



For Immediate Release International Production & Processing Expo

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Pet Food Conference Attracts Largest Crowd Yet

TUCKER, Ga. – Feb. 1, 2017 – The American Feed Industry Association’s 10th annual Pet Food Conference was held Tuesday in conjunction with the 2017 International Production & Processing Expo in Atlanta, Georgia. There were 365 people in attendance.

“In 2016, there were 250 attendees at the Pet Food Conference. This year’s conference, with 365 registered attendees, tops the record books as the largest yet,” said Leah Wilkinson, AFIA vice president of legislative, regulatory and state affairs.

The Pet Food Conference is one of three AFIA-sponsored events at IPPE. It is designed to inform pet food representatives about the latest industry initiatives and included speakers from government entities, private companies and universities.

Attendees heard from a panel on environmental monitoring in pet food safety programs, as well as eight individuals. Dr. Melissa Brookshire discussed the need for transparency with pet food customers during her presentation, “Making Pet Food for Today’s Discerning Customer.”

“A pet food manufacturer today needs to balance the nutritional requirements of the animal, conducting sustainable operations and the needs and wants of the consumer. It can be done, but it takes some focus and attention,” said Brookshire.

The ever-important Food Safety Modernization Act was a high-priority topic. The Food and Drug Administration’s Jenny Murphy said the agency’s inspection mindset is to educate before regulating when it comes to FSMA.

“FSMA puts control in the facility’s hands. Take responsibility, go beyond basic requirements in your quality and food safety programs,” said Murphy.

Another lively topic was “Developing the Next Generation of Pet Food Employees.” A U.S. Department of Agriculture/Purdue University study reported there is a need for nearly 60,000 high-skilled employees

in the food and agriculture arenas between 2015-20. Jessica Starkey, Ph.D., an assistant professor at Auburn University, said education about careers in agriculture starts with our country's teachers.

“Educating the educator on the pet food industry will help us share information with students looking for careers in agriculture. The students are there, we just need to connect to industry,” stated Starkey.

Other topics included: industry trends, trade, extrusion of grain-free pet foods, and research and AAFCO updates.

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Photo Captions:



FDA's Jenny Murphy explains the agency's thoughts on Food Safety Modernization Act inspections at the 10th annual Pet Food Conference.



Jessica Starkey, assistant professor at Auburn University, presented at the 10th annual Pet Food Conference about the importance of educating the educator when it comes to agriculture.

ABOUT IPPE

The International Production & Processing Expo (IPPE) is a collaboration of three shows - International Feed Expo, International Meat Expo and the International Poultry Expo - representing the entire chain of protein production and processing. The event is sponsored by the American Feed Industry Association (AFIA), North American Meat Institute (NAMI) and U.S. Poultry & Egg Association (USPOULTRY).

ABOUT AFIA

The American Feed Industry Association (AFIA) is the world's largest organization devoted exclusively to representing the business, legislative and regulatory interests of the U.S. animal feed industry and its suppliers. AFIA also is the recognized leader on international industry developments. Member-companies are livestock feed and pet food manufacturers, integrators, pharmaceutical companies, ingredient suppliers, equipment manufacturers and companies which supply other products, services and supplies to feed manufacturers.

ABOUT NAMI

The North American Meat Institute (NAMI) is the leading voice for the meat and poultry industry. Formed from the 2015 merger of the American Meat Institute (AMI) and North American Meat Association (NAMA), the Institute has a rich, century-long history and provides essential member services including legislative, regulatory, scientific, international and public affairs representation. NAMI's mission is to shape a public policy environment in which the meat and poultry industry can produce wholesome products safely, efficiently and profitably. Together, the Institute's members produce the vast majority of U.S. beef, pork, lamb and poultry and the equipment, ingredients and services needed for the highest quality products.

ABOUT USPOULTRY

U.S. Poultry & Egg Association (USPOULTRY) is the all-feather organization representing the complete spectrum of today's poultry industry, whose mission is to progressively serve member companies through

research, education, communication and technical assistance. Founded in 1947, USPOULTRY is based in Tucker, Ga.