

Who Are The Farm-To-Table Farmers?

We all love good food, and for many, the local food movement is the hottest trend right now. The farm-to-table movement promotes food purchases directly from local farmers. As a farmer, I have some confusion about the term “farm-to-table.” What determines local food? What exactly is farm-to-table? Who are the farm-to-table farmers? Is this a legitimate food movement or is it more to make consumers feel better about their food decisions?

Food Bloggers Conference

This past summer I attended the [International Food Bloggers conference](#) in Sacramento, CA. Being in the company of a plethora of foodies, I was a little out of my element. Yes, I love good food just as much as the next person, but I am definitely not a foodie. Not surprising, one of the hot topics at the conference was the farm-to-table movement.

During one of our group dinners, the chef came out and talked to us about the food we were about to eat. He proceeded to tell us details about how he visited Mary’s Farm—the farm where our food originated. He told us how well he knew Mary, how the chickens lived, what they ate and how the chickens had a good life. While it may have comforted the foodies in attendance, I had a different feeling. I felt as a “traditional farmer,” the “know your farmer” movement marginalizes traditional farmers. It made me feel like farms like mine are put into a “lower class” of farm. Why? Because we sell our pigs to a meat packer and not directly to the consumer. From many consumers’ perspective, good food can only come from farmers they personally know and my customers don’t know me.

[AgChat](#)

Another example pertaining to the farm-to-table movement happened at the most recent AgChat conference. Ag attendees listened to a panel consisting of a chef, two dietitians and a mommy blogger. The panelists were asked food related questions. The purpose of this panel allowed farmers to hear their individual food perspectives. One statement from the mommy blogger that stood out to me was how she did not buy grocery store meat until she visited a farm. Thankfully, she now has the confidence of buying meat from the grocery store after seeing how well the farm was operated. I can’t help but think about how many other mothers feel the same way the mommy blogger did prior to the farm tour. This makes me sad that people don’t want to buy grocery store meat. Why?

Because I am a grocery store farmer.

Superior Animal Care

Grocery store farmers take pride in their farms. Our animals are our top priority and they are well taken care of. We work with an animal nutritionist, who formulates their diet to include high quality feed. We also work closely with our animal care expert—our veterinarian—who also helps us give them superior care. *We truly care.*

At the end of the day, we chose to be a grocery store farmer. *And we couldn't be prouder.*

Another realization I made when thinking about these experiences . . .

ALL farmers are farm-to-table farmers . . .

ALL farmers' goals is to raise and grow food for families to eat. This is an enormous responsibility and a very humbling experience all at the same time. In addition, farmers are more local than most people realize. How can that be?

Who Are Local Farmers?

On our farm, about 95% of the feed our pigs eat is corn and soybean meal. The corn our pigs eat is grown right across the road from our home and the soybean meal comes from our local soybean farmers. Our pigs are sold to Hormel, which is only about 65 miles away. Much of that pork stays in the upper Midwest.

[That's local.](#)

Yes, you may not know a specific package of pork chops came from my farm, but that doesn't make the meat inferior.

We are so fortunate that we have food choices and these choices are all healthy, safe and nutritious raised by the hard work of *ALL farmers*.

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