WISCONSIN MEAT INDUSTRY HALL OF FAME

2009

Louis E. Muench
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Louis E. Muench, President of Louie’s Finer Meats, Inc., was born to Louis, Sr. and Doris Muench on June 16, 1954. In 1963, the Muench family moved to Cumberland, Wisconsin, from Chicago where Louie Sr. worked as a meat cutter. He took a position with The Company Store in Cumberland, WI as the Meat Department Manager. In 1970, Louie’s Finer Meats opened its doors in a small building in Cumberland and in 1978 expanded and moved to its present location. Since this move, the building has been expanded three times as the business has grown.

As with many of the great meat processors in Wisconsin and across the nation, Louis E. grew up with the business. He graduated from Cumberland High School in 1972. He attended UW-Barron County and earned an Associate’s Degree in 1974. Later he would be recognized as the first recipient of the UW-Barron County Distinguished Alumni award and he currently serves on the UW-Barron County Foundation. He graduated from the Butcher’s Program at SW WI Vo-Tech in Fennimore in 1975. He then proceeded to attend UW-River Falls where he earned a B.S. degree with a double major in Food Science and Biology.

While Louis E. completed college, the business was still located in the original downtown building. His father decided that they would move to a larger building if Louis decided to join the business…and that he did. While the product line was initially limited, it has continually grown over the years under Louis’ vision and direction. Louis always sought innovation in product development, including exploring the use of unique non-meat ingredients long before such ingredients were common. Louie’s Finer Meats won its first Wisconsin Association of Meat Processors best-of-show award in 1991 for Wisconsin Summer Sausage, which includes cranberries, cheddar cheese, maple syrup and honey.

Louis has had a positive effect on the Wisconsin and national meat industry in numerous ways. He has been committed to product innovation and development across a broad range of product categories, which has benefited the meat industry as a whole. His ongoing commitment to quality and product innovation has led to Louie’s Finer Meats being recognized with over 300 awards at the state, national, and international levels across the full spectrum of product categories, including fresh sausage, smoked sausage, hams, innovative items, and marinated products. Top honors include three Governor’s Trophies at the state level and 11 medals at the international level.

In addition, he has been always willing to share knowledge, ideas and technology with students and other meat processors, whether through formal workshops or casual conversation. In the infancy stages of Wisconsin developing HACCP programs, Louie’s Finer Meats worked with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture as a pilot plant. He has selflessly given his time to instruct others at seminars in conjunction with UW-River Falls, UW-Madison, Minnesota Association of Meat Processors, Cumberland High School, American Association of Meat Processors, SW Minnesota State University, South Dakota State University, American Meat Science Association, and Wisconsin Department of
Agriculture. The breadth and depth of Louis’ meat processing knowledge is remarkable and highly coveted by his peers, making him one of the most respected teachers of his craft.

Louis has served repeatedly as a product show judge for the Minnesota Association of Meat Processors and the South Dakota Association of Meat Processors because of his thorough knowledge of processed meats. Additionally, he has served as director and vice president of the American Association of Meat Processors and director and president of the Wisconsin Association of Meat Processors. He was inducted into the American Association of Meat Processors Cured Meats Hall of Fame in 2003. He has encouraged industry-wide innovation through these many activities, whether through professional workshops or involving local high school students in meat product development contests.

Louis has served his community selflessly over the years. He served as the Scoutmaster of Cumberland’s Troop 24 for 25 years assisting 28 scouts to achieve the rank of Eagle Scout. He is active in Anthony’s parish, Island City Research Academy, Enrichment Through Culture (ETC), and Cumberland Kiwanis. Louis and his wife Barbara were recognized as the Cumberland Chamber of Commerce Citizens of the Year. This honor was, in part, because of “Louie’s Brat Haus” which is a portable food stand that is provided as a fundraiser for non-profit organizations each weekend.

Three of the six Muench children have followed in Louis Sr.’s footsteps. Louis E. and two brothers, James and William have dedicated their careers to the continued success of Louie's Finer Meats. Louis E. Muench is married to Barbara and has three children, Louis K., Heidi and Eric, and they currently reside in Cumberland, WI. His sons, Louis K. and Eric are also actively involved in the business.

For his contributions to the meat industry, to his fellow meat processors and to his community, we are proud to induct Louis E. Muench into the Wisconsin Meat Industry Hall of Fame.