

URNER BARRY'S EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE AND GLOBAL PROTEIN SUMMIT
EPIC ONLINE EVENT PREVIEW INSIDE!

Urner Barry's Reporter

the newsmagazine for the food industry professional
VOLUME 15 | NUMBER 4 | FALL 2020 | QUARTERLY

**CHICKEN INDUSTRY'S
NEW NORM** *p.14*

**RECORD BONELESS
PORK SPREADS** *p.16*

**THE PUSH FOR PLANT
AUTOMATION** *p.24*

**RETAIL BECOMES LIFELINE
FOR SEAFOOD SELLERS** *p.36*

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From the Editor's Desk...

Amidst the COVID-19 chaos this summer, I found myself enjoying some down-time while listening to one of my perennial musicians, Jimmy Buffet. Heavily engaged in the lyrics, I was not immediately transported to some exotic destination as you might guess, but rather to the present day.

The song opens, "I took off for a weekend last month just to try and recall the whole year. All of the faces and all of the places wonderin' where they all disappeared." Sound familiar? I'm sure some of you have never heard those words sung before, but the sentiment is all too familiar. Mr. Buffet goes on to say, "I didn't ponder the question too long..." and naturally, neither did I, because I knew the answer.

Social distancing and self-isolation have been rough. Spikes in cases attributed to bad behavior, what New Jersey Governor Murphy might blame on "knuckleheads," is causing further heartache and economic misery. COVID-19 is in the news, evidenced by our workplace protocol, and verified by the "For Lease" signs we notice popping up across town. It has stressed young families and old, those who are financially sound and who are fiscally struggling, and it has done so with alarming equality. COVID-19 has not gone away with summer heat. New cases and deaths have not been reduced to a trickle, and economic prosperity, even stability, is difficult to see returning anytime soon.

Or is it? Is it possible that for the food industry, this is just what the doctor ordered? Well likely not quite, but a strong prescription for change has been in order for some time. Surely direct to the consumer meal kits, poultry and seafood purveyors off-loading into the backseat of the family minivan, and the retailers' ability to accommodate essential consumer needs during a pandemic, have all boosted the knowledge and know-how of an already well-oiled machine. The ability to pivot and adapt the product and the culture of the company producing it, to meet the needs of the consumer in the "new norm," will make the difference between those that prosper, those that get by, and those that close their doors forever. As dark as things seem now, if you look and listen closely, you can sense the change happening. We may find in a few years that this lifestyle-altering, heart-breaking and deadly disease, was just the thing the highly traditional business of food production needed to achieve a new level of prosperity. I certainly hope so.

Meanwhile, make some time to kick back and enjoy this issue of Urner Barry's *Reporter*. I hope that it finds you healthy and safe.



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Urner Barry's Reporter

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Nearly every sector of the foodservice industry is asking the same question: *what's next?* None more so than buffets.

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COVID-19 BRINGS A NEW DAY FOR *Buffets*

"It seems likely that many operators will reduce or remove self-service stations," explain the research and consulting firm.

"This includes buffet-style service, self-service beverage, bakery cases, roller grills and even self-service ordering kiosks. While self-service may not disappear completely, changing methods and dispensing styles, as well as a

are likely to satisfy their appetites. They typically don't feature signature dishes or menu items like a restaurant. And with restrictions making it hard to offer a similar experience through takeout or delivery, buffets need to reopen their doors and adjust their operations.

When America does finally return to "normal," buffets will likely still be in hotels, a hotspot on cruises and remain in communities. However, the experience may look different as they learn from the devastation COVID-19 brought upon the industry. [UB](#)

Article contributed by Ryan Doyle
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The coronavirus pandemic will change the way buffets operate in America. Time will tell if it will mean the end of the traditional buffet, but at least for the near future don't expect to share tongs with anyone.

In Las Vegas, the famed Bacchanal Buffet at Caesars Palace is set to complete its \$2.4 million renovation in August. But with the pandemic in the backdrop, the typical display of nearly 10 food stations and thousands of people being served will look much different.

The location will do away with shared utensils and offer smaller dishes and table-side delivery for some of its most popular items, like its Cajun seafood boil. But the Bacchanal is not the only one making significant changes to its normal operations. Buffets all over the country are adjusting and attempting to adhere to local health guidelines.

Technomic highlighted the removal or reduction of self-service in its "Post-Pandemic Playbook."

renewed hyper-sensitivity to sanitization to ensure safety, will likely be necessary."

When you do take that next trip, continental breakfasts bars may also be a thing of the past as hotels will try to limit guests touching the same surfaces. Those that offer complimentary breakfasts may turn to prepackaged baked goods and fruit. Even salad bars and other self-serve stations will likely be roped-off at restaurants.

How long buffets will need to adjust operations as the country loosens coronavirus restrictions is unknown. And consumer sentiment is an important factor too.

In Technomic's July 30 update of its "COVID-19, The Foodservice View" report, 77% of consumers expressed concerns that the coronavirus would reemerge before the end of the year. These concerns could mean a slow build in foot traffic of restaurants and buffets through the end of the year.

Consumers head to buffets for their variety. No matter what a guest may crave, buffets



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CONSUMER BUYING TRENDS IN A PANDEMIC

During extraordinary times, insights into consumer behaviors become more vital than ever to businesses. The Hartman Group, a food culture consultancy, provides such trends, insights, and strategic counsels to professionals in the food and beverage industry. The company conducts its own primary research with expertise in areas including sustainability and the health and wellness consumer.

In 2012, the Hartman Group developed the Eating Occasions Compass, a database that documents the who, what, when, where, and why of eating occasions in the United States. Through this database, Shelley Balanko, Ph.D., Senior Vice President of the Hartman Group, said, “We came to learn that often its not the consumer that is different but the occasion that is different, and we started to see the usefulness of looking at consumer behavior through the lens of eating occasions.”

Prior to the pandemic, consumers were on the course of eating food alone for immediate consumption, meaning a lot of what we consumed was eaten within an hour of being purchased. Balanko noted that consumers were on a trajectory of an “immediate gratification style of eating.”

However, this activity of quickly eating meals alone does not match the ideals of the average American. According to the Hartman Group’s research, Americans have felt a pull towards wanting to have at least one meal together. Balanko mentioned that before

the pandemic consumers struggled with that ideal. But now, even if consumers cannot have dinner together regularly, they are starting to prioritize having at least one meal a week as a family.

Meanwhile, Balanko predicts that consumer concern for personal and collective health will linger for some time. “Even though foodservice has begun to open up, consumers are reporting that they are going to eat out less in the future even as COVID-19 passes.” Many consumers claim this decision is not because they do not trust foodservice providers, but they do not trust other diners. Consumers are expected to play it safe with outdoor dining and continue relying on takeout and delivery.

“Even though foodservice has begun to open up, consumers are reporting that they are going to eat out less in the future even as COVID-19 passes.”

Since consumers are eating more meals at home, there is more sourcing from pantries going on, resulting in regular trips to the grocery store. However, consumers are spending less time in the store and no longer shopping in an exploratory way. Balanko described a “get in and get out mentality,” where consumers are on a rushed mission to get what they need safely.

When it comes to coveted items being out of stock, Balanko reported a mix of consumer behavior with some purchasing a different brand and/or trying something completely new. Some consumers stated if they could not get a specific brand they would try the private label. For others, their existing brand was available, but they were concerned it may not be on the shelf during their next trip. Therefore, they would purchase their usual product and a shelf stable item in preparation for an empty store shelf next time.

Early on, consumers were turning to nostalgic childhood brands as a means of comfort. Now, consumers are faced with more cooking at home and planning. “Consumers are looking for options that will allow them to cook from home conveniently and for their level of skill,” said Balanko. While consumers are dealing with working remotely and children at home, convenience while keeping it fresh is the goal.

Also, prices are less of a concern to eaters during the pandemic. “Think about all



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the money spent on foodservice. Last year consumers spent more at restaurants than grocery stores,” said Balanko. Consumers are now using that money on items that will keep them healthy. “The pandemic has shined a spotlight on wellness and immunity, and we have seen organic items do well in the past few months,” stated Balanko. Overall, consumers are not unconscious about price but are willing to pay for quality.

While consumers are adapting to a new normal, safety concerns are expected to remain a top priority. “Delivery and takeout will keep consumers going to foodservice and keep local businesses alive,” said Balanko. Meal kits are certainly an option, and foodservice operators have started to recreate the in-dining experience by offering items for consumers to prepare in the comfort and safety of their own home. Balanko noted that this is the incarnation of convenience that consumers have embraced and will continue to do so as they have become more intentional with their purchases.

Balanko also mentioned the importance of transparency. Consumers want to know what companies are doing to protect their workers and customers. Cleanliness remains a major priority as well, as consumers would like to see that extra precautions are being taken to keep restaurants and stores sanitized.

For foodservice, Balanko suggests operators help consumers have a dining experience that provides a sense of discovery. Operators should develop concepts that make dining at home a treat for consumers and innovate beyond takeout and delivery. When it comes to retail, Balanko recommends companies aid consumers in convenient ways to cook at home and empower them to develop and grow their skills in the kitchen. [UB](#)

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Shelley Balanko, Ph.D. will be speaking at Urner Barry’s Executive Conference and Global Protein Summit event. Her session, “Consumer trends in a pandemic: What do they want?” will be available on demand on Wednesday, October 7.



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Adapt and move fast: A Q&A with Restaurant Brands International CMO Fernando Machado

We caught up with Fernando Machado, Global CMO at Restaurant Brands International, to talk about his perspective on the pandemic and foodservice impacts ahead of his much-anticipated appearance at Urner Barry's upcoming Executive Conference and Global Protein Summit, broadcasting exclusively online October 6-9, 2020. Fernando's focus is infusing Burger King, Popeyes and Tim Hortons with purpose, improving product quality, overall sustainability, modernizing design, and inspiring the organization around tech, digital and brand development.

Q: How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the QSR sector in 2020?

A: The pandemic definitely affected the entire hospitality industry and QSR was no exception to that. Different countries

were affected in different ways and at different timings. In our case we had situations ranging from countries that were in complete lock down and that included having all our restaurants closed, to countries where we could still operate via



drive thru, delivery and takeout. All brands adopted new restaurant routines in order to guarantee the safety of their crew and of their guests. We have seen a spike in delivery sales and a dramatic acceleration of digital sales, including contactless methods of payment via apps. As a result of a change in people's routines, segments like pizza and fried chicken saw an acceleration during this period while others like coffee and baked goods experienced a sharp decline. The situation started to normalize a bit during July and August for most players.

Q: How has the messaging to consumers changed in terms of marketing due to the pandemic?

A: We are very nimble and tend to move really fast here at Restaurant Brands International. So when the pandemic hit, we basically changed our marketing plan to take into account the new context people were facing. We basically changed the entire plan in less than a week. That shows how strong our marketing team is. The first thing we did was to leverage our brands to provide support to people and communities. As an example, Burger King donated more than 1 million kids meals

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for families in need in the U.S. Popeyes also donated more than 1 million family meals to people in need in Louisiana. And Tim Hortons offered free coffee and baked goods to healthcare professionals, first responders and volunteers. Our entire team and franchisee partners took immediate action in all countries we are present. After that we developed assets to explain to people our new restaurant procedures focused on health and safety. We also made sure to advertise how people could order our food. Finally, we layered on top of that innovation and advertising which made sense for each respective market.

Q: As adaptability seems more important than ever, how can companies prepare for fluctuations in consumer behavior?

A: QSR is a very dynamic industry, extremely competitive and incredibly fast paced. And moving fast is one of our key strengths. Our team has a very strong bias for action and is used to pivot when needed. Burger King, for instance, is known for being able to surf waves of popular culture with its advertising. But that is only possible if you can adapt, change, evolve and run really fast. In my view you can prepare for that by doing it repeatedly. It's like training for a race. You will only run fast if you practice.

Q: What is the biggest challenge facing the foodservice segment as we round out 2020 and look ahead to 2021?

A: I think the biggest challenge is to reignite growth by reopening the dining area and by continuing to accelerate digital channels. In our case we are also working on improving food quality by offering products with no ingredients from artificial sources and on improving our overall sustainability footprint.

Q: You will be delivering a keynote address at Urner Barry's upcoming online Executive Conference and Global Protein Summit in October. Can you tell us why you're looking forward to the online event?

A: I am really excited about Urner Barry's upcoming online Executive Conference



and Global Protein Summit in October. It's a really unique opportunity to connect with key players in our industry, exchange experiences and learn from different points of views. I am also looking forward [to] sharing some of our learnings and exciting initiatives we have done during the challenging year we all had. [UB](#)

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Retail egg sales hampered by carton shortage

The retail egg shortage witnessed in the beginning phases of the COVID-19 pandemic garnered a lot of attention in the news, but the reality is that 2020—much like 2019—has not been plagued by a lack of eggs, but rather an over-abundance. Faced with the unpredictable demand shifts brought on by COVID-19, producers have been confronted with the seemingly impossible task of striking a balance between output and the ever-changing consumption levels.

In March, shelter-in-place mandates drove retail demand for eggs to unprecedented levels. The spike—which pushed shell egg prices to a record-high \$3.09/dozen—was historic, but short-lived. The demand destruction that followed in the foodservice arena, on the other hand, has been pervasive. By April, the restaurant and tourism industries had effectively been shut down, causing egg prices to retreat to pre-pandemic levels. And they've struggled to find solid footing ever since.

Much of that can be attributed to the increased availability of loose eggs that are no longer needed in foodservice channels. Producers have made substantial adjustments to account for

this lost demand, culling the national flock by nearly 15 million layers between April and July, to a nearly three-year low of 316 million layers. And yet, egg prices continue to languish below the cost of production. When this article went to press, Urner Barry's benchmark Midwest large quotation sat at just \$0.78/dozen—18% behind the same time last year when demand was intact, and 45% lower than the five-year average.

Industry sources believe a stronger push from the demand side in the form of retail features would help move the market closer to the equilibrium it seeks, and in turn bring egg values back to profitable levels. But there's a major obstacle standing in the way—carton availability, or more to the point, the lack thereof. Like so many other segments of the protein industry in which laborers are working in close proximity, carton manufacturers have been hard hit by personnel issues, forcing them to slow, and at times halt production, in order to sanitize, or because of absenteeism.

Lead times for more popular SKUs, such as single-dozen large, have reportedly stretched to as much as 10 to 12 weeks. Sources say manufacturers are modifying their operations wherever

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possible—shutting down lines for less popular cartons, for instance—in order to ramp up production of those that are more widely used. But even with those efforts, many egg suppliers are operating hand-to-mouth and do not have enough cartons in inventory to meet the added volume an aggressive feature would bring. In fact, suppliers say they sometimes lack the cartons necessary to meet regular orders, and are forced to either push, short—and in the worst of scenarios—cancel loads. Others have gone as far as sourcing cartons from abroad, bringing them in from far-away destinations like Brazil and Russia.

That is not to say that all suppliers are short cartons. Some have long-standing relationships with carton manufacturers that

helps assure more reliable delivery timetables, and others have managed to build a more robust inventory over time. But among those who are in short supply, there is growing concern that the situation will only worsen as the year progresses. Egg demand usually wanes in the warmer months, giving manufacturers an opportunity to build inventory for the upcoming baking season. But production woes, coupled with the early-COVID-19 spike in demand, is not providing the reprieve they need to get caught up—let alone get ahead. [UB](#)

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SCOTT RASMUSSEN talks politics *and* what you need to know

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Long recognized as one of the world's leading public opinion pollsters, Scott Rasmussen is constantly measuring and analyzing the mood of the nation. That's why when it came time for Urner Barry to create a lineup of dynamic speakers for the upcoming online Executive Conference and Global Protein Summit, Scott was a must-have headliner.

This exclusive online event is set to take place October 6-9, 2020 and will feature live and on-demand sessions exploring the biggest issues facing the food industry today. Being an election year, political implications are top of mind for businesses operating in the U.S. and around the globe.

"The biggest issues are the deeply intertwined issues of the pandemic, lockdowns, and the economy," says Scott Rasmussen. "What's fascinating is that both parties lined up positions early on and are largely at the mercy of how events unfold. Democrats have basically lined up in support of more lockdowns while Republicans are identified with re-opening. If fears of the pandemic grow between now and November, that's good for Democrats. If it begins to look like we're climbing out

of the hole by November, that's good for Republicans. It's always the case that events matter more than campaigns, but this year the dynamic is more evident than usual."

The stakes certainly seem especially high given the current climate of uncertainty and unrest. Businesses should be aware of the wildcard factors heading into November, and that's precisely what this event intends to provide.

"The issues of racial justice will be an ongoing concern. In the short-term, it will be important to see whether the focus remains on civil rights, which is good for Biden, or if events shift the focus to law and order, which is good for Trump. Beyond the election, however, the issue of helping our



nation move closer to its founding ideals will be a dominant issue for businesses over the coming years," notes Rasmussen.

Co-founder of cable sports network, ESPN, Scott Rasmussen grew up in broadcasting and went on to revolutionize the polling industry. *The Washington Post* has called Rasmussen "a driving force in American

“...the issue of helping our nation move closer to its founding ideals will be a dominant issue for businesses over the coming years.”

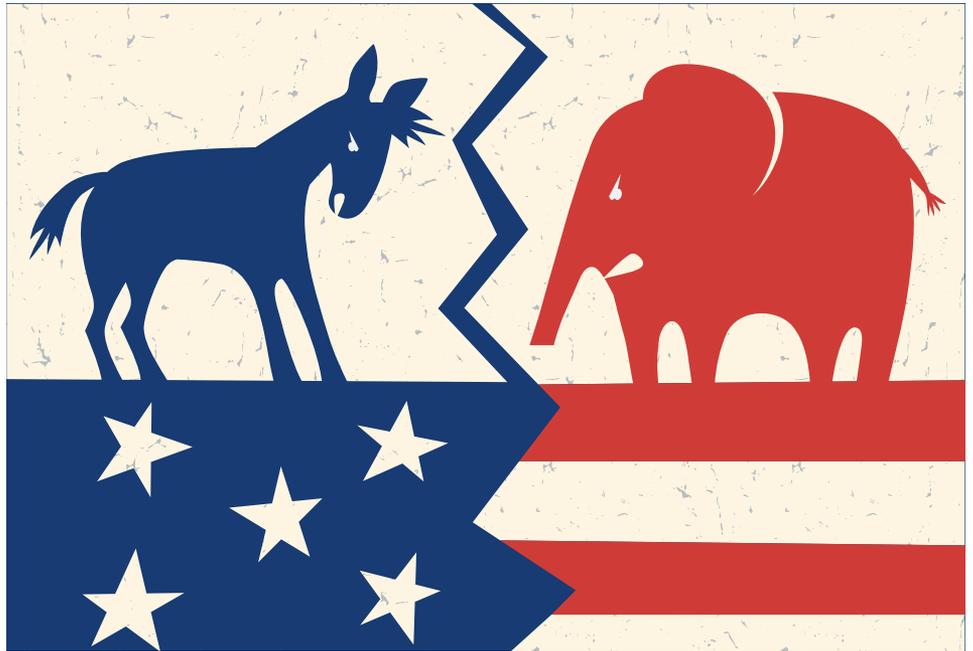
politics,” while the *Wall Street Journal* described him as, “a key player in the contact sport of politics.”

“The world has fundamentally changed and it will take a decade or longer for business and society to sort things out,” he says. “In reality, many of the changes we’ll see have been building for years or decades. But the pandemic served as a catalyst for change that greatly accelerated the process.”

Change is certainly the name of the game in 2020 and adaptability is a must. In the age of COVID-19, the renowned Executive Conference is teaming up with the Global Protein Summit into one, epic online event in 2020. Despite limitations on gatherings, information remains vital and the online event will provide food companies and agribusinesses the latest intel and analysis on the markets, the economy, and the latest from the political arena.

“It’s a great opportunity to put the entire election in a proper context. For me, that means explaining how I can be deeply pessimistic about our political system and wildly optimistic about our nation’s future. The short answer is that I recognize that politicians don’t really lead the country. The culture leads and politics lag behind. This is a critically important concept for business leaders to understand as they grapple with the issues affecting their industry.” [UB](#)

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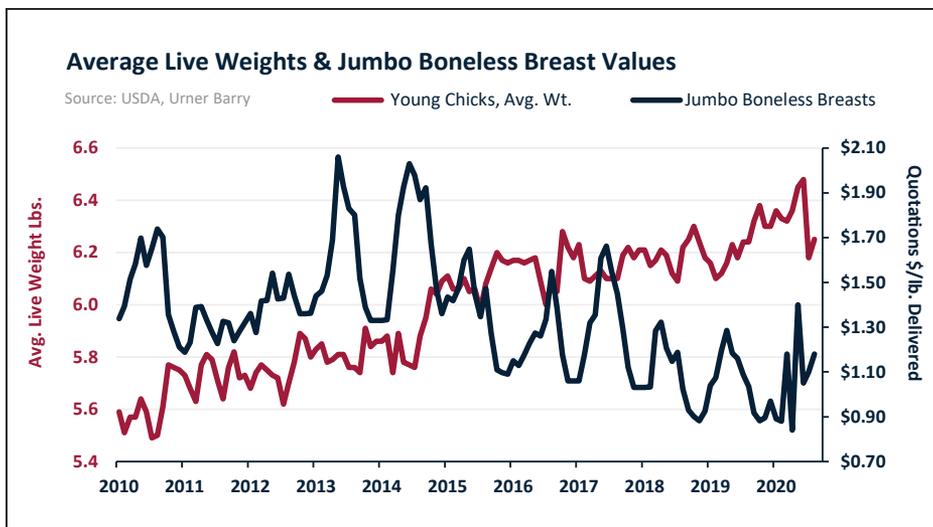
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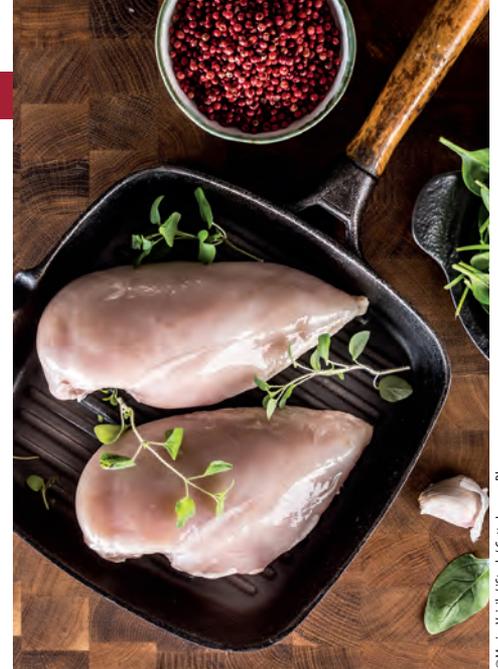
The chicken industry's *new norm* may not be so new

For months on end, and certainly throughout this summer, most of us have expressed a desire for things to go back to the way they were pre-COVID-19. Chicken processors, further processors and their customer base were no exception and consistently wondered aloud just when returning to the “norm” might take place. Now, what many of them meant was how long it might be before industry activity might transition beyond the highly volatile and rollercoaster-like movement of prices that saw market values surge and degrade at record paces. What they have conveniently forgot in their rush to experience their routine business lives again is that prior to 2020, the “normal” at hand involved record low pricing on many key lines and more supply than many knew what to do with. Sure, any semblance of normalcy is welcome at this stage, but if this pandemic has taught the industry anything, it’s that adapting can be the difference between closing up shop or keeping the lights on.



It may be hard to recall now, but a time existed not too long ago where a happy balance was in place between supply and demand. Some were better positioned than others, but most processors had adequate offerings for the call, and in most cases deep discounts weren’t forced when buyers turned up their noses because there was always some room in the freezer. Bird weights were not the go-to indicator as to whether or not supply would be an issue, as so many other variables came into play. Sure, seasonality has a significant role, but weights and headcounts are factors processors actually have a say in. As illustrated by our chart, the slow but sure rise in weight to the “no turning back” 6 lb. mark, has a definitive effect on pricing. The heavier the bird, the less money is reaped from it. Just before 2015, bird weights shot past that “line in the sand” and never looked back.

It’s no coincidence that after that time, jumbo boneless sellers have struggled to realize a ROI. Market values exceeding \$1.25/lb. have been few and far between. Midway through 2020, that gap is as



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“...prior to 2020, the ‘normal’ at hand involved record low pricing on many key lines and more supply than many knew what to do with.”

large as ever and most would agree this trajectory looks similar in the future.

With all the bad this pandemic has given us, there may be a silver lining in the end. As foodservice was all but shut down, processors were forced to take drastic measures to rid themselves of excess supply. One choice that was made by many was to begin breaking eggs with the hopes that the

cutback would pay dividends down the road. The USDA’s Weekly Broiler Hatchery showed sharp decreases in egg sets and chicks placed in this timeframe, verifying what was being discussed in industry circles. Fast forward to June and July and the amount of chicken crossing the line was dramatically reduced, showing that the measures taken weren’t in vain and that balance can be achieved even in the most dire of circumstances.

It remains to be seen if this production management, so to speak, can be consistently applied when the pandemic is finally under control. Many factors, including cheap corn and brand-new facilities, aren’t helping players limit the amount of production able to be processed. But the recipe for success was written, not by plan, but by necessity. Only time will tell if the lessons learned throughout the spring and summer will be used for a brighter tomorrow or if the “normal” many long for will come back into play. [UB](#)

Article contributed by **Matt Busardo** | mbusardo@urnerbarry.com

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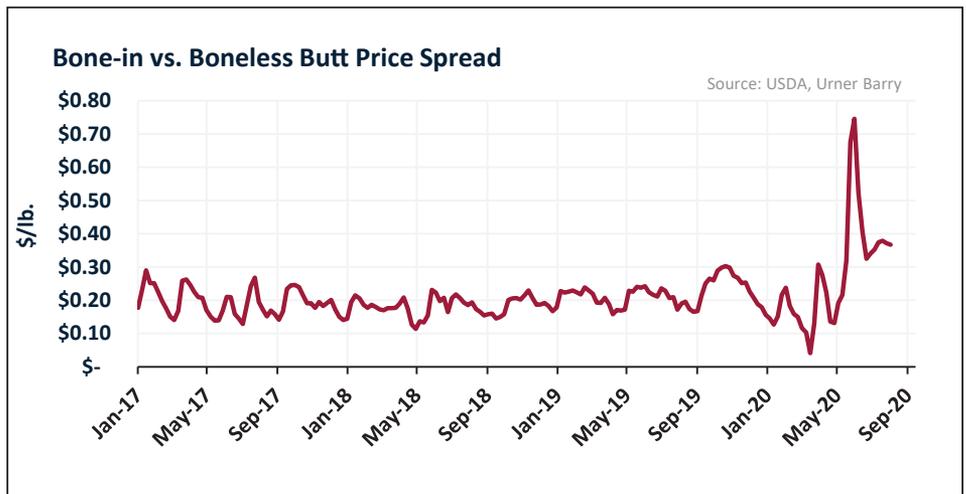
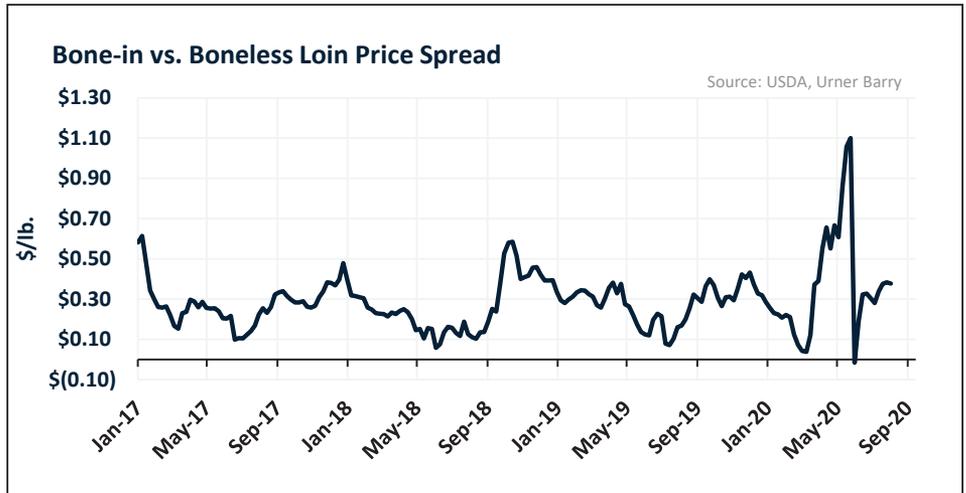
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Labor issues in the pork market and record boneless spreads

The first half of 2020 was an unprecedentedly volatile period in the pork market due, in large part, to COVID-19, which swept across the globe and left much of the United States in lockdown. We have seen multiple stages of this pandemic, including a wave of exaggerated retail activity, the decline in foodservice demand, a rash of packing and processing plant closures, the eventual reopening of those plants, and a return to record slaughter figures as the industry attempts to catch up with a backlog of hogs.

One of the most prominent lingering consequences of the pandemic has been the continual instability of the labor market across the industry. Pork plants were hit particularly hard with virus outbreaks, causing a slew of locations to temporarily close throughout April and May. In the aftermath, even as these plants reopened, many workers decided not to return. Whether due to social distancing measures at plants, workers utilizing federal aid, sick or vacation leave, or just departing the industry entirely, this decline in available labor has had a tangible impact on the pork market.

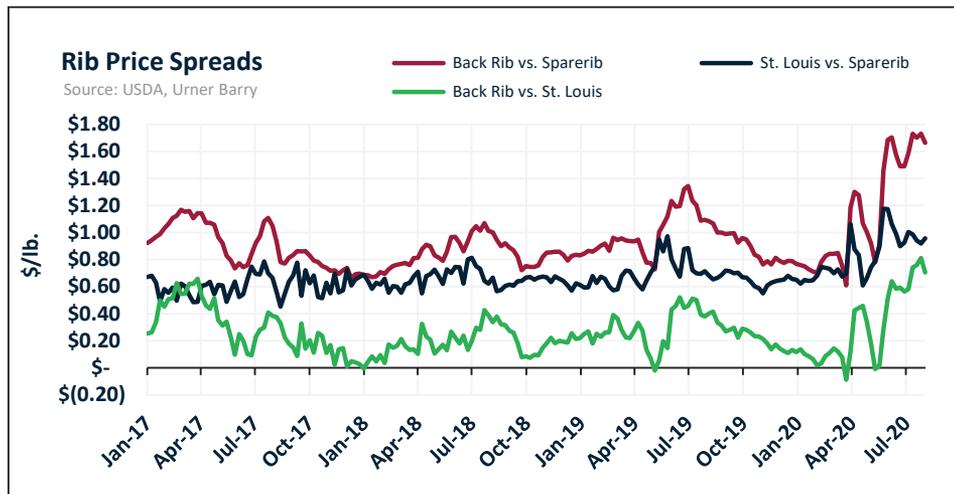
Often, the problems surrounding the labor situation have manifested on boning lines, where there just simply are not enough hands available to process the bone-in items. As a result, fewer boneless and in turn, a greater degree of bone-in products, have been available on the market, leading boneless products to take on significant premiums over their bone-in source cuts. This has been observed throughout both the green meat and fresh pork complexes for the loin, butt, rib, and ham components.



On March 9, the spread between the bone-in and boneless loin was \$3.83/cwt. As retail demand increased and the labor situation worsened in the following months, a large spread between the boneless loin and bone-in loin started to develop. This spread crested during the last week of May, with boneless holding a record \$110.10/cwt premium over the bone-in price. Bone-in and boneless butts also showed the same trajectory, peaking on June 1 around \$75.60/cwt, which is more than 600% higher than the roughly \$10/cwt spread in the beginning of March. Following these heights, buyer pushback drove both loins and butts back down to more seasonal pricing levels in mid-June.

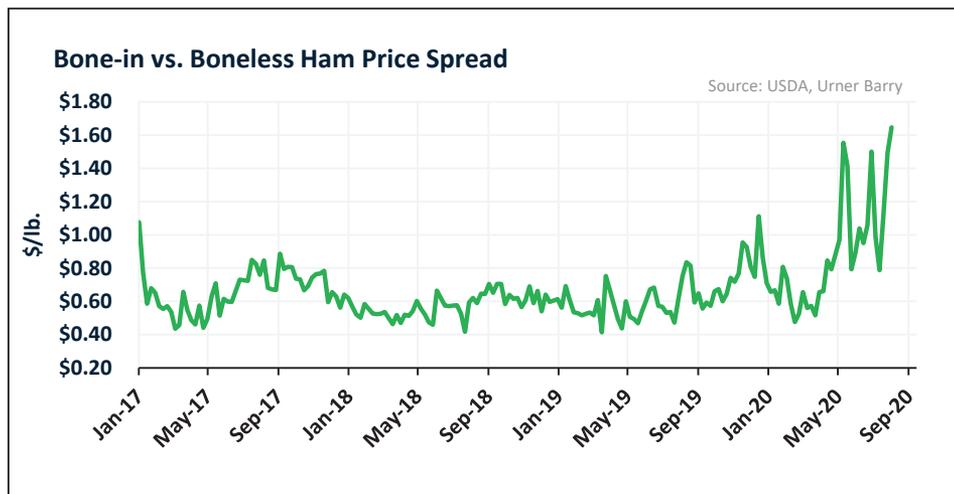


Spareribs have also seen a highly volatile market this year, especially during the height of the pandemic, with prices rising by roughly \$105/cwt between April and May and then declining \$86/cwt as we progressed deeper into the summer. Unlike the loin and butt bone-in to boneless spreads, ribs have maintained a very high spread between the sparerib, back rib and St. Louis ribs. Between strong retail interest, lack of labor, and thin cold storage supplies, back ribs and St. Louis ribs have been very well supported this summer. In the chart below, we compare spareribs to St. Louis ribs, spareribs to back ribs, and St. Louis ribs to back ribs.



By looking at the chart we can see that the spread between the spareribs and the St. Louis ribs peaked around June 1. Back ribs gained a significant premium over spares beginning in April and has only expanded on that spread throughout the summer months, averaging around \$170/cwt in July. The spread between back ribs and St. Louis, which in July rose to as high as \$81/cwt, indicates that back ribs continue to be more sought after and in lesser supply than St. Louis.

Hams have seen some of the most remarkable spreads between the bone-in and boneless components with the boneless premium reaching \$164.60/cwt on August 3, compared to roughly \$60/cwt in the beginning of March. In times of limited labor, what workforce is available at plants tends to get diverted from ham lines to other areas of the plant, such as loin or butt boning lines. This has resulted in periods of notable shortages of boneless production during the last few months.



“Often, the problems surrounding the labor situation have manifested on boning lines, where there just simply are not enough hands available to process the bone-in items.”

With occasional flair ups of the virus, worker fears, employment competition, and new social distancing guidelines at plants, this could linger throughout the rest of the year. Boning lines are expected to see an ebb and flow in capacity as this situation is gradually resolved and either new workers are trained, or previous workers return. [UB](#)

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KFC answers age-old question by removing the egg from the conversation

The saying “if it ain't broke, don't fix it” has proven to be a winning strategy for the chicken fast food business and one which has remained firmly in place since the outset of the 1930s. Less than a decade after Mrs. Wilmer Steele pioneered the commercial broiler industry by raising a flock of about 500 chickens to be used solely for meat consumption, Harland Sanders began selling fried chicken to hungry travelers out of a fuel station that he owned at the time. After formulating a unique seasoning recipe which consisted of 11 herbs and spices, the bar was set and

the rest was history. As it currently stands, KFC has well over 20,000 worldwide locations making it the second largest fast food chain, just behind McDonalds. And the menu itself hasn't changed much since the gas station days—that is, until recently.

With the original recipe still being held so close to KFC's core marketing strategy, you would be forgiven for believing that its global success is heavily rooted in tradition rather than modernization. In actuality, it is more a combination of the two rather than any one factor alone. In

fact, some would argue that innovation itself has been “baked” into the Colonel's recipe since the very beginning. Many attribute the invention of the first pressure fryer to Sanders and his effort to increase restaurant efficiency by more quickly and evenly cooking chicken. Since that time, KFC is still thinking up new and innovative ways to shake up the quick serve restaurant industry. Take their recent collaboration with Beyond Meat to create plant-based fried chicken, which first debuted in August 2019. After a successful response from consumers in Atlanta,



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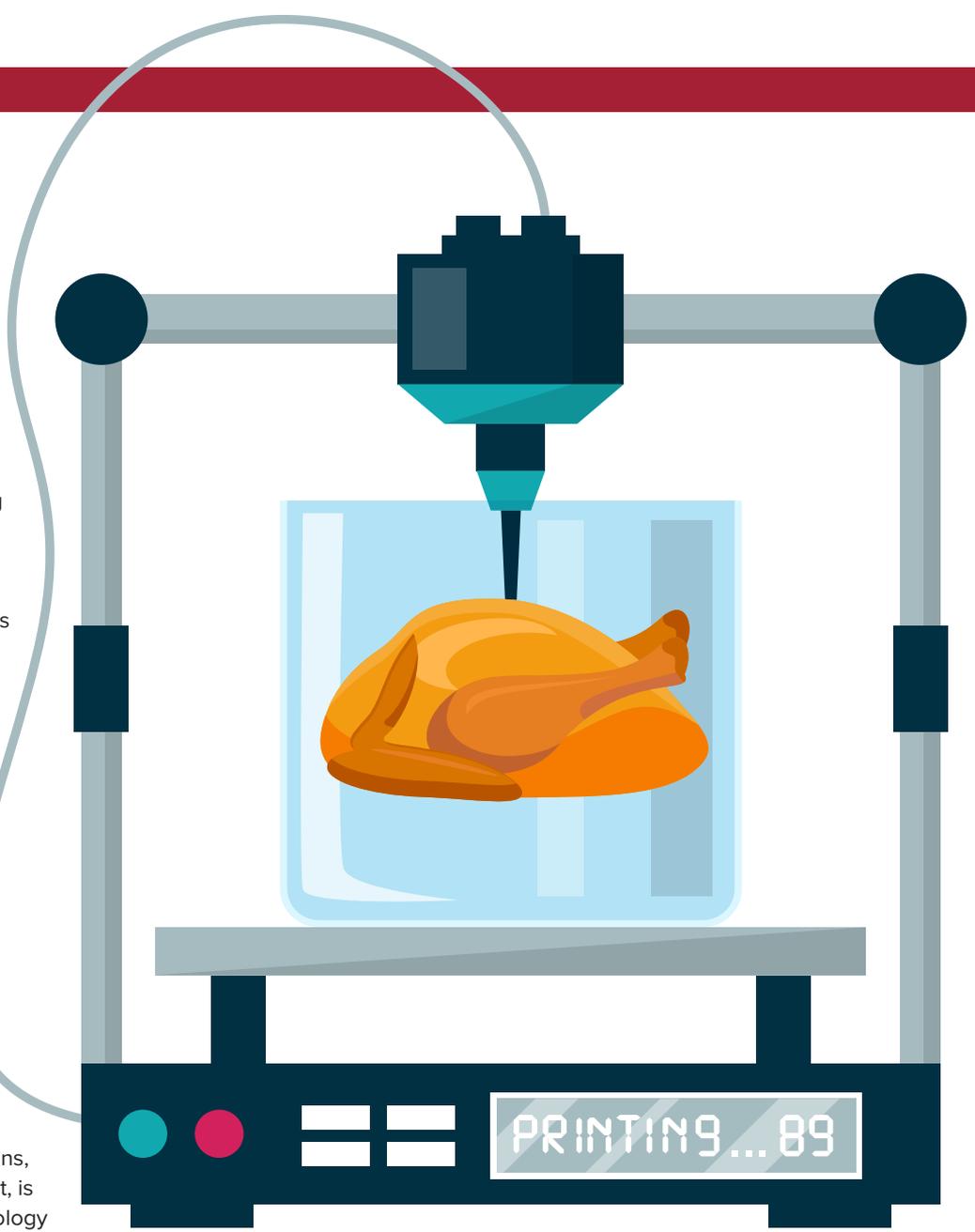
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Nashville and Charlotte, KFC will soon be rolling out their plant-based meat to 50 locations along the west coast.

But for consumers who enjoy traditional protein, the company has something new coming down the pipe. In a statement released by KFC: “[We are] taking the next step in [our] innovative concept of creating a restaurant of the future by launching the development of innovative 3D bioprinting technology to create chicken meat.” KFC went on to explain that the concept was inspired by the increased popularity of healthy lifestyle and nutritional choices, as well as the annual increase in consumer demand for alternatives to traditional meat and the underlying need to develop more environmentally friendly methods for food production.

So how does bioprinting work and what are the benefits over traditional chicken? Well, much like the Colonel’s original recipe, the details behind the bioprinting process itself remain under wraps—and with good reason. As it currently stands, there are no other methods available on the market which allow for the creation of such a complex final product. What we do know is that 3D Bioprinting Solutions, who KFC is partnering with for this project, is developing an additive bioprinting technology using just chicken cells and plant material to start. This would theoretically allow them to reproduce the taste and texture of traditional chicken meat without ever involving actual chickens in the process. The final product would have the same microelements found in the original food while excluding some additives that are used in traditional farming to create what they consider to be a “cleaner” meat-based offering. According to a study published by the *American Environmental Science & Technology Journal*, bioprinted meat also carries with it several ethical and environmental benefits. Not only does it avoid the raising, handling, transportation, and slaughter of actual chickens, but it also promises several key environmental benefits. These include cutting energy consumption by more than half, reducing greenhouse gas emissions 25-fold and utilizing 100 times less land than traditional farming methods.

While the research laboratory will take care of the science behind building the cellular structure of the meat, the fast food chain will offer up its famous and top secret spices and breading to give the 3D-printed nuggets that signature flavor that customers have come to crave.



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“With the original recipe still being held so close to KFC’s core marketing strategy, you would be forgiven for believing that its global success is heavily rooted in tradition rather than modernization.”

So, are you ready to head over to your local KFC chain to satiate your craving for lab cultured meat? Well, for those of us who reside in the United States, there could be a waiting period. The initial prototype will be exclusively available in Russia this fall, with the hope of expanding the concept to other markets in the future. [UB](#)

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Foodservice slowdowns continue to impact egg products

The foodservice sector absorbs roughly 22% of all eggs produced in the United States. With an average of more than 320 million layers through the first half of 2020, that means more than 70 million layers worth of production go into this sector, roughly two thirds of which is in the form of egg products. Shutdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic have shuttered restaurants, changed operations, and shifted the how and where consumers get their eggs.

During the peak-pandemic shutdowns, the industry reported losses of close to half of their foodservice demand. This was partially offset by retail demand for shell eggs, but provided little relief to in-line processors (those who run eggs directly into their breaking plants from their hen houses), which may have a large

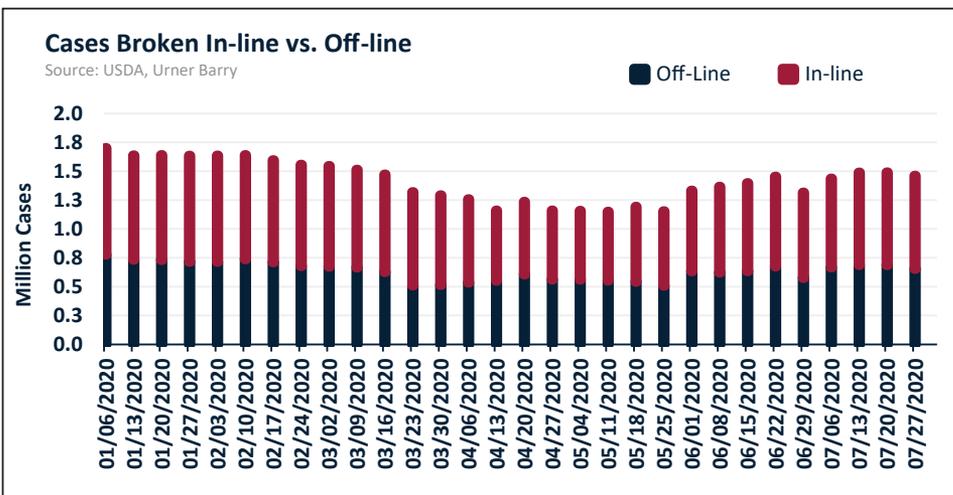
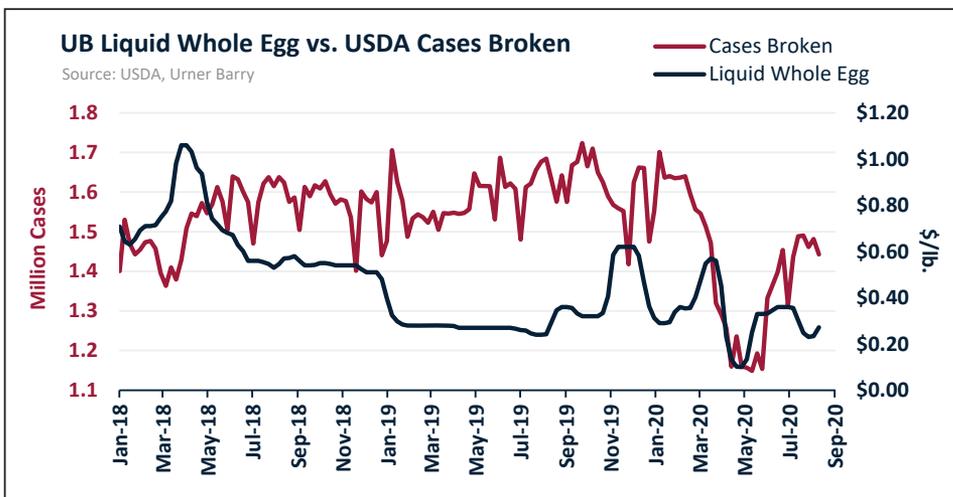


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percentage of their business earmarked for the foodservice channel. The flow of liquid eggs out of these plants created surpluses in the market during the back half of March and through the month of April, sending Urner Barry's liquid whole egg quotations to a record low of just \$0.08 per pound. Unable to find a home for their liquid, processors were forced to adjust their flocks through molt and slaughter. This was evident in a 10 million bird reduction to the national production figure during Q2 and in the USDA's weekly processing report, which tracks the number of eggs broken by processors to create egg products. Weekly processing hit 5-year-lows in mid-May, when just 1.15 million cases were broken. That figure was 30% lower than

pre-COVID-19 levels earlier in the year and same week levels in 2019.

As the nation began to find a new sense of normalcy after the initial shutdown and businesses started to reopen, demand for egg products from the foodservice sector began to recover. Orders rebounded early in the summer months, though some of this volume was driven by the restocking of empty coolers rather than traffic. Whole egg prices rallied back to \$0.34 per pound, but the move was short-lived as COVID-19 cases again started to spike and the recovery stalled or backtracked.

Through early August, the market has bounced around in the low \$0.20's.

Typically, August marks the end of the summer demand period, when consumers tend to eat the least amount of eggs seasonally. That is at least partially due to back-to-school preparations and government school lunch orders. This business has also come into question, as states grapple with how and if students will be allowed to go back to campuses or if they will move forward with online learning. There are also hybrid approaches being implemented. Year-to-date school lunch bids for egg products were down 21% in volume compared to 2019, and roughly 80% of the total volume was bid for through July of last year.

Foodservice has recovered from the initial lows following the early shutdown stage, but some say major QSR accounts are still off as much as 40%. Some chains have, at least temporarily, changed their menu offerings or the period in which they serve breakfast to streamline their operations while they are unable to host inhouse diners. Additionally, consumers take

advantage of breakfast as a grab-and-go option on the way to work or school, and they have changed their habits while at home. In a recent survey, the American Egg Board reported that 28% of respondents said on-the-go and 28% said pickup and eat at home were the most likely places to eat breakfast once pandemic restrictions had been lifted.

As we head into the fall, processors are dealing with the continued disruptions of demand, both in the foodservice and institutional arenas. There is still no telling when business will return to normal, what school lunch will look like, when travel will resume, or when stadiums will again be packed with fans. This continues to weigh on the egg products market, especially whole egg. Year-to-date, prices have averaged just \$0.23 per pound, which is the lowest level in the last decade. [UB](#)

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COVID-19 leads to changes in SCHOOL CAFETERIAS

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The impact that COVID-19 has had on restaurants has been widely reported, but one segment that hasn't been highlighted too often is the K-12 operators.

According to Datassential's August Trendspotting report, K-12 school dining saw a decrease of \$5.6 billion in consumer spending, and a decrease of \$3.9 billion in operator spending as schools suspended in-person learning. But even when the classrooms went virtual, many young families still relied on the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) for free or reduced meals. School cafeterias had to pivot to a "grab-and-go" environment, offering their students pre-packaged and convenience-oriented foods.

Now, with the start of a new school year, and a lot of uncertainty still surrounding COVID-19, the USDA program is looking slightly different. For FY 2019 the NSLP, the second largest food and nutrition assistance program in the nation, served nearly 4.9 billion total lunches; 68.4% of them which were free. We don't have those figures yet for FY 2020, however, in January 2020 the NSLP served over 505 million lunches; 67.4% which were free. In April 2020 that number dropped to 293 million lunches served as in-school learning shut down. But while the total amount served was nearly cut in half in the few months from January to April, the number of meals served for free increased to 80%.

The USDA's program generally has restrictions, like that children "gather and eat their meals on site." But due to the public health emergency, the USDA made some temporary changes. Looking specifically at Texas, which is the state with the largest participation in the NSLP, the coronavirus outbreak has led them to waive meal service time requirements for the 2020-2021 school year. In normal circumstances meals must be served during standard meal times. However, the waiver means that children will be able to follow social distancing recommendations and have safer access to nutritious food. The requirement to serve meals in a standard group setting has also been waived in the state of Texas for the 2020-2021 school year, as well as the requirement that children

come to the meal site to pick up meals. The waiver allows parents or guardians to pick up the meal and take it home to their children.

Whether or not K-12 schools reopen for in-person learning this fall, the NSLP means that cafeterias will still be operating—albeit it with some COVID-19 related changes. And college students returning to campus should expect to see changes in their dining halls too. When the pandemic hit, Datassential reports that consumer spending at colleges and universities was nearly cut in half. For 2020, consumer spending at on-campus dining facilities was at \$10.3 billion, a decrease of \$9.6 billion. Operator spending was at \$4.6 billion, a decrease of \$4.3 billion. And according to Datassential the impacts of COVID-19 will likely linger for this segment. The research agency predicts that the service format might change and menus may be condensed. Like K-12 operators, they'll be relying heavily on grab-and-go items.

Aramark, which is a food and facilities partner of more than 400 colleges and universities across the U.S., is introducing new programs to respond to student needs during the pandemic. This includes expanded grab and go items for breakfast, lunch, dinner and snack occasions. The company is also rolling out self-checkout, as well as cashless and touchless check-out to promote social distancing and increase student confidence in on-campus dining.

For those that are still hesitant about dining halls, Aramark is also working to introduce Good Uncle, an app-based on-demand food delivery service, to more campuses. Acquired in August 2019 by Aramark, Good Uncle provides students with the option to pick up freshly prepared, restaurant quality meals at pick-up points around their campus. The company is also working with their regional produce suppliers to make fruit and vegetable boxes available for students who would prefer to cook-at-home. [UB](#)

Article contributed by **Amanda Buckle**
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The push for plant automation amid COVID-19

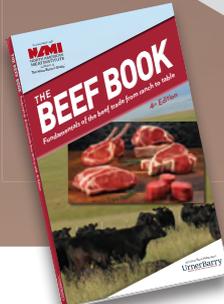
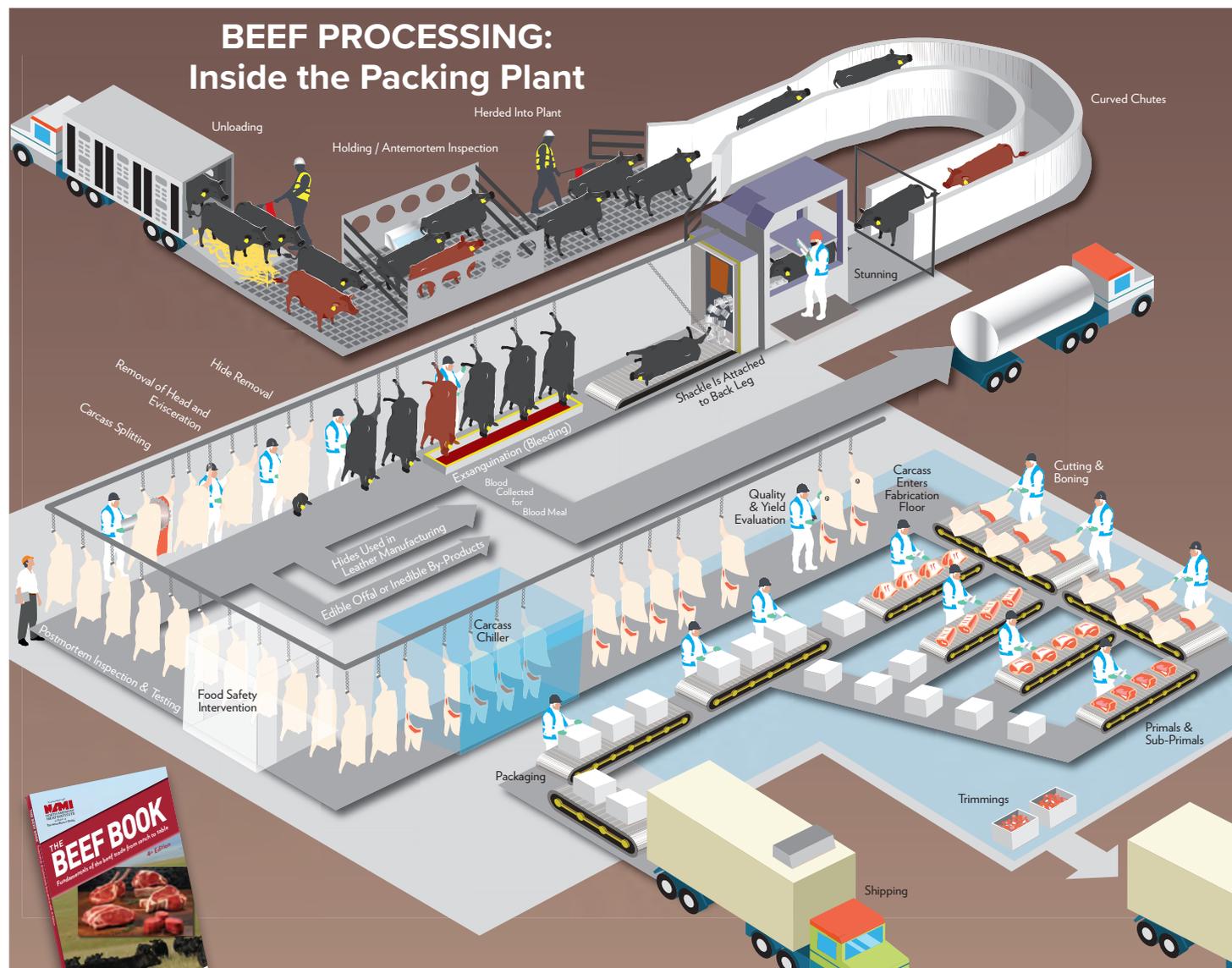
According to the North American Meat Institute, over half a million people work in meatpacking plants across the United States. Widespread worker absenteeism because of the pandemic emphasized the cruciality of this workforce. Cattle and hog processing plants experienced sharply reduced slaughter levels by as much as one-third during late April into May as hundreds of plant workers were affected by the coronavirus. Several meat facilities in the nation had become hotspots, largely due to the close physical layout where employees work near one another.

More than 16,000 meat and poultry processing workers in 239 facilities across 23 states have been diagnosed with COVID-19 as of May 31, according to the CDC. Plants have implemented proactive measures to protect the workforce, including worker screening, distributing PPE, and erecting physical barriers on both the processing floors and in break rooms.

Difficulties recruiting and retaining workers at America's meat processing facilities has pushed plant automation to the forefront of discussion. Meat plants were already

facing difficulties finding consistent labor predated the pandemic. Refugees and immigrants constitute a significant portion of the workforce, which has high annual turnover rates. Moreover, finding workers is challenging in small towns across the South and Midwest where a majority of the nation's processing facilities are located.

Social distancing is forcing plants to reconfigure the layout of their slaughterhouses and processing lines. Slaughtering and parting animals is labor-intensive. Robots that automate and



The above infographic is an excerpt from *The Beef Book: Fundamentals of the beef trade from ranch to table*, which is available at shop.urnerbarr.com.

“Difficulties recruiting and retaining workers at America’s meat processing facilities has pushed plant automation to the forefront of discussion.”

speed up certain processing tasks can help relieve bottlenecked supplies where the lack of skilled workers has slowed production and reduced processing capacity. Additionally, robotic technology can potentially yield more high-value meat while improving the safety of the process.

The initial start-up costs and overall lack of economic incentive have slowed nationwide implementation of automated production lines. “There’s been a push for automation for many years,” note some livestock market managers and dealers, but it still takes people to watch the equipment. However, reducing the amount of manual labor by increasing the automation of laborious, repetitive tasks could help keep workers safe and chain speeds moving.

In the U.S., poultry production has been quicker to adapt to plant automation.

Birds’ smaller carcasses mean companies need less capital investment to automate their production lines. While some poultry processors have successfully automated certain steps, such as eviscerating, implementing automation is more challenging for cattle and hog operations since chickens vary less in size. Larger livestock have more muscle groups than poultry, thus requiring heavy-duty, complicated machinery which must be able to distinguish between the variation in animal carcass sizes and shapes. Robotic technology has not yet perfected the fine motor skills of humans who are skilled at cutting.

While meat production has recovered, albeit not at pre-COVID levels, labor challenges continue to force some processors to favor less processed cuts. This translates to fewer products that can

be boned and processed for case-ready items due to worker shortages. The lack of labor on boning lines has resulted in boneless products taking on significant premiums over their bone-in source cuts. Furthermore, finer cutting such as trimming fat continues to be done by hand.

For now, labor remains less expensive than robots, and humans can do those skilled jobs better than machines can. Until the economic incentives are more attractive, processing plants (beef and pork operations in particular), will likely remain reluctant to transition to automation on a wide scale. Now more than ever, the pandemic has highlighted the vital asset of human input. [UB](#)

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Tourism suffers as restrictions change summer plans



There is no shortage of wanderlust, but folks have stopped wandering.

A report published in May by the United Nations' World Tourism Organization looked at a total of 217 destinations. Of those destinations, 97 of them implemented total or partial border closures. A whopping 65 countries and territories totally suspended, or partially suspended flights. And another 39 locations enforced border closures aimed at a specific group of destinations.

It became almost impossible to travel strictly based on restrictions, and that's not even factoring in any economic issues or safety-related fears. The International

Air Transport Association estimated that passenger revenue would be down 55% from 2019 levels—approximately \$314 billion.

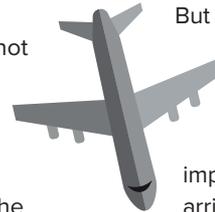
The impact that the coronavirus has had on airlines has been well documented in the news. Major airlines have received billions of dollars in grants and loans to stay afloat. But airlines are not the only ones suffering from a decline in travel. Analytics firm STR reported that hotel rates fell across all regions in March, resulting in layoffs at not only major hotel chains, but also online travel platforms, like Expedia Group.

Fortunately, shorter, domestic flights appear to be slowly gaining favor with the



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public. Squaremouth, a travel insurance company, reported a 15% increase in domestic summer vacation insurance purchases compared to April of last year. And the U.S. Travel Association suggests personal travel to rural places in classic American road trip style will see an uptick. This is good news for the food industry, as U.S. travelers spend \$268 billion annually on food services.



But not every state can benefit from an uptick in road trips.

According to WalletHub, Hawaii is the state where COVID-19 has had the biggest impact on tourism. In July visitor arrivals to the islands fell by almost 98% compared to the

same month last year. A report from the Hawaii Tourism Authority revealed that only 22,562 visitors arrived by air in July, compared to 995,210 who arrived in July 2019. Of those 22,562 visitors, only 2,100 of them were from international locations. With a 14-day mandatory quarantine for out-of-state and inter-island travelers in place, it's not hard to see why these numbers are so low. And Hawaii's tourism might not be improving for some time as Governor David Ige said in August that the state won't reopen to tourism until at least October.

When it comes to global travel, the International Association of Air Travel predicts that the industry will not fully recover until 2024. Just this past August a rising number of coronavirus infections triggered renewed travel restrictions across Europe. Until a vaccine is released it might be some time until we see the travel sector flying high again. [UB](#)

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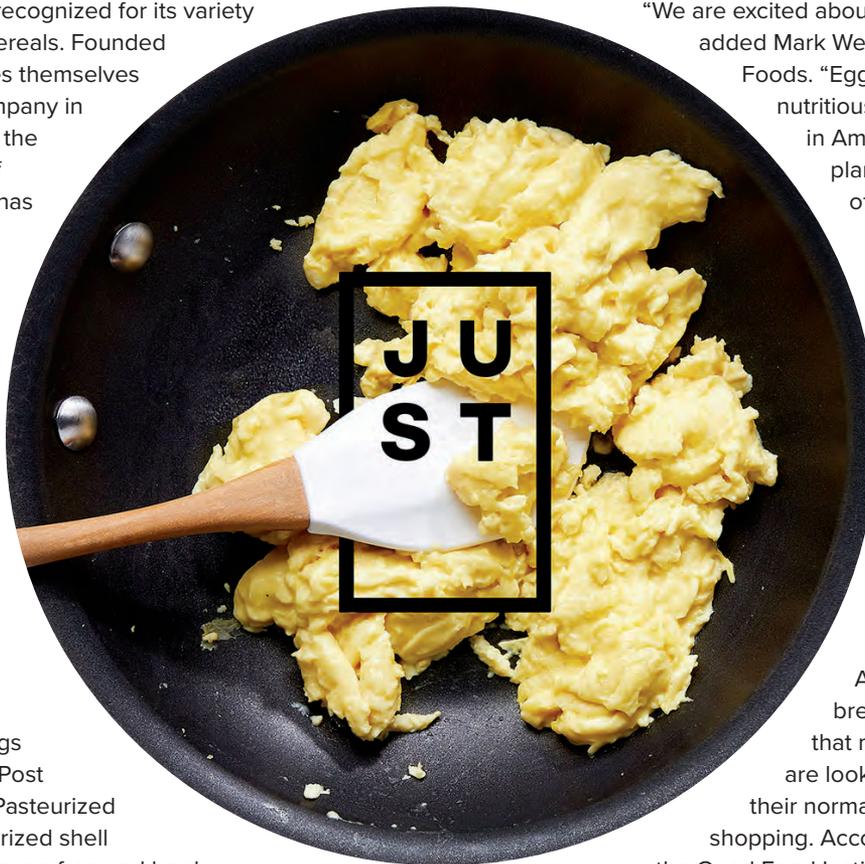
TO THEIR PLATE

Post is a household name recognized for its variety of ready-to-eat breakfast cereals. Founded in 1895, the company prides themselves on being the #3 cereal company in the United States, but over the years, through a number of acquisitions, the company has claimed a bigger stake in the breakfast world.

In 2014 Post Holdings acquired Michael Foods, a leading producer of value-added food products, including *Papetti's*®, *All Whites*®, *Better 'n Eggs*®, *Easy Eggs*®, *Simply Potatoes*® and *Crystal Farms*®. A year later Post Holdings announced the acquisition of Willamette Egg Farms, a producer, processor and wholesale distributor of eggs and egg products. In 2016 Post Holdings bought National Pasteurized Eggs, a producer of pasteurized shell eggs, including all-natural, cage-free and hard-boiled eggs, and in 2017 Post Holdings announced that they would be buying Bob Evans Farms, adding vegetable-based side dishes and breakfast sausages to their portfolio. Now, the company is taking an even bigger bite out of breakfast thanks to a partnership with JUST, a plant-based egg substitute.

In May JUST announced a “groundbreaking” new partnership with Michael Foods to bring JUST Egg to more consumers across the U.S. Under the agreement, Michael Foods serves as the exclusive manufacturer, supplier and distributor of JUST Egg to foodservice and food ingredient customers who are looking for a plant-based egg product.

“Our companies share a great deal in common,” Josh Tetrick, co-founder and CEO of JUST, said when the partnership was announced. “We’re fathers and brothers and sisters and mothers, all sharing a belief that the food we eat is one of the most important choices we make. Signing this partnership is one of the proudest moments in our company’s journey to build a better food system.”



“We are excited about this new partnership,” added Mark Westphal, President of Michael Foods. “Eggs will continue to be a nutritious and affordable staple in America’s diet, and JUST’s plant-based egg products offer a great complement to our value-added eggs by allowing customers to serve every consumer their preference. Working together, we are bringing innovation and options to the food industry.”

There is no denying that people love eggs for breakfast. A survey conducted by OnePoll revealed that 65% of Americans prefer eggs for breakfast. But it’s also true that more and more consumers are looking for alternatives to their normal purchases when they go shopping. According to a SPINS report for the Good Food Institute, sales of plant-based foods grew 29% in the last two years. Within the same SPINS data from this past March, plant-based eggs were shown to have grown 192% since 2019.

Walmart, Kroger, and Whole Foods are just a few of the retailers selling JUST egg. The plant-based substitute, which is made from mung beans, is also available at a number of quick-service restaurants, including Tim Horton’s and Bareburger. And thanks to the pandemic, an increase in sales will help the company go public “sooner” rather than later.

“The target to hit operating profitability is some time before the end of 2021,” Tetrick told Reuters in August. “Once we hit operating profitability, then I’ll really begin considering an IPO with my team and with my board and with some of our major shareholders.” [UB](#)

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May through July snow crab imports significantly higher than cyclical behavior

May to July 2020 collective imports are trending drastically above 2019 levels. According to the data, overall year-to-date levels are up 15.4%. On a month-to-month basis, after the surge of imports in June, July 2020 imports are lower in comparison, down 26.2%. However, measuring against July 2019, total imports is where we see the most significant upward comparison of 51% higher than the same time last year. Overall snow crab imports are also 33.2% higher than the 3-year average.

Market participants report that the surge in June imports, and follow up of higher than average July imports, are not a complete surprise. In a year which saw the Gulf of Saint Lawrence's quota down 3.5% and the Newfoundland and Labrador quota up 10%; many reported an overall feeling that the volume of crab available out of Canada for the year would be similar to 2019. With roughly the same volume of crab as the previous year, the COVID-19 pandemic was obviously the largest hurdle to cross. But after preparations, precautions, and negotiations, Canada has been able to deliver a successful snow crab season. And it appears the U.S. was the most active buyer.

With the United States' proximity to Canada, and the U.S. marketplace already a large buyer in the fishery, it looks as though U.S. buyers continued to bolster trade with its natural partner to the north. Market participants reported that a softer demand into the Japanese markets this year created a unique opportunity for the robust U.S. demand, especially within the retail sector. Japan,

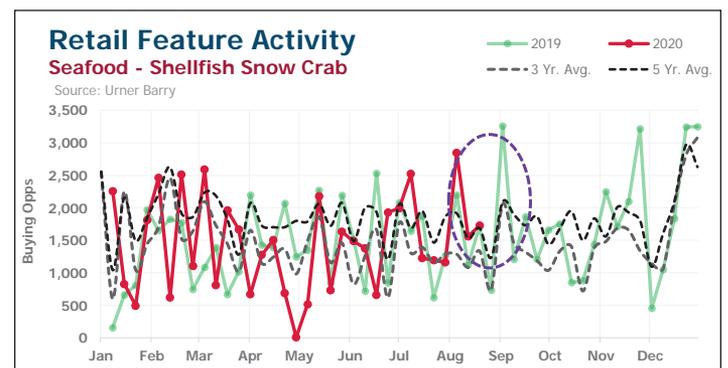
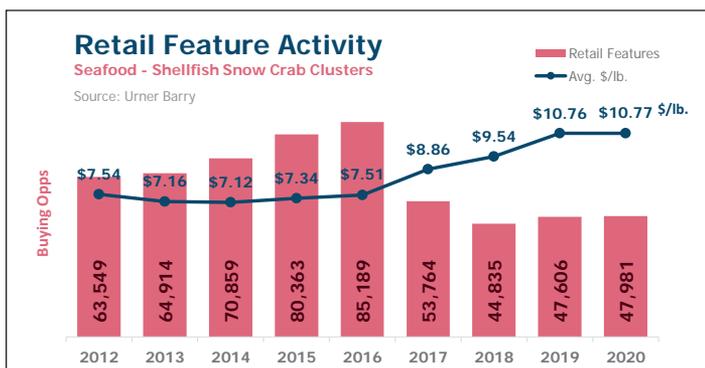
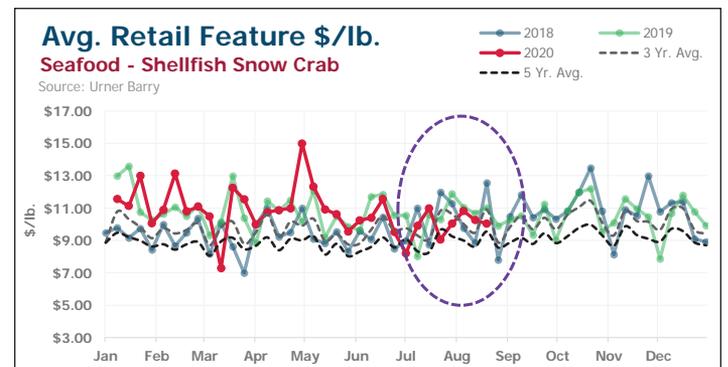
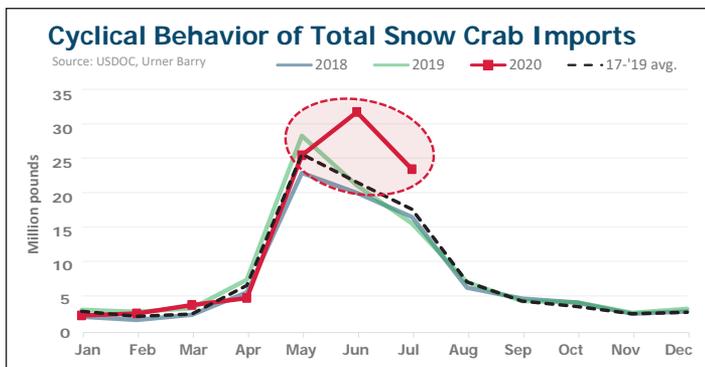
historically speaking, is an active buyer; the Canadian processors in the past would divert much time and effort to supply the Japanese needs before the U.S. market.

In May and June, however, U.S. retailers are reported to have taken a very aggressive and strong position in the Canadian snow crab market. This in turn helped to keep the U.S. spot market extremely dry and hence support drastic price increases throughout all of June for 5-8s and most of July for larger sized crab 8s, and 10s.

Although upward pricing pressure is still noted on larger sized crab, supplies of these sizes are exceedingly light; the market has started to taper off on all sizes. The drastic and significant price increase seen through the first half of the summer seems to have slowed and the market looks to be more stable.

In addition, we have seen prices at retail begin to tick up. 2020 year-to-date pricing is slightly over 2019, up by 0.3%. Pricing is currently sitting just below the 3-year average. Moreover, we have started to see the number of buying opportunities or promotions of snow crab at retail begin to decrease. It is unclear how long inventories will last here in the U.S. Many market participants report that product looks to have been consumed or is with the end user. Inventories are extremely lean heading into the back half of the summer and into the fall. [UB](#)

Article contributed by Janice Schreiber
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Good Food Institute's Alison Rabschnuk talks about the growing demand for **ALTERNATIVE PROTEINS**

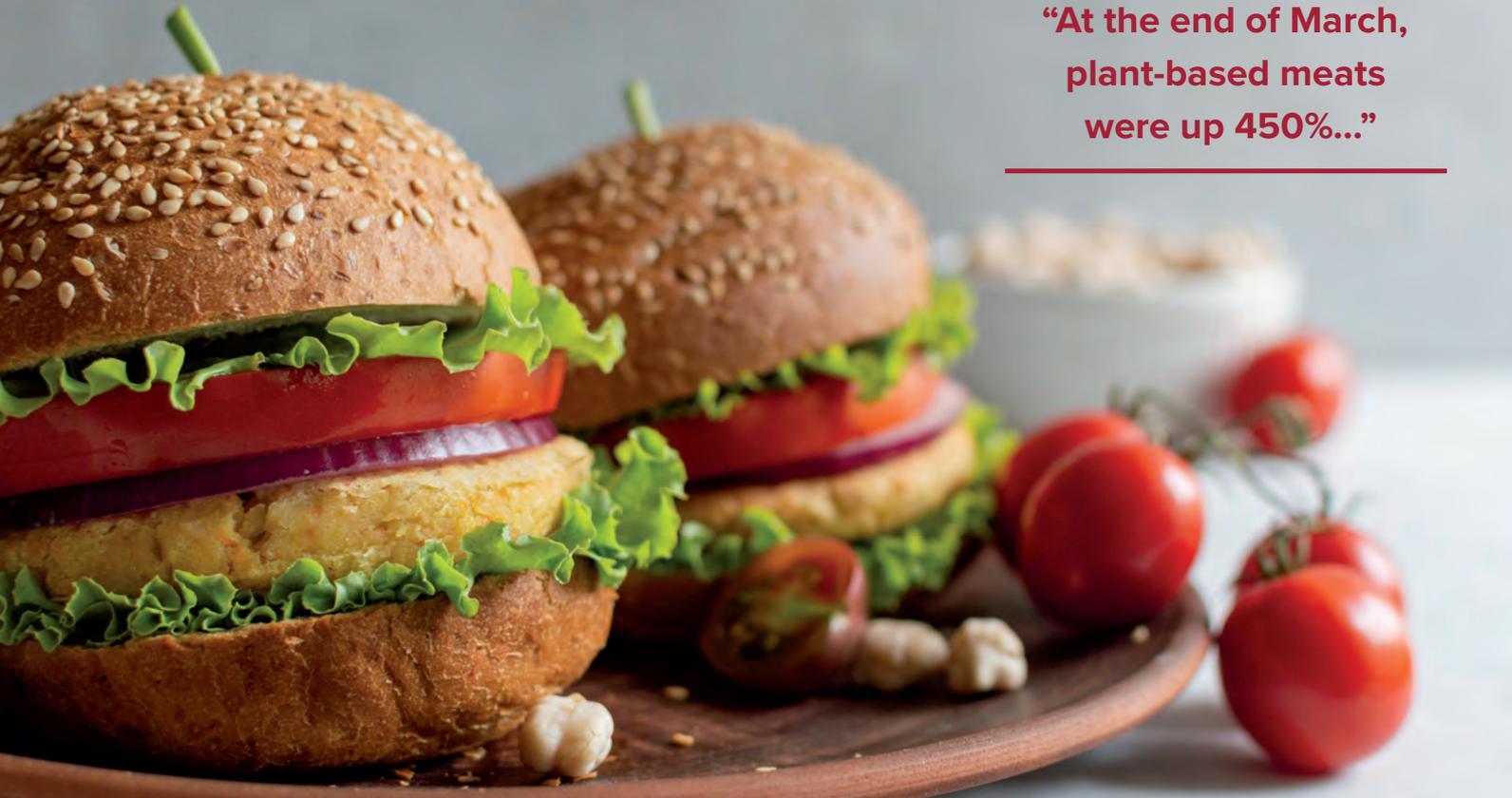
The plant-based food industry has not been immune to the impacts of COVID-19. Just like those in poultry, beef and seafood, the shutdown of the foodservice industry forced those in the plant-based world to shift their focus to retail. Fortunately for them, plant-based proteins have seen a significant jump in retail sales growth.

According to Alison Rabschnuk, Director of Corporate Engagement of the Good Food Institute, a non-profit that provides strategic support for companies working on plant-based and cultivated meat products, the boost in numbers at the start of the pandemic can be attributed to pantry loading. However, some key statistics show some positive signs for the still niche, but growing industry.

"If we look at dollar sales growth between plant-based meat compared to animal-based meat, plant-based definitely outperformed," Rabschnuk explained via statistics from IRI. "Of course, we need point out the obvious fact, which is that plant-based meat still only makes up about 1% of the retail meat market. It's still quite niche."



**"At the end of March,
plant-based meats
were up 450%..."**





At the end of March, plant-based meats were up 450%, compared to about a 100% jump in animal meats. Moving ahead to June, that number was still up 150% for fresh plant-based meat.

GFI has theorized that, because the consumer sees these products alongside animal meat, that between wanting to change up dinner at home and potential shortages of animal meat products at the local supermarket, consumers were willing to give alternative proteins a try.

And plant-based meats have also seen success via e-commerce. Rabschunk shared that a number of companies creating plant-based products were able to pivot amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, Impossible Foods and Meatless Farm were able to sell products through their website.

Others faced challenges due to the coronavirus. Because of travel restrictions and other logistical issues brought on by the virus, equipment maintenance and capital improvements were harder to achieve at this time. Ingredients also became an issue at times, with some companies relying on overseas products.

But even with COVID-19's hurdles, the positive sales numbers via retail shows the sector still has momentum.

"If you look at the projections, many are projecting pretty aggressive growth for this industry," Rabschunk said. "And if you do look at our own sales growth year-over-year you're looking at double-digit sales growth for a lot of these plant-based food categories."

With plant-based proteins and animal proteins now taking up shelf space alongside each other, is it possible they could co-exist in diets?

Rabschunk believes so.

With the population expected to increase by 2 billion people by 2050, there will be more mouths to feed than ever and finding another sustainable protein source could help relieve stress off the food system. Plus, protein producers have made moves to take a different approach to feeding the population.

"Even Tyson and Perdue switching their messaging from being the makers of animal meat to the makers of protein. I think this allows them to explore other ways of feeding their consumers. I don't think it's necessarily an either-or conversation; at least not at this point." [UB](#)

Article contributed by **Ryan Doyle**
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The Good Food Institute's Co-Founder and Executive Director Bruce Friedrich will host a presentation "The Growing Demand for Alternative Proteins," which will be available on demand on Friday, October 9.

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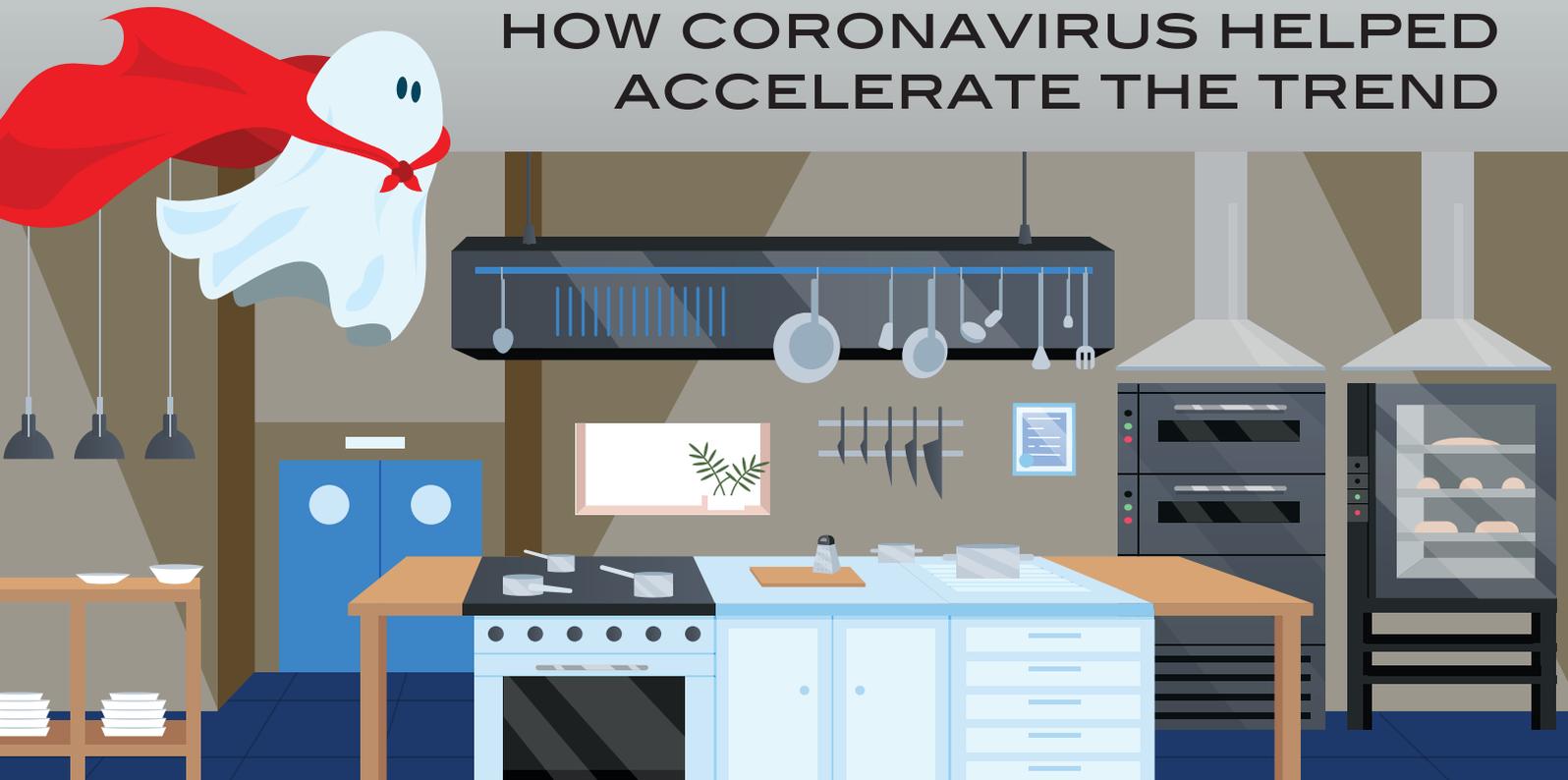
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Eat, drink and be scary...

GHOST KITCHENS:

HOW CORONAVIRUS HELPED ACCELERATE THE TREND



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Fall is the perfect time to tell ghost stories. But there's nothing scary about ghost kitchens. In fact, this trend in the foodservice industry might actually be able to bring back some restaurants that were teetering on the brink of death.

In March, when the coronavirus pandemic resulted in lockdowns across the nation, the restaurant industry took an immediate hit. With dining rooms closed, unemployment up, and "safer at home" measures in place, more people began to cook at home than ever before. Surveys conducted by the National Restaurant Association found that in total between March and June, eating and drinking sales levels were down more than \$116 billion from expected data. Restaurants were forced to permanently close their doors. But while the future looked grim for many, others found ways to push through and capitalize on the demand for delivery... with ghost kitchens.

Ghost kitchens, also known as virtual kitchens, emerged a few years ago

thanks to the rising popularity of delivery services like Grubhub, DoorDash and Uber Eats. Ordering online removes the need for a physical storefront. Instead, chefs simply need a kitchen—a single space that could potentially "house" other brands and offerings. Enter Kitchen United and CloudKitchens, two ghost kitchen companies that have emerged to help restaurant brands grow and become profitable.

Kitchen United is building kitchen centers in high demand locations across the nation, like Austin, Chicago, Pasadena and Scottsdale, and is expanding into more cities, like Los Angeles, New York City, Atlanta, Boston and Miami. The company lets growing virtual restaurants focus on preparing the food, while they facilitate getting the food quickly to the customer through delivery

service providers or customer pickup. They also provide back and front of house services, like utilities, trash and pest control, cleaning chemicals, and support with onboarding and city permitting.

CloudKitchens, like Kitchen United, offers turn-key solutions for virtual restaurants. "All you've got to do is cook," their website boasts. "We handle the logistics

and fulfillment to make sure your orders are delivered with more accuracy, in less time."

Dog Haus, a craft casual concept known for its chef-driven hot dog, sausage and burger creations, is just one of the many restaurants that have decided to partner with Kitchen United and

CloudKitchens to launch their facilities. Dog Haus initially planned to launch their new virtual kitchen space venture, The Absolute Brands, this summer. But like many others



Plant B
Photo Credit: Dog Haus

in the restaurant industry, they were hit hard when government mandates forced them to close their dining rooms at the beginning of the pandemic.



Bad Mutha Clucka
Photo Credit: Dog Haus

Instead of shutting their doors or delaying their plans, Dog Haus chose to push forward with the launch of The Absolute Brands, which is comprised of six different concepts: Dog Haus (which has physical locations across the country), Bad-Ass Breakfast Burritos, Bad Mutha Clucka, Freiburger, Plant B, and Huevos Dias.

“Originally, we had planned to have The Absolute Brands available in our ghost kitchens only, but due to COVID, we decided to give our franchisees the option to offer them out of their brick and mortar locations,” Dog Haus partner André Vener told *Urner Barry’s Reporter*. “Most took the opportunity and are now seeing outstanding results... We’re seeing franchisees make record breaking sales—even compared to before COVID. The sub-brands have helped boost some of our lowest performing locations to our top five restaurants.”

The Absolute Brands is currently in six ghost kitchen facilities—one in Austin, two in Chicago, one in Pasadena, and two in Los Angeles. To order from one of The Absolute Brands, customers simply need to place their order through their preferred delivery service provider.

“As a franchisor, it’s easier for us to operate multiple brands within one ghost kitchen because we have both our infrastructure and a corporate team in place,” Vener explained. “We can test a market and if it’s successful, sell it to a franchise along with the territory.”

With the pandemic changing the way that people access food, being able to adapt with ghost kitchens is something that Vener finds important.

“Being able to join together with family and friends at a restaurant to enjoy a great meal is a concept that has been around for hundreds of years, and COVID isn’t going to bring it to a halt,” said Vener. “However, takeout and delivery are only going to



Bad-Ass Breakfast Burritos
Photo Credit: Dog Haus

become more of a necessity. Brands will need to continue to adapt and perfect their to-go game if they want to survive. Over the past few months, we’ve seen several big-brands take the leap into the ghost kitchen world and I’m certain those numbers will only continue to grow.”

Market research firm Euromonitor predicts that ghost kitchens could create a \$1 trillion global opportunity by 2030. According to the firm, these virtual kitchens could capture 50% of the drive-thru service, 50% of takeaway foodservice, 35% of ready meals, 30% of packaged cooking

ingredients, 25% of dine-in foodservice and 15% of packaged snacks. That’s nothing to “boo” about. [UB](#)

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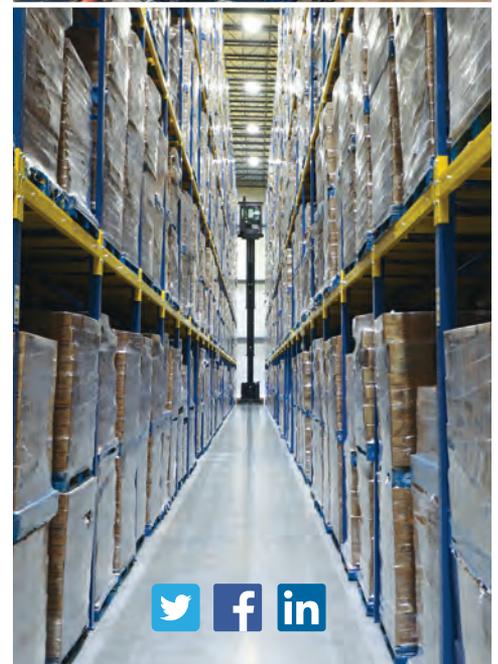


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RESTAURANT MARKETING IN THE AGE OF COVID-19

Coronavirus continues to wreak financial havoc, but how are restaurants innovating and maintaining customer loyalty in the face of all the uncertainty?

Fast casual dining has been forced to get creative and adapt to a new, takeout-oriented landscape. Build-your-own pizza kits, cocktails to-go, and restaurant-built meal kits rose to prevalence, advertised as affordable yet novel ways to feed the family. A local IHOP is advertising four burgers, fries, and sodas for \$29.99. Pizza Hut added their Big Dinner Box with pizza, pasta, or wings back to the menu. Even Taco Bell debuted an “At Home Taco Bar” for \$25.

Marketing has changed, too. It is not just about value or quality anymore, but safety. According to Datassential, half of consumers’ top consideration is if the restaurant is clean and sanitary. Additionally, about 76% feel that a restaurant’s cleanliness and food safety procedures will always matter more than it did before. This has caused foodservice to pivot away from products as the focus of marketing campaigns, and instead highlight its safety precautions.

For example, “tamper-proof” take-out packaging has entered the scene and dine-in restaurants have been forced to up their safety measures to draw in and maintain customers. Marketing messages highlighting safety protocols, sanitization, and limited food handling are taking precedent over typical advertising strategies.

Only 34% of adults in the United States feel comfortable dining out right now, down from 41% in early June, according to Morning Consult. This makes communication between restaurants and customers more important than ever. Around 60-70% of adults plan on spending the same or more on a meal kit delivery service, grocery delivery, or restaurant delivery services.

Foodservice is changing and circumstances may be alarming, but fortunately, the industry is staying ahead. The circumstances have also accelerated the adaptation of technology, so foodservice must have a forward-thinking mindset to be successful. Compared to pre-pandemic behavior, Datassential found that about 18% of consumers plan to start using a restaurant app to order more often, and 16% have recently used contactless payment for the first time.

Also, trends are expected to continue blasting ahead with speed. About 88% of consumers that were interested in simple ingredients prior to the pandemic will still be interested after. The same goes for plant-based foods at 86%. While some operators are planning to take a step back and focus on the core, most plan to hold their course or even turn up their innovation pipelines. About 55% of operators find it equally important to keep up with trends, 27% find it more important, and 18% find it less important.

When considering how to market a product or concept during this pandemic and in the future, companies should try to keep it human. Consumers are keeping a close eye on how companies are treating staff during this time, and these acts have become another priority that does not typically take precedence when choosing where to dine. It is important not to lose sight of how employees and consumers have been reacting with thanks and gratitude to the foodservice industry. Hospitality is the heartbeat of service, and observing companies feeding unemployed staff, giving to foodbanks, and pivoting business operations to serve consumers at times where shelves were empty demonstrates the humanity of it all. This is an economic and health story, but also a human story, which should be remembered in the long run. [UB](#)

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Article contributed by **Amanda Buckle, Liz Cuozzo, Gary Morrison and Janice Schreiber**
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The change in dining behavior in response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been dramatic. In March, when cases in the U.S. really began to spike, restaurants across the nation were forced to close their doors for indoor dining. And while many have since reopened, the National Restaurant Association reports that in total between March and July, eating and drinking place sales levels were down more than \$131 billion from expected levels.

But while foodservice suffered, retail sales skyrocketed. In the week ending March 14, retail sales increased by 41.7% over the previous year. The following week, ending March 21, retail sales in the U.S. peaked, growing by 85.4% over the previous year as consumers engaged in panic buying. Proteins like eggs, poultry and beef were first choice options for consumers. However, seafood also saw some big gains at retail. According to Nielsen, for the week ending March 14, frozen seafood sales surged by 52.4% while shelf-stable seafood sales increased by 53.4%. And although some grocery retailers chose to close their fresh seafood counters early on, data shows that fresh and chilled seafood also increased 13.7% for the week ending March 14. These numbers have only increased, with Nielsen reporting that for the week ending June 27, fresh seafood increased 60% while frozen increased 21%.

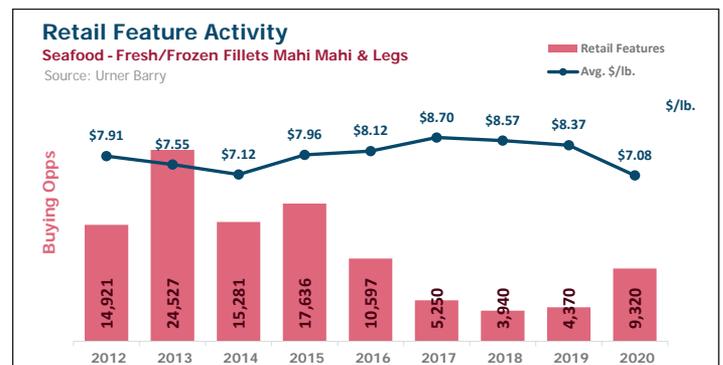
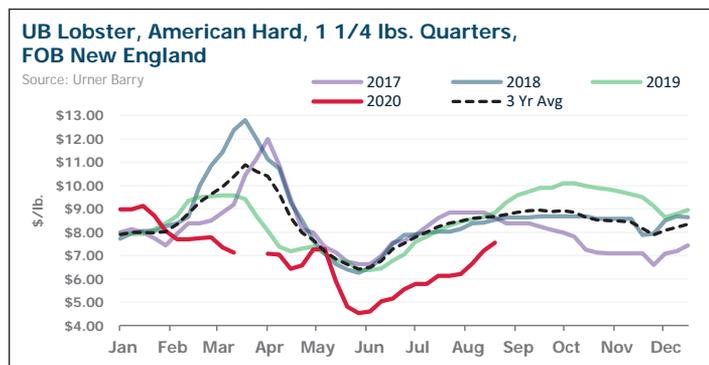
Since restaurants typically account for 75% of seafood consumption in the U.S., retail has been a lifeline for many seafood sellers. Check out some of the seafood winners at retail:

Lobster

Two seafood items that are synonymous with foodservice and historically higher price points are live lobster and lobster tails. Lobster is a luxury item normally consumed in fine dining restaurants. Market prices for high priced seafood, such as lobster, began their descent in mid-January when China shut down its borders, travel restrictions were enacted, and restaurant closures became the norm. As further restrictions extended to outdoor dining and cruise lines remain docked for the foreseeable future, sales of lobster products experienced a shift in demand from foodservice to the retail sector. Market prices for hard shell New England quarters are trading 22% below their three-year average, while prices for 4-5 oz. frozen lobster tails are 15% lower year-over-year. Compared to restaurant prices, consumers see the value at the retail level and are willing to experiment. Sales of fresh lobster have increased 292% for the week ending June 27.

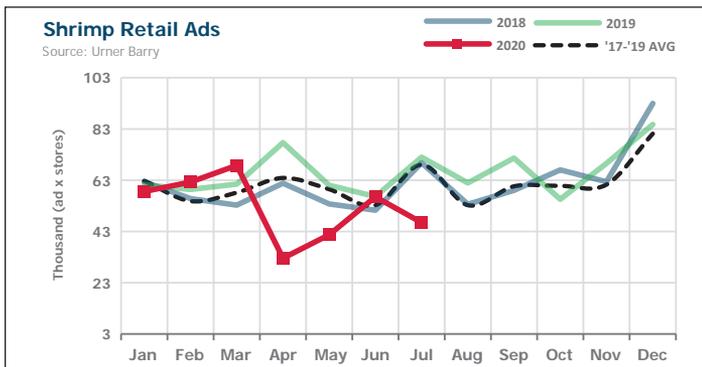
Mahi

Although both frozen mahi fillets and portions are typically earmarked for foodservice distribution, we have seen an increase in retail activity specifically for mahi fillets. In fact, retail buying opportunities have increased 113% compared to last year, while the average year-to-date price per pound is at its lowest level since 2012 and is 15% lower than 2019. Market participants report an active demand specifically for frozen mahi 1-3 lbs., and 3-5 lbs. Co. fillets, which are vacuum packed and an ideal size for retail. As a result of this uptick in demand from retail, prices for frozen 3-5 lbs. mahi Co. fillets are trading 27% higher year-to-date and are 6.9% higher than their three-year average. Until restrictions are lifted and consumers feel comfortable again to dine in restaurants, retail will remain the primary outlet for sales.



Shrimp

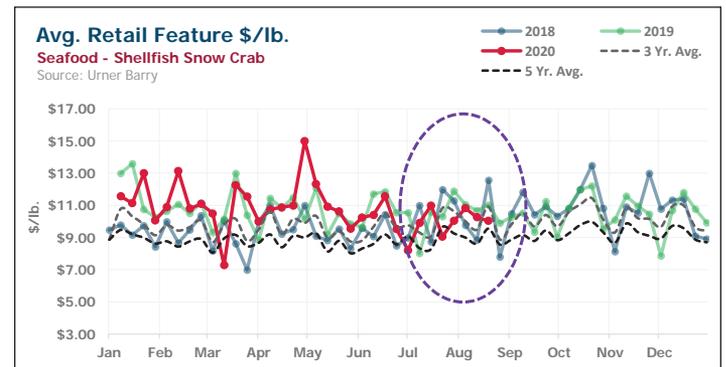
The COVID-19 situation has provided opportunities at retail for shrimp that didn't exist prior to the pandemic. Consumer buying patterns shifted when land-based proteins appeared short in the grocery store and expanded interest to shrimp. Retailers, as a result, were not compelled to promote shrimp during the months of April through July. Buying opportunities fell 34% for the four-month period compared to last year and 28% from the three-year average. However, when there were ads run, it was happening at attractive levels; evidenced by the white shrimp retail index falling to the lowest levels since 2009. Retail price features averaged 2% below last year in the most recent four month stretch (April, May, June, July) and 3% below the same months three-year average.



Snow Crab

Snow crab demand at retail during the 2020 pandemic has been extremely robust. It's not a trend that started in 2020, as 2019 also saw an extremely popular year at the retail level for snow crab. As of this writing, 2020 buying opportunities are slightly above 2019 for the first time this year, up 1%.

Year-to-date average prices at retail are also now right on par with 2019 levels. Throughout May and June, average retail prices stayed above the 3-year averages. However, during the July 4th holiday, pricing did dip below the three-year average and again during portions of August. Imports into the U.S. market are up 47% compared to the same period of time last year. Many market participants speculate that a large portion of the sales have gone directly to retail. [UB](#)



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**Executive Conference and
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John Manzella

**talks macro-economic trends,
global trade and what's ahead**



Leading up to Urner Barry's Executive Conference and Global Protein Summit virtual event, *Urner Barry's Reporter* sat down with keynote speaker John Manzella to highlight his upcoming presentations.

Manzella is a world-recognized speaker and author, as well as a nationally syndicated columnist on global business, trade policy, labor, and the latest economic trends. He is also the founder of both *ManzellaReport.com*, a premier source for global business and economic analysis, and *Manzella Trade Communications, Inc.*, a public affairs, publishing and consulting firm.

His views have appeared in top publications, including *The Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times*, and his valuable insight, analysis and strategic direction have been vital to many of the world's largest corporations and associations preparing for the business, economic and political challenges ahead.

URNER BARRY'S REPORTER: Why is now a pivotal time to keep a close eye on global trade in the protein industry?

JOHN MANZELLA: Global trade is rapidly changing and evolving as supply chain disruptions increase. Understanding the relationships and tensions with China and other countries will help companies better plan and manage their trade and logistics operations.

UBR: Can you talk about COVID-19's impact on global trade?

JM: At this time, COVID-19 in the United States has not been contained and continues to spread in many states. Reimposed restrictions may result in less U.S. growth than is currently projected for the third and fourth quarter. This will impact all of us in various ways. Also, tensions with China are likely to result in less U.S.-China trade and investment, and more trade with other countries, forcing supply chains to continue to adapt.

COVID-19, and a number of economic trends and factors are putting upward and downward pressure on the U.S. and global economic growth. In my presentation I will provide analysis of several sectors and reveal new risks to help the audience make better informed decisions and more accurately plan, assess and reduce risks.

UBR: Let's talk about your on-demand session, which focuses on the virus' impact on globalization.

JM: I'm often asked if COVID-19 will kill globalization. My answer: globalization is not dying. Rather, it's evolving, and existing

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trends are accelerating. But globalization is like fire. It can cook your food, keep you warm, or burn your house down. Whether you are a beneficiary of globalization or a victim depends on several factors that I'll discuss during my presentation.

UBR: What lessons do you think companies will learn from the pandemic?

JM: To reduce threats to business, including future pandemics, in the long-term companies will no longer rely on any one source of supply or single country, whether it's China or another nation. By this logic, U.S. companies would be wise to not rely solely on domestic suppliers either. Also, companies should reconsider just-in-time inventory strategies, which have often turned into just-too-late failures, and if possible, stockpile more supplies in varied locations, both in the U.S. and abroad.

UBR: What can companies do to mitigate risks and take advantage of opportunities when operating across the globe?

JM: Automation has not only reduced incentives to seek cheap labor, which has typically involved establishing large scale manufacturing operations in low-cost countries, but now favors the development of multiple, smaller, digitally connected smart facilities located worldwide near fast-growing consumer centers. Importantly, they are better positioned to bypass trade barriers. COVID-19 and the rise of protectionism will accelerate this trend.

And due to on-site 3-D printing technology, many components and parts can now be created right in manufacturing and assembly facilities when demanded. This, combined with the fact that a greater numbers of goods produced in developing countries will not be exported, but consumed there, will continue to reduce merchandise trade flows.

Digital technologies and automation are rapidly transforming globalization and boosting productivity, one of the most important factors determining how well we live. But they are also destroying American

blue-collar jobs and some white-collar ones. In fact, over the next two decades, nearly half of existing jobs will be lost due to these technologies.

The good news: history reveals that after waves of innovation destroy jobs, more new ones are created. This time is no exception. Although we don't know what the jobs of the future will be, we do know they will require highly skilled employees. Consequently, workers would be smart to constantly upgrade their skills. [UB](#)

Article contributed by Ryan Doyle
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EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE
and GLOBAL PROTEIN SUMMIT

John Manzella will provide a live keynote address, "Macro-economic trends, global trade and what's ahead," on Thursday, October 8 at 11:00 a.m. ET. Manzella will also be part of an on-demand session focused on COVID-19 and globalization.



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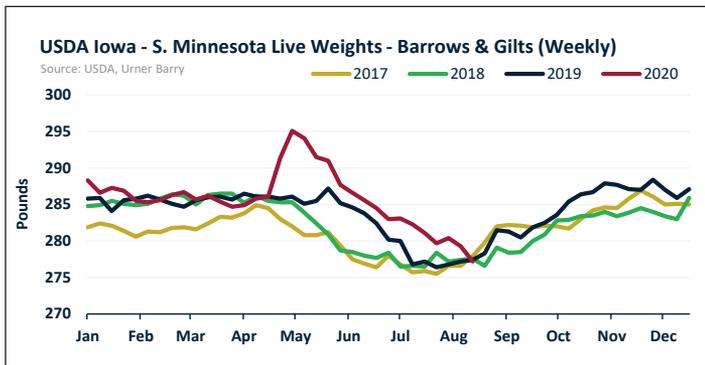
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Revisiting the hog and cattle supply situation — What lies ahead?

Slaughter-ready hog supplies are typically the smallest of the year in early July. Declining average slaughter weights normally accompany these tighter supplies since hotter temperatures impact hog performance and slow daily weight gains. At the onset of the pandemic, seasonal norms throughout the livestock industry have been largely upended. While the hog industry continues to contend with backlogged market-ready supplies generated by the temporary closure of several major processing facilities in late April into May, average hog weights are following the seasonal trend lower on a week-to-week basis. A closer look at hog weights amid the ongoing challenges related to the pandemic may offer some insight into the current supply situation and market outlook heading into the fourth quarter.

According to daily data provided by the USDA, a five-day rolling average of slaughter on July 31 showed a decline of 1.6 pounds in the carcass weight compared with a week earlier. Data for the week ending August 1 indicated the average live weight for barrows and gilts in Iowa and southern Minnesota at 279.7 pounds, down 1.4 pounds from the previous week but 3.3 pounds above a year ago. While the buildup of hogs would be expected to result in higher week-over-week weight gains, heat stress during much of July in the Midwest likely impacted hog performance in seasonal fashion. Of note, the larger than year ago figure is a reminder that hog weights are still very heavy for this time of year due to the backlog.



Heat stress during much of July impacted hog performance on a week-to-week basis. However, hog weights are still very heavy for this time of year due to the backlog.

Some market managers and livestock dealers note that excessively heavy butcher hogs may be going to sow plants or other alternative markets and are therefore not included in the weekly barrows and gilts average calculations. Because of this, the decline

in weights is not viewed as a complete representation of the supply situation.

Lower weights on a weekly basis suggest that the industry is making a dent in the backlog. Some producers are closer to becoming current on their marketings, but industry sources note that “current” is in relation to March levels prior to slowed production, when producers were already dealing with heavy supplies. Slaughter has recovered to about 2.5 to 2.6 million per week, but daily levels remain 4% to 5% below pre-COVID levels amid widespread worker absenteeism.

Looking ahead, unless producers euthanized a lot of pigs or growing hogs during the spring due to lack of barn space, it is going to be a difficult process for plants to fully catch up with the available supplies. Typically, slaughter rates begin a seasonal uptick by late August and continue to expand through the fall. It appears unlikely that the industry will achieve pre-COVID 490,000 to 500,000 daily levels in the near-term, and a resurgence of the virus and subsequent production slowdowns could continue to hamper the market and make it even more difficult for feeders to maintain current marketings heading into the fourth quarter.

Pork production for the week ending July 25 was up 10.6% from last year. It is a challenge for the market to absorb all this pork. Lackluster foodservice demand from venues such as restaurants, sporting arenas, and schools poses a threat to a healthy domestic demand needed to move pork through the pipeline.

Last year, weekly non-holiday slaughter in September and October averaged 2.624 million and 2.690 million head, respectively. According to the June Hogs and Pigs report, intended farrowings for September to November are down 5% from a year ago, implying lower pork production in the first half of 2021. The report also indicated at least 3% more hogs for that period, not accounting for hogs held back on maintenance diets. The decline in farrowing intentions suggests that producers are responding to the low cash hog prices and are reluctant to expand their herd due to the uncertain environment.

Turning to cattle, feeders are similarly contending with a backlog of supplies. However, the buildup of front-end cattle supplies is not thought to be as severe as the buildup of market-ready hog supplies, due in part to a quicker recovery in cattle slaughter, along with more flexibility to hold cattle on pasture longer.

Actual daily and weekly federally inspected slaughter has been revised downwards since the second week of June, meaning

that fewer cattle are moving through the pipeline in a timely fashion. This translates to more supplies that continue to hang over the market amid the “dog days of summer,” when demand for beef and meat overall generally wanes.

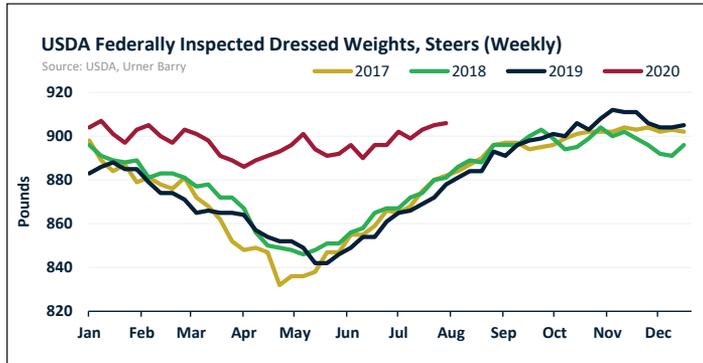
The cattle industry is no stranger to plant disruptions. A large fire severely damaged Tyson’s plant in Holcomb, Kansas, on August 9, 2019. The plant can process about 6,000 cattle a day and its closure came at a time when on-feed supplies were record large.

The facility was out of commission for the balance of the year, forcing shipments of cattle to be rerouted to Tyson’s other processing facilities. The immediate market consequences disrupted every step of the supply chain. Beef processing margins surged as packers tried to push as many cattle through the plants as possible, incentivized by lower cash markets and sharply higher beef prices.

The string of plant closures in late April into May this year due to the coronavirus closely mirrored this market reaction, but on a larger and more prolonged scale. The domino of plant disruptions resulted in unprecedented swings in wholesale beef prices due to tightened supplies, coupled with a surge in panic-buying induced demand. As the industry grappled with sharply reduced processing capacity, the Urner Barry Choice beef quote topped at an all-time high of \$443.68 on May 13. This compares with the Urner Barry Choice high of \$233.57 achieved two weeks after the Tyson fire.

While daily cattle slaughter levels have recovered to 97% - 98% of pre-COVID levels, the industry continues to work through the record high front-end fed cattle supply. Carcass weights tell the tale of this backlog. As of the week ending July 25, the USDA reported the average steer carcass weight at 903 pounds, 34 pounds above a year ago and 26 pounds above the previous five-year average.

As of July 30, cattle harvest year-to-date is 1,023,000 head below year ago levels. However, the increase in average carcass weights is resulting in beef production exceeding year-over-year figures.



The increase in average carcass weights is resulting in beef production exceeding year-over-year figures.

The July 1 Cattle on Feed was reported at 11.438 million head, down 0.4% from a year ago and slightly below the record high July 1 on-feed number set in 2019. Some analysts anticipate a better outlook for the balance of the year since this category of cattle has peaked and is projected to decline below year-ago levels by October if orderly marketings are maintained.

The higher cash price action for negotiated cattle in July has been contra seasonal (prices normally decline during July), suggesting that the market has fully discounted the backlog supplies. Prices on July 31 reached as high as \$103 live/cwt in Iowa, up as much as \$10/cwt from the last week of April when weekday slaughter levels dipped to 75,000 head, about 38% below pre-COVID levels. Wide beef packer operating margins will encourage plants to keep running and moving supplies through the pipeline.

Looking ahead, a COVID-19 resurgence and slowed production levels are the greatest threats to the recovery of the cattle and hog industries. The resilience of these industries is paramount to our nation’s meat production, and there is a pressing need for a better year ahead. [UB](#)

Article contributed by Courtney Shum
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Preparing for the new wave of consumers...

Agricultural Consultant Michelle Klieger breaks down the needs and wants of today's consumer

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Article contributed by Michelle Klieger, Stratagem Consulting

For decades, agriculture's mantra has been to provide safe and affordable food. This dual-mandate resulted in a highly concentrated and specialized agricultural system that constantly improves efficiency

and increases output throughout the supply chain. With this yardstick, agriculture has achieved its goal. In developed countries, food is widely available and takes up a smaller percentage of the average household budget than ever before. Yet, it's too soon for agriculture to declare victory.

To maximize the food production system, resiliency and optimization were sacrificed—and consumers want them back. Consumers still want safe food. But they also want food that supports environmental health, human health, and the health of their communities. Many understand the interconnectedness of these sectors and are willing to pay more for food that optimizes across them, instead of the cheapest possible items in the grocery store.

These are not new trends. Since the early 2000s, Americans have spent an average of 10% of their disposable income on food. Prices have continued to fall, but the percentage has stabilized because Americans have opted for more expensive items and eating in restaurants. In the 1980s, Americans ate 55% of their meals at home and 45% away. In 2017, Americans spent \$1.7 trillion on food, and \$900 billion (53%) was spent on food away from the home.

Besides eating out, consumers have opted to spend more money on products that represent or promote their values. Using your wallet to make a statement is popular with both millennials and Generation Z. These consumers purchase products that support human health, environmental sustainability, animal welfare, and local communities. They are willing to pay more, and many invest time and effort into finding the right products.

These trends have been building momentum for years. Most crises exacerbate current trends and the coronavirus pandemic is no exemption. The most obvious connection is human health. Demand for foods perceived to be healthy increase after a food safety outbreak or a health challenge. The pandemic is creating a global discussion. People with diet-related health conditions are more at-risk for complications or death from the virus. The conversation about our diets and food as medicine is just starting to heat up.

The pandemic has also raised questions about where food is produced, who produces it, and the resiliency of a highly integrated food system. In March, unharvested food rotted in fields while food insecurity surged. In April, thousands of food workers contracted the virus, shutting down processing plants and increasing grocery store food shortages. Prior to the pandemic, few consumers knew the extent to which migrant workers supported the food system. Or that several meat processing facilities account for more than 5% of American meat supply. When these farms and plants went offline, the impact was dramatic. The highly concentrated and specialized agriculture was not keeping consumer prices stable and low, rather it was causing shortages and price spikes.

These shocks may be over, but many people will not forget. Consumers expect food to be safe. They want it to be affordable and resilient. The pandemic highlighted the externalities of optimizing for price alone. Consumers have been finding their voice for years and recent news headlines give them the words they have been searching for. The food system will not change overnight, but consumers will keep demanding food that sustains their health, the environment, and the local economy. [UB](#)



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Michelle Klieger will be speaking at Urner Barry's Executive Conference and Global Protein Summit event. Her session, "Preparing for the New Wave of Consumers," will be available on demand on Friday, October 9.

U.S. beef exports dip in first half of the year

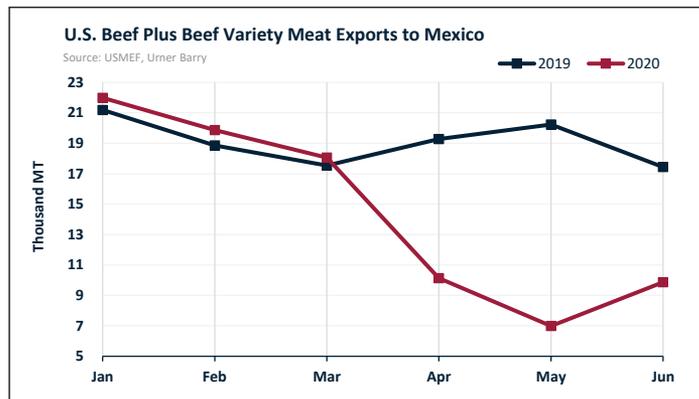
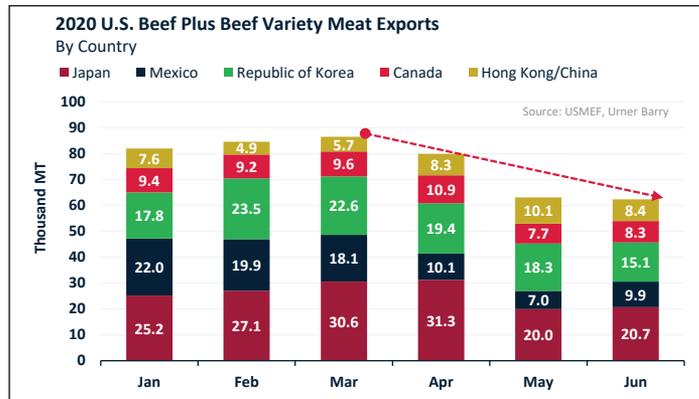
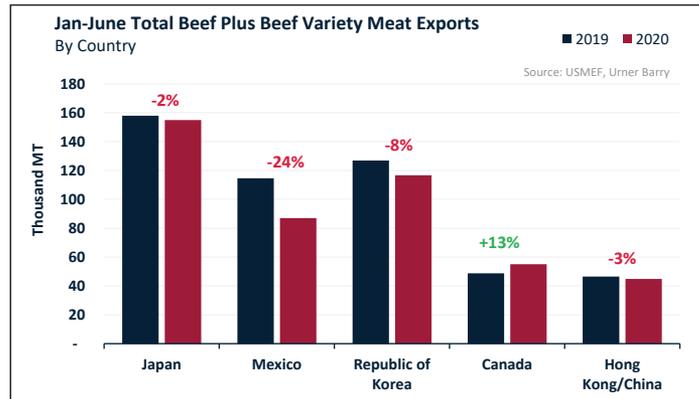
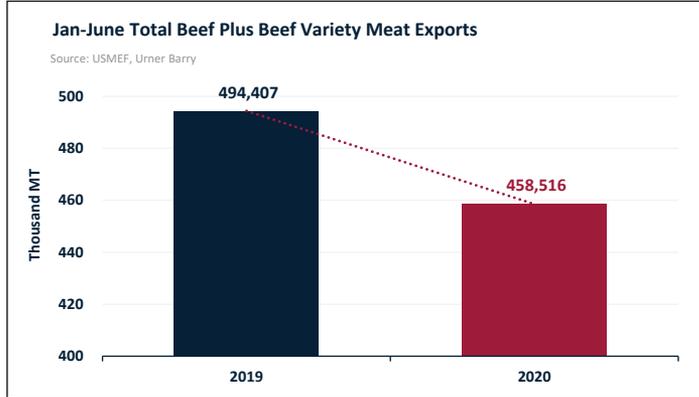
Article contributed by Jocelyn Garcia Rojas | jgarciarojas@urnerbarry.com

Top leading markets for U.S. beef and beef variety meat exports, which include Japan, Mexico, the Republic of Korea, Canada, and Hong Kong/China, reflect a year-to-date volume decline of 7%, or 35,891 MT, compared to last year.

Breaking it down to the top five export destinations, we can see an overall decline in exports compared to 2019, with Canada being the exception. To this point, Canada has imported 13% more beef from the United States versus last year. Mexico, which imports a majority of its beef from the U.S., imported 24% less year-over-year.

The most impactful factor this year has been COVID-19. The decline in exports began in mid-March, when the rate of infection began skyrocketing in the United States. Once again, looking to Mexico, we can really see this change in March. Panic buying began and during this time, as a result of plant closures, the United States began to experience a gap in its beef supply chain.

The market is still experiencing uncertainty as we move past the first half of the year and COVID-19 restrictions continue to impact consumer demand. As we edge closer to the holiday season, it will be interesting to see whether consumer demand maintains that uncertain course, or if a change in the COVID-19 backdrop will redirect the market towards more seasonally expected behavior for the balance of 2020. [UB](#)



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National Fisheries Institute dishes up first-ever National Pescatarian Month



Article contributed by Lynsee Fowler, National Fisheries Institute

National Today—the premier site for tracking food culture—has officially designated October 2020 as the country’s first-ever “National Pescatarian Month,” thanks to a partnership with the National Fisheries Institute (NFI) and its blog, Dish on Fish.

“Americans love to celebrate and at NFI, we knew there was an important community being left out of the party—pescatarians,” said Judy Dashiell, the senior vice president of NFI. “National Today is the curator of special days and months, so we worked with them to create National Pescatarian Month.”



retailers and foodservice operators. Dish on Fish will help ramp up the chatter about seafood even further with the additional designation of “National Pescatarian Month” come October.

Encouraging consumers to “go pescatarian” is a dual effort that gives a “home” to those who identify themselves as pescatarians; but also includes people who simply want to incorporate more seafood into their meal plans—at least two to three times per week as recommended by the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

NFI chose October because it amplifies the traditional “National Seafood Month” messaging promoted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), NFI members,

Importantly, “National Pescatarian Month” is designed to be inclusive, so NFI members and industry partners can amplify the messages by using a tool kit of turnkey resources including logos, social media graphics, recipe cards, infographics, and media resources.

NFI is also engaging registered dietitians, lifestyle bloggers and food and health editors to spread the pescatarian message in October. The campaign will feature nutritious, pescatarian-friendly meal plans and recipes, along with tips for simple seafood prep and cooking. “It’s important to show that seafood is delicious and simple to prepare,” Dashiell said. The campaign will also educate consumers about seafood’s many health benefits, like improved brain and heart health and reduced risks of cardiovascular disease, inflammation and depression—which is timely given the boosted interest in foods that support mental and physical health this year.

Dish on Fish is also excited to introduce its first e-cookbook in time with the first-ever “National Pescatarian Month,” featuring more than 30 diverse, original seafood recipes for the everyday home cook, with a special foreword by noted chef and seafood champion Barton Seaver. The cookbook will be available October 1.

“During a very challenging year, NFI is thrilled to bring the seafood community together for National Pescatarian Month,” Dashiell said.

If you’re interested in any of these resources, please contact Judy Dashiell at jdashiell@nfi.org.

Visit DishonFish.com for engaging, shareable content including meal plans, seafood prep and cooking tips, and the latest seafood science and recommendations. The website will also feature “National Pescatarian Month” promotion. [UB](#)

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Don't put all your shrimp in one basket...

Vietnam's diversified shrimp industry is paying dividends

By most accounts, Vietnam's extensive distribution network and processing capacity has enabled their domestic shrimp industry to navigate the ongoing international pandemic.

Similar to other major shrimp producers, Vietnam has had to contend with halts in production and dips in demand. Despite these hindrances, Vietnam has been able to shift a steady amount of product to new and existing markets.

As an existing market, Europe is expected to play a pivotal role in the advancement of Vietnam's shrimp industry. Described by the European Commission as "the most ambitious free trade deal ever concluded with a developing country" the EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA) and the subsequent removal of high basic tax rates is anticipated to bolster European imports of seafood from Vietnam.

NOT ALL EQUAL

While Vietnam's shrimp industry continues to feel the pinch on the back of a slowdown in global economic activity, it remains better placed than other major exporters.

An over reliance on selling unprocessed shrimp to China has left the Ecuadorian shrimp industry reeling. While Ecuador's shrimp exports were profitable prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, the old adage "Don't put all your eggs in one basket" can be used to demonstrate the risks of having too many resources in one area.

In June of this year China's customs authority claimed shipments from three of Ecuador's largest shrimp companies—

Industrial Pesquera Santa Priscila SA, Empacreci SA and Empacadora Del Pacifico Sociedad Anonima—had produced six positive COVID-19 results. While tests on the frozen shrimp and inner packaging were reported as negative, the subsequent ban on shrimp from those companies sent farm gate prices crashing, with market participants struggling to break-even.

While India has more of a diversified portfolio of international clientele, it relies heavily on the U.S. and China, with the latter importing \$1 billion worth of shrimp from India in 2019, up from \$700 million in 2018. Similar to Ecuador, a drop in Indian shrimp exports to China has left many market participants struggling to stay afloat with farm gate prices dropping and the industry calling for government intervention.

ROADMAP

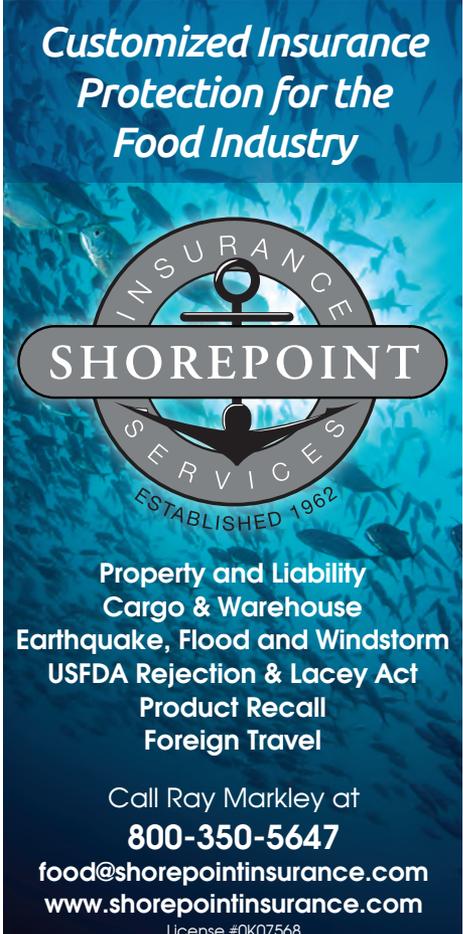
The extent of pandemic scar tissue on the global economy will have a major role in dictating future trade flows.

Repercussions of any economic crisis are particularly strong in the food sector. There is concern among industry analysts that the recession could drive consumers away from expensive products, including shrimp, and from restaurants, where shrimp is mainly consumed.

With established sales channels across the globe, several factors are expected to favor shrimp exports from Vietnam. Under the newly enacted EVFTA, key products such as black tiger shrimp will be reduced from the basic rate of 20% to 0%, while other shrimp items are part of a 3-year tax reduction roadmap. Supply of raw shrimp

in Ecuador, Indonesia, and Thailand will continue to be influenced by pandemic-induced bottlenecks. Meanwhile the supply of raw materials in China is expected to dip on the back of the DIV1 virus. In addition, delays at Chinese ports has made Indian farmers reluctant to stock high volumes which could send future buyers in the direction of Vietnam. [UB](#)

Article contributed by **Michael Nesbitt**
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A GLOOMY SHADOW OVER THE UK BEEF MARKET

Long heralded for its animal welfare and environmental stewardship, the UK beef sector is on the brink of chartering unknown waters.

Given Brexit uncertainty, businesses across the supply chain are concerned about both future beef supply and export earnings. And with potential tariffs higher than the price of the product itself, concerns are justified.

With one of the highest quality farm assurance schemes in the world, industry bodies across the UK want the government to ensure that the rules for imports remain intact come deadline day. Likewise, British retailers continue to urge negotiators to reach a post-Brexit trade deal. A potential tariff of 48% on Irish beef imports is on the table. Failure to reach a trade deal will have lasting effects on the UK and EU beef market, particularly Irish exports, which account for 70% of the UK's beef imports.

CRUCIAL JUNCTURE

As a net importer of beef, import tariffs—in a no-deal scenario—would increase the cost of beef in the market. Likewise, if tariffs are imposed on exports to the EU it would significantly reduce the price competitiveness of UK beef and shrink export earnings.

If tariffs are imposed on both imports and exports equally, domestic beef prices

would rise as a result of the UK being a net importer, in turn bolstering margins. If tariffs are imposed only on exports of UK product while imports of EU beef are tariff-free, domestic beef prices would weaken and margins would tighten. On the other hand, if tariffs were only applied to imports from the EU—an unlikely but still possible scenario—farmers margins would increase and production would likely go up, if all else remains equal.

WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

While COVID-19 continues to weigh on markets, some argue the long-term success of the UK beef sector depends on future trade deals with third member countries.

With African swine fever decimating China's pig population, filling their demand for protein continues to influence international trade flows. The ongoing pandemic also limits the processing capacity of China, so increased access to this market represents a significant window of opportunity.

While UK exports of premium beef cuts to non-EU destinations were on the up prior the outbreak of COVID-19, industry analysts believe lower-value cuts and offal products represent a larger opportunity for the UK

beef industry. The UK currently exports valuable cuts such as topsides and fillets to China. There is room to expand the exports of items that are less valuable on the domestic market, but valued highly in other markets, including the Far East and Africa. This would in turn assist with carcass balance by using more of the animal and bolster industry revenue.

With China lifting a ban on beef imports in June 2018, the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board estimates that beef exports to China could be worth as much as £250m (\$326m) in the coming years. The UK will face sturdy competition, but British beef, along with its food certification and assurance schemes, is well placed to capitalize on China's huge demand for protein.

While the above scenarios all come with a degree of uncertainty, lingering pandemic-induced bottlenecks and subsequent reduced consumer confidence could weigh heavier on the market than future tax duties. [UB](#)

Article contributed by **Michael Nesbitt**
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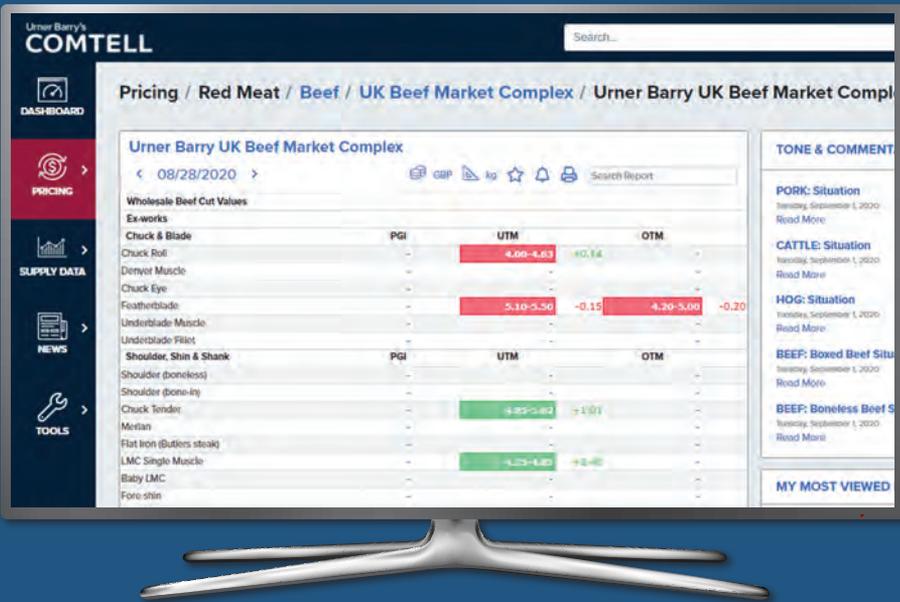


First of its kind coverage...

URNER BARRY'S NEW MARKET COVERAGE OF UK BEEF TRADE

Adding to the timely, accurate and unbiased reporting on the U.S. beef market, Urner Barry will now offer coverage of the beef trade in the United Kingdom. This initiative provides transparency and insight into international market dynamics at a time when information is more critical than ever.

"We are excited for the opportunity to invest in the UK beef industry and continue our tradition of helping people make better trading decisions by providing independent, accurate and timely market information," said Urner Barry CEO Joe Muldowney. "We're grateful for the incredible support we've seen so far from the UK on this endeavor and look forward to building on this offering in the future."



The added coverage will include wholesale spot prices for primal cuts, sub-primal cuts, offal items, and the cutout. Within those items, wholesale prices will be categorized into product under the following designations: protected geographical indication (PGI) , under 30 months (UTM), and over 30 months (OTM).

Leading this initiative for Urner Barry is European-based market reporter and analyst, Michael Nesbitt.

"The UK Beef market sits at a crucial juncture," said Nesbitt. "Given the current climate of uncertainty along with changes in global trade dynamics, access to valuable market information is and will continue to be of critical importance."

Market data for UK beef will be released on a weekly basis, published exclusively on COMTELL every Friday. To view the latest quotes and commentary, please visit COMTELL. Not a subscriber? Call 732-240-5330 to speak with an Account Manager or email help@urnerbarry.com. UB

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MARKET PRICES, NEWS, AND ANALYSIS



A look at the shrimp distribution chain

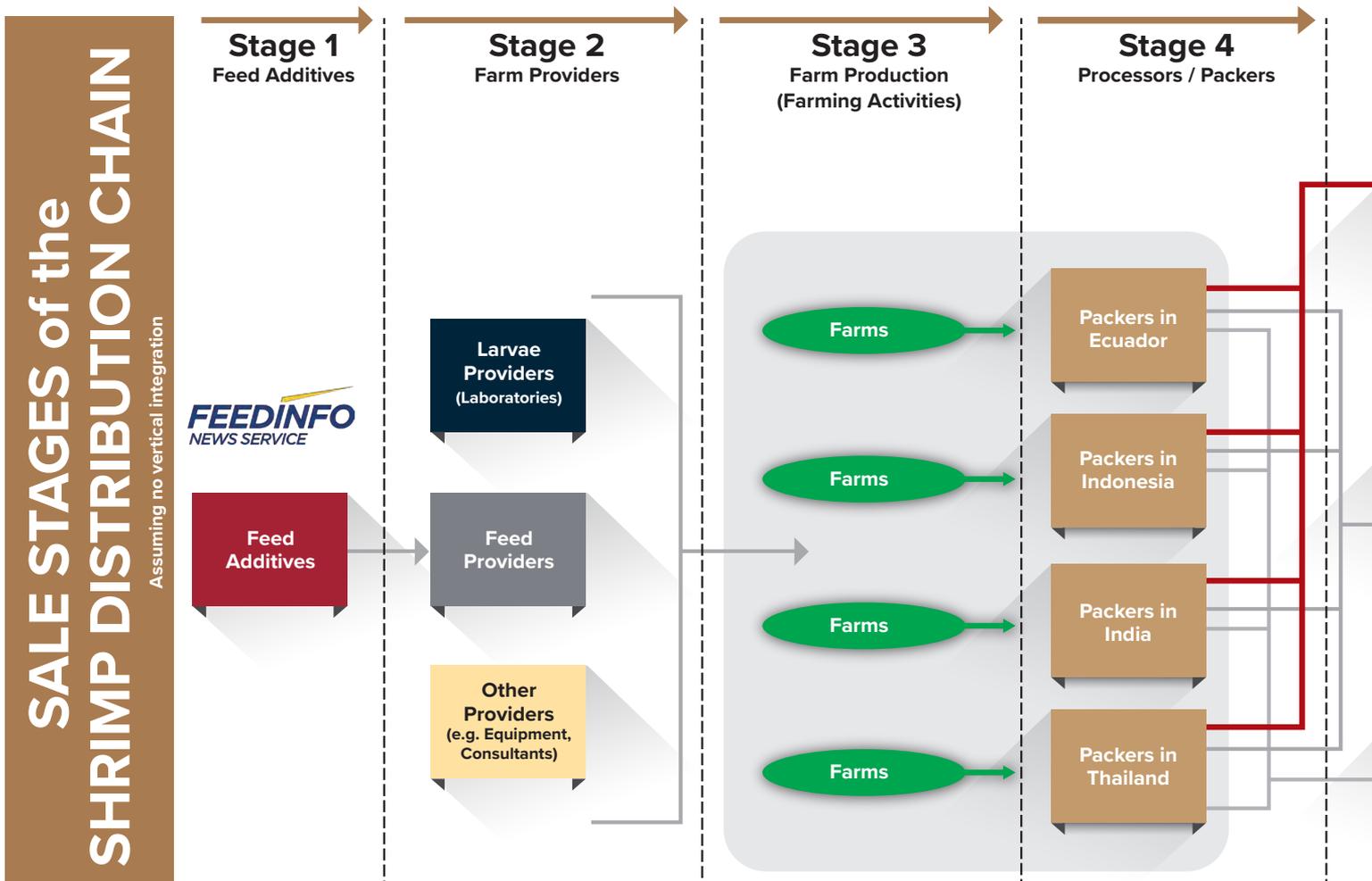
The following illustration has two purposes—to show, in a simplistic manner, the shrimp production chain and where AgriBriefing companies, in this case Feedinfo and Urner Barry, play a crucial role.

Beginning from left to right, and assuming no vertical integration, we find feed additives companies. Feedinfo plays a crucial role in price discovery of feed and feed additives. These additives are then sold to feed producing companies, such as shrimp hatcheries and farms. Feed companies combine the additives with other raw materials, like fishmeal, an important component of shrimp feed. The companies then sell their range of feed products to shrimp hatcheries and farms. The next step involves the selling of shrimp farm harvests to packers, who then transform it into its various presentations, from frozen head-on shell-on, to headless peeled and deveined, among many others.

After shrimp is packed into boxes, it is then shipped to a destination market, assuming it is exported. For the purpose of this exercise, let's assume this product is shipped to the United States, where an importer, or a "first receiver," assumes ownership of this packed shrimp. It is this stage where Urner Barry quotations play a critical role. Once this first receiver or "importer" clears the product into the United States, the product is then sold to different markets. It can be sold to the importer's customers in which there is a contractual agreement, at a fixed price, tied to a benchmark—say a price index of some sort—at a fixed volume, among many other pre-arranged conditions. However, like many other markets, there exists the "spot market," which are open or negotiated transactions at that particular point in time. These are governed by the fundamental laws of supply and demand. If importers hold an excess supply of shrimp

relative to demand, prices will fall. Similarly, if importers hold scarce inventories relative to the existing demand, prices will rise. It is here where Urner Barry discovers the price of these transactions in an effort to bring transparency to an otherwise opaque market. Urner Barry establishes price quotations based on the findings that would then function as benchmarks, which ultimately provide essential price signals to both buyers and sellers in an effort to make informed decisions. The customers of importers vary in their business nature; some will be direct users such as restaurant chains, hotels, and/or grocery stores, as well as intermediaries such as traders, distributors, and/or brokers. All of them play a crucial role in buying and selling shrimp. In the next step, "end-users" are often referred to as the final step just before the consumer. [UB](#)

Article contributed by **Angel Rubio**
arubio@urnerbarry.com

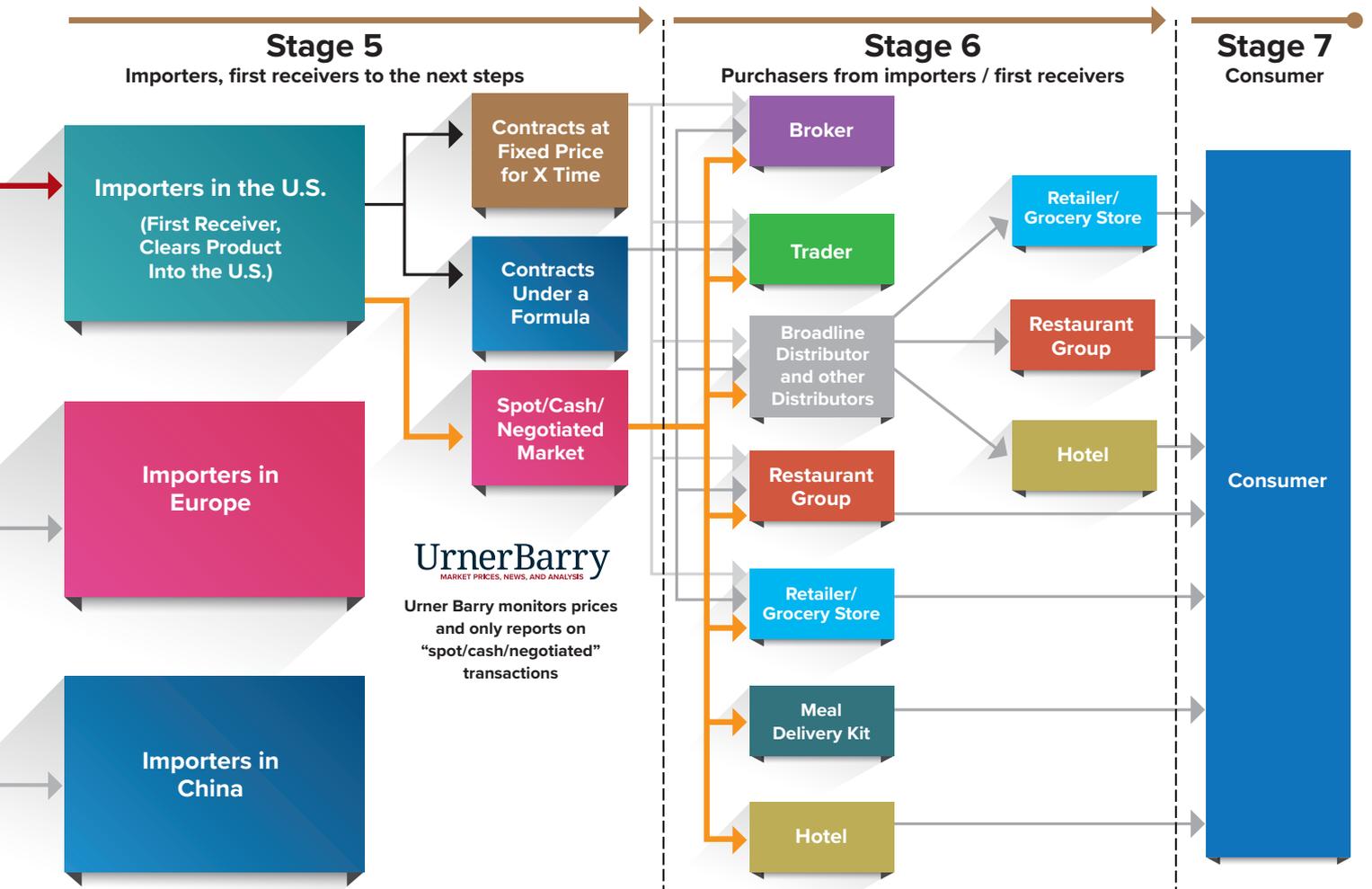


SHRIMP SUPPLY SOLUTIONS FROM THE SOURCE



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A socially-distanced Thanksgiving?

Article contributed by Beth Breeding,
National Turkey Federation

After weeks that felt like years, one day we woke up and it was already the middle of summer. Now, we're heading full steam into the fall, with the holiday season approaching ever so quickly. While turkey is a 365-days-a-year kind of protein, the holiday season is certainly our traditional time to shine. After all, what's a Thanksgiving meal without turkey?



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As we think about holiday gatherings in the midst of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, it's safe to say they are going to look a little different. Families who may have traveled to be together will likely stay home. Large gatherings will become more intimate. Many may try to prepare their own Thanksgiving feast for the first time ever, with helpful instructions from Mom or Grandma (or Dad and Grandpa for that matter). Friendsgiving might mean wearing your traditional "eating pants" at home while raising a glass during the group Zoom. A socially-distanced Thanksgiving

is a new concept, but it can still bring people together. It's also an opportunity for the turkey industry to highlight the versatility of our products and engage new home cooks with Thanksgiving meal preparations.

Since the outset of COVID-19 earlier this year, there has been a steady increase in year-over-year demand for turkey products at retail. Primarily, year-over-year gains have been in the double digits, with ground turkey products surging in popularity. While the uptick

in retail sales has not been enough to counteract foodservice and export losses, this trend has resulted in more consumers familiarizing themselves with turkey products. As consumers continue to cook at home and get adventurous in the kitchen, it is likely this trend will also carry over into holiday preparations.

No one can pinpoint exactly what will happen in November, but here are some of the key factors the National Turkey Federation (NTF) is considering as we plan for turkey's big day:

TURKEY AVAILABILITY

COVID-19 has had some impact on turkey production; however, NTF does not anticipate any supply problems for consumers purchasing turkey for holiday meals. The turkey industry has been responsive to changes in production and managed supply chain needs accordingly. But like any year, a little advance planning doesn't hurt to make sure the preferred products are available. If there is something specific a consumer wants, they should talk to their grocer's meat department several weeks ahead of Thanksgiving to get more details about products and availability.

THE THANKSGIVING CENTERPIECE

Turkey is the centerpiece of a Thanksgiving meal. But that doesn't mean consumers can't switch up how the big bird is prepared. There are a variety of cuts of turkey to try as well as cooking techniques that encourage home cooks to think outside of the oven. As NTF prepares our holiday content and meal guides, we're making it a priority to address some of the changes that Thanksgiving 2020 may bring. A whole turkey is a classic Thanksgiving favorite and fits every meal (hello, leftovers), and preparing it on the grill or smoker frees up oven space and opens the door to new flavors. For smaller crowds, a bone-in turkey breast is a great option. It cooks quicker and is a perfect size for small gatherings. If the turkey legs or wings are a favorite, prepare those on their own. Instant Pots and air fryers are other kitchen

gadgets that can help make turkey preparations easier for novice cooks. For those still resigned to using the oven as shoe storage, we also anticipate seeing restaurants capitalize on growing carry-out business with Thanksgiving meal kits or catered meals. Our advice to consumers is to make the meal their own, as long as turkey is the featured protein.

LEFTOVERS: LEFT OUT NO MORE

Even if a holiday gathering is smaller, cooking a whole turkey is an economical way to cook once, yet yield a number of meals. Leftovers often get snubbed, but NTF is focusing part of our holiday campaign on creative ways to utilize extra turkey. Consumers can get the greatest value out of their turkey by putting leftovers to the test. There's nothing wrong with a classic turkey sandwich, but enchiladas, soups (including gumbo) and quesadillas are other ways to make the most of round two. Leftover turkey can be safely frozen for several months and used as needed.

When we look for comfort in times of uncertainty, we often turn to familiar foods that evoke happy memories and make us feel at home. Whether consumers find themselves at their home or the home of a friend or family member for the Thanksgiving holiday, turkey is the perfect protein to make a socially-distanced Thanksgiving feel not so distant. We look forward to helping introduce consumers to the many delicious turkey options available to them at the holidays and beyond. [UB](#)



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Sockeye promotions take a hit during pandemic

FARMED SALMON

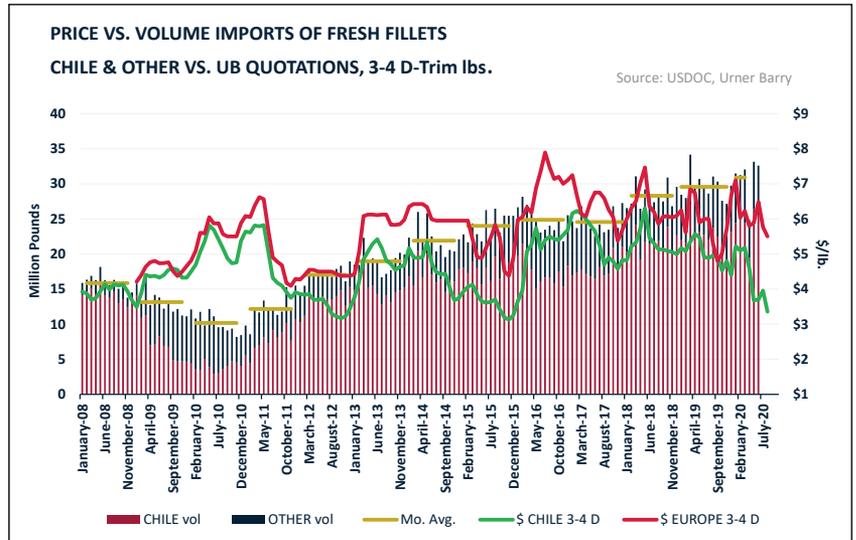
The farmed salmon market post Fourth of July continued to feel the effect of the pandemic, coupled with a historical seasonal slowdown. Chilean farmed fresh fillets are fairly stable most years during the month of August. Looking at the past five years, 60% of the time the market has maintained an extremely steady pattern. In 2015 the market dipped lower, while in 2016 the market did firm. 2020 is more closely following the 2015 trend.

Taking a look at the 5-year average of 3-4 Chilean fresh fillets in comparison to 2020, the 5-year average from mid-July until this same time period does dip about 3%. This year, since mid-July, 3-4s have dropped 17%.

However, on August 27 a national trucker's strike began in Chile, lasting nearly a week. The strike is reported to have affected the main road from Puerto Montt north to Santiago where flights depart for the U.S. market. Suppliers with resources south of Puerto Montt reported that some production continued throughout the strike. The situation greatly impeded the complicated logistic structure within the country of delivering fresh fish to the U.S. market. Some offerings and negotiations between buyers and sellers for the spot market were reported to be delayed until a clear resolution was in sight or an additional plan could be developed for transporting the fish out of the country. The situation dried up the spot market for fresh fillets extremely quickly. Any fish that get out of the country now will most likely be destined to fulfill contracted business, leaving the spot market tremendously short.

As of this writing there is upward pricing pressure on the market and the undertone is very unsettled in both the fillet and whole fish markets out of Chile. The market prior to the strike had been slipping over the past several weeks for both fresh farmed fillets and whole fish. The 3-4 pound Chilean fresh fillet market has tumbled 27.6% since around Fourth of July. Its dipped 7.4% since the beginning of August. Similarly, the fresh whole market out of Chile has dropped 28.5% since Fourth of July.

From a historical standpoint, as August rolls into September, pricing remains relatively steady. Looking at the 5-year and the 3-year average for 3-4 pound fresh fillets; the market trended down 0.6% when looking at the 5-year average and up slightly 0.4% for the 3-year. On the other hand, retail promotions or buying opportunities, show a more substantial uptick comparing the last week of August to the first week of September. Both the 5 and 3-year averages saw over a 20% increase in buying opportunities for the first week in September compared to the last week of August (up 23 and 22% respectively). At this moment, the exact



promotions planned for this year are unknown, however, from a historical perspective buying opportunities do appear to rise during this time period. Any disruption in deliveries of fresh salmon to retail would be damaging. Historically speaking, as salmon and the seafood industry move into the fall, markets can begin to slip. When product begins to flow back into the market from Chile, salmon will need the continued support of retail promotions to move volumes of imported salmon.

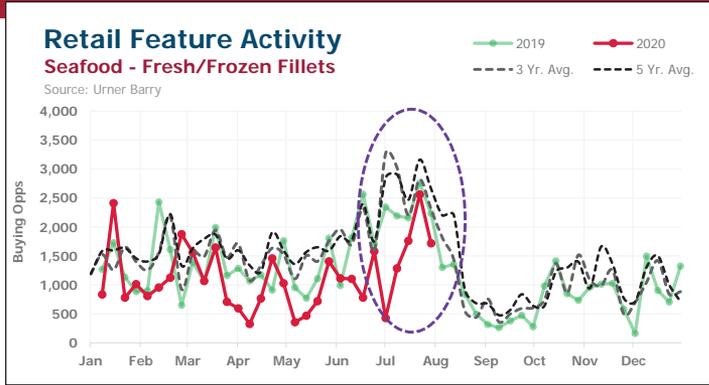
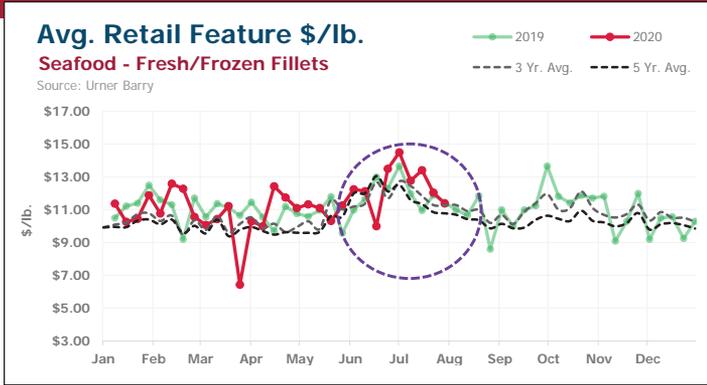
WILD SALMON

2020 has been a year of unknown, and sockeye salmon may be another example of a seafood species that will not be sad to see this year go.

Sockeye buying opportunities at retail have trended below both the 3-year and 5-year averages throughout all of 2020. Price at the retail level, in concert, has remained above the 3-year and 5-year averages, with one exception being in mid-June this year.

The number of times that retailers feature sockeyes on their ad circulars is down for the same time period, 26% lower than the 3-year and 35.4% lower than the 5-year. Year-to-date sockeye features are off 27% in comparison to 2019. However, from a survey of just under 50 retailers across 16 metropolitan areas across the country, there have been retailers that have consistently promoted.

It is hard to say why or point to an exact reason why there has been a significant drop-off of promotions at retail this year. But looking at the timing of when promotions and campaigns are planned versus the news of the day, some explanations start to emerge. Promotions at retail are typically booked 8-12 weeks out, which puts the planning around mid-April to mid-May for a



promotion to run at the beginning of July. Historically speaking there are two peaks of promotions on the 3-year and 5-year trend, the first around the Fourth of July holiday and the second being the third week in July.

Looking back at the news cycle during mid-April to mid-May, much of the discussion involved Alaska navigating issues such as 14-day worker quarantine, transporting seasonal workers to Alaska and discussions around Alaska's ability to deal with a surge of hospitalizations. In addition, as the weeks ticked by and concern grew over late runs of other species of salmon, this situation could also have influenced retailers' decisions on whether or not to promote sockeyes in July. It is clear looking at the chart below that the initial bump of promotions in the early part of July was missed.

Compound this news with a rapidly falling farmed salmon market, which dropped \$1.55 or 31% on 3-4 pound Chilean fresh fillets from the beginning of April to the end of May. As prices were falling, retailers among other buyers more than likely booked ads for the future in order to help stabilize the market situation.

Sockeye prices for fresh whole fish have followed the 3-year average throughout the season and ended the fresh season above the 3-year average. With most of the 2020 sockeye season complete, moving forward it will interesting to see how the frozen sockeye markets adjusts into the fourth quarter of 2020 and beyond. [UB](#)

Article contributed by Janice Schreiber
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THE EXPANSION OF THIRD-PARTY DELIVERY SERVICES

In recent years, we have seen a shift in the way that consumers order and receive food. Whether it be from a restaurant or retailer, third-party food delivery companies have started to take over the ordering process. Delivery is big business for restaurants and grocers, and demand has increased for these services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The biggest player in the food delivery game is DoorDash, with a 45% share of sales. However, in July, as cases of the coronavirus continued to spike around the country, Uber took one giant leap forward by announcing a definitive agreement to acquire competitor Postmates for about \$2.65 billion in an all-stock transaction. According to Uber, Postmates is highly complementary to Uber Eats due its focus on geographic areas, as well as different customer demographics. The acquisition gives restaurants and merchants access to more tools and technology to connect with a larger consumer base. The deal makes Uber/Postmates the second-largest food delivery company in the United States with 37% share of sales. Grubhub, which was acquired by JustEatTakeaway.com in June for \$7.3 billion, has a 17% share of sales.

Throughout the pandemic, restaurants have expanded their delivery options to continue serving consumers while limiting contact. For example, Tim Hortons announced a partnership

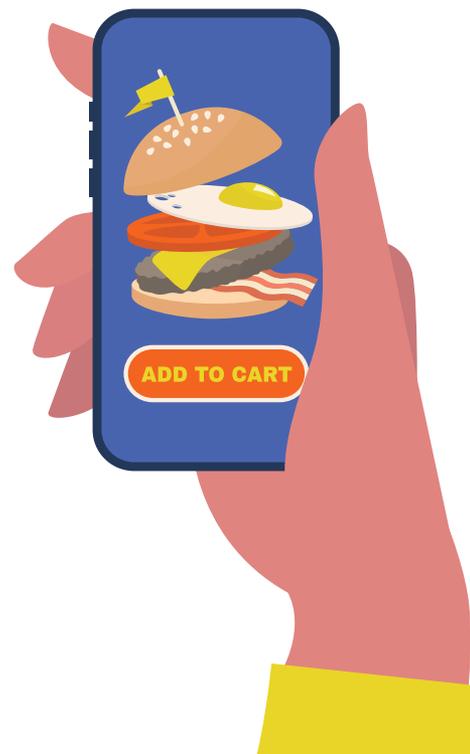
with Grubhub, offering delivery in select markets. Locations included Grand Rapids and Detroit, Michigan, as well as Rochester, New York, and Columbus, Ohio.

Chipotle also announced a partnership with Grubhub, establishing a fully integrated partnership to provide efficient operations and a seamless eating experience. Chipotle reported that investing in digital and increasing access are primary focuses for them. The company grew its digital sales by 80.8% year-over-year in their first quarter earnings.

But in addition to partnering with foodservice, third-party delivery companies have also expanded into the grocery market. As of mid-summer, consumers in select Latin American and Canadian cities can order groceries through the Uber and Uber Eats app. The partnership with Cornershop, a grocery delivery startup, marks Uber and Cornershop's first integrated grocery delivery experience. The launch came after grocery delivery trials with more than 9,500 merchants in over 30 countries on Uber Eats, where Uber has seen a 176% increase in grocery orders since February.

DoorDash has entered the grocery market as well and introduced its own convenience store called DashMart. The platform, located within the DoorDash app, provides delivery of household essentials. DashMart stores are distribution hubs owned and operated by DoorDash and carry inventory of more than 2,000 items curated from distributors and restaurants. The move differentiates the brand from rivals like Grubhub, which specializes in foodservice pickup and delivery.

“Delivery is big business for restaurants and grocers, and demand has increased for these services during the COVID-19 pandemic.”





Meanwhile, Grubhub is betting on a strategy it has relied on for years in Europe: Let restaurants deliver their own food. According to Grubhub, delivery can be the largest expense in an online food order, amounting to about 25% of an order's overall cost.

When an online service does the delivery, it passes along the expense. Restaurant contributions do not always cover the cost, reports Grubhub. The company stated this is especially the case with big chains, which can negotiate lower rates for themselves.

However, the strategy faces challenges in the United States. DoorDash and Uber Eats have grown much faster than Grubhub, according to research firm Second Measure. Companies like DoorDash and Uber Eats can more easily coordinate orders across multiple restaurants and consumers as they have a greater percentage of deliveries done by their own networks.

According to Packaged Facts, online sales of food and beverages in the United States have been growing rapidly even before the coronavirus pandemic and totaled about \$17 billion in 2018. They are expected to increase 32% per year through 2023. Yet, while e-commerce sales are growing rapidly, they still represent a small percentage of total food and beverage sales, about 4%.

Research from the Hartman Group revealed that third-party delivery services have become important, particularly for millennials. Millennials are more likely than other generations to consider food delivery services an important attribute.

While we know consumers crave convenience, the coronavirus pandemic has also played a pivotal role in advancing the use of technology. While online ordering and food delivery was expected to expand, the virus has accelerated the process. Services limiting contact have increased significantly, with use of these services up 13% from 2019. Some consumers that have not used a third-party delivery app in the past are now using the service to practice social distancing and limit outside contact. These behavioral shifts could potentially permanently change the way we order food going forward. As these major players merge and develop new strategies to serve as many consumers as efficiently as possible, placing an order via an app on a mobile device could become the new normal. [UB](#)

Article contributed by **Andraia Torsiello** | atorsiello@urnerbarry.com

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When times get tough...

Beef marketing through a new lens

Article contributed by Kylee Kohls,
Certified Angus Beef®

New Year's resolutions made with 20-20 vision were soon masked, locked away or reviewed through rose-colored glasses.

Creative can-do was the only way for the Certified Angus Beef® (CAB®) brand to stay on mission in pandemic times, engaging all partners through that new lens.

"We shared our expertise through extreme education," company meat scientist Diana Clark told the American Society for Animal Scientists Annual Conference in July.

As the beef marketing arm of the American Angus Association®, CAB connects its farmer-rancher owners to the chefs, retailers and food distributors who buy and sell the meat, cultivating demand at every link. When nobody could join in live tours, the brand set up stages on digital platforms.

In the spring, "Field trips to the farm" brought more than 130,000 on Facebook Live to 10 ranches on the Northern Plains states to the Old South. An Indiana 3-year-old showed off her baby calf in one segment, while in another, a South Carolina rancher's granddaughters called the Angus herd in while she told the story of starting their farm there with 100 cows and three preschoolers in the 1990s.

CAB chefs, working from home and unable to prepare delicious meals for visitors in the brand's Test Kitchen or Culinary Center, created a series of home videos that met consumers where everyone was living—at home. From backyard fire-pit cookouts to breakfast in remote kitchens, the chefs shared their families, friendship and food ideas, creating thousands of new person-to-person relationships and a warmer style of presenting that's here to stay.

Meat scientist Clark told the assembled animal scientists how CAB brand partners adjusted to the year.

"As beef price and supply changes dominated the country, culinary innovation reached new heights," she said. Chefs with limited menu options turned to multi-purpose beef cuts and carryout alternatives. Raw cuts walked out the front doors at 40% of restaurants, with instructions to create those favorites at home; 80% planned to keep that up even as dining rooms reopen.

Throughout the months of stay-at-home orders, CAB chefs, meat scientists and restaurant partners took to Instagram for weekly "Chef Chats" and roundtable discussions on the changing business environment.



Many restaurant partners helped feed essential workers in local communities, Clark said. Service never stopped. When supplies were short, CAB helped find beef in cold storage.

The grocery store was changing, too.

"There's been tremendous growth in the retail meat department as more people cook at home and store meat in the freezer," she said.

The brand offered virtual training and online courses to help retail staff expertly answer questions on cut, color, marbling, packaging and specifications.

In line with North American Meat Institute (NAMI) data showing the rise of Choice or higher beef from 73% of sales in 2009-14 to 82% for the next five years and 86.7% as of July, Clark conducted survey research.

On average, she found 58% of respondents said color and 43% said marbling determines beef quality, although brand name and

nutrition labels outweigh marbling for the millennial generation. Roughly 80% of respondents said they would be likely or very likely to purchase vacuum-packaged beef with a freezer-ready label, and favor packaging that lets them see the product.

While most consumers prefer to pick out their own beef from the meat case, grocery e-commerce is climbing, Clark said.

Large retail chain partners in Canada and the western United States saw more than 275% increases in online food sales in the 2020 second quarter.

Beef is still bringing people together.

“We are all a part of a greater community,” said Clark. “We saw partners helping partners—retailers hiring meat specialists from their distributors after they were laid off, chefs talking about new ways to use beef—we’ve had each other’s backs through it all.” [UB](#)

Images provided by Certified Angus Beef®



“There’s been tremendous growth in the retail meat department as more people cook at home and store meat in the freezer.”

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Smaller sized scallops making waves in the market

The 2020 Atlantic sea scallop season, which started on the first of April, has been faced with its fair share of challenges. Pandemic related setbacks aside, the specifications set for the fishing year estimated roughly 52 million pounds of projected landings, a 20% fall from the previous year. Despite the 10.5 million pound year-over-year difference, the 2020 projected volume still surpasses the historical average.

Contributing to the fall in volume are the slow-growing scallops located within the Nantucket Lightship Deep-South Area. This mass of scallops within the area are estimated at over 35,000 metric tons and have been watched via dredge survey in previous years. The class of scallops have turned eight years old this fishing season and survey results have noted a

slight growth spurt the past year, with sizes ranging from 30-to-50 count range.

Due to concerns that this class of scallops could see a die-off due to old age before growing into larger sizes, the New England Fishery Management Council set into place opportunities for this area to be harvested during the 2020 season, allowing for an increase in crew members due to the added time needed to shuck and handle the smaller scallops.

As smaller sized scallops enter the marketplace, end-users needed to get creative on ways to market the scallop without losing perceived value due to their size. Historically, smaller sized bay scallops would be imported into the United States from China, but being able to offer a domestic product already grabs customers attention. Luckily, the industry quickly found endless opportunities for the new product within the retail sector, as well as foodservice and restaurant establishments.

Bacon-wrapped or added into paella, mixed into a seafood medley or breaded and fried, petite scallops are having no trouble selling themselves. The versatility of this bivalve transcends the selling sector or product form. These smaller scallops are seen across high-end, mid-tier, and fast casual dining eateries, a true testament to the Atlantic sea scallop.



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As the 2020 scallop fishing year moves on, the class of undersized scallops will be harvested through, making way for the next class of scallops to move in and thrive. [UB](#)

Article contributed by **Lorin Castiglione**
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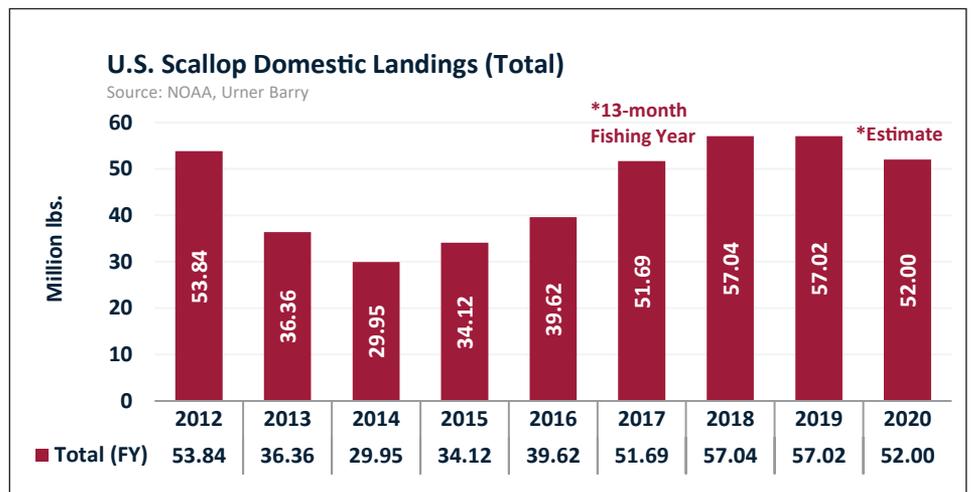


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MEET URNER BARRY'S MARKET DIGEST PODCAST HOST

Laura Zinger

Behind Urner Barry's Market Digest podcast is the leader of Urner Barry's sales and service team, Laura Zinger.

Joining Urner Barry in January 2018, Laura brought with her a robust background in sales and service spanning multiple industries. Early in her career, Laura spent time as a technical support and service lead in a call center environment for T-Mobile, where she gained valuable insight into the customer experience, call handling, and key metrics measurements for performance in a service-oriented industry.

She then transitioned into property management, where she oversaw multiple medical offices, condominiums, and residential tenants. Property management sparked Laura's interest in working with businesses, and allowed her to learn quickly how to negotiate contracts, coordinate vendors and budgets, and manage complex relationships with lessees, both residential and commercial.

From there, Laura landed a spot in banking with JPMorgan Chase, where she held multiple securities licenses and worked in both private and business banking. She served on the Diversity Council for JPMorgan Chase where she instigated the translation of multiple banking documents and communications into Spanish and worked to celebrate the many cultures and backgrounds within the retail sector.

She also chaired the volunteerism committee for Central and Southern NJ, raising thousands of dollars and dozens of volunteer hours for Hurricane Sandy relief, childhood cancer, ASPCA pet shelters, and more.

Laura began her tenure at Urner Barry as a Territory Account Manager and quickly progressed to Senior Account Manager where she worked feverishly on process standardization and mentoring. Today she serves as UB's Territory Sales and Key Account Manager. In her current role, the primary focus is always the clients and their experience with Urner Barry. Laura is committed to continuous improvement and innovation across her team to ensure that customer goals and objectives are well supported by our brand. She also consults with our product development team to continuously improve COMTELL by relaying customer feedback and recommendations from her team. As a part of the plant-based protein market initiative, Laura is responsible for developing relationships within the growing alternative protein space and generating awareness with Urner Barry clients. Laura is also a part of the team responsible for the new Urner Barry Consulting launch, which brings a new and incredible layer of value and insights to our customers.

When she's not busy leading the sales team and helping customers, Laura hosts Urner Barry's Market Digest podcast, a weekly show focused on all things food and agriculture. She recruits guests that bring fresh perspectives from the many functions both within and supporting the protein industry. In her time as the

host, she has featured guests from Certified Angus Beef, CNBC, Beyond Meat, CoBank, Global AgriTrends, and many other incredible professionals with expertise that benefits listeners.

In addition to the podcast, Laura has also hosted panels at the Global Protein Summit in Chicago and the Women in Food and Agriculture Summit in Amsterdam. She will be doing the same at the epic and



upcoming virtual event, Urner Barry's Executive Conference and Global Protein Summit this October.

Off the clock, Laura values time with her husband, two children, and her new, quarantine-acquired puppy and kitten. A foodie at heart, Laura loves cooking, baking, and eating many cuisines and sharing that passion with family during the holidays. She also enjoys volunteering in her community, working as a professional makeup artist, and a good gin and tonic. [UB](#)

Urner Barry's **MARKET DIGEST PODCAST**

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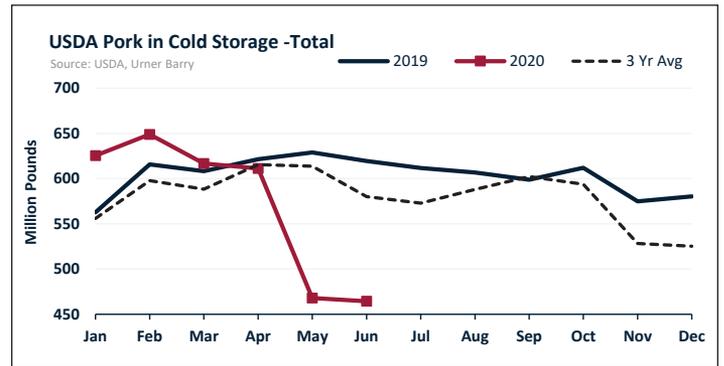
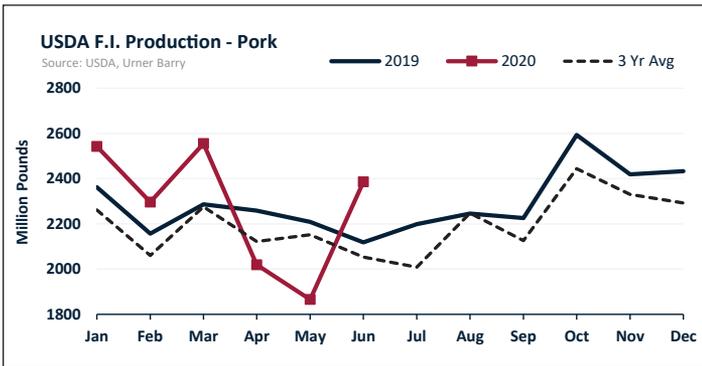
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Pork cold storage at 10-year lows after COVID-19

As packing and processing plants closed due to COVID-19 outbreaks in April and May, pork production was significantly impacted. With consumers still desiring pork, particularly on the retail front with many states entering some degree of lockdown at the time, the industry had to compensate for the lack of fresh pork being produced. Cold storage would be used to a record degree in

an attempt to accomplish this, and the end result, as of June, was pork supplies in freezers sitting at multi-year lows.

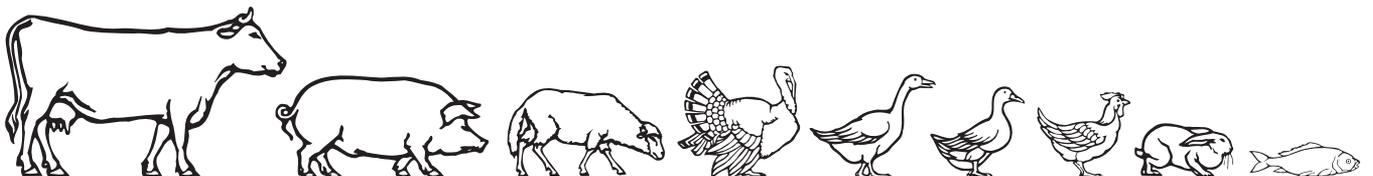
The USDA Federally Inspected pork production for May totaled 1.865 billion pounds. This was almost 16% below the year prior and represented a 27% decline from the March 2020 level of



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2.55 billion pounds. For reference, the three-year average decline in production for this period is 5.4%.

As the industry struggled to process enough pork to satisfy domestic and international demand amid mass plant closures, cold storage was utilized to make up the difference. Between April and June, 147 million pounds of pork was pulled from the freezers. This equates to a 24% decline in storage stocks over three months, with the June figure of 464 million pounds representing a 25% shortfall from June 2019. Again, for reference, the three-year average decline in cold storage stocks for the April to June period is 5.8%, or 35 million pounds. The quantity of pork in freezers for the month of June was at the lowest year-over-year level we have seen since 2010.

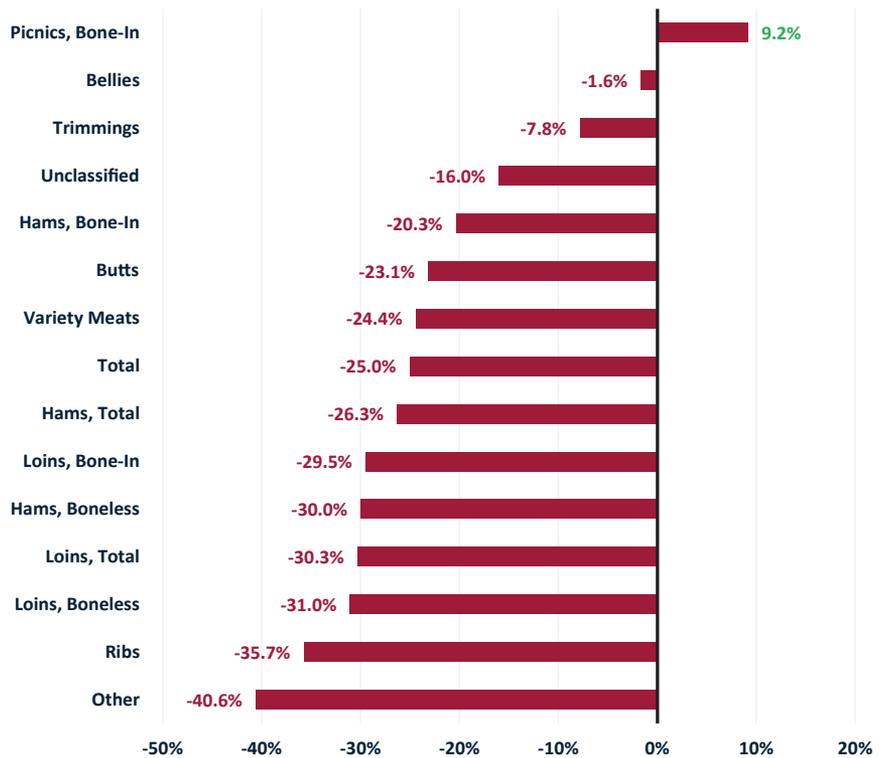
Digging deeper into June's cold storage figures provides a look into which items have been particularly impacted from this massive freezer withdrawal. Ribs lead the whole muscle category in losses, sitting at a nearly 36% deficit from this time last year. Bone-in and boneless loin products are down 30% from a year ago, hams are down 26% and butts are down 23%. The only category that posted an increase from last year were bone-in picnics, up 9% year-over-year.

Since the initial decline in production, the pork industry has made a concerted effort to bring slaughter figures back to levels more inline with what was expected pre-COVID. Unfortunately, while the slaughter numbers have improved, there still exist significant challenges within the plants on the cutting and processing floors, in terms of lack of labor. This shortfall in the workforce extends to the ability to box and freeze product. Without improvements on this front, it may prove difficult to rebuild cold storage stocks to more normal levels. Entering 2021 with freezer supplies as depleted as they are currently would raise concern, and as such, many will continue to track progress on this front as the year wears on. [UB](#)

Article contributed by Russell Barton
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June 2020 vs. June 2019 Pork in Cold Storage

Source: USDA, Urner Barry



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SEIZING THE DGA MOMENT FOR THE INCREDIBLE EGG— A NUTRITION ESSENTIAL IN THE AMERICAN DIET



Article contributed by
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President & CEO
American Egg Board

As the new president and CEO of our U.S. egg industry's marketing organization, the American Egg Board (AEB), it is my honor and responsibility to direct a portfolio of strategic programs that support our egg producers' businesses and generate a significant, quantifiable return on their investment.

As you may know, July 15, 2020 was an important day for the American diet and for eggs: The Dietary Guidelines for Americans Advisory Committee in its scientific report, for the first time in history, issued recommendations for birth to 24 months old.

And in that guidance, the committee specifically recommended eggs as an important first food for infants and toddlers, as well as for pregnant and lactating women. The committee also encouraged eggs for pre-teens and adolescents.

These recommendations are extremely significant to our egg industry. They introduce an entirely new opportunity

for us to help families and our youngest consumers lay a foundation for a healthy diet and life, right from the start, cultivating a new generation of egg lovers.

The committee also classified a nutrient plentiful in eggs—choline—as being under-consumed by most Americans. Choline is critical for fetal brain development, and it supports brain health at all life stages—for kids and older Americans, in particular. Importantly, 92% of pregnant women fail to meet the daily Adequate Intake (AI) recommendations for choline. The egg is one of the most concentrated food sources of choline in the American diet.

DRIVING THE NUTRITION SCIENCE THAT BENEFITS LIVES

These extraordinary recommendations from our nation's top nutrition experts run parallel to years of continuous scientific leadership and investment in objective, groundbreaking nutrition research from the Egg Nutrition Center (ENC), the AEB's science and education division.

A respected authority in the nutrition science field, the ENC has driven exploration of choline and other key areas of study by funding important, independently conducted research at top universities that has not only informed and evolved the thinking around the nutritional impact of eggs, but has inspired and prompted investment in further research by other leading institutions. Collectively, this body of evidence constitutes the scientific basis upon which the 2021 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee made its recommendations.

The ENC also communicates and disseminates the latest scientific information within the field, ultimately

reaching the consumer through credentialed health professionals. Notably, more than 500 credentialed health professionals in ENC's "Egg Enthusiast" community have done an outstanding job of sharing the latest nutritional science in health media and in their own social media to highly targeted audiences of nutrition-focused consumers.

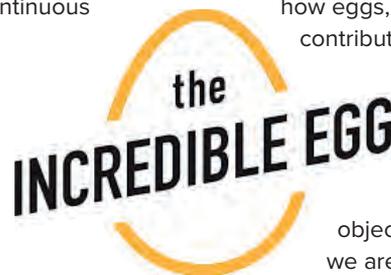
CONNECTING WITH CONSUMERS TO MAKE THE SCIENCE RELEVANT

Our work is only just beginning. There is much to be done between now and the release of the final DGAs by the USDA and HHS expected in late December. It is your AEB's job now to be a partner to the USDA and HHS by spreading the word about these recommendations and supporting their efforts to educate and engage the public about the Dietary Guidelines and

how eggs, as a nutrient-dense food, contribute to health and wellbeing at every age and life stage in a variety of ways.

The AEB is accomplishing this objective on two fronts. First, we are connecting the dots for consumers through sustained media outreach and engaging marketing. To date, the AEB's media outreach efforts—including more than 3,766 broadcast TV and radio segments—have generated a staggering 712 million media impressions. And we have secured additional segments with major national broadcast outlets and placements in top-tier lifestyle print for the weeks ahead.

Consumers will feel even better about their carton of eggs or breakfast sandwich as a result of these recommendations. We're providing them the permission to do more of what they've already been doing—eating and enjoying eggs.

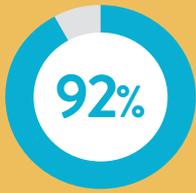


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CHOLINE: A NUTRIENT CRITICAL FOR BRAIN HEALTH



of pregnant women **fail to meet intake recommendations** for choline.



Only **26%** of expecting mothers are even **familiar with choline**.



And **39%** of those who have heard of choline **don't know that it is essential for infant brain development**.

EGGS ARE AN IMPORTANT BUILDING BLOCK FOR MOMS AND BABIES



EGGS ARE NUTRIENT RICH. They are a good or excellent source of eight essential nutrients, as well as carotenoids lutein and zeaxanthin (252 mcg).

Excellent source of:

- vitamin B12
- biotin (B7)
- iodine
- selenium
- choline

Good source of:

- high-quality protein
- riboflavin (B2)
- pantothenic acid (B5)

all for only **70 CALORIES**



Second, we continue to be a credible partner in the field of nutrition science by actively participating in the process and educating and informing professionals in the field. On August 11, Dr. Mickey Rubin, executive director of the AEB's Egg Nutrition Center, provided oral comments to the USDA and HHS in a public hearing in support of the report's conclusions, which represent a tremendous step forward in helping Americans build healthy diets. We will continue to participate in the public comment period.

With science soundly on our side and a robust strategy and tools to engage the public, we are confident that America's egg farmers can expect more good news to come.

A STRATEGY FOR LONG-TERM GROWTH AND PROSPERITY

If we've learned anything in the past few months, it's that no one can predict our future. But we can prepare for it. We can plan for the unknowable. We can have a strategy that enables us to create and seize the opportunity in any challenge we may face down the road.

I like to call this "futureproofing." To future-proof America's egg industry, we must be nimble, adapt to changing circumstances, rapidly implement technology, and look forward, not back. We must invest in new opportunities to always meet consumers where they are.

According to the USDA, more than 37 million Americans were already considered food insecure before the pandemic. With tens of millions joining the ranks of the unemployed, eggs remain one of the most affordable high-quality proteins available to people. It will be our ongoing task to provide the solutions our consumers need in their daily lives.

The Incredible Egg's stellar nutritional profile is one of many assets we aim to deploy as part of a comprehensive five-year strategic plan currently being developed in collaboration with the AEB's Executive Committee and my leadership team, and with extensive input from our producers and allied industry.

Together, we will future-proof our egg industry, ensuring the long-term security and prosperity of America's egg farmers and The Incredible Egg's position as an essential, indispensable part of people's lives. UB

Infographics provided by American Egg Board



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A pandemic can't stop this shrimp farm...

HOMEGROWN SHRIMP LOOKS TO THE FUTURE

Shrimp. Shrimp. Shrimp. We can't get enough of it. It's the highest consumed species of seafood in the U.S., with Americans eating 4.6 pounds per capita in 2018. People love it! And Charoen Pokphand Foods (CPF) is envisioning a future where their shrimp farms could be within a 12-hour delivery radius of every shrimp-hungry American.

In September 2019, Homegrown Shrimp USA, a subsidiary of Thailand's CPF, announced that they would be building a land-based shrimp farm in Florida. But Homegrown Shrimp isn't your average land-based shrimp farm; it's being referred to as an "aquaculture 5.0" shrimp farm. The farm can be cultured anywhere, anytime of the year, and has zero discharged waste. Everything is recycled, with waste dewatered and compacted into little dry material that could be used in gardening or aquaculture.

Things have moved fast since the September announcement. Homegrown Shrimp received their first CPF broodstock in March. And by the end of April—in the middle of a pandemic—their first postlarvae (PL) shipments went out.

"It was not our plan," Robins McIntosh, Executive Vice President of CPF, told *Uner Barry's Reporter* of getting out their first PL shipment during the COVID-19 crisis. "Things are behind. Indiantown in Florida is actually a hot zone, so we're right in the middle of it. It makes getting things difficult but we have gotten more than I thought we would get done because we were able to get in the first broodstock before the ban on flights."

The pandemic certainly threw some curveballs at Homegrown Shrimp, but McIntosh admits that there were also some "miscalculations" that put them a little behind.

"We've had to alter a few things as we go because when we started this venture I miscalculated south Florida. I thought it was warmer than it was, but it's actually quite cold. It didn't allow for a 12 month production."

Fortunately the company was able to adapt with the construction of a new building that provides a constant climate no matter what time of the year. And because of this unplanned construction, Homegrown Shrimp's operations have truly become "anywhere, anytime."

"A greenhouse would have limited us to the Sun Belt," explained McIntosh of the new covered facility. "We can take this anywhere really in the world."

Homegrown Shrimp's land-based shrimp farm is located at a former citrus grove in Indiantown, Florida. Photos courtesy of Homegrown Shrimp.



And while the possibilities are endless, right now the focus is on the U.S.—especially with the political pressure tied to imports.

In 2019 the U.S. imported 700,065 metric tons of shrimp. According to McIntosh, there is no way to hit a commodity type price that's produced in Asia or South America, but he's hopeful that Homegrown can be profitable by getting more into a direct market with a fresh product. While U.S. farms are putting product on the market at about \$30 or \$40 a kilogram, Homegrown hopes to be in the market at \$15 or \$20.

For McIntosh, the biggest problem that U.S. shrimp farms have right now is that it's seasonal and too small to have a constant supply.

"You advertise in the local paper and they come to your farm on the weekend and then you give them the shrimp because it's harvested that weekend. That's the last harvest for the next four months. We hope to have a sized project that we can harvest at least once a week or twice a week. And eventually when it gets built out we'll be harvesting every day. So there will be a steady supply of these fresh shrimp every day of the year, which again, hopefully allows us to fit into a restaurant, or fit into a vendor that needs constant supply and not something that just pops up now and then."

It almost sounds too good to be true. And McIntosh laughs that it might be. But if it works, the plan is to go big.

"The idea is we have numerous farms around the country, hopefully within a 12-hour radius of every American alive if necessary... We're thinking big." [UB](#)

Article contributed by **Amanda Buckle** | abuckle@urnerbarry.com



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A walk down memory lane ahead of Urner Barry's first epic online event

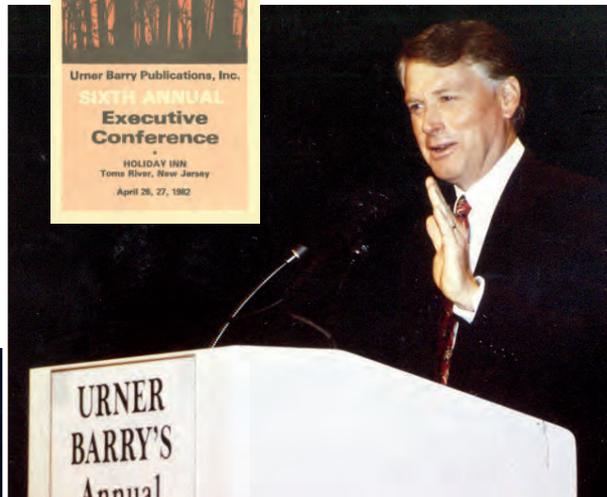


Senior Editor of *Urner Barry's Reporter*, Russell W. Whitman (R) is shown here in 2008 with Republican presidential candidate Mike Huckabee (L).

For over 40 years, Urner Barry's Executive Conference is where the protein industry's most influential members come to connect, learn and advance their professional development. The event attracts over 400 attendees each year at some of the most beautiful Las Vegas resorts, and features a wide variety of speakers, including many well-known authors, sports figures, agricultural and marketing specialists, television commentators and national political figures. The Executive Conference podium has been delighted to host Senator Jesse Helms, Senator Patrick Leahy, Secretary of State Alexander Haig, Vice President Dan Quayle, Senator Bill Bradley and Political strategists Mary Matalin and James Carville. The sesquicentennial event even featured 2008 Republican presidential candidate Mike Huckabee.

Given the great success of the Executive Conference over the years, Urner Barry decided to craft another event tailored more specifically to the

red meat and poultry markets. The first ever Global Protein Summit took place in Chicago in October 2019 and featured presentations that covered technical information for both the global and U.S. domestic red meat and poultry industries. Through headline talks and protein-specific breakouts, delegates were able to understand more about the most pressing issues facing these markets today, as well as how to best prepare for potential issues of the future. The sold-out event had attendees packed wall-to-wall and eager to attend the 2020 show.



Vice President Dan Quayle took to the podium in 1996 as the Executive Conference keynote speaker.

However, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the UB events team had some difficult decisions to make. Given travel restrictions, venue closures, and most importantly, the safety of our attendees, the team decided instead of running both events in-person, to combine these shows and take them virtual, creating one epic online experience dubbed "**Urner Barry's Executive Conference and Global Protein Summit.**"



During Urner Barry's celebratory 140th year, Senator Bill Bradley addressed the 1998 Executive Conference attendees.



At Caesars Palace Las Vegas in 1992, Urner Barry's then President Paul B. Brown (L) shared a laugh with keynote speaker former Secretary of State Alexander Haig (R).

This exciting new online event will take place from October 6-9, and attendees will have the ability to attend live sessions on each day, as well as access a library of on-demand content throughout the week. Our keynote speakers, which include the likes of Scott Rasmussen, Editor-at-Large for Ballotpedia, author, co-founder of ESPN and publisher of Scottrasmussen.com,

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EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE
and GLOBAL PROTEIN SUMMIT

and John Manzella, founder of The Manzella Report, will be discussing some of the most topical issues of 2020, including COVID-19's impact on trade relations and trends, the political landscape and the changing impact of globalization. Our on-demand content library will feature insights from industry leaders and allow attendees to have access to an exceptional lineup of experts covering everything from consumer trends, global trade and sector challenges. We will also be featuring insight and analysis from Urner Barry's own market reporters to understand pricing trends throughout the pandemic. Attendees will access all of these sessions through a customized virtual platform, which will streamline navigation, provide networking and meeting tools, and showcase our valued partners and sponsors.



“...attendees will have the ability to attend live sessions on each day, as well as access a library of on-demand content throughout the week.”

Leveraging our market perspective and network, Urner Barry's Executive Conference and Global Protein Summit will be the must-attend online event of 2020. Registration to the show is still open and group discounts are available. For more information and to book your ticket, please visit www.urnerbarry.com/events. We look forward to hosting these two events on site again in 2021! [UB](#)

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