

## Trading off Pros Cons

JEFF REINKE, Editorial Director



By JEFF REINKE, Editorial Director

Aside from being a Cy Young Award winner (think MVP for baseball pitchers) and member of the 1960 Pittsburgh Pirates World Championship baseball team, Vernon Law is attributed with one of my favorite quotes of all time. Whether he was referencing his experience as a father or an athlete, I'm not sure, but by sharing with us that he felt, "Experience is a hard teacher because she gives the test first, the lesson afterward," Law also could have been foreshadowing the current situation involving our market's new trade show schedule.

The Pack and Process Expos used to be held at the same time at the same place. Now with PMMI and FPSA deciding to go their respective ways, these organizations' shows have their own separate places on the calendar.

Similarly, every two years one could see representative companies from the dairy, meat and bakery marketplaces collectively supporting the Worldwide Food Expo. That show, too, has seemingly gone the way of the Dodo, with the International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA) deciding to host its show separately. Throw in the IBIE show for all you bakers out there, as well as a couple of other more regional or niche events, and the schedule fills up pretty quickly for suppliers who strive to service all these sectors of the food processing universe.

My colleagues and I here both at *Chem.Info* and *Food Manufacturing* have been fortunate enough to meet and work with representatives from the organizations involved with these shows and responsible for their management. We can appreciate their perspective and are dedicated to working with all of them in helping to best serve the food production marketplace of which we're all a part. However, I can't help but think back to Mr. Law's quote about experience and how it might reflect on this division of shows and the difficult lessons it could teach as suppliers and processors alike look to allocate limited travel funds.

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The overused yet accurate verbiage I've heard at shows when speaking to exhibitors for the last 18 to 24 months is that attendance has been more about quality than quantity. So while there have been fewer handshakes at the booth, the purchasing power, technological savvy and prestige of the representative companies on the other end have made the trip worthwhile. Hopefully that will continue to be the case.

Hopefully the experiences of all who attend each of these shows will simply reflect a new dynamic where all of these events meet a specific demand for both the supplier and plant personnel in keeping everyone involved operating profitably and effectively. Hopefully, experience in this case allows each of these shows to pass that initial test — and only need to learn how to improve afterwards, instead of just survive.

*What's your take? Let me know by e-mailing [jeff.reinke@advantagemedia.com](mailto:jeff.reinke@advantagemedia.com) [1].*

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