

Nath Morris, a Georgia Native, has 31 years of experience in the Poultry Industry. Currently Vice President of Expo for the US Poultry & Egg Association, Nath manages the annual International Production & Processing Expo (IPPE) held annually in Atlanta, Georgia. Nath previously served as Sales Director for Heritage Breeders, a Division of Perdue Farms; Yield Specialist and Territory Manager for Aviagen/Arbor Acres and held various processing positions with Seaboard Farms of Athens. Nath is a 1986 graduate of The University of Georgia with BS in Poultry Science. He has also served 16 years on the Hall County Board of Education and is a past president of the Georgia School Board Association. Nath and his wife, Joy, live in Gainesville, Georgia, USA.

Why did you choose the pig/poultry industry to work in when you started out your career?

As a third generation in the business, I guess I was destined to be part of the poultry industry. My grandfather, Dank Morris, was a professor in the poultry science department at UGA and one of the first veterinarians in the Georgia Poultry Lab Network. My father, Dale, held executive positions at Mar-Jac Poultry and a market-leading equipment distributor in the 1970s and 1980s. His first job after also graduating from UGA was with the Southeastern Poultry & Egg Association, which later became US Poultry & Egg Association, under Executive Secretary Bob Martin, and he managed what was then called the Southeastern Poultry Conference. Dad is still involved in the industry serving on the board of Poss Ltd and continues to work the exhibit for Poss at IPPE.

I spent summers and school breaks as a teenager in and around the poultry business packing eggs, loading feed trucks, washing incubators, selecting breeder males and working in the deboning department at Mar-Jac. I remember my dad telling me before making my decision to go into poultry: "Nath, everybody has to eat and people are eating more chicken now than ever before."

How important is the feed industry to the successes the US pig and poultry industries have achieved in supplying high quality and safe food to a national population?

It is amazing the improved efficiencies that both the pig and poultry industry have seen over the past quarter century. Efficient feed ingredients and formulations, improved genetics through natural selection, disease resistance and better overall animal husbandry has enabled the industries to supply safe, healthy protein sources not only to the US population, but to the world.

Improved crop yields and sustainability must keep pace with the food supply needs of the increasing world population. The farmer, whether it's crops, poultry, swine or cattle, is still the backbone of the protein supply business and we must work hand in hand to continue to meet those needs.

Do you have a philosophy on the 'protein production' sectors in terms of meeting the nutritional qualities of consumers? If so, how has that been reflected in production terms and what is the likely future direction the industry will take?

Estimations show the world population growing by a third, or 2.3 billion people, by 2050. As per capita income also increases, especially in developing countries, the demand for higher protein food products will also rise. We must continue to ask the question, "Why are we turning a food and feed source into fuel?" and adapt new technology for meeting bioenergy demands while we also consider more sustainable methods for providing food to the world.

How important are expos, such as IPPE in the USA in terms of encouraging the industries they serve to achieve more?

IPPE plays an important role in the industries we serve. Revenue from the IPPE goes back into our industries in the form of research, education and workforce recruitment and development through the support of agriculture related youth programs and universities.

The growth of the IPPE generates even more opportunities for groundbreaking research to take place to help provide a safe food product. As far as the industry achieving more, IPPE offers many educational opportunities where industry leaders, producers, suppliers and academia come together to share new ideas, new technology and new products to improve efficiencies in labor and yields, improvements in food safety and sustainability.

Education and collaboration takes place in exhibitor's booths, in the more than 80 hours of educational sessions, in our TECHTalks sessions and even in networking activities during the IPPE. Discussions about issues facing all industries are a key focus on our educational sessions. Of particular interest will be a session on regulatory updates for the feed industry that includes DOL, DOT, EPA, FDA and OSHA.

What other sectors now and in the future are IPPE covering and how international will it become?

2017 is the eleventh year of USPOULTRY's partnership with the American Feed Industry Association (AFIA) and the fifth with the North American Meat Institute (NAMI) to integrate its shows into one IPPE. The partnership makes more sense than ever with the consolidation of companies into multi-species protein/food producers and processors. Many of these companies now have multi-national divisions. Of our 30,000 attendees, 25 percent are now international with over one-third of the international visitors coming from Latin America, South America and Mexico.

I expect to see this trend continue as we make that region more of a focus in dedicated educational sessions like the managing for efficiency seminar presented in Spanish only in 2017. We have also seen a tremendous increase in the number of South American exhibitors, especially from Brazil where many of these companies will exhibit together in a 'Brazilian Pavilion'.

What are your plans to develop the IPPE over the coming years particularly for feed millers?

IPPE has seen tremendous growth over the last several years, even being in a sold out position in 2017 as we had to turn away booth requests. IPPE will have over 530,000 square feet of exhibit space with over 1250 exhibitors. We have a strong team with years of industry and expo experience. We are always looking for ways to improve the show experience for exhibitors and attendees.

We work with exhibitors and industry to help attract a broad range of customers to attend the event. We host many industry sponsored committee and association meetings during the week of IPPE and welcome all segments to plan to hold their meeting while in Atlanta. We think the feed industry would be pleased with the growth in the number exhibitors and feed related products and services they add to IPPE.