

U.S. ANIMAL AGRICULTURE AND THE U.N. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Raising animals for food is at the heart of healthy, sustainable communities and healthy, sustainable diets. Generations of farmers and ranchers have put the health and well-being of animals first, while also caring for the land and its natural resources to ensure a viable future. In doing so, they have continued to provide nutrient-dense foods that cannot easily be replaced.

U.S. ANIMAL AGRICULTURE IS
ACTIVELY CONTRIBUTING TOWARD
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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The U.S. animal agriculture community has a proven track record of continuously improving animal care, environmental impact, and food security and has committed to even greater achievements. Real progress toward healthy people and a healthy planet depends on recognizing and advancing those contributions. **Here are a few examples of how U.S. animal agriculture is supporting U.N. Sustainable Development Goals:**

1 NO POVERTY**NO POVERTY**

U.S. food and agriculture is a economic driver, providing 22.1 million jobs to support local families and communities.¹² Meat and poultry packers and processors provide more than 530,000 jobs with a competitive starting pay rate of \$22.00 per hour.²¹ In U.S. poultry, more than 2 million jobs are provided, contributing \$132.7 billion in wages and \$663.6 billion in economic activity.²²

2 ZERO HUNGER**ZERO HUNGER**

Meat, dairy, poultry, eggs, and seafood play a pivotal role in healthy, balanced diets. The U.S. dairy community alone is supplying enough protein for 169 million people, calcium for 254 million people, and energy for 71.2 million people.¹

Improvements in genetics and animal breeding have also allowed farmers and ranchers to feed more people with fewer animals and fewer natural resources. For example, the U.S. beef community is producing 66% more beef per animal while reducing emissions by more than 40% between 1961 and 2019.^{2,3}

The U.S. animal agriculture community is helping to fight food insecurity in local communities as well, including companies like Cargill which has provided more than \$28 million to Feeding America over the last 35 years to fight food insecurity.⁴ The Protein PACT has set a goal of closing the protein gap for hungry Americans, including supporting infrastructure for food banks. In 2023, Meat Institute members contributed more than 84 million servings to food banks and more than \$15 million.²³

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**

Animal-based foods are great sources of many essential nutrients – some of which are best and sometimes only found in meat, dairy, poultry, eggs, and seafood.⁵ These nutrients include iron, which is the most common nutrient deficiency in the world, and vitamin B12. These foods can also support weight management, satiety, physical fitness, and overall health. Some foods, such as dairy, have been linked to reduced risk of certain diseases like cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has concluded that, “Livestock serves as a crucial source of high-quality protein and essential micronutrients, and is vital for normal development and good health.”²⁰

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



QUALITY EDUCATION

Animal agriculture companies are supporting the continued learning of employees and community members by providing opportunities and pathways for further education. At Tyson, hourly employees have access to English as a second language courses and all employees can attend financial literacy training.⁶ Smithfield supports education by offering free tuition opportunities for all eligible employees to help provide learning and career growth opportunities and funds environmental education scholarships for youth.⁷ Meat Institute members contributed more than \$2 million in scholarships in 2023.²³

5 GENDER EQUALITY



GENDER EQUALITY

Women are increasingly getting more involved in U.S. agriculture. Between 2006 and 2021, women's share of the farm workforce has increased from 20.3% to 28.1%.⁸

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

As part of the Protein PACT, U.S. meat processors and packers are implementing water quality programs with a goal of reducing total water use and improving the quality of water coming into and leaving facilities.⁹

In aquaculture, the raising of oysters, clams, mussels, scallops, and seaweed is helping to improve coastal waters.¹⁰ Shellfish and seaweed farms remove nitrogen, carbon, and other nutrients from marine waters, and provide habitat to a variety of marine organisms.

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

The U.S. animal agriculture community is always looking for new ways to innovate, including projects to recycle manure from the farm and convert it into renewable energy. Smithfield has set a goal to implement biogas systems on 90% of company and contract finishing farms in North Carolina and on 90% of company finishing farms in Missouri by 2030.⁷

The U.S. dairy community is also contributing with its growing use of methane digesters to turn manure into biofuel. In one area of California alone, several dairy farms are producing enough renewable natural gas to replace 3 million gallons of diesel.¹¹

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

The agriculture and food sector provides employment to 10.4% of the working population in the U.S., equating to roughly 22 million jobs for Americans.¹²

Agriculture, food, and related industries contributed approximately \$1.53 trillion to U.S. gross domestic product in 2023, making up 5.6% of the share.¹²

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Byproducts from animal agriculture are being recycled to support a variety of industries, including the health and medical fields. Smithfield Bioscience is innovating by making use of byproducts to produce heparin, an anticoagulant, used in cardiac surgery, dialysis procedures, blood transfusions, and medical device implantation.⁷

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



REDUCED INEQUALITIES

U.S. animal agriculture is actively working to support diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives internally and in local communities. Management-level jobs at Smithfield facilities now consist of 27% women and 30% minorities.⁷ The Association of Equipment Manufacturers has set a goal to reduce socioeconomic inequalities in the community by promoting employment from diverse backgrounds and supporting inclusivity within the equipment manufacturing community.¹³

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Farmers, ranchers, and those involved in agriculture are often well-connected and involved in their local communities and recognize the need to invest in them. As an example, Christensen Farms donated \$300,900 in 2023 to local communities, including \$14,200 to local emergency services and \$22,000 to military veterans and coastal shellfish farms participate in beach cleanups to remove marine debris.^{14,18} U.S. meat packers and processors donated more than \$14 million to local charities, including Boys & Girls Clubs, in 2023.²³



RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

U.S. meat packers and processors, through the Protein PACT, are implementing waste management programs to prevent waste generation when possible and to find new ways to reduce, reuse, or recycle waste products to limit waste sent to landfills.⁹



CLIMATE ACTION

Many farms in the U.S. have been passed down over multiple generations. This is not possible without the everyday commitment to care for the land and preserve it for the next generation. American farmers and ranchers have been innovating for decades to reduce their environmental impact.¹⁵

- The U.S. beef community has reduced emissions per pound of beef by more than 40% while also producing more than 66% more beef per animal. This allows the U.S. to supply 17% of the world's beef with only 6% of the world's cattle.
- Thanks to improved farming practices, the dairy community has reduced the carbon footprint of one gallon of milk by 19%, requiring 30% less water and 21% less land.
- In the pork community, on-farm conservation practices have reduced CO2 emissions equivalent to taking 22,410 cars off the road.

Although incredible progress towards climate change efforts has already been made, the U.S. animal agriculture community remains committed to furthering that progress.

- The U.S. beef community has committed to becoming climate neutral by 2040.
- The U.S. dairy community has committed to reaching greenhouse gas neutrality by 2050.
- The U.S. pork community has set a target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 40% from a 2015 baseline by 2030.



LIFE BELOW WATER

Experts agree that the future of sustainable seafood must involve both farm-raised and wild-caught fish. Aquaculture farmers are supporting sustainability goals and life below water by raising shellfish like oysters and clams that improve water quality and provide habitat to marine organisms. Aquaculture farms also reduce our reliance on wild fisheries for seafood, support at-risk species through the propagation and release of fish, shellfish, sponges, and crabs, and provide habitat for wildlife through the creation of wetlands, ponds, and oyster reefs.¹⁵

15 LIFE ON LAND



LIFE ON LAND

Conservation practices are increasingly being implemented by farmers and ranchers to benefit the environment and local ecosystems. For instance, beef cattle that are raised on grassland or rangeland help to provide ecosystem services like habitat for wildlife and increase plant diversity.¹⁶

In addition to environmental stewardship, U.S. farmers and ranchers are committed to the ethical care of the animals they raise. Several species-specific animal welfare guidelines are ISO certified, including Pork Quality Assurance (PQA) Plus, Beef Quality Assurance (BQA), and the Dairy FARM program, demonstrating an ongoing commitment to animal welfare and life on land.

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Animal agriculture is supporting human and social rights via set goals and accountability audits. The Protein PACT has set labor and human rights metrics, with 69% of member participants committing to annual social compliance audits. In addition, 44% are committed to policies and practices that align with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights.⁹

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



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Food supply chain stakeholders are partnering to further progress toward various UN Sustainable Development Goals. Meat Institute is building relationships with partners along the supply chain to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.⁹ National Pork Board has partnered with conversation groups such as Ducks Unlimited to improve on-farm management to benefit wildlife and local ecosystems.¹⁷

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