

Van Horn Speaks at FAPC Marketing Workshop

STILLWATER, Okla.—A sales specialist was one of nine presenters during the Food & Agricultural Products Center's second annual “Real World” Marketing Workshop held recently.

Del Van Horn, regional sales specialist with Advance Food Co., spoke to approximately 40 participants during the workshop.

Van Horn has been in foodservice sales since 1978 working with a variety of products in the frozen and value-added meat categories. In his current position, he is primarily involved in introducing new products to the market and training both broker and distributor sales people on the full line of products available from Advance Food Co.

Advance Food Co. was founded in 1973 by Paul Allen and Dave McLaughlin and with a handful of employees and one small processing plant in Enid, Okla. Today, Advance Food Co. is a multi-million dollar company with more than 1,500 employees with five processing plants located across the United States.

The company's product lines have grown beyond country-fried steaks to include a complete line of veal, lamb and Philly steaks as well as specialty poultry and pork items.

“The continuing focus for Advance Food was providing the best customer service in the industry, creating center-of-the-plate protein solutions, enhancing key product lines, and developing programs to improve margins for operators,” Van Horn said.

Van Horn gave a detailed description of the products offered by Advance Foods. He discussed two product lines with annual sales exceeding \$90 million: the raw breaded product line, which includes beef, chicken, pork and veal as well as the Steak-EZE line, a beef and chicken traditional steak product.

He also discussed the SmartServe, which is a fully cooked unbreaded chicken and beef charbroiled product line that comes in a variety of flavors for chicken items and pub style hamburgers.

Finally, he discussed the newest product line: the Vincello Lamb and Veal product, which offers three kinds of lamb American Colorado, Australian, and New Zealand lamb. Van Horn said Vincello makes Advance the leading supplier of frozen, portioned-controlled veal products.

“Advance is a solutions oriented company with serving the customers being its main priority,” Van Horn said. “We do not look for products, we look for solutions; we are definitely into value-added foods at Advance Foods.”

The purpose for the marketing workshop was to help participants address marketing issues such as market identification, market research and market planning, said Jim Brooks, FAPC business planning and marketing specialist and chair of the workshop.

"The fact is a good marketing program is essential to survive and succeed in the highly competitive food-marketing arena," Brooks said. "Marketing is not just radio, television and other advertising. It's not just knocking on doors of prospective buyers and attending trade shows. It's critical for success."

Other speakers during the workshop included Mark Harsha, Harsha & Associates; Steve Long, Food Marketing Specialists; Bob Johnson, Sysco Food Services; Vince Orza, Eateries Inc.; Randy Earhart, Taco Mayo; David Books, Shawnee Milling Co.; Gerald Cockerham, Associated Wholesale Grocers; and Lee Ann Potter, Oklahoma Restaurant Association.

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