

## **Animal Agriculture –**

*Innovation, Technology & Consumer Engagement*

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hosted by  
**NIAA**  
AnimalAgriculture.org



### **Shared Visibility of Data Provides Value to Everybody, says NIAA Annual Conference Speaker David McCarty.**

**NIAA News Release, February 19, 2019**---The National Institute for Animal Agriculture has chosen the theme *Animal Agriculture; Innovation & Technology; Engaging the Consumers* for its 2019 Annual Conference April 9-11<sup>th</sup> in Des Moines, Iowa.

One of the greatest challenges facing agriculture is improving the consumer's perception of it. Another is communicating how innovation and technology are constantly being developed to help animal agriculture improve animal health, welfare, sustainability, traceability and more.

Blockchain technology may be where the two concepts converge. It's a leading-edge, innovative technology which is revolutionizing how the food supply chain can be tracked from farm or ranch to processing to distribution to the consumer's table. It may also provide a transparency in agriculture which can give consumers a new level of authenticity on where their food comes from.

With 30 years of working in technology targeting the needs of retailers and consumers, NIAA Annual Conference Speaker David E. McCarty, Consumer Products Industry Executive Consultant with IBM™ says that the demand drivers of today's consumer are very different.

“Consumers want to know is it local? Is it sustainably raised? How was it treated? The authenticity of that information has to be something they can trust,” says McCarty. “The question is how do we leverage technology to transfer this data in a traceable way so today's consumer knows that what they buy is aligned with their social mores.”

Part of what makes Blockchain special, according to McCarty, is that the data is immutable. Once entered, it can't be changed. "You know it is accurate because it can't be tampered with," says McCarty. "Combine that with certifications from standard regulatory bodies and we have the recipe for a trusted relationship with the end consumer."

"Consumers are driving the value of knowing more about the products they want, and they vote with their wallet," says McCarty. "We are seeing fundamental shifts in what they purchase. With alternative meat products and other disruptions coming into the marketplace, it is important to establish that trust."

Blockchain technology has been applied to many business problems for which it has not been ideally suited. But McCarty sees the use of it in the case of animal agriculture as the perfect fit. "In this case, Blockchain is the right solution to animal ag traceability and transparency," he says. "You have lack of trust, lack of visibility, and inefficiencies between diverse parts of the supply chain, all of which lend themselves well to a Blockchain solution."

Traditionally, the information itself has been hard to capture, creating a data gap that needs to close. "We can now present data in a format that the consumer can trust. It is not just marketing speak, but making the data real and something they can believe in," says McCarty.

McCarty cites the European retailer Carrefour which has instituted the IBM Food Trust™ Blockchain system. "You can walk into a Carrefour store in Spain, for example. You pick up a package of chicken and get the lineage of that chicken, what farm it came from, where and when it went to the processing plant, how it was distributed and transported to the store - all from scanning a bar code right on the package," he says. "Now the consumer can understand the entire chain."

In addition, McCarty says being able to prove that you are marketing an organic or hormone-free product, local or imported, will be a part of the value.

His presentation ***Transforming the Supply Chain Around Animal Protein*** will be part of the 2-day Annual Conference along with other industry experts, and NIAA's Technology Showcase.

NIAA will also hold its Annual Business Membership Meeting during the Conference as well as Committee / Council Meetings, as well as the **National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials**.

For the agenda, please go [HERE](#). To register go [HERE](#). For hotel information, go [HERE](#).