

# IFEEEDER NEWSLETTER

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## Livestock Are Problem Solvers, Not the Problem

It's an interesting perspective for sure – livestock as a solution provider and not “the problem” as so many people would want us to believe. Of course, it is something we have known all along in the animal food industry.

I recently had the opportunity to visit with Dr. Frank Mitloehner, a professor of air quality at the University of California, Davis, who conducts research in air quality and emissions, to learn more about his research. I discovered that there is a story that we are not telling, one that can help us tell a more accurate story about animal agriculture and how livestock can be a solution provider to issues surrounding healthy living and environmental stewardship.



New research has shown that cattle can help mitigate climate change. When cattle expel methane, it enters the atmosphere with a global warming potential that's about 28 times greater than carbon dioxide over a 100-year period. But unlike carbon dioxide from tailpipe emissions, for example, methane is a short-lived greenhouse gas (GHG) that has a lifespan of about 10 years. Once in the atmosphere, methane reacts to become water vapor and carbon dioxide.

Plants require carbon dioxide to complete the process of photosynthesis, so they pull it from the atmosphere. Photosynthesis produces food for humans and for animals, including cattle. When it's the latter, this carbon cycle begins anew.

Because of the marked advances in animal agriculture that have occurred in the United States since 1950, we have far fewer cattle, but we are nevertheless producing the same amount of beef. Where cows are concerned, less methane is going into the atmosphere than was the case 50, 60, 70 years ago. That means less carbon dioxide is being produced in the methane conversion outlined above.

With this decrease in carbon dioxide from cattle, plants draw from the glut of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere from other human activities such as the burning

of fossil fuels. In this way, cattle can help to mitigate climate change (CLEAR Center 2019).

Dr. Mitloehner is undertaking the development of a tool to help people better understand and communicate how we look at methane in animal agriculture, using the new research stated above. This tool will show that our industry's efforts to improve production practices are helping to mitigate methane production.



This is being measured by another one of Dr. Mitloehner's research projects. In coordination with the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization's Livestock Environmental Assessment Program (LEAP), Dr. Mitloehner's research has documented that the environmental impact of livestock in the United States is just 4%. Within LEAP, a tool has been

developed to help the industry effectively measure its environmental footprint. Building on that research is the creation of the Global Feed LCA Institute (GFLI). GFLI is creating a series of regional databases for feed ingredients to help the industry facilitate environmental assessments and measure continuous improvement. Dr. Mitleohner has been an industry leader in helping develop both of these tools.

This research will provide the objective information we need to make improvements and help tell the real story of animal agriculture. In addition to being a full time researcher, Dr. Mitloehner is now the director of a new research center at UC Davis – the Center for Clarity and Leadership for Environmental Awareness and Research, or the CLEAR Center for short. This center will engage others from around the world to conduct research that will help the industry better communicate its environmental sustainability story. It's time for all of us to help others see livestock as a solution provider.

IFEEDER will be using the tools Dr. Mitloehner is developing to help us continue to be your champion in the animal food industry. It will help us better communicate with decision makers and thought leaders as they look at legislative and regulatory issues. It will provide objective, science-based information around addressing choice in the market place, especially as it impacts consumers' environmental, dietary and nutritional concerns. And it will help us communicate the positive environmental sustainability progress we have made in helping to produce animal protein.

To learn more about Dr. Mitloehner and his research please visit his website at [clear.ucdavis.edu](http://clear.ucdavis.edu).

## Let Us Compliment You!

Good job! Way to go! You rock! Who doesn't like to receive a compliment? I know I sure do and this Friday, Jan. 24, is National Compliment Day. Even better than receiving a compliment is the opportunity to give someone a compliment.



Why not let IFEEDER give you a compliment?

By making a gift to IFEEDER you help us tell decision makers, thought leaders and consumer influencers just how phenomenal the animal food industry is. You help us share your amazing sustainability story, celebrate choice in the market place for animal protein and lift your efforts to have a positive impact on the environment.

IFEEDER is the champion for the animal food industry and your support ensures that we continue to tell your story of the animal food industry's role in the safe, sustainable and nutritious production of animal protein.

Make a gift at [IFEEDER.org/donations](https://ifeeder.org/donations) and we will be sure to tell you just how fabulous you are.

## Donate Now!

For every \$1 IFEEDER invests in research and education projects, \$5 is leveraged from other sources. All donations go directly toward projects, as IFEEDER's administrative costs are borne by AFIA, so your donations go even further. Help us maximize our reach by donating today! Simply select "[Donate](#)" at the top of [ifeeder.org](https://ifeeder.org) and select whether you would like to donate via check, pledge or credit card. For questions, contact [Rob Cooper](#), IFEEDER's executive director, at (703) 650-0141.