

Rick Martin **Lamb Weston (Ret.)**

December 4, 2019

Lecture 2:30-3:20 p.m. | PAA A110

Reception 3:30-4:20 p.m. | Benson Lobby

Abstract

Agriculture and food manufacturing are a top-ranking industry in the Pacific Northwest. In Washington State alone, over 164,000 jobs are associated with the industry and the statewide revenue is conservatively estimated at well over \$20 billion annually. Washington is ranked #1 or #2 in the production of many products including asparagus, hops, apples, wine, seafood and frozen potato products. The Ports and infrastructure in the PNW provide ready access to markets around the world.

The Food Industry needs strong engineering talent to drive technical and business innovation in the coming years. Chemical Engineers, in particular, are well suited to roles in this industry as the processes and unit operations used in food processing typically overlap the Chem E curriculum with emphasis on heat transfer, diffusion and reaction kinetics, organic chemistry and fluid mechanics to name a few.

Pressures on the food industry include a shortage of skilled labor leading to a need for automation; increasing food safety regulations impacting sanitary design and microbial control requirements; increasing global competition requiring improvements in efficiency and effectiveness; consumer demand for consistency and quality leading to the need to fully understand process variability and invent new methods of processing. All of these challenges rely on technical skill and understanding to develop effective strategies and implementation plans.

In this discussion, I will share specific examples of the technical engineering and science-based work currently being done in the company I recently retired from and I will outline the skills and critical success factors I believe are crucial to succeed in the Food Industry. As an outcome of the discussion, I hope more UW Chem E's will consider food and agriculture products as potential career choices.

Bio



Rick was named an Executive Officer of Lamb Weston in 2016 when the company was spun off from ConAgra Foods as an independent, publicly held, entity. In his Chief Supply Chain Officer role, he had global end-to-end supply chain responsibility for 25 processing plants with an annual spend of over \$2 billion dollars, over 6000 employees and execution of a capital improvement program of over \$500 million annually. Agricultural services, logistics, warehousing, manufacturing, engineering, purchasing, safety and quality functions all reported to him.

Rick joined ConAgra Foods, Lamb Weston in March 1994 at the Quincy, Washington Plant as Manufacturing Manager. He has also served the company as Operations Manager for the Pasco, Washington Plant, Operations Manager for Richland and Pasco Plants, Director Operations for Potato Plants, Vice President Manufacturing and Vice President of Global Operations.

Prior to ConAgra Foods / Lamb Weston, Rick worked 15 years for General Foods and Kraft Foods serving in a variety of engineering, manufacturing and engineering roles in facilities in Modesto, California; Battle Creek, Michigan and Chicago, Illinois.

Rick is a former member of the Board of Directors for Northwest Food Processors Association.

Lamb Weston, founded in 1950, is a leading producer of frozen potatoes, sweet potato products, vegetables and appetizers. Lamb Weston supplies frozen potato products to restaurants and food retailers in more than 100 countries on all seven continents. Listed on the New York Stock Exchange since 2016 under the symbol LW, the company has sales revenue approaching \$4 billion and is the largest frozen potato products supplier in North America and the #2 supplier globally. Over 80 million servings of Lamb Weston fries are sold around the world every day.