Ah, the power of cheese

Taken from a decades-old advertising campaign, “the power of cheese” is the inspiration behind the theme for the 2017 AMPI Annual Report, found in this issue.

At AMPI, we know cheese. It’s what we do.

Cheese represented nearly 60 percent of the co-op’s sales in 2017 and contributed to the third consecutive year of financial improvement.

The employees of AMPI made a record 659 million pounds of cheese in 2017. More important, it’s award-winning cheese. After earning 19 awards in 2017, we started 2018 with another major win. Cheesemakers at AMPI’s Jim Falls, Wis., plant defended their title with a Colby Jack winning best in its class at the World Championship Cheese Contest.

Our job — and the job of every AMPI employee — is to add value to what you own. We take what you have and make it better by turning high quality milk into the great-tasting dairy products consumers crave.

The confidence needed to invest in, and grow, our co-op’s cheese business comes from climbing customer demand and strong milk production on member farms.

We’re AMPI. We know cheese. It’s what we do.
FEATURES

04 | DEFINING THE AMPI ADVANTAGE
Co-op leaders detail what differentiates AMPI in the marketplace and what’s driving consumers’ buying decisions.

05 | SCENES FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING
More than 300 AMPI members and employees gathered in Bloomington, Minn., for the 2018 AMPI Annual Meeting.

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In their annual address to members, AMPI Co-Presidents and CEOs Donn DeVelder and Sheryl Meshke defined the AMPI advantage.

“You have what everybody wants,” Meshke told the more than 300 attendees at the co-op’s annual meeting held March 27 in Bloomington, Minn. “You have the manufacturing capacity to process member milk into products consumers want to buy.”

DeVelder pointed to the growing value of owning manufacturing capacity as widespread milk processing capacity concerns continue to plague the industry.

“You have the certainty of knowing there is a home for your milk,” he said. “And major co-op decisions are made in a room filled with fellow dairy farmers who are elected by you.”

In the cooperative’s 10 manufacturing facilities, AMPI employees make the dairy products found under many of the nation’s leading brands.

“This is our competitive edge — the AMPI advantage,” Meshke said. “We deliver premium dairy products to customers who want to know where they come from. We can pinpoint the family farms, the cheesemakers and the rural communities that benefit.”

Meshke and DeVelder called on their senior staff to further detail what today’s customer wants and how the cooperative is delivering.

AMPI customers, in the retail and food service sectors, are facing unprecedented change, said AMPI Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing Marshall Reece.

He shared the results of a survey conducted by the International Food Information Council Foundation, asking participants to rate the importance of food purchasing factors.

“AMPI checks all the boxes,” Reece said. “We have simple, easy-to-understand ingredients and the certainty of knowing where the milk comes from. And we share the same values of producing food that is healthy and safe, along with high standards of animal care.”

Mike Wolkow, AMPI senior vice president of operations, said AMPI is upgrading manufacturing facilities to further meet customer demand.

The upgrades include expanding processing capacity and the ability to make premium cheeses. AMPI employees make more than 20 varieties of natural cheese according to customer specifications.

“You can count on us to be really good at making cheese,” Wolkow said, acknowledging it starts with high-quality milk from member farms.

Together, the group shared their confidence in the business.

“AMPI is poised for great things to come,” DeVelder said.

Members of the AMPI management team share their perspectives with annual meeting attendees. They are, from left, Sheryl Meshke and Donn DeVelder, co-presidents and CEOs; Mike Wolkow, senior vice president of operations; and Marshall Reece, senior vice president of sales and marketing.
1. Jason Wiehrouch, an AMPI Young Cooperator (YC) from Melrose, Wis., and his fiancé Shelby Mahoney test their taste buds during the cheese identification contest.

2. AMPI Rochester Division Manager Steve Voss, far right, explains what to look for when grading cheese. Listening are, clockwise from top, AMPI members Mark and Kimber Sipma, Boyden, Iowa; Robert Stoll, Cascade, Iowa; and Kraig Konder, Glenwood City, Wis.

3. AMPI members, from left, Darrel Maus, Freeport, Minn.; Josiah McNally, New Hampton, Iowa; and Bill Post, Chandler, Minn., visit during a break from the annual meeting business session.

4. AMPI Director Alan Qual, Lisbon, N.D., addresses the membership during the business session.

5. AMPI delegates, from left, Dan Krekelberg, Faribault, Minn.; Rita Tisol, Chippewa Falls, Wis.; Greg Vander Wal, Slayton, Minn.; Troy Opdahl, Hazel, S.D.; and Galen Fick, Boyden, Iowa, review information during the business meeting.

6. AMPI Chairman of the Board Steve Schlangen, Albany, Minn., addresses attendees during the business session.

7. Alison Van Eenennaam, Ph.D., shares the science and data behind the safety of genetically modified organisms with meeting attendees. She is an animal genomics and biotechnology cooperative extension specialist in the department of animal science at the University of California-Davis.

8. AMPI YCs Anne Heinen and Chad Frenchick, Eden Valley, Minn., participate in the YC and AMPI Board of Directors question-and-answer session.
Board leaders elected

Cooperative delegates in divisions one (southern Minnesota) and six (eastern Iowa) reelected members of the AMPI Board of Directors.

Reelected to represent division one are Steve Hoffman, New Ulm, Minn.; Tom Hoscheit, Caledonia, Minn.; Bruce Maas, Walnut Grove, Minn.; and Bill Post, Chandler, Minn. Representing division six are Paul Bodensteiner, West Union, Iowa, and Doug Carroll, Ryan, Iowa.

The board of directors elected its officer team following the AMPI Annual Meeting on March 27. The team includes chairman Steve Schlangen, Albany, Minn.; vice chairman Doug Temme, Wayne, Neb.; secretary Bruce Brockshus, Ocheyedan, Iowa; and treasurer Brad Nevin, Rice Lake, Wis.

A complete list of the AMPI Board of Directors and contact information can be found on page 7 in this issue of Dairymen’s Digest.

Considering resolutions

In the annual review of resolutions, AMPI delegates amended and removed existing resolutions during the business meeting held March 27 in Bloomington, Minn.

An amendment to the National Dairy FARM Program resolution included the addition of language from an existing resolution on animal well-being.

Amendments to update language regarding the Margin Protection Program and using milk and dairy supply trucks as traveling billboards were also approved. An outdated resolution regarding milk classes was removed.

Before moving to the delegates, the proposed resolutions were approved by the AMPI Resolutions Committee. Resolutions serve as policy guidelines for the board of directors and management team.

For a copy of the 2018 AMPI Resolutions, contact Lori Helget at 507-354-8295 or helgetl@ampi.com.

Young Cooperators elect steering committee

Newly elected members of the 2018 AMPI Young Cooperator (YC) Steering Committee are, from left, members-at-large, Julie and Matthew Peterson, Boyd, Wis.; vice chaircouple, Amy and Cole Hoscheit, Caledonia, Minn.; chaircouple, Kim and Jon Schmidt, Owatonna, Minn.; past chaircouple, Kimber and Mark Sipma, Boyden, Iowa; and secretaries Parker and Katherine Byington, Lewiston, Minn.

The committee is working on details for the annual YC Summer Tour, which will be held in Eau Claire, Wis., on June 19-20. The event features a tour of the co-op’s cheese plant in Blair, Wis., and two area farms.
Board of Directors

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AMPI Officers

Chairman .................................................. Steve Schlangen

Vice Chairman ........................................... Doug Temme

Secretary .................................................. Bruce Brockshus

Treasurer ................................................... Brad Nevin

Plant Locations

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Undeniably fun

Have You Herd?
The 2018 AMPI Young Cooperator (YC) Summer Tour dates are June 19-20.

YCs will visit AMPI’s Blair, Wis., cheese plant and member farms. Tour headquarters will be the Metropolis Resort in Eau Claire, Wis.

Registration opens May 1.
Space is limited and available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Contact Nickie Sabo at 507-354-8295 or sabon@ampi.com to register. Visit www.ampi.com for tour details.