something that they didn't know quite how to handle, why I know when I would be in a country, they'd contact me and by email many times since. And so that's another opportunity. And I guess as far as Peace Corps is concerned, I assume there isn't any age limit on that as long as someone can be productive, why they can be a part of it. And then of course different religious organizations that do work in other countries. I have not, I guess done this for any religious organization even though I am affiliated with a Christian denomination. One of the things that I would share with you that I found in my work in other countries. Almost without exception, if you wanted to talk to them about God, if you wanted to talk to them about Jesus Christ, any area of Christianity, they were glad to talk to you. But where you ran into a barrier is if you started talking to them about becoming my denomination. So I think that's something to think about. That many of these are receptive until it comes time to talk about them, you know, maybe becoming part of your denomination. That was not my intent. But I remember one time in Russia. It was the translator that I was involved with and she mentioned a lot of dislike for the Russian Orthodox Church. And so I wasn't criticizing it. I said well, would you be interested in me telling you a little bit about the denomination where I belong. And she said oh no, no I can't do that. I can't, you know, give up my religion, my denomination. So I think any of you with expectations of making progress here, you've got to tread very carefully and you may or may not accomplish anything.

[30]Well how to get started? One possibility, sabbatical from your company or from your university. One thing I might mention about sabbatical. Be careful. Several years ago I was working on one and it looked like it would fly, maybe I'll hold that for later on and I'll tell you a little bit more about that but, if I have time. Let's go ahead. I'll tie it in with this. It looked like it was going to fly where I was working out something at another country. I probably shouldn't mention the country. But what we were working on is that we would go live in his house and work for, I've forgotten, six months or a year, whatever. He would come and stay in our house. Well as I started checking into it a little bit more I realized that was never going to work because he was a chain smoker or close to it. And because of asthma and other problems that I've experienced that I'm very sensitive to tobacco smoke. And more even one time I actually smoked. But I realized that wasn't going to work. I thought a little bit further too. And knowing that his area was meat microbiology. And knowing in our department how much emphasis was put

on microbiology, I decided it might be a mistake for me to go down there because I might never come back. My, he might end up staying there permanently. Okay, consulting and again I've already told you, this is where I sort of, got my start to begin with and there are many different avenues but the industry and different organizations. The International Congress, it's amazing how many people find opportunities through there. I think a real interesting story was in 1987 when I was at the International Congress in Finland. Sam Angel, some of you may remember Sam, Sam was such a worker and so on that while he was there he was doing some research there in Finland while he was there to attend the meeting. So there are many opportunities of course that develop through here. So it's probably enough said. And then of course volunteer service, especially Peace Corps or through your church and such as that.

[31]Preparation, I'm not going to say too much about this but as far as I'm concerned the big one is experience. Experience through research, teaching, any kind of experience that is positive that you can share with others. Planning, many times it requires a lot of planning to be successful as far as international service is concerned. Language study, now one of the things that I have found for myself is even though at one time I felt like I was proficient enough in Spanish that I could get by in good shape, I found out that I just talked to slowly for a lot of them. They had difficulty understanding me because I didn't speak it quickly enough. So that's another problem. Of course, the other problem is, you know, when you're in several different countries, it probably is a little unfair to expect someone to know all of the languages.

[32]Well let's talk a little bit about beyond technical assistance or looking at it as a higher calling. First of all to me in addition to valuable service that you render are the friendships. You saw examples of that where I was invited to Olla and Inga's house. And there are many friendships that end up being lifetime friendships. To me most of us have a desire to help others and share and to me this is, this is an example of where we can do it. If you are one that has a wish to communicate your Christian principles, yeah it's a possibility. I still say on this one, don't be too naïve cause it's not as easy as it sounds. Well to me it's a good way of developing international goodwill. Don't be naïve enough to think that everybody's going to appreciate your efforts and everybody's going to go for it. But in many cases it can and I still maintain that in many cases, if we could have, on a lot of these nations, if we could, if I could use the, this expression. If we can teach them how to fish rather than give them the fish, we would, we would have better goodwill toward them. And then in my view, one of the best ways we can promote peace on earth is sharing with others. And what I want to do as I wind down and I was asked to leave a little bit of time in case you wanted to interrogate me or whatever. So the last example I want to use as far as a higher calling and the way you might want to look at something like the international service that I've described is a little bit like a story that I heard years ago. The story was

told that someone from the press went to a construction site and started interviewing some of the workers. And so the reporter asked a leading question of one person. What are you doing here? And the person's response was, I'm making $11 an hour. He went to another person. And he asked that person, what are you doing here? The person said well, can't you see what I'm doing. I'm mixing up this mortar and I have to transport it a wheel barrow and it's hot. I'm tired and I want to go home. And he asked the third person, what are you doing? And the person said I'm building a cathedral. As far as I'm concerned with your work in international service, if you choose to do it this way you can build a cathedral. And my wishes for you is if you make that choice, best wishes.

[33]Thank you very much Dr. Marriott. You've provided us with a view of the world that we often overlook and many of us have not had the opportunity to experience. Thanks a lot for that incite.