



2019 Stakeholders Summit Highlights Report

Animal Agriculture Alliance | May 8-9, 2019

“A Seat At The Table”



Day 1: May 8, 2019

CONNECT

Setting the Table: Consumer Focus Group

Speaker:

- Anne-Marie Roerink, Principal, 210 Analytics
- 6 Kansas City-area consumers

Quotes:

“I think it’s [animal welfare] the life and maintenance of that animal and the type of care they receive. And if that’s poor, just like with us, if our living conditions are poor than that shows on our health. And so animal welfare to me is the living condition of the animal and the impact on its health.”

“As a consumer, voting with my dollars will bring change.”

“What does ‘organic’ really mean? Is it just to justify an increase in price?”

“I believe most [farmers] don’t mistreat animals – that’s their living.”

Key Messages:

- The panel participants agreed taste, price and appearance are important when they stand at the meat case, but had differing opinions when it came to animal welfare and antibiotic use.
- Some said animal welfare is a main driver of their purchasing decisions, while others agreed it was important, but wasn’t top-of-mind.
- Several panelists mentioned they rely on the retailers to source humanely-raised meat and poultry products.
- The participants preferred advertisements and messages communicating a farm’s or company’s values rather than why their product is superior to others.

Video of presentation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PEkAxw3qUwU>

A New Label on the Table: One Health Certified Program

Speaker:

- G. Donald Ritter, DVM, Director of Technical Marketing, Mountaire Farms Inc.

Quotes:

“We view it [the program] as a triple win program. It’s a win for the animals for sure, for people, for consumers, and it’s a win for the environment. And a bonus win is that it’s a continuous improvement program. So, we’re going to start somewhere and strive to get better.” - Ritter

“The goal is to reduce consumer confusion and to create a practical and meaningful certification program at a minimum cost premium.”- Ritter

“One Health Certified recognizes that the health of animals, people and the planet are linked together and strives to create optimal outcomes for all three.” – Ritter

“The program is going to offer a better choice to consumers than the current other label options.” - Ritter

Key Messages:

- Current meat labels are confusing and no antibiotics ever programs have negative, unintended consequences.
- Eighty percent of surveyed consumers prefer a certification program with multiple requirements versus a program that addresses only one attribute.
- Fifty percent of surveyed consumers want restrictions on the use of antibiotics in food animals.
- One Health Certified is a new multi-protein consumer choice program that takes care of animals and addresses important issues in animal agriculture in a responsible and sustainable way.
- The One Health Certified program is the first certification program to require measurement of the environmental impact of the animal production system.

Video of presentation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z2lmaP7FGtg>

From Birth to Burger: Industry-Led Beef Supply Chain Animal Welfare & Sustainability Efforts

Speakers:

- Kristen Parman, Vice President, Membership Services, Livestock Marketing Association
- Debbie Lyons-Blythe, Rancher, Blythe Angus
- Justin Nelson, Vice President, Cattle Procurement, Tyson Foods

Quotes:

“People are afraid of corporate America – but when you break corporate America down, they’re just people. They’re just trying to make a living. Sustainability requires transparency. It’s an opportunity.” – Nelson

“At the end of the day – it’s about what the consumer wants. We also need to educate because there is a lot of fiction in the world today. We need to do a better job educating consumers about what things mean.” - Nelson

“The conversation around sustainability has been happening for a very long time. The roundtable [U.S. Roundtable for Sustainable Beef] is truly a collaboration with different segments of the farm to fork industry. By being involved and seeing how other sectors are interested in our product and want to improve their own sustainability caught my attention.” – Lyons-Blythe

“There’s not a one-size fits all answer, but developing a toolkit in areas to find out how operations can better situate themselves for the future is a valuable opportunity.” - Parman

Key Messages:

- The Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) program and the U.S. Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (USRSB) are two examples of collective efforts to provide consumers with high-quality beef.

- Transparency, open communication and respect are key to communicating effectively about beef sustainability.

Video of presentation: <https://youtu.be/UlsUWblmKzs>

ENGAGE

Conversations Around the Table: Engaging Influencers

Speakers:

- Moderated by Andy Vance, Feedstuffs
- Hana Bieliauskas, Senior Associate, Digital, Inspire PR Group
- Ruth Woiwode, PhD, Manager of Livestock Audit Services, Food Safety Net Services
- Lauren Lane, Owner and Blogger, Lauren Lane Culinarian
- Adriane Heins, Heins Family Farms

Quotes:

“The power of influencers these days is huge and I think that's becoming even more so as Instagram continues to grow. These influencers and bloggers have huge and super engaged networks so what they're sharing on their blogs what they're sharing on their social media sites is being seen by thousands of people and whether it's influencing them to buy a product or just influencing them and how they make their food decisions they have a huge impact. So, I think that we have seen a massive growth in confidence in the food systems through engaging with really strong and well engaged bloggers and influencers.” - Bieliauskas

“The more I can connect with my audience and be really authentic and work with people that I'm passionate about that's when my influence is golden.” - Lane

“I would love to engage with consumers and go down the grocery aisle and tell everyone buying milk, ‘thank you,’ but we can't do everything as farmers. We'd like to link arms with people who are good storytellers.” - Heins

“Farms are being scrutinized for animal care practices. A breakdown in the system - the idea of complete transparency, telling about the process that's in place to respond [to animal care allegations], because we're dealing with humans and animals where mistakes will happen, but what people care about is the process by which we respond that there that there is a process and that drives trust.” - Woiwode

“When we can bring people to us and actually bring them on the property and bring them to the farm, we can see really big things happen and that does take a bit of a leap of faith.” - Heins

Key Messages:

- Influencer engagement is a type of third-party validation to the information being shared.
- Full transparency and authenticity are key when connecting with potential clients.
- Independent audits matter to build confidence and verify that practices are current.

Video of presentation: <https://youtu.be/Elq2F4Ib5kY>

Engaging Unexpected Allies

Speaker:

- Wes Jamison, PhD, Associate Professor of Public Relations, Palm Beach Atlantic University

Key Messages:

- Over the past decade, a growing number of misleading messages about modern animal agriculture have been presented by animal rights activist groups to church and religious leaders or in religious forums, under the guise of religion and compassion.
- Unfortunately, some activists are using religion as yet another way to influence public policy to eliminate individual food choices – just as they’ve done through legislation and ballot initiatives. Targeting individuals who have a spiritual sense but may not fully engage in reading or understanding biblical scriptures or other religious doctrines by appealing to their sense of compassion and guilt, is just one more way to further their goals of advancing animal rights and ending meat consumption.

Bringing the Food Chain to the Table: Retailer/Restaurant/Foodservice Perspectives

Speakers:

- Moderated by Jim Dudlicek, Editorial Director, Progressive Grocer
- David Guilhaus, Senior Manager of Food Safety, Publix
- Judy Panayos, Senior Director, Sustainability, Supply Management, Sodexo
- Mark Smith, Chief Procurement Officer, Centralized Supply Chain Services

Quotes:

“Sometimes the answer is – we don’t have a solution today. The pressures we are getting from the market are too much and we make a commitment then talk with our suppliers to figure things out.”
– Panayos

“We don’t set deadlines to miss them.” – Guilhaus

“We work with selecting direct suppliers and making sure they've got the right certifications following the right standards that we've selected and then supporting those either with audits or with review of materials, documents, etc.” – Guilhaus

“Our brands are there to deliver a quality, food safe product that delivers the right value to the consumer.” – Smith

“We are pretty deep into broiler welfare. Certainly, the brands have made commitments relative to cage-free [eggs] and gestation crates so those are the predominant animal welfare type issues that the brands have been engaged with.” – Smith

“It goes beyond not just the meat-based protein or animal-based proteins, but into this whole idea of carbon footprint and the carbon footprint of our food is very important to many of our clients across the different sectors. So, you'll hear things about that and how we incorporate that into how we service our clients and then you'll also hear things about better meat. So, to coin a phrase from or to

take a phrase from our health care sector, 'less meat, better meat,' so they're talking about plant forward diets." – Panayos

Key Messages:

- Food safety, traceability and transparency are important to brands.
- Retailers feel the pressures from animal rights groups.
- Retail companies work with their suppliers to meet deadlines for animal care policies.

Video of presentation: <https://youtu.be/abERZ1CIWa4>

The Power of Positive Marketing

Speaker:

- Bill Gutrich, Director of Global Food Industry Engagement, Elanco Animal Health

Quotes:

"Great marketing talks about the consumers connecting to that emotional 'why.' Good marketing talks about the buyer, not the product." – Gutrich

"We should be in a positive posture, not constantly defending." – Gutrich

"Most brand marketing which is always ineffective talks about 'what' because that's clearer and easier - every brand knows what they make." – Gutrich

Key Messages:

- Fairlife is a brand that is proof of the power of positive marketing.
- Loyalty is a feeling and brands need to connect with their customers' 'why.'
- Only three percent of survey respondents correctly said broilers are not raised in cages. Ninety percent of respondents said more than 20 percent of chickens are raised with added hormones. Consumers don't know the positive story of our products and we should be telling it.
- When you engage or react to criticism in your marketing - or worse, make it your brand story, you actually over empower that criticism and let it control your destiny which can damage your credibility and business.

Video of presentation: <https://youtu.be/TBv3lhlsfpg>

Does the Conversation Reflect the Cart? What Consumers Say vs. What They Buy

Speakers:

- Kim Kirchherr, Registered Dietitian and Supermarket Consultant
- Leah McGrath, Registered Dietitian and Founder, BuildUP Dietitians

Quotes:

“Social media promotes loud, fearmongering voices.” – McGrath

“Agriculture is not inherent knowledge anymore like it used to be. So, how do we make sure we are resonating? Relationships make facts make sense.” – Kirchherr

Key Messages:

- Stop talking to consumers as a large, monolithic group and start talking to individuals.
- Reframe the conversation using shopper data instead of conversation data.
- 0.5 percent of people are vegan and 2 – 3.3 percent of people are vegetarians, but 59 percent of vegetarians admitted to eating meat in the previous 24-hour period.
- The top drivers of purchases are taste, price and health.

Video of presentation: <https://youtu.be/L4EymKhKkFc>

Day 2: May 9, 2019

PROTECT

Hot Issues on the Table

Speakers:

- Moderated by Chuck Jolley, President, Jolley & Associates
- Gene editing - Jane Andrews, Retail Nutrition Consultant
- Alternative proteins - Christine McCracken, Executive Director, Animal Protein, Rabobank
- Blockchain - Andy Brudtkuhl, Director of Emerging Technology, National Pork Board

Quotes:

“It’s your job to bring safe affordable food to the market. It’s the consumer’s job to decide what to purchase.” – Andrews

“These [protein alternatives] are highly processed products that are not natural. Animal agriculture has the edge – use it.” - McCracken

“They’re not anything fancy, they’re just encrypted data. In most cases blockchain is not going to solve your problem, but there are specific cases where it can help.” - Brudtkuhl

Key Messages:

- It’s important for retailers to step up and communicate science to consumers.

- Gene editing is the newest tool in the toolbox for plant and animal breeders. One-third of consumers don't realize plants have DNA.
- Challenges the industry faces relative to gene editing are: consumer acceptance, cost competitiveness, financing, retail and foodservice and regulation.
- Health concerns, food safety, population growth, animal welfare, curiosity, technology, convenience and investors are a few things that are driving the meat alternative movement.
- Everyone in animal agriculture needs to keep up to date and read materials about plant-based and cell-cultured proteins.
- Blockchain technology can help with provenance, traceability, trust and efficiency in animal agriculture.

Videos of presentations

- Jane Andrews: <https://youtu.be/Ja2RH0o0prM>
- Christine McCracken: <https://youtu.be/OATFJLWZKxl>
- Andy Brudtkuhl: <https://youtu.be/N6Bc-qllHwI>
- Discussion: <https://youtu.be/zNtdxKSjxbg>

Protecting our Plates: Are You a Target for Activists?

Speakers:

- Jim Rovers, Senior Vice President, AFIMAC
- Sophie Cranley, Risk Mitigation Specialist, AFIMAC

Quotes:

"They [animal rights activists] don't like going after hard targets. Do a better job to make it harder for activists to get in." – Rovers

"I don't think the activists are going away. They are becoming more aggressive. I think what's emboldened them is the lack of teeth in some of our legal framework." – Rovers

"For every good [social media] post that you put up, the activists put up 200 that are negative [towards animal agriculture]." – Rovers

"We're seeing more radicalized groups because they have a different view on how they want to do everything." – Cranley

Key Messages:

- Make yourself a hard target for animal rights activists, not a soft target.
- Activist activity within a campaign can include: petitions, media engagement, art, lobbying, marches, rallies, protests, direct action, education, outreach, networking and contacting targets.
- To mitigate the risk of being targeted, have security and protection including alarm systems, cameras, access controls, vendor selection/screening process, fencing and signage.
- There two categories of activist groups: main groups and sub groups. The main groups are organized with paid employees and the sub groups usually function on a volunteer basis.

Securing Your Seat: Legal Developments in Animal Activism

Speaker:

- Michelle Pardo, Partner, Duane Morris LLP

Quotes:

“Animal activists do not like labels that give the public comfort when buying animal products.” – Pardo

“They [animal rights groups] figured out that they can bring animal mistreatment to the courts through consumer fraud cases.” – Pardo

Key Messages:

- Hot topics for 2019 that are also being seen in the legislative arena include meatless diets, alternative proteins, legal standing for animals, environmental effects of animal agriculture and ‘natural’ and ‘humane’ labels.
- Animal activists use the Endangered Species Act, consumer fraud, the Administrative Procedure Act, Habeas Corpus and environmental/nuisance claims as part of their litigation efforts.
- Activist “experts” ignore a large body of scientific evidence, cherry pick from activist-driven, small, flawed studies and favor anecdotes and personal observations.

Farmers Under Fire

Speaker:

- Andy Curliss, CEO, North Carolina Pork Council

Quotes:

“It puts a lot of people out of business and takes a lot of food off the table.” – Curliss

“They [opposers to animal agriculture] are willing to say and do things that we just won’t. We [agriculture industry] believe in the truth and facts and they don’t.” – Curliss

“Make sure you have a relationship with your lawmaker.” – Curliss

Key Messages:

- We need to stay united because adversaries want to divide our industry.
- Agriculture needs to solidify its strengths.
- Agriculture has come far and is continuously improving animal welfare and environmental stewardship.
- Funders from Facebook, Google and the Schmidt Foundation are giving money to the animal rights movement.