



Season 2, Episode 12: Sustainability in Pork Production

Dr. Justin Ransom, Tyson Foods, discusses how companies are approaching sustainability and the importance of striving for continuous improvement. Dr. Brett Kaysen, National Pork Board, reviews the value of open communication and being consumer focused.

Doing more with less

Dr. Justin Ransom discusses how large companies are addressing sustainability by setting bold, science-based sustainability goals. Pork production systems must start innovating and find a way to do more with less. Producing higher quality protein at higher quantities, while using fewer resources and having less of an impact on the environment. Not only should the focus be on having a positive impact on the environment, but also having positive interactions with the community and your team of employees. Environmental and social governance (ESG) are a developing set of standards or criteria companies should be conscious of in order to be good stewards of business and resources.

Sustainability and the future

In general, pork producers are focused on raising pigs as sustainably as possible. The focus needs to be on looking to the future and deciding how to take the next steps forward, while keeping company goals and values in mind. In order to feed our growing world, advancements in technology, science, and management practices need to be made in order to improve pig survivability. Producers need to tell an effective story on how they are continuously improving and keeping sustainability at the forefront of business decisions. Consumers are wanting transparency, they want to feel good about the food they purchase.

What is your why?

Dr. Brett Kaysen encourages us to look at the big picture, thinking about sustainability from a global perspective. Beyond the farm, what impacts are you having on people around the globe, what impacts are you having on consumers? The consumer is changing, they are coming with good questions on how the animals, environment, and workers are being treated. Producers need to start taking credit for the great work they are doing on a daily basis to further the sustainability of pork. Several other commodity groups have stepped on board with defining their sustainability goals and timeline. The swine industry has been slower to make a statement on U.S. gas emissions goals, although this is strategic and fueled by wanting to collect solid science-based information first.

Communicate and listen

Conveying the message of sustainability initiatives in terms everyone can understand is critical. For example, reducing soil erosion through limited till or no till practices. By putting the amount of soil saved from erosion in terms of number of dump trucks, it really helps put the quantity of soil into perspective for the general public. The industry needs to focus on using multi-media to convey the story of pork sustainability. Campaigns such as the Eric Stonestreet, National Pork Board messaging is putting this into action. Make sure to listen, dialogues should be two sided, understand the concerns of your audience. Lastly, collaborate with others outside of your expertise to find creative and sustainable solutions.

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