

THE IFDA COMMUNITY

meet > engage > build > grow

4

TRUE STORIES



Helping Our Members Succeed

CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITIES:

We don't want to define your
experience with IFDA.

We do want you to consider how
IFDA can help your business.

Here are four stories about people
in the IFDA Community.

“On the inbound side, it’s a way for our company to understand what we are up against in various areas of our business, and in how we are dealing with new issues and new regulations.”

Shamrock Foods Company is the umbrella for Shamrock Farms, one of the largest dairies in the Southwest, and Shamrock Foods, one of the top 10 largest foodservice distribution companies in the United States. Headquartered in Phoenix, Shamrock serves customers in ten states from seven distribution centers.

Mark Engdahl joined the company in 2003 and is the vice president of foodservice operations. He holds a BS in Agriculture, Forestry, and Agricultural Economics and says he had intended to pursue that field, but following college he began working in retail grocery distribution, then 14 years later moved into foodservice.

Engdahl has been engaged with IFDA for more than a decade as a regular at the Distribution Solutions Conference, and serves on the IFDA Operations Leadership Committee. For the past five years he has also served on the Planning Council for the IFDA Distribution Solutions Conference, a group that identifies topics and puts together conference workshops.

Asked what he gets on a personal level from this work, Engdahl says: “The biggest things I take away are the relationships I’ve built over the years. They are just invaluable. I’ve gained not only work relationships, but personal friendships out of IFDA. If I get stuck on something, or I just want to get an opinion on something, I have people I can call and they can do the same with me. To me it’s the networking, it’s the relationships, it’s having these people as resources in your toolbox.”

Along with Engdahl, Shamrock Foods has other thought leaders engaged in IFDA Leadership Committees for food safety, human resources, government relations, information technology, and safety and risk. Engdahl says the benefit to Shamrock of investing people in this work is both inbound and outbound.

“It’s providing input so IFDA can take that to Capitol Hill for us, which is really important because we need to have a voice. It’s also making sure we have input on major regulations like various rules within the Food Safety Modernization Act. As a company, our voice is stronger when

it can be used collectively with the industry.” That’s the outbound side, says Engdahl.

“On the inbound side, it’s a way for our company to understand what we are up against in various areas of our business, and in how we are dealing with new issues and new regulations,” says Engdahl.

In 2015, the IFDA Distribution Solutions Conference was held in Phoenix, and Engdahl helped coordinate a tour of Shamrock’s Phoenix distribution center. The 850,000 square-foot facility is 110 feet high and largely automated.

“With the conference being held in Phoenix, we were very pleased to be able to open our doors to the industry to come in and take a look. Obviously, we are very much into technology and working smarter, not harder for our people,” said Engdahl. “As things get more regulated and tighter, everyone is working on how to cut costs and do things better. We tend to embrace technology as one vehicle that can do that and we were happy to share.”



“What I learned first and enjoy the most about working with this group is that no one cares where you work. We are just interested in how to be in compliance and keep our products safe for our customers.”

Ben E. Keith Foods is a broadline foodservice distributor headquartered in Dallas/Fort Worth and serves eleven states with 8 distribution centers throughout the southwest. The parent company, Ben E. Keith Co., also operates a beverage division that includes 14 DCs.

Shirley Abderrazzaq joined Ben E. Keith Foods as a Healthcare Specialist nearly 20 years ago. She then moved into the National Accounts Department, and in the fall of 2011 became the director of food safety. Before joining Ben E. Keith Foods, she was director of nutrition and food services at All Saints Health System.

Abderrazzaq has served as an industry volunteer on the IFDA Food Safety Leadership Committee since January of 2011 and over the past five years, has worked with other committee members to help shape the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA).

“Serving on the committee helps me hear what other companies are doing in the area of food safety, and helps me understand the law and what I need to do to protect our customers and Ben E. Keith on food safety issues,” says Abderrazzaq. “Reading one of the FSMA rules is not an easy task. Having it presented for discussion at one of our meetings with IFDA’s food safety legal counsel Miriam Guggenheim and IFDA’s Jon Eisen really gets to the roots of the Rule we are discussing. After leaving a meeting I have a good understanding of what needs to be accomplished and can develop a plan for my company.” That, she says, provides significant ROI for Ben E. Keith Foods.

Abderrazzaq said her first meeting with the committee was an interesting experience. “When I attended my first meeting it was very strange to see all of these competitors sitting and talking together since I started with Ben E.

Keith on the sales side. What I learned first and enjoy the most about working with this group is that no one cares where you work. We are just interested in how to be in compliance and keep our products safe for our customers.”

Participation in the committee is also both personally and professionally rewarding in many ways, says Abderrazzaq. During the meetings the group discusses challenges and shares ideas, and she believes she would not be as knowledgeable about the new FSMA Rules without her participation on the committee. “I have built some good friendships and feel comfortable contacting them if I have a question on something pertaining to food safety,” says Abderrazzaq. “They are almost like an extension of your own food safety department.”



“The IFDA Community has been critical not only in my personal and professional growth, but to that of many of us at Martin Bros. Distributing. Engagement with IFDA is definitely a contributing factor to our overall success.”

Martin Bros. Distributing Co. is a broadline distributor that operates a single distribution center from their headquarters in Cedar Falls, IA. The company's distribution area includes Iowa and seven states surrounding it.

Diane Chandler is executive vice president of Martin Bros. As part of the company's senior leadership team, she participates in the annual IFDA Partners Executive Forum, which includes three days of top-to-top meetings between distributors and foodservice manufacturers to identify joint opportunities for growth.

“IFDA Partners has been a benefit to Martin Bros. in many ways. It has given us increased visibility in the industry and the forum provides a unique opportunity to share our culture and differentiate go to market strategies in a collaborative setting,” says Chandler. “It has also given us the platform to discuss industry issues face to face with trading partners, understand multiple perspectives, and

to help shape potential solutions to keep our mutual businesses moving forward.”

In addition to building stronger relationships with trading partners, Chandler says Martin Bros. capitalizes on IFDA networking opportunities to engage leaders in both the distributor and manufacturer communities. “That has allowed us to further our relationships, develop and strengthen partnerships, and collaborate for future success,” says Chandler.

Prior to her current role, Chandler was director of marketing and merchandising at the company. Her participation with IFDA stretches back to 1998. Chandler believes that personal and professional growth occur most when you have the opportunity to engage in activities outside of day-to-day business and is thankful for the culture at Martin Bros. that embraces outside engagement.

“I have been extremely fortunate that Martin Bros. understands the benefit of exposing and involving our team in the IFDA community,” said Chandler. “IFDA has been instrumental in providing opportunities for our personal and professional growth and continues to innovate by introducing new programs like the Executive Development Program and new committees like Women's Foodservice Leadership group.” Chandler said her company encourages their team to participate, allowing key employees to devote time and resources for the benefit of the greater industry.

“Regardless of what we give in time and resources as very active participants, all of us at Martin Bros. understand we get even more in return,” said Chandler. “The IFDA Community has been critical not only in my personal and professional growth, but to that of many of us at Martin Bros. Distributing. Engagement with IFDA is definitely a contributing factor to our overall success.”



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Honor Foods of Philadelphia, PA, is a redistributor in the mid-Atlantic region that serves customers stretching from Virginia through Maine and westward through Ohio.

Joe Adams is the company’s vice president of sales and purchasing, and oversees the companies sales group. He has more than 20 years in the food business including previous management positions at McCain Foods and Campbells Soup Company.

In 2015, Adams participated in the first IFDA Executive Development Program conducted with the University of Virginia’s Darden School of Business. The program has a number of facets that take place over seven months, but the core of the curriculum happens during two sessions at the Darden campus where case studies are used to drive discussions around problem-solving, ethics, leadership, finance, and much more. The time at Darden includes teamwork with other participants in the program and

discussions led by Darden professors. Adams said the experience has made a difference for him professionally on many levels.

“The opportunity to work with a group of high level executives from many different facets of the distribution business has helped me the most,” said Adams. “In our sessions, I knew how I problem solved and worked with others. What I learned during my time at Darden was how a financial person, or an operational manager problem solved. This has allowed me to have a new perspective in my day-to-day tasks. I now have a much deeper understanding and respect of how other senior managers in different areas of responsibility problem solve and interact with others,” said Adams.

He also came away with ideas and lessons that he applies in his strategic thought process.

“An example is that I need to think outside of the box and not just look at things in the now, but instead, pull the

layers back and look at how an issue came about — look at the possible outcomes based on the facts that I know.” From there, Adams says he can make improved decisions.

On a personal level, Adams made many bonds in the program. “There is nothing I enjoy more than walking through an industry conference or an IFDA event and seeing one of my fellow Darden graduates,” said Adams. “Even though I only spent a few days with these folks, there is a genuine camaraderie that we have all come to cherish. If we see each other, we are all sure to stop and catch up on how each other has been doing and share a memory from our class time together. I believe we all take great pride in being the first to attend this excellent program.”



The IFDA Community is comprised of foodservice distribution companies of all sizes including broadline, systems, convenience, and specialty distributors.

IFDA DISTRIBUTOR MEMBERS BY FOODSERVICE SALES



If your company is not an IFDA Member, consider how the IFDA community can benefit your business. Contact Heidi Weiss at (703) 532-9400 for membership information.

Helping Our Members Succeed



INTERNATIONAL FOODSERVICE DISTRIBUTORS ASSOCIATION

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