

FARMERS

Both Ends of the Food Chain Can Reconnect



“The groceryman is, of course, the bridge between the farmer and the consumer, and as such must be acquainted with the desires and the needs of both.”
President Dwight D. Eisenhower, June 16, 1954

When President Eisenhower addressed those words to the National Association of Retail Grocers more than half a century ago, the chances were fairly high that a grocer personally knew a farmer. More than 4.8 million farmers in the United States farmed 1.2 billion acres of land. Today, just 2 million farmers operate on 930 million acres. That's 60 percent fewer farmers producing food from 25 percent less land!

The United States farmer has become increasingly efficient and fruitful during those years, enabling grocers to offer an abundance of food products to consumers. However, at the same time productivity has gone up, communication has gone down. There now exists a gulf, or a form of “separation anxiety”

between the farmer and grocer. The reasons for this separation are many. Here are just a few:

- **Consolidation**
Both farming and grocery retailing have experienced intense consolidation, leaving fewer in the business. Fewer people naturally means fewer opportunities for interaction.
- **A generation detached from the farm**
The last generation of Americans have lost ties with the farm. They therefore have little knowledge of today's food producing methods and techniques.
- **Farms geographically relocating**
Farms have relocated away from population centers. Day-to-day contact with retailers and consumers is almost non-existent.
- **A more complex food-chain**
The number of people who touch a product on its path to the consumer has become more complex. More people now inhabit the space between the farmer who produces food and the grocer who sells it. For example: One estimate says it now takes as many as 56 companies to produce one can of chicken noodle soup!

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The cost of separation: The information vacuum that has been created by separation between farmers and grocers has increasingly been filled by political activists. Many of their messages can be sensationalized, inaccurate and a direct threat to sales of store perimeter items that represent food marketers' higher margin items.

MEATLESS MONDAY
 Start for a Healthier America
www.MeatlessMonday.com

PESTA

SHOPPER'S GUIDE TO PESTICIDES IN PRODUCE
 DIRTY DOZEN CLEANEST 12
 Buy These Organic Lowest in Pesticides

Bell Peppers	Sweet Corn (Frozen)	Onions	Avocado	BEST
Asparagus	Mango	Pineapples		
Spinach	Sweet Peas (Frozen)			
Potatoes	Kiwi			
	Bananas			
	Cabbage			
	Broccoli			
	Eggplant			

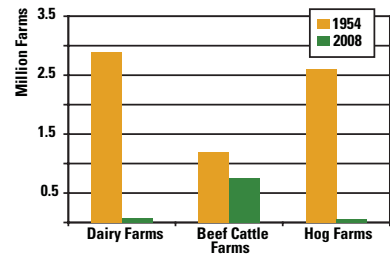
Don't see your favorites? Get the full results at www.foodchoices.org & support EWG research with an online gift.

The Farmer Grows Increasingly Scarce

A Snapshot of the Livestock Farming Sector comparing today with 1954 demonstrates the drastic changes that have occurred.

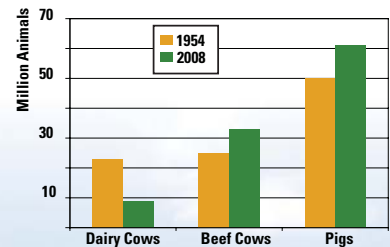
IN THE MILK CASE

- 2.8 million fewer dairy operations
- 14 million fewer dairy cows
- 59 billion more pounds of milk produced



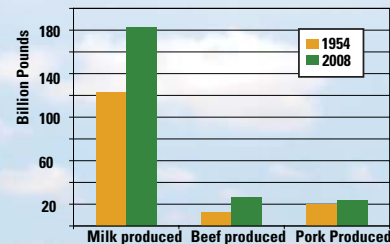
IN THE MEAT CASE BEEF

- 450,000 fewer beef cow operations
- 8 million more beef cows
- 14 billion more pounds of beef grown



PORK

- 2.5 million fewer pork operations
- 11 million more hogs and pigs
- 3 billion more pounds of pork



These figures reveal that the United States farmer has become increasingly efficient and productive, enabling grocers to have an abundance of food products to offer consumers. But has there been a cost?

—Come Meet the Farmers —

CRAIG ROWLES is a partner and general manager of Iowa's Elite Pork Partnership, an 8,000-sow farm that raises about 140,000 pigs from birth to market each year. A veterinarian, he practiced for 14 years before becoming a farmer. He has been active in promoting efficient pork production technologies, maintaining Iowa's pork industry leadership and strengthening rural development.

LIZ DOORNINK, is a Wisconsin wife, mother, and passionate dairy farm advocate. Growing up in New York City, she never understood where her food came from until she met and married a fifth-generation dairy farmer. Today, she considers it her mission to help your consumers better understand the technologies that allow her to care for animals, employees, the environment and the community.

JOHN GILLESPIE and his family grow soybeans, corn, wheat, alfalfa and beef cattle in Ontario. He is actively involved in the Beef Information Centre and other organizations.

TOM BROWN farms soybeans, corn and wheat with brother Randy, nephew Kyle and wife Susie. He family also owns a birth-to-market hog operation and feed cattle.

ANN BURKHOLDER returned to Nebraska after graduating cum laude from Dartmouth College to pursue a career as a beef cattle feeder. As president of Will Feed Inc., a farm that rearms cattle for market, Ann has been a vocal advocate of the farmer's obligation to steadily improve the quality of his animals on behalf of the consumer. As a result, last year Ann was recognized by the National Cattleman's Association as the U.S. Beef Quality Producer of the Year.

■ Industrialization/specialization

As the nation became more industrialized, each member of the food chain retreated into his own segment. Communication and understanding of what other parts of the chain were experiencing was often hindered.

FILLING THE VOID

Many have stepped up to fill that communication gap. New magazines, web sites, a television network, reality cooking shows and weight loss programs are clamoring for consumers' attention. Add to this barrage activists and marketers who fervently work to disseminate misinformation about food in an attempt to profit or further their own agenda.

The result is a confused consumer who feels the disconnect within the food chain and is searching for a trustworthy source on food and food related issues.

Evidence of their search can be found in three of today's most successful food movements—Farmers Markets, Organic and "Locally Grown." In the last 15 years, farmers markets have increased 260 percent. Organic market share has tripled and "locally grown" became the latest vogue statement. The consumer has rewarded these movements with their dollar in return for "re-connection."

So while grocers may have capitalized on some of these movements, they risk missing the much larger opportunity—to claim (or, some would say "re-claim") their rightful position as the single, trusted source on food!

FIND THE ANSWERS

Grocers could capture this position by—as Eisenhower advised a half century ago—seeking to be as familiar with the farmer as they have sought to be familiar with the consumer. By growing in knowledge about the farm and farm technology,

the grocer will equip himself to be an indispensable link in the food chain. He'll be able to talk confidently on issues like

hormones, antibiotics, animal welfare, biotechnology. Contact with a farmer will also help the grocer see through errant claims about what's happening on today's farms and to stem the tide of fear marketing. For food consumers looking to find the answers about their food concerns, the grocer will become the indispensable source.



Farmer
goes to
Market
Reconnecting Farmers and Retailers.

INTRODUCING FARMER GOES TO MARKET

To help shortcut the long and intensive process of finding, meeting and reconnecting with farmers, this year's Concept Show Floor introduces the Farmer Goes to Market Pavilion. It is the only source in the nation where independent retailers can interact face to face with real, working farmers and ask questions on the retailer's home turf. Farmer Goes to Market is designed to close the information gap and provide you with direct answers to common farm and food questions.

If you're attending the N.G.A. Annual Trade Show and Supermarket Synergy Showcase, visit the Farmer Goes to Market pavilion located in the center of the show floor. Inside, you can ask a real life farmer the questions your customers are asking you. Discuss the issues you're most concerned about. Get answers unfiltered... direct from the best source.

A collaborative effort between Food-Chain Communications and the National Grocers Association, the Farmer Goes to Market Pavilion will reestablish that connection between grocers and farmers and begin the much-needed dialog many have lost. For information, go to www.FarmerGoesToMarket.com.



Don't miss your chance to ask these real farmers and others your pressing questions about why they do what they do to raise your food products, from noon to 4 p.m. Feb. 4 and 5.