



## Having THAT Conversation

*By: Rob Cooper, IFEEDER executive director*

It was a typical Wednesday night in January. I had just sat down to text with a friend on nothing special, just to catch up on world events and personal plans for the new year...like eating healthy.

Then it happened...

*Friend: I'm going to try and eat more plant-based products. They are better for me and for the environment.*



*Me: (insert smoking head emoji) Well, that's great, but let's talk about that...*

It's certainly a conversation I wasn't expecting, but thanks to my role with the Institute for Feed Education and Research and my knowledge of some of the science-based research and resources that IFEEDER has funded over the past decade, I knew I could provide a decent perspective on why choice is important in the marketplace. Part of providing choices is ensuring that animal protein is an option everyone can consider. I can also speak to why consumers should have trust in the animal food industry.

*Friend: But if we get rid of cows, then no more methane, right? Just grow beef in petri dishes?*

*Me: (Head exploding) Actually, animal agriculture has done extensive research and is able to show that we are part of the solution to climate change. Methane is a unique gas that recycles*

*about every 10 years, unlike other greenhouse gases that stay in the environment for hundreds of years.*

*Friend: I had no idea, that is interesting!*

*Me: I'm going to send you links to some of the resources I have that explain more about sustainability in the animal agriculture industry as well as on methane's impact in the environment.*

I shared the following links to research and projects that IFEEDER has funded:

- [Livestock Environmental Assessment and Performance Project](#)
- [Global Feed LCA Institute](#)

I also shared information from our collaborators at the Center for Clarity and Leadership in Environmental Assessment and Research at the University of California, Davis:

- [Can Cattle Help Mitigate Climate Change?](#)
- [The Biogenic Carbon Cycle and Cattle](#)

As I reflected on the conversation, I hope I accomplished two things. First, I hope I gave him permission to continue choosing to eat animal protein as part of his healthy diet. Second, I hope I connected with his values related to the environment and his health.

Because of industry support, IFEEDER has been helping research and communicate sustainability in the animal food industry. Like me, I hope you will not only engage in conversations about sustainability, but find the resources, like those listed above, helpful in explaining how the animal food industry is committed to the sustainable production of animal protein.

We have to meet our friends and neighbors where they are and help them see the alignment of their values to the choices they are making. I'm thankful to all the donors who have made the research possible so there is no shortage of resources available for us to connect with those in our communities.

As IFEEDER continues to make investments in sustainability research and programs that support our feed industry partners and help ensure choice in the consumer marketplace, I hope the industry will continue to support IFEEDER through time and financial commitments to our mission that helps build trust in the animal food industry.

And by the way, my friend and I had a virtual cooking session just this week. On the menu? Grilled steaks.

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## Welcome New IFEEDER Donors

- Dairy Management, Inc.
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**United  
Nations**



**Food Systems Summit 2021**

## United Nations Food Systems Summit

IFEEDER is pleased to support the formation of a U.S. industrywide agriculture coalition to engage in the [United Nations' Food Systems Summit](#) (UN FSS). AFIA's President and CEO Constance Cullman is leading the formation of this coalition to ensure that U.S. agriculture has a coordinated approach to engaging in the UN FSS.

The mission of the coalition will be to ensure that the U.S. agriculture's position of supporting innovation and access to diverse production systems and diets is a prominent part of the UN FSS final report.

The outcome of the UN FSS has the potential to dramatically impact the rules of engagement for all food production and trading systems, including the acceptability of certain tools and practices. Currently, there is minimal participation by U.S. representatives or other nations that embrace innovation in food production. Many of the leaders identified have previously indicated a strong preference for limiting the use of innovation in food production systems. Should the UN FSS proceed without strong intervention and engagement from the U.S. agricultural sector or government, the outcome will likely be steered toward the UN making recommendations that could curtail the use of advanced farming techniques.

Get involved and make sure you are a part of conversation. It will take all of us working together and collectively supporting this issue with our time, expertise and financial support to ensure that innovation in agriculture remains a priority. For more information or to see how you can stay connected with this issue, please reach out to [Rob Cooper](#).

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## Connecting With AFIA Members

Over the past year, IFEEDER has had the opportunity to participate in virtual calls with AFIA members. To date, we have shared the mission and work of IFEEDER with over 17 AFIA member companies, with many more scheduled in 2021. It has been a great way to promote IFEEDER's work and establish new relationships along the way. While we would rather see everyone in person, connecting virtually has not slowed us down. If you would like to talk with us, please drop me a note at [rcoper@afia.org](mailto:rcoper@afia.org) and we will set something up.

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## 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 American Feed Industry Association, so your donations go even further. Help us maximize our reach by donating today! Click the link below to make a gift. For questions, contact [Rob Cooper](#), IFEEDER's executive director, at (703) 650-0141.

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