



Kevin Stiles On A Mission For The Iowa Poultry Association And Iowa Egg Council



Leading the charge for the Iowa Poultry Association and Iowa Egg Council is Kevin Stiles. Kevin joined the association just under three years ago as its Executive Director.

Kevin was born and raised on a dairy farm in western Maryland. He graduated from the University of Maryland in College Park with degrees in Communications and Extension Education. After college Kevin worked at the University of Wisconsin in Extension programming. He then spent six years working in international marketing and later worked for a state trade association in California. Prior to joining IPA Kevin was Senior Vice President of Business Development for the Midwest Dairy Association where he managed business development in a 10-state area.

Kevin came to Iowa, approximately 20 years ago, in part thanks to his wife Karen, who was born and raised in West Des Moines. Kevin and Karen have two children, Logan and Garrett - both are attending Iowa State University.

IPA serves as the voice, watchdog, advocate, educator, lobbyists, resource and cheer leader for the poultry and egg industry in Iowa. Kevin said that a lot of what the IPA and Egg Council tries to accomplish is get the members working together on common goals.

Soon after Kevin started with Iowa Poultry Association, the board and staff went through a strategic planning session and developed a mission and vision statement, along with key priorities and strategies. IPA's Mission statement is "***Iowa Poultry Association actively raises confidence in the poultry community through leadership, support, advocacy and education.***" Among the new strategies are to expand member engagement and education efforts.

Over the last two years IPA has worked hard to accomplish those goals. They have expanded efforts at the annual Fall Festival, added an Annual Issues Conference, created an Emerging Leaders Program, added a Poultry & Egg Student Scholarship Program, increased member communications and added a committee structure that currently involves more than 100 IPA members. The policy development process has been expanded to include Regional Fall Policy Meetings, a Legislative Committee and an Annual IPA Legislative Day on the Hill.

When asked about the biggest challenges facing the industry today Kevin listed three:

First, finding laborers to work on the farms. He said the immigration issues we are experiencing between Mexico and the United States has made the labor shortage even worse. He said it's affecting many areas of agriculture and feels it is imperative that we find a solution.

Kevin believes that the industry and the state of Iowa should take a holistic approach to the shortage of farm workers and address the infrastructure problems of rural Iowa. They include - developing reliable daycare options, creating affordable housing, providing access to health care, improving broadband availability and increasing community social and recreational options. He sees these as fundamental needs to attract and retain farm workers.

Second, biosecurity is always a major concern. The outbreak of the Avian Influenza (bird flu) that devastated the Iowa poultry and egg industry in 2015 was not that long ago. He said that it is imperative for all producers to have biosecurity programs and protocols in place. Kevin said that all it takes is for one producer to have an outbreak of disease and that puts the entire industry at risk.

Kevin's third priority is educating consumers to have a better understanding and appreciation for the industry. That includes making them aware of the responsible husbandry and sustainability practices that are being used by poultry and egg producers. It also involves educating consumers on the nutritional value of eggs – enlightening them to the fact that eggs are one of the most affordable sources of protein available.

Kevin feels the future is bright for the Iowa poultry and egg producers. He said they are positioned very well in the export market and have been only slightly impacted by the trade wars. He said approximately two-thirds of all eggs marketed in Iowa are in liquid, dried or frozen form and used in other products and formulations. He pointed out that Iowa ranks number one in egg production in the United States and that more than one out of every six eggs in the country comes from Iowa. He credits the visionaries that saw the potential for Iowa in the poultry and egg business that has resulted in the state producing greater than 16 billion eggs per year.

Kevin closed in saying, "We have a wide and progressive poultry and egg community. The producers and allied members are engaged and strong partners." He said it is very rewarding to work on their behalf as their Executive Director.



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