

# AMSA – Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow

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## Introduction

A recent commencement speaker at Yale used each letter of that name: Y for Youth, A for Ambition, L for Loyalty and E for Effort, and spoke for 30 minutes on each! At the conclusion of the two-hour presentation, one senior said to his neighbor “Thank God we did not go to Massachusetts Institute of Technology”!

I have been tempted to do the same with the three letters of BYU. In 90 minutes, you would then appreciate the fact that we are **not** meeting at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University at this time!

## AMSA — Yesterday

At the entrance to the U.S. Archives in Washington is the statement “Study the Past.” It is natural to assume that what we have and where we are today just happened. However, when we “study the past,” we realize that our predecessors contributed considerable thought and effort to conceive, develop and nurture this organization to its present status.

The Cooperative Meat Investigations meetings in the 1920’s and 1930’s annually brought together the “meats men” of the nation to learn from one another. Generally, those gatherings were held in Chicago. Immediately post-World War II, Mr. R.C. Pollock, General Manager of the National Live Stock and Meat Board (NLSMB) invited the meats personnel from USDA and the Land-Grant Colleges/Universities to meet in Chicago to discuss their programs and problems. The first meeting, held in 1948, attracted 45 people. In the picture, you may identify many of the great early workers in this field. In fact, you might even find a few who are present at this 49th meeting. The term “reciprocal” was selected as best depicting the nature of this conference

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which featured the exchange and reciprocation of thoughts, ideas and mutual concerns. Thus, the Reciprocal Meat Conference (RMC) was founded. It met annually in Chicago until 1959, when it first convened on a university campus on a one-year trial. That first campus conference, held at Michigan State University, was the successful forerunner of all RMC’s held on university campuses ever since, except for one year (1960) back in Chicago. That was pre-ordained to be sure that the campus venue was acceptable before making a total commitment. Next year, we will celebrate the Golden Anniversary of RMC on the campus of Iowa State University. We met there for the 25th anniversary of RMC in 1972.

The RMC has operated these many years under the guidance of an RMC chairman plus five RMC directors and the support of the National Live Stock and Meat Board. The programs have focused on those topics of greatest interest to the membership and tailored to teaching, research and extension interests. Some industry personnel participated, but by-and-large the majority were from university and USDA personnel. The business and offerings of the RMC were largely informal and on a once-or-twice a year basis. In 1964, another approach to governance and organization was instituted.

## AMSA — Today

Another statement impressing the visitor to the National Archives is “The Past Is Prologue.” Certainly, this has been true of the RMC-AMSA relationship. We have not lived in the past, but we have *built* on the past! Abraham Lincoln said: “We can not know whither we are going unless we know from whence we come.” Certainly, we are aware of our origin and have charted a steady and rational course toward our present position.

At the RMC in 1964, held at the University of Wisconsin, the American Meat Science Association was born; sired by the foresight of a number of RMC leaders and conceived by the hard labor and expertise of this same leadership. Since then, the RMC has been the major, but not the only, contribution of AMSA. It also took on co-sponsorship of the Meat Industry Research Conference (MIRC) with the American

Meat Institute, as well as sponsoring or cooperating on addressing a number of issues pertaining to meat and its production, processing, nutrition and health attributes. It has become proactive rather than reactive.

AMSA membership has increased steadily from 300 to 400 in the early 1960's to a current membership of nearly 1,000. Approximately 15% of its membership is international, with 150 members from 40 countries.

AMSA has been fortunate to have had excellent leadership, strong supporting membership and a great crop of young scientists coming along and taking the reins in a progressive manner.

Some have expressed concerns for the future of AMSA in view of recent developments pertaining to our relationships with our wonderful benefactor the National Live Stock and Meat Board, now that it has been merged with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association. How do we fit into their plans and what will be our future relationships? These concerns will be addressed in several of the sessions to follow.

We can worry unduly or take a "wait and see" posture and act accordingly. We can emulate the biblical lily "who toils not, neither does it sow, yet Solomon in all his glory was ne'er arrayed as one of these"! Or, we can assume the attitude of "why worry" expressed in the following philosophy. Either we are well or we are ill. If we are well, there is no need to worry; if we are ill, we either get better or we die; if we get better, there is no need to worry; if we die we have but two options, either we go to heaven or we go to hell; if we go to heaven, we have nothing to worry about; if we go to hell, we will be so busy greeting all of our friends that we will not have time to worry. So why worry!

Would that life were so simple. Of course, we must be concerned and anticipate all scenarios and prepare for the future!

### AMSA — Tomorrow

The future belongs to those who prepare for it. AMSA has been preparing for the future. AMSA is poised to forge ahead, as our next two speakers will assure you.

At this point, I would like to offer some personal perspective for you as members as well as for AMSA as an organization. Although we are American in name we are really more than that in scope. We are North American. We are North and South and Central American. We are and should be international in our outlook. Of course, we do have national concerns that we must address and service, but we are a global economy and worldwide in our trade and outreach.

Today we meet at BYU whose very motto is "The world is our campus." In these days and the future, we must "think globally and act locally."

President Bill Clinton recently said: "We are tied in with the rest of the world today, whether we like it or not."

With today's communications at our fingertips, the World Wide Web is all-encompassing. We are immediately wherever we need to be by this mechanism and we can commu-

nicate directly and instantaneously with fellow workers around the earth. We must groom ourselves to utilize such opportunities.

Additionally, we must avail ourselves of every opportunity that we can to pursue our international contacts. Take a sabbatic leave at an overseas location working in your specialty. Attend ICoMST's wherever they may be held, and visit laboratories and research institutes in those and neighboring countries. Arrange for exchange of personnel between your institute and abroad. Both staff and students should be encouraged to participate.

Learn a second or third language to enhance your international capabilities. We should not expect everyone to learn English to accommodate us, especially when we visit abroad. We must make the effort to communicate in the host's language and to know and appreciate their culture.

The Fulbright program offers collaborative endeavors that can last for decades. It plays a unique role in supporting international scholarship and educational exchange with 130 countries. Avail yourself of this opportunity!

The meat industry has been positioning itself to expand its export trade and to develop markets abroad. IBP's annual report for 1995 shows \$1.8 billion net export sales in 1995, an 18% increase over 1994. This represents 14% of IBP's total net sales for 1995. Those sales were in 50 countries. In 1996, they are opening sales offices in Korea and Taiwan. Their Perry, Iowa pork plant will produce specifically for Japan through their partner Nippon Meat Packers, Inc. In 1997, IBP plans to develop a fully-integrated pork operation with China, in Shandong Province. This information is further proof of our need to internationalize our outlook, both personally and professionally - as individuals and as AMSA.

Lyndon B. Johnson had a favorite guideline: "Do things, not just talk or theorize. Be willing to make mistakes if necessary, but *get things done*!"

As we prepare to leave one century and enter into another, we as individuals, and AMSA as an organization, have obligations as meat and food scientists to do our utmost to assure that hunger and malnutrition throughout the world are eliminated. Witness the dinner plate depicting one-third of the world as seriously inadequate, one-third inadequate and one-third adequate in its food availability. We can and we must correct that pathetic situation. Every 60 seconds, 23 innocent children under 5 years old die from preventable causes, often from hunger. Even in our own country, the USA, more than 15 million children are hungry and every 53 minutes, one of them will die.

Consider the Global Village of 100 based on today's statistics: 57 are Asians, 21 are Europeans, 14 are from the Western Hemisphere and 8 are African. Of these, 70 are non-white; 70 are non-Christian; 70 are unable to read; 50 are malnourished; 80 have substandard housing; six (all from the U.S.) have half of the world's wealth; and only one has a university education.

Yes, we have a task ahead of us, but we need to be aware that:

"A task *without* a vision is drudgery  
A vision *without* a task is but a dream  
A vision *with* a task is the hope of the world"

Although we have a real need for the microscope for close inspection as scientists, we must look through the telescope periodically for far vision as humanitarians!

Three laborers working on a major construction project were asked what they were doing and replied independently: that in one case, he was passing stone to the mason, who in turn cited the fact that he was laying up 100 stones per day; but the third individual mixing mortar stated with great pride that he was helping to build a great cathedral. Tell me who among these had a vision? We all need to help build great cathedrals, to the betterment of humankind the world over!

There is hope as evidenced by the following facts:

1. The percentage of humanity living in absolute poverty has dropped from 70% in 1960 to 32% today.
2. Global per-capita income has tripled in the last 50 years.
3. Nearly 80% of children worldwide are now immunized, up from 15% in one decade.
4. Seventy-one percent of children in the developing world now complete four years of primary schooling, the highest figure ever attained.

5. Life expectancy in the developing world was 46 years in 1960. Today it is 63 years.

6. Smallpox has been eradicated worldwide.

These are triumphs to be celebrated and emulated. The lesson of the past 50 years is that individual actions can change the world. The past makes us believe in the future and compels us to renew the promise.

We must believe in a future where all people have adequate food, housing, education, health-care and the chance for economic survival. A future of peace and dignity. A future where people working together can solve common problems.

You can make a difference individually! AMSA can make a difference collectively! Although we cannot be all things to all people, we can:

"Be what you is,  
Don't be what you ain't,  
Because if you is what you ain't,  
Then you ain't what you is."

Anon

Best wishes in your career and your personal life. You are affiliated with a wonderful organization! Appreciate the tremendous legacy you have; continue the outstanding work you are doing and carry AMSA forward into the 21st Century with pride and accomplishment.