



# MINNESOTA

Farm and Food in Focus



## Meeting Growing Protein Demand FOR BETTER HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

AN UPDATE FOR CANDIDATES AND VOTERS REGARDING THE MAJOR IMPACT AND TRANSFORMATION OF MINNESOTA'S FARM/FOOD SECTOR



### THE CHALLENGE

The U.S. population is expected to **exceed 450 million** (currently 330 million) within 30 years as the global population exceeds **9.5 billion**.

**Global food demand is projected to grow by 56%**

### ANSWERING THE CALL

Farmers and agribusinesses are stepping up to meet the challenge by adopting practices that can make protein production more efficient, safe and healthy to meet consumer demand from Minnesota, across the U.S. and around the world.

**Demand for animal and plant-based protein is surging as consumers seek a range of protein choices in their diet. In Minnesota, farmers, livestock producers, and food companies are delivering more protein products to strengthen the food supply chain and improve our diet, while protecting the environment and providing better animal care.**

**Minnesota impact:** The state's animal protein production is consistently ranked among the top in the nation and includes:

- No. 1 producer of turkeys
- No. 2 producer of hogs
- No. 5 producer of meat animals
- No. 6 producer of cheese
- No. 8 producer of eggs, milk and cattle on feed

**Good animal care is good business:** Better health and overall care allows livestock to produce more and live better lives. Improving nutrition supports their natural immune systems and keeps them at optimum health. This is obviously in the best interests of farm animals and also helps farmers control costs and maintain healthy animals.

### MODERN PRACTICES THAT PROTECT ANIMAL HEALTH

A lot of the old ways of raising livestock, while nostalgic, often don't do a good job of keeping animals healthy. Disease transmission between farm animals can be a large problem if not actively managed. While there is a consumer market for farm animals raised the "traditional way," it is important to note that modern livestock and poultry facilities are designed to significantly reduce the spread of disease among animals and do a much better job of ensuring that they receive good nutrition. Livestock farmers also invest a lot in the ongoing medical care of their animals through their use of veterinary services. Technology tools on the farm track data on each animal, giving farmers better tools to prevent disease and help farmers to more quickly identify sick animals so they can get the care they need. One of the most effective tools employed in recent years are the on-farm audits that livestock producers use to help ensure compliance with animal care best practices and to keep their operation up to date.

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## COVID CHALLENGES

Fortunately, there is no evidence of transmission of COVID-19 from farm animals to humans. However, the livestock and poultry sector were certainly negatively impacted by the challenges of COVID in processing facilities. Livestock and poultry farmers faced both financial and emotional stress as their animals had to be euthanized earlier this year when processing facilities could not accept animals due to the impacts of the pandemic on their plant workers. Livestock farmers and processing companies have risen to the challenge and discovered ways to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the protein value chain.

## NEED FOR SMARTER REGULATION

The regulatory process to permit a modern dairy, hog, cattle or poultry operation in Minnesota can be a problem that puts Minnesota farmers at a competitive disadvantage to farmers in other states. To be clear, Minnesota farmers support strong environmental standards – after all, they are almost all family farmers who live on the land and certainly don't want to be owning polluted property. But other states have embraced smarter regulation that both protects the environment while reaching environmental permitting decisions in far less time and at lower costs. This is a model Minnesota should emulate.



## ENGAGEMENT IS KEY

In addition to gauging consumer expectations, we must listen to farmers, ranchers, and food producers as we strive to strengthen our food supply system and balance sustainable practices with consumer demand. Most consumers prefer high quality food that is on the grocery shelf at an affordable price – this consumer expectation is what has fueled the growth of modern livestock and poultry facilities that are best able to meet this demand. Other consumers want plant-based protein and/or are willing to pay higher prices for meat that is raised according to organic or other standards. Regardless of what consumers want, Minnesota farmers stand ready to meet consumer expectations.

## WHAT WE BELIEVE

Minnesota's food and agriculture sector is deeply committed to delivering healthy protein options for a growing population while implementing best practices when it comes to humane animal care, veterinary medicine, and good nutrition. With supportive policies, smarter environmental regulation, further investments, and sound science, the food and agriculture sector can be a strong partner without sacrificing food safety, environmental protection, or productivity.

SOURCES: National Research Council of the National Academies; Agriculture Utilization Research Institute; World-Grain.com; World Resources Institute; Innova Market Insights; Plant Protein Innovation Center at the University of Minnesota; Health for Animals Association; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Union of Concerned Scientists and various news reports

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