

EAA Meeting Reflects Philosophy

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The format for the annual meeting of Egg Association of America (EAA) was roundtable discussion, presentation on a major issue, and required business.

"That reflects our overall policy of emphasizing business over politics," said Mac McLaurin, EAA president. "We're interested in getting issues on the table, getting related input from as wide a scope as feasible, and then finding the most effective and efficient solutions."

During the roundtable discussions, participants identified the most important issues facing their companies and the whole egg industry. Topping the list were some perennial favorites such as food safety, environment quality, animal welfare, egg market, burdensome government regulations, and egg consumption.

Compared to past meetings, more emphasis this time was placed on disposal of spent fowl, a perception of decreasing USDA influence (especially related to food safety), and the negative psychology associated with several market reporting mechanisms.

Some participants took the time to suggest ways to meet some of these challenges, such as acting rather than reacting, adding value to their product, and taking advantage of opportunities in egg products.

The guest speaker, Dr. Joy Mench, an associate professor and researcher from the University of Maryland, spoke on the changing public attitudes toward animal welfare. She distinguished protests by extremists such as PETA from growing public concern about how agricultural animals are treated. She pointed out that chief public concerns today are "beak trimming, forced molt, caging (both stock and design), transport and slaughter."

Mench drew an interesting parallel with evolving attitudes about use of laboratory animals and changes in the law related to treatment of animals. She applauded EAA's efforts to be more proactive in this area.

Outgoing chairman Andy Wadsworth said, "... we need to spend our time concentrating on what your needs are going to be in the coming years Egg Association members have been on the leading edge in our industry because we aren't bound by our old paradigms ('we've always done it this way,' mentality). We have to look at new ways of doing business, develop new attitudes about who we are in business for (the customer), and promote our-

selves, as well as our products. The Certified Egg Producer program is a great start I'm as excited as ever to be a member of EAA, to be a part of a group of my peers that loves the egg business (most of the time), wants to be successful, and supports the breakthrough concepts that come

out of our association for the good of the industry."

Incoming chairman, Al Wenger, summarized his intentions, "We need to operate our association like a business," and we do that in three ways:

- Fast-recognize changing threats and opportunities and act

constructively.

- Focus-on the future and on excellence.

- Flexible-bring solutions to fruition without high costs.

EAA recognized retiring Dr. John Mason for his professional-ism in directing the salmonella Enteritidis Control Program.

"Professional" is defined as "one who sacrifices his own interests for those of his profession," according to Andy Wadsworth.

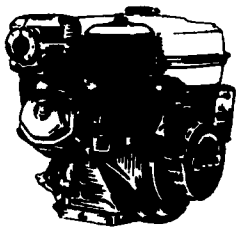
The group then adjourned to attend the conference and trade show. Copies of the Certified Egg Producer™ program were made available in the EAA booth.

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