



**ANNUAL MEAT  
CONFERENCE®**

# FIRST-TIME ATTENDEE GUIDEBOOK



# WELCOME AND AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ANNUAL MEAT CONFERENCE

## WELCOME TO YOUR FIRST ANNUAL MEAT CONFERENCE!

The Annual Meat Conference (AMC) is one of the most important and highly anticipated events in the retail meat industry. It brings together professionals from every facet of the sector. Established in 1977, the AMC serves as a platform for industry leaders to connect, share knowledge, and discuss the latest developments in retail meat marketing, consumer insights and other timely topics impacting the industry.

**Hosted by FMI and the Meat Institute**, AMC is held annually and attracts a diverse range of attendees, including retailers, processors, suppliers, and marketing professionals. The conference has become a cornerstone of the meat industry, shaping key trends, influencing marketing decisions and driving innovation. Over the years, the conference has become synonymous with thought leadership, with experts presenting topics ranging from sustainability and animal welfare to emerging technologies and market trends. Through its cutting-edge educational sessions, networking opportunities and belt-busting exhibition hall, the AMC fosters collaboration and moves the retail meat industry forward.

Congratulations on the opportunity to attend your first conference. You will find that the AMC is an invaluable opportunity to stay ahead of the curve and be part of the ongoing conversation shaping the future of the retail meat industry.

# WHAT TO EXPECT AT AMC

The mission of the Annual Meat Conference is to provide a gathering point where professionals from all corners of the retail meat industry can connect, collaborate, and advance their knowledge. The conference is designed with several key objectives in mind:

## 1 NETWORKING

AMC brings together a diverse group of industry stakeholders and fosters invaluable networking opportunities, allowing attendees to forge new business relationships, strengthen existing partnerships, and exchange insights with peers and thought leaders. Find more networking tips for the conference later in this guide.

## 2 LEARNING

With a focus on professional development for industry veterans and those who are new to meat, AMC offers a wide range of educational sessions led by experts in the field. These sessions cover the latest trends, regulatory updates, consumer behavior insights and emerging technologies. Attendees will access - critical knowledge that can directly impact their business strategies and operations. You will want to carefully consider which breakout sessions to attend because sessions are not recorded, though materials like handouts and PowerPoints may be available (pending permission) after the conference for attendees.

## 3 INDUSTRY ADVANCEMENTS

The AMC is a key forum for showcasing the latest advancements in the meat industry. From consumer insights (more on the Power of Meat below) to sustainability initiatives to technological innovations, AMC provides the opportunity for attendees to learn about how the industry is evolving. You will walk away with a deeper understanding of how to navigate and thrive in an ever-changing marketplace.

## 4 PRODUCT INNOVATION

As a hub for product development, AMC highlights the latest innovations in meat production, processing, and packaging. The AMC Exhibit Hall is unlike anything you have seen before! Exhibitors will highlight the newest products and technologies that are reshaping the industry, offering attendees a first-hand look at the future of meat products and services. (Pro tips on how to navigate your first time in the Exhibit Hall below!)

At its core, the AMC empowers participants with the tools, connections, and knowledge necessary to drive success in the meat industry. Whether you are looking to stay competitive, innovate, or simply learn, the AMC is the go-to event for shaping the future of the sector.

# PREPARING FOR THE CONFERENCE

## Conference App/Website:

Download and use the official AMC app or website to access schedules, floor maps, exhibitor lists, and more.

Use the QR code on the right.



## PACKING LIST

- **Comfortable shoes** (the venue is large and especially on Exhibit Hall day, there is a lot of walking)
- **Business casual attire** (and layered clothing for warmth in those chilly meeting spaces)
- **Attire with a loose waistband for the Exhibit Hall** (you will thank us later!)
- **Phone and charger:** Don't forget a portable charger to stay powered up all day. The conference app will be an awesome resource AND where you can ask questions during the sessions, so you don't want it to lose power!
- **Business cards:** Have plenty on hand for networking.
- **A photo ID:** For security, this will be required for obtaining your conference badge.

## UNDERSTANDING THE CONFERENCE LAYOUT

You will have the Venue map at your fingertips in the Conference App. Notable areas you will want to find:

- Registration desk (to pick up your conference badge- don't forget to bring your photo ID!)
- Exhibit halls (Tuesday Afternoon)
- Main conference and breakout rooms (ample time is allowed for breaks, but make sure you know where you are heading for concurrent sessions)

# MAXIMIZING YOUR NETWORKING AT THE AMC



Networking is one of the most valuable aspects of attending the AMC. Whether wanting to connect with potential business partners, industry experts or peers, maximizing your networking opportunities can set the stage for lasting professional relationships. Here's how to make the most of the conference, both before and during the event:

## PRE-CONFERENCE NETWORKING

Starting your networking efforts before you arrive can give you a significant head start. AMC planners know this and generously offer a list of attendees, which can be found here: <https://meatconference.com/registration>. We highly recommend you take some time the week ahead of the conference to review the list and note other attendees with whom you want to connect. With over 2,500 attendees at the conference, you cannot count on just running into someone in the halls!

### HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO CONNECT WITH OTHER ATTENDEES IN ADVANCE:

**LinkedIn:** Update your LinkedIn profile to reflect your current role, company, and areas of expertise. Send personalized connection requests to other registered attendees, mentioning that you will be at the AMC. You can also join relevant LinkedIn groups or search for posts with the event hashtag to engage in conversations before the event begins.

**AMC App:** Be sure to download the conference app. It will allow you to view the attendee list, create a personalized schedule and message others directly. Take advantage of the app's networking features to schedule meetings, ask questions, or share insights ahead of time. (But don't rely on it solely – if someone doesn't respond, but sure to use another method of contact as well as not everyone leverages the app to this extent.)

**Social Media:** Follow the official AMC social media accounts and engage with other attendees by liking, commenting, or sharing posts. Use the event hashtag (e.g., #2026AMC #MeatConference #PowerofMeat) to increase your visibility and start conversations. Search for hashtags related to your industry interests to find others discussing related topics.

## ATTENDEE LIST

The attendee list mentioned above is a valuable tool for targeted networking. Here is how to make the most of it:

**Target Specific Contacts:** Use the list to search for people in your industry or who represent companies or organizations that align with your goals. Focus on decision-makers, industry experts, and potential clients or partners who could help drive your business forward.

**Plan Your Meetings:** Once you've identified key contacts, reach out before the conference to schedule a meeting or casual coffee chat. Be clear about why you want to connect and how it could be mutually beneficial.

## BUSINESS CARD ETIQUETTE

Exchanging business cards remains a key networking tool. Follow these tips for effective and professional business card exchanges:

- **Have Plenty of Cards:** Ensure you have enough business cards to distribute throughout the conference. Aim to carry at least 30–50 cards, depending on the event size. Keep them in a business card holder to protect them from damage.
- **Exchange Cards with Purpose:** When handing out your business card, make sure to engage in meaningful conversation first. Don't just pass your card without context. A simple phrase like, "It's been great talking about [topic], here's my card so we can continue the conversation later," is a great approach.
- **Follow-Up:** After exchanging cards, follow up within a day or two via email or LinkedIn to reinforce the connection. Personalize your message by referencing your conversation and suggesting a next step, whether setting up a meeting, sharing resources, or collaborating on an idea.

## ELEVATOR PITCH

An elevator pitch is a brief, impactful introduction of who you are and what your company does. Here is how to craft and deliver a compelling elevator pitch at the AMC:

- **Keep It Concise:** Your pitch should be 30 seconds to 1 minute. Focus on the most important aspects of your background and business. For example, "Hi, I'm [Your Name], and I work at [Company Name]. We specialize in [brief description of your company's offerings]. I'm looking to connect with others in the industry to explore opportunities for [specific collaboration or interest]."
- **Highlight What Makes You Unique:** Emphasize what sets your company apart. Whether it's your innovative approach to production, sustainability efforts, or new technology, make sure to communicate what makes you valuable in the retail meat industry.
- **Be Engaging:** Deliver your pitch with confidence, but also be approachable. You want your listener to remember you and feel compelled to continue the conversation. Practice your pitch in advance to feel natural and not overly rehearsed.

By following these networking strategies, you can build meaningful connections, grow your professional network, and maximize the value of your time at the AMC. Whether pre-arranging meetings or crafting the perfect pitch, thoughtful preparation and active engagement will ensure that you make the most out of your conference experience.

# EXHIBITOR INFORMATION

**Exhibit Hall Overview:** Ninety-nine percent of Annual Meat Conference attendees visit the Exhibit Hall and 81% recognize it as the most valuable aspect of the conference, so it is something you want to plan for. You can find a floor plan of the Exhibit Hall, which is sold out this year, here: [https://amc2026.mapyourshow.com/8\\_0/exhview/index.cfm](https://amc2026.mapyourshow.com/8_0/exhview/index.cfm)

The map is searchable by Exhibitor, Product Category and Booth Number and it is highly recommended that you create a plan for navigating it before you get to the event. You will also find this information in the App.

## WHAT TO EXPECT FROM EXHIBITS:

- Product sampling.
- Live demonstrations.
- Meeting industry suppliers and distributors.
- Interactive displays or innovative technologies.

## TIPS FOR NAVIGATING THE EXPO FLOOR:

- Make a list of must-see exhibitors ahead of time. It is easy to think that you will make it around the entire Exhibit Hall, but it is more difficult than you think. There are a lot of vendors and a limited amount of time, so you will want to be strategic about how you approach this part of the conference.
- Pace yourself on samples because you will be filled by the end of the first aisle if you take everything. (And believe us, it is difficult NOT to try everything!). Perhaps the best advice for this experience is to wear comfortable clothing, (and dare we say, forgiving) clothing. You've truly never seen this much protein in one place at one time in your life!

# EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- **Session Descriptions:** You will find all information about the sessions at <https://meatconference.com/program/>. This information will also be in your app, where you can create your own conference schedule and tie it to your calendar for alerts.
- **Choosing Sessions:** The conference consists of a combination of “main stage” and “concurrent” sessions. You will want to thoughtfully consider which concurrent sessions to attend, because they are not recorded for later viewing. However, you will have access to any presentations or handouts that are shared via the conference app. If you are attending the conference with colleagues, it is wise to strategically break off and attend different sessions so that you can share your learnings with each other.
- **Networking Luncheon:** This luncheon has become a popular AMC tradition, featuring educational content sponsored by the Women’s Meat Industry Network (WMIN). The luncheon is open to all conference attendees with full registration (not exhibitor-only registration), but due to popular demand, *advance registration is required*. This year’s lunch will feature a panel discussion with leaders from several well-known companies in the industry discussing the value and importance of women’s employee resource groups in retention and advancement of women in our industry. As a special treat, the panel will be moderated by the conference keynote speaker, Kelly McDonald.
- **Welcome Reception:** Each year, the welcome reception is a wonderful place to connect with friends, both new and old. The excitement from the new release of Power of Meat is always a hot topic, in addition to other current events in the industry. It is common to schedule private dinners with customers and other partners this evening, but be sure to stop off at the reception on your way out.

## HEALTH & SAFETY GUIDELINES

- **Emergency Procedures:** While attending AMC 2026 at the Gaylord National Resort, please take a moment to locate the nearest exits and remain attentive to all overhead safety announcements. Be aware of your surroundings, avoid leaving personal items unattended, and report any suspicious activity to AMC staff immediately. For onsite assistance, Gaylord National Security is available 24/7 at (301) 965-4500. For everyone’s safety, official AMC badges must be worn at all times and are required for entry to all conference events.



# POST-CONFERENCE FOLLOW-UP

## YOU'VE MADE IT THROUGH YOUR FIRST AMC- NOW WHAT?!?

The AMC experience does not need to end when you board your flight for home. Here are some important things to consider:

- **Post-Event Networking:** Follow up as promised with those new contacts you made at the conference. It is common to quickly get sucked back into day-to-day work (especially when you have been out for the better part of the week) and items like networking get brushed aside. Put deliberate time on your calendar to make these follow-ups. While at it, schedule yourself a recurring calendar item every few weeks to keep this practice going. When done successfully, you will find your network grows exponentially.
- **Resources to Review:** The full Power of Meat report and many presentations will be available after the conference. Much like your networking, do not put this off. You will have actionable insights to put to work in your business – don't put off this opportunity.
- **Surveys and Feedback:** Last, but not least, please take a few minutes to respond to the post-conference survey so that we can continue to make improvements and evolve this conference so it remains the most valuable retail meat event of the year. (This guidebook was the direct result of feedback we received from past surveys that showed us being a first-time attendee could be a little overwhelming- especially for those new to the meat industry.)

# TOP 5 PRACTICAL TIPS FOR FIRST-TIME ATTENDEES

This guidebook contains a lot of information, but if we were to boil things down to the five most important things to remember, here they are:

- **Pre-conference preparation is important.** From planning who you want to meet, what you are going to pack and how you are going to attack the Exhibit Hall, there is no substitute for advance planning.
- **Make the most of the conference app.** The conference website is a thorough source of information as you are planning your trip, but onsite, there is no substitute for the conference app. Download it ahead of time and become familiar with it- you will have basically everything you need at your fingertips.
- **Get out of your comfort zone.** It is easy to stick close to your colleagues, especially as a first-time attendee. However, the true value in AMC comes from expanding your knowledge and your network. Do not be afraid to introduce yourself to new people.
- **Manage your time.** Based on feedback from attendees, conference planners allow ample breaks between all sessions. Do not use every break to catch up on what is going on back at the office! Deliberately network or use breaks to meet up with people you have contacted before the conference. And when you are in session, leave your devices in your pocket or your bag. Make the most of your opportunity to learn.
- **Pace yourself.** The days of AMC are long and the nights can be longer. Be sure to stay hydrated and get a good amount of sleep. Plan how you are going to manage new contacts you receive (stack of business cards, list of names in a notebook, etc.). Set goals for yourself for each day.

**MOST IMPORTANTLY, HAVE FUN!**

**BE SURE TO MARK YOUR  
CALENDAR FOR  
AMC 2027  
IN DALLAS TX:  
MARCH 1-3**



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