



FMI
20 YEARS OF POWER OF MEAT
AMC
ANNUAL MEAT CONFERENCE®

**FIRST TIME ATTENDEES
GUIDEBOOK**





WELCOME AND AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ANNUAL MEAT CONFERENCE

WELCOME TO YOUR FIRST ANNUAL MEAT CONFERENCE!

The Annual Meat Conference (AMC) is one of the most important and highly anticipated events in the retail meat industry. It brings together professionals from every facet of the sector. Established in 1977, the AMC serves as a platform for industry leaders to connect, share knowledge, and discuss the latest developments in retail meat marketing, consumer insights and other timely topics impacting the industry.

Hosted by FMI and the Meat Institute, AMC is held annually and attracts a diverse range of attendees, including retailers, processors, suppliers, and marketing professionals. The conference has become a cornerstone of the meat industry, shaping key trends, influencing marketing decisions and driving innovation. Over the years, the conference has become synonymous with thought leadership, with experts presenting topics ranging from sustainability and animal welfare to emerging technologies and market trends. Through its cutting-edge educational sessions, networking opportunities and belt-busting exhibition hall, the AMC fosters collaboration and moves the retail meat industry forward.

Congratulations on the opportunity to attend your first conference. You will find that the AMC is an invaluable opportunity to stay ahead of the curve and be part of the ongoing conversation shaping the future of the retail meat industry.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT AMC

The mission of the Annual Meat Conference is to provide a gathering point where professionals from all corners of the retail meat industry can connect, collaborate, and advance their knowledge. The conference is designed with several key objectives in mind:

1 NETWORKING

AMC brings together a diverse group of industry stakeholders and fosters invaluable networking opportunities, allowing attendees to forge new business relationships, strengthen existing partnerships, and exchange insights with peers and thought leaders. Find more networking tips for the conference later in this guide.

2 LEARNING

With a focus on professional development for industry veterans and those who are new to meat, AMC offers a wide range of educational sessions led by experts in the field. These sessions cover the latest trends, regulatory updates, consumer behavior insights and emerging technologies. Attendees will access critical knowledge that can directly impact their business strategies and operations. You will want to carefully consider which breakout sessions to attend because sessions are not recorded, though materials like handouts and PowerPoints may be available (pending permission) after the conference for attendees.

3 INDUSTRY ADVANCEMENTS

The AMC is a key forum for showcasing the latest advancements in the meat industry. From consumer insights (more on the Power of Meat below) to sustainability initiatives to technological innovations, AMC provides the opportunity for attendees to learn about how the industry is evolving. You will walk away with a deeper understanding of how to navigate and thrive in an ever-changing marketplace.

4 PRODUCT INNOVATION

As a hub for product development, AMC highlights the latest innovations in meat production, processing, and packaging. The AMC Exhibit Hall is unlike anything you have seen before! Exhibitors will highlight the newest products and technologies that are reshaping the industry, offering attendees a first-hand look at the future of meat products and services. (Pro tips on how to navigate your first time in the Exhibit Hall below!)

At its core, the AMC empowers participants with the tools, connections, and knowledge necessary to drive success in the meat industry. Whether you are looking to stay competitive, innovate, or simply learn, the AMC is the go-to event for shaping the future of the sector.

THIS YEAR'S PROGRAM

The **2025 Annual Meat Conference** is set to feature an impressive lineup of speakers, industry experts and thought leaders who will share their insights on the most pressing issues and exciting innovations within the retail meat sector. This year's conference promises to deliver a diverse range of presentations, workshops, and discussions aimed at empowering attendees with knowledge and strategies to excel in the ever-evolving marketplace. You can find the entire program on the website here: <https://meatconference.com/program>. This information will also be in the conference app.

OPENING KEYNOTE SPEAKER: KELLY McDONALD

In this forward-looking session, Kelly McDonald will help attendees explore the intersection of **macro trends** and the meat retail industry. We will delve into the transformations in technology, culture and consumer behaviors reshaping the industry and discuss practical strategies for retailers and brands to maintain long-term relevance, embrace change and foster innovation.

Kelly is considered one of the nation's top experts in diversity, leadership, marketing and sales to people "not like you," consumer trends, and leveraging the customer experience. Kelly is a bestselling author and renowned professional speaker. She is also the founder of McDonald Marketing, which has **twice been named one of the "Top Ad Agencies in the U.S." by Advertising Age** magazine and ranked as one of the fastest-

growing independently owned companies in the U.S. by Inc. Magazine.

She has been featured on CNBC, Forbes Magazine, BusinessWeek, Fast Company, on CNNMoney.com and SiriusXM Radio. Her client experience includes iconic brands such as Toyota, State Farm, Nike, Harley-Davidson, Miller-Coors and Sherwin-Williams, Great Clips and NASA.

Check out her books "[How to Market to People Not Like You](#)" (Wiley Publisher) and "[Crafting the Customer Experience for People Not Like You](#)" (Wiley Publisher) for insights on how to market today's consumer.

Note: Kelly will also be moderating the discussion at the Networking Luncheon. (More info below.)

THE POWER OF MEAT: CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF INSIGHTS

If there is one thing in addition to the **Exhibition Hall** that keeps attendees coming back year after year, it is the *Power of Meat*. This annual publication, sponsored by CRYOVAC® Brand Food Packaging and prepared by Anne-Marie Roerink of 210 Analytics, has become a cornerstone resource for the retail meat industry. Since its inception, this comprehensive report has provided an

in-depth analysis of key trends, consumer behavior, and market dynamics within the retail meat sector. It tracks and evaluates consumer attitudes toward meat, identifies purchasing patterns and explores evolving preferences, making it an essential tool for companies looking to stay informed about the ever-changing meat landscape.

In 2025, the *Power of Meat* report marks its 20th anniversary, celebrating two decades of valuable insights that have helped shape strategic decisions across the meat industry. Over the years, the report has evolved, adapting to shifts in the market, technological advancements and changing consumer concerns. Its findings have been instrumental in helping stakeholders up and down the retail meat supply chain understand the pulse of the consumer and navigate industry challenges.

This highly anticipated session happens immediately after the opening keynote so that attendees will have the information to reflect upon in the coming days. In addition to Anne-Marie's presentation of key findings, an "After Party" immediately following offered as one of the breakout sessions. This year, Anne-Marie will be joined by Tristen Kendall-Barros, VP of Marketing, Roche Brothers, and Jason Resner, President, DNR Sales & Marketing Strategy Advisors, for an insightful Q&A session to be moderated by Kiersten Hafer, VP of Data and Insights at the National Pork Board.

CLOSING KEYNOTE SPEAKER: RON ELVING

After a tumultuous 2024 election season and a year marked by continued pressures from inflation and ever-increasing regulations, what is ahead for the industry under a new presidential administration and changes in Congress? In this session, the always level-headed, straight-talking Ron Elving, Senior Washington Editor for National Public Radio will provide insights into how the national political environment could impact the meat industry in the months ahead. Ron is a popular speaker and is back by popular demand this year to close the conference.

In addition to his role at NPR News, where he is frequently heard as a news analyst and writes regularly for NPR.org, Ron is also a professorial lecturer and Executive in Residence at the School of Public Affairs at American University, where he has also taught in the School of Communication. In 2016, he was honored with the University Faculty Award for Outstanding Teaching in an Adjunct Appointment. He has also taught at George Mason and Georgetown.

He was previously the political editor for USA Today and for Congressional Quarterly. He has been published by the Brookings Institution and the American Political Science Association. He has contributed chapters on Obama and the media and on the media role in Congress to the academic studies *Obama in Office* 2011, and *Rivals for Power, 2013*. Ron's earlier book, *Conflict and Compromise: How Congress Makes the Law*, was published by Simon & Schuster and is also a Touchstone paperback.

During his tenure as manager of NPR's Washington desk from 1999 to 2014, the desk's reporters were awarded every major recognition available in radio journalism, including the Dirksen Award for Congressional Reporting and the Edward R. Murrow Award from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. In 2008, the American Political Science Association awarded NPR the Carey McWilliams Award "in recognition of a major contribution to the understanding of political science."

Don't make the rookie mistake of leaving before the end of the conference- this is a must-see session!



OTHER NOTABLE SESSIONS

2025 MARKET OUTLOOK FOR MEAT AND POULTRY

Another can't-miss session, this one is first thing Tuesday morning, so don't get too crazy at the opening night reception!

Economic experts will share updates and insights in plain language so that even those new to the industry can understand. From a macro demand standpoint provided by Brian Earnest, Lead Protein Industry Analyst, CoBank to supply information on poultry (Christine McCracken, Executive Director, Protein Analyst, Rabobank), pork (Lee Schulz, Chief Economist, Kerns and Associates, LLC) and beef (Randy Blach, Chief Executive Officer, CattleFax), you will get information you need to go back and be more effective in your daily work. You may even take away some tips for staying up to date with economic information daily, weekly or monthly basis.

Like the Power of Meat, this session also has a deep dive immediately following for anyone who has questions for the speakers.

BEHIND THE MEAT COUNTER: PORK CARCASS FABRICATION

Back by popular demand after last year's beef fabrication- join us for an in-depth demonstration on pork carcass fabrication. While originally designed for those new to meat, this interactive breakout session will have something for everyone- even those who have held the knife themselves- as we delve into not only how to fabricate the pork carcass, but also how to market each unique cut and flavor profiles to today's consumer. This is a session you will not want to miss! Speakers Kari Underly, founder of Range Meat Academy and Garrett Pittler, center of the plate specialist, US Foods may even have a special treat cooked up for everyone in attendance and reference materials being sponsored by the National Pork Board.

The 2025 AMC lineup promises to offer fresh perspectives, valuable expertise, and actionable takeaways, making it an unmissable event for anyone looking to stay ahead in the meat industry. Be prepared to engage with leading voices shaping the future of the sector and gain insights that will influence your business strategies for years to come.

PREPARING FOR THE CONFERENCE



Conference App/Website:

Download and use the official AMC app or website to access schedules, floor maps, exhibitor lists, and more.

<https://page.swapcard.com/app/annualmeatconference/>

PACKING LIST

- **Comfortable shoes** (the venue is large and especially on Exhibit Hall day, there is a lot of walking)
- **Business casual attire** (and layered clothing for warmth in those chilly meeting spaces)
- **Attire with a loose waistband for the Exhibit Hall** (you will thank us later!)
- **Phone and charger:** Don't forget a portable charger to stay powered up all day. The conference app will be an awesome resource AND where you can ask questions during the sessions, so you don't want it to lose power!
- **Business cards:** Have plenty on hand for networking.
- **A photo ID:** For security, this will be required for obtaining your conference badge.

UNDERSTANDING THE CONFERENCE LAYOUT

You will have the Venue map at your fingertips in the Conference App. Notable areas you will want to find:

- Registration desk (to pick up your conference badge- don't forget to bring your photo ID!)
- Exhibit halls (Tuesday Afternoon)
- Main conference and breakout rooms (ample time is allowed for breaks, but make sure you know where you are heading for concurrent sessions)

MAXIMIZING YOUR NETWORKING AT THE AMC



Networking is one of the most valuable aspects of attending the AMC. Whether wanting to connect with potential business partners, industry experts or peers, maximizing your networking opportunities can set the stage for lasting professional relationships. Here's how to make the most of the conference, both before and during the event:

PRE-CONFERENCE NETWORKING

Starting your networking efforts before you arrive can give you a significant head start. AMC planners know this and generously offer a list of attendees, which can be found here: <https://meatconference.com/content/registration>. We highly recommend you take some time the week ahead of the conference to review the list and note other attendees with whom you want to connect. With over 2,000 attendees at the conference, you cannot count on just running into someone in the halls!

HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO CONNECT WITH OTHER ATTENDEES IN ADVANCE:

LinkedIn: Update your LinkedIn profile to reflect your current role, company, and areas of expertise. Send personalized connection requests to other registered attendees, mentioning that you will be at the AMC. You can also join relevant LinkedIn groups or search for posts with the event hashtag to engage in conversations before the event begins.

AMC App: Be sure to download the conference app. It will allow you to view the attendee list, create a personalized schedule and message others directly. Take advantage of the app's networking features to schedule meetings, ask questions, or share insights ahead of time. (But don't rely on it solely – if someone doesn't respond, but sure to use another method of contact as well as not everyone leverages the app to this extent.)

Social Media: Follow the official AMC social media accounts and engage with other attendees by liking, commenting, or sharing posts. Use the event hashtag (e.g., #2025AMC #MeatConference #PowerofMeat) to increase your visibility and start conversations. Search for hashtags related to your industry interests to find others discussing related topics.

ATTENDEE LIST

The attendee list mentioned above is a valuable tool for targeted networking. Here is how to make the most of it:

Target Specific Contacts: Use the list to search for people in your industry or who represent companies or organizations that align with your goals. Focus on decision-makers, industry experts, and potential clients or partners who could help drive your business forward.

Plan Your Meetings: Once you've identified key contacts, reach out before the conference to schedule a meeting or casual coffee chat. Be clear about why you want to connect and how it could be mutually beneficial.

BUSINESS CARD ETIQUETTE

Exchanging business cards remains a key networking tool. Follow these tips for effective and professional business card exchanges:

- **Have Plenty of Cards:** Ensure you have enough business cards to distribute throughout the conference. Aim to carry at least 30–50 cards, depending on the event size. Keep them in a business card holder to protect them from damage.
- **Exchange Cards with Purpose:** When handing out your business card, make sure to engage in meaningful conversation first. Don't just pass your card without context. A simple phrase like, "It's been great talking about [topic], here's my card so we can continue the conversation later," is a great approach.
- **Follow-Up:** After exchanging cards, follow up within a day or two via email or LinkedIn to reinforce the connection. Personalize your message by referencing your conversation and suggesting a next step, whether setting up a meeting, sharing resources, or collaborating on an idea.

ELEVATOR PITCH

An elevator pitch is a brief, impactful introduction of who you are and what your company does. Here is how to craft and deliver a compelling elevator pitch at the AMC:

- **Keep It Concise:** Your pitch should be 30 seconds to 1 minute. Focus on the most important aspects of your background and business. For example, "Hi, I'm [Your Name], and I work at [Company Name]. We specialize in [brief description of your company's offerings]. I'm looking to connect with others in the industry to explore opportunities for [specific collaboration or interest]."
- **Highlight What Makes You Unique:** Emphasize what sets your company apart. Whether it's your innovative approach to production, sustainability efforts, or new technology, make sure to communicate what makes you valuable in the retail meat industry.
- **Be Engaging:** Deliver your pitch with confidence, but also be approachable. You want your listener to remember you and feel compelled to continue the conversation. Practice your pitch in advance to feel natural and not overly rehearsed.

By following these networking strategies, you can build meaningful connections, grow your professional network, and maximize the value of your time at the AMC. Whether pre-arranging meetings or crafting the perfect pitch, thoughtful preparation and active engagement will ensure that you make the most out of your conference experience.

EXHIBITOR INFORMATION

Exhibit Hall Overview: Ninety-nine percent of Annual Meat Conference attendees visit the Exhibit Hall and 81% recognize it as the most valuable aspect of the conference, so it is something you want to plan for. You can find a floor plan of the Exhibit Hall, which is sold out this year, here: https://amc2025.mapyourshow.com/8_0/exhview/index.cfm

The map is searchable by Exhibitor, Product Category and Booth Number and it is highly recommended that you create a plan for navigating it before you get to Orlando. You will also find this information in the App.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM EXHIBITS:

- Product sampling.
- Live demonstrations.
- Meeting industry suppliers and distributors.
- Interactive displays or innovative technologies.

TIPS FOR NAVIGATING THE EXPO FLOOR:

- Make a list of must-see exhibitors ahead of time. It is easy to think that you will make it around the entire Exhibit Hall, but it is more difficult than you think. There are a lot of vendors and a limited amount of time, so you will want to be strategic about how you approach this part of the conference.
- Pace yourself on samples because you will be filled by the end of the first aisle if you take everything. (And believe us, it is difficult NOT to try everything!). Perhaps the best advice for this experience is to wear comfortable clothing, (and dare we say, forgiving) clothing. You've truly never seen this much protein in one place at one time in your life!

EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- **Session Descriptions:** You will find all information about the sessions at <https://meatconference.com/program/>. This information will also be in your app, where you can create your own conference schedule and tie it to your calendar for alerts.
- **Choosing Sessions:** The conference consists of a combination of “main stage” and “concurrent” sessions. You will want to thoughtfully consider which concurrent sessions to attend, because they are not recorded for later viewing. However, you will have access to any presentations or handouts that are shared via the conference app. If you are attending the conference with colleagues, it is wise to strategically break off and attend different sessions so that you can share your learnings with each other.
- **Networking Luncheon:** This luncheon has become a popular AMC tradition, featuring educational content sponsored by the Women’s Meat Industry Network (WMIN). The luncheon is open to all conference attendees with full registration (not exhibitor-only registration), but due to popular demand, *advance registration is required*. This year’s lunch will feature a panel discussion with leaders from several well-known companies in the industry discussing the value and importance of women’s employee resource groups in retention and advancement of women in our industry. As a special treat, the panel will be moderated by the conference keynote speaker, Kelly McDonald.
- **Welcome Reception:** Each year, the welcome reception is a wonderful place to connect with friends, both new and old. The excitement from the new release of Power of Meat is always a hot topic, in addition to other current events in the industry. It is common to schedule private dinners with customers and other partners this evening, but be sure to stop off at the reception on your way out.

HEALTH & SAFETY GUIDELINES

- **Emergency Procedures:** Inside the World Center Marriott, ensure you always know where exits are and follow all overhead safety announcements. Stay aware of your surroundings, never leave items unattended & report any suspicious behavior to AMC staff. The World Center Marriott security & safety dispatch can be reached 24/7 by calling (321) 231-4301. Please wear your official AMC badge – it is required for access to all events.



POST-CONFERENCE FOLLOW-UP

YOU'VE MADE IT THROUGH YOUR FIRST AMC- NOW WHAT?!?

The AMC experience does not need to end when you board your flight for home. Here are some important things to consider:

- **Post-Event Networking:** Follow up as promised with those new contacts you made at the conference. It is common to quickly get sucked back into day-to-day work (especially when you have been out for the better part of the week) and items like networking get brushed aside. Put deliberate time on your calendar to make these follow-ups. While at it, schedule yourself a recurring calendar item every few weeks to keep this practice going. When done successfully, you will find your network grows exponentially.
- **Resources to Review:** The full Power of Meat report and many presentations will be available after the conference. Much like your networking, do not put this off. You will have actionable insights to put to work in your business – don't put off this opportunity.
- **Surveys and Feedback:** Last, but not least, please take a few minutes to respond to the post-conference survey so that we can continue to make improvements and evolve this conference so it remains the most valuable retail meat event of the year. (This guidebook was the direct result of feedback we received from past surveys that showed us being a first-time attendee could be a little overwhelming- especially for those new to the meat industry.)

TOP 5 PRACTICAL TIPS FOR FIRST-TIME ATTENDEES

This guidebook contains a lot of information, but if we were to boil things down to the five most important things to remember, here they are:

- **Pre-conference preparation is important.** From planning who you want to meet, what you are going to pack and how you are going to attack the Exhibit Hall, there is no substitute for advance planning.
- **Make the most of the conference app.** The conference website is a thorough source of information as you are planning your trip, but onsite, there is no substitute for the conference app. Download it ahead of time and become familiar with it- you will have basically everything you need at your fingertips.
- **Get out of your comfort zone.** It is easy to stick close to your colleagues, especially as a first-time attendee. However, the true value in AMC comes from expanding your knowledge and your network. Do not be afraid to introduce yourself to new people.
- **Manage your time.** Based on feedback from attendees, conference planners allow ample breaks between all sessions. Do not use every break to catch up on what is going on back at the office! Deliberately network or use breaks to meet up with people you have contacted before the conference. And when you are in session, leave your devices in your pocket or your bag. Make the most of your opportunity to learn.
- **Pace yourself.** The days of AMC are long and the nights can be longer. Be sure to stay hydrated and get a good amount of sleep. Plan how you are going to manage new contacts you receive (stack of business cards, list of names in a notebook, etc.). Set goals for yourself for each day.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, HAVE FUN!

**BE SURE TO MARK YOUR
CALENDAR FOR
AMC 2026
IN WASHINGTON, D.C.:
MARCH 2-4**





AMC ANNUAL MEAT
CONFERENCE®

20 YEARS OF POWER
to MEAT

