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FAPC-OSU scientist speaks at seminar and tours meat plants in Chile

By Mandy Gross, FAPC Communications Services Manager

(Stillwater, Okla. – Aug. 12, 2009) An Oklahoma State University scientist was invited to speak during a food safety seminar at Universidad Catolica de Chile and tour meat processors in Santiago, Chile in July.

Dr. Peter Muriana, food microbiologist for the Robert M. Kerr Food & Agricultural Products Center and associate professor for OSU's department of animal science, along with David Howard and Adam Cowherd from Unitherm Food Systems in Bristow, Okla., participated in the "Death to Listeria" seminar, which was organized by Alfa Chilena S.A. and Universidad Catolica de Chile.

"Despite the fact that our luggage never arrived, the trip went exceptionally well," Muriana said. "Unitherm is interested in breaking into the South American market with their processing equipment, and the South American processors are interested in producing safe products and capturing the interest of international retail giants, such as Walmart, who want products produced as safe as they are in the U.S."

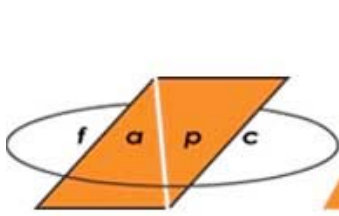
About 100 individuals from the Universidad Catolica de Chile, Universidad Santiago de Chile and the Chilean meat processing industry attended the seminar and listened to Muriana discuss his food industry experience and research in the area of *Listeria monocytogenes*.

Following the seminar, Muriana participated in a social with members of the audience and attended a dinner for food industry chief executive officers and directors.

"It was an excellent learning experience, as well as increasing my recognition among these internationals," Muriana said.

During the stay in Chile, Muriana and the Unitherm Food Systems representatives toured several food processing plants and met with the leadership of those companies.

"The U.S. has a significant lead in food processing technology compared to the Chilean food processing industry," Muriana said. "The comment we often make: 'if I can only go back in time with what I know now' applies very well to improving safety and reducing risk in the Chilean meat processing industry, but their industry is not motivated by the forceful regulatory incentives that the USDA has helped push through in the U.S. during the last 10 years."



Unitherm Food Systems, a market leader in innovative equipment technologies for pasteurization, cooking and chilling of raw, partially cooked and fully cooked food products and agricultural food commodities, helped plan the trip to Chile.

FAPC Director Roy Escoubas said he is pleased that Muriana had the opportunity to travel to Chile with Unitherm Food Systems and share his research with Chilean representatives and the food industry.

“The invitation to Dr. Muriana to participate in this seminar is more than a collegial information transfer in science and technology,” Escoubas said. “This was an effort to support an Oklahoma business demonstrate technical competence in the South American food industry. This work will help expand the Unitherm Food Systems business and result in jobs and revenue income in Oklahoma.”

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