



NORTH AMERICAN RENDERERS ASSOCIATION



FATS AND PROTEINS RESEARCH FOUNDATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Two Industry Leaders Honored at 2024 NARA Convention

ALEXANDRIA, VA, December 5, 2024 – The North American Renderers Association (NARA) is excited to announce that the organization's sister research foundation, the Fats and Proteins Research Foundation (FPRF), has proudly recognized two outstanding professionals for their exceptional contributions to the rendering industry during the NARA 2024 Convention in Santa Barbara, California. The awards were presented by Dr. Charles Starkey, NARA's Vice President of Scientific and Regulatory Affairs and the Fats and Proteins Research Foundation (FPRF) Director of Research.

Dr. Rhett Smith, Ph.D., Receives the Fred Bisplinghoff Research Innovation Award

Dr. Rhett Smith was honored with the prestigious Fred Bisplinghoff Research Innovation Award for his groundbreaking work on utilizing low-value fats in cements and recycling plastics for sustainable materials. Established in 2015, this award recognizes FPRF grant recipients who advance knowledge, increase the use of rendered products, or improve operational processes, product quality, and safety.

Dr. Smith, a Professor of Organic Materials Chemistry at Clemson University, specializes in converting agricultural co-products and waste plastics into commercially viable construction materials. His notable publications include studies on sulfur-based copolymers, recyclable polymers, and carbon-negative polymer cements. Dr. Smith's research has had a transformative impact on sustainability within the industry.

The Dr. Fred Bisplinghoff Research Innovation Award was founded in 2015 in honor of former FPRF President, Dr. Fred Bisplinghoff. It is awarded to an FPRF grant recipient who has done outstanding research for the rendering industry that made a substantial contribution to current knowledge, increased the use of rendered products, or developed improvements in operations, product quality, and safety.

Dr. B.J. Bench Recognized with the "Beyond the Call of Duty" Award

Dr. B.J. Bench was honored with the "Beyond the Call of Duty" award, a special recognition created to celebrate his extraordinary efforts in assisting NARA, particularly with APHIS guidance and advancements in analytical methodologies. Dr. Bench is the Director of Food Safety & Quality Assurance for Tyson Foods Ingredient Solutions, where he leads quality assurance and method development for animal nutrition and other areas.

With a Ph.D. from Texas A&M University and extensive expertise in food safety, Dr. Bench has contributed significantly to improving operational efficiency and ensuring product safety across multiple locations. His dedication to scientific advancement has made him a trusted leader in the field.

NARA congratulates Dr. Smith and Dr. Bench for their remarkable achievements and their continued commitment to innovation and excellence in rendering and sustainability.

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About the Fats and Proteins Research Foundation

The Fats and Proteins Research Foundation (FPRF) was organized in 1962 to serve the rendering and associated industries. FPRF's purpose is to fund research that results in enhanced usage and development of new applications for rendered animal products.

About the North American Renderers Association

The North American Renderers Association (NARA) represents the interests of the North American rendering industry to regulatory and other governmental agencies, promotes the greater use of animal byproducts, and fosters the opening and expansion of trade between foreign buyers and North American exporters. In addition to its U.S.-based headquarters, the association maintains offices and market consultants in strategic locations around the world. NARA publishes a bi-monthly trade magazine, *Render*. For more information, visit www.nara.org.