

Tyson Foods takes new steps in improving animal well-being

This is a sponsored post written by me on behalf of Tyson Foods. All opinions are entirely my own.

I love how farms can be so different but yet so similar. Diverse livestock and crops, farm size, and farm methods is what makes us different, but one thing we all share is similar attitudes, skills, perseverance and passion. We wake every single day wanting to do better than the day before. It's that positive attitude that tomorrow will be a better day that fuels farmers.

And you know what, it's not just farmers wanting to do better. Companies like Tyson Foods also share the same values. They understand the importance of animal well-being and the needed skills, perseverance and passion to raise healthy animals. In fact, they have a goal to be leaders when it comes to animal well-being.

And they are well on their way. Is it enough?

Let's take a look at some of the steps they are taking in improving animal well-being.

Raising Expectations

Tyson Foods is raising expectations. Raising expectations through their company, their farmers and consumers. Let's start with who Tyson Foods is and isn't.

Yes, some of the independent farms that raise chickens for Tyson Foods may be large, but the technology and research allows them to care for the animals without affecting their well-being. But most important, families are behind these farms. The term "factory farm" gets used often in agriculture. I live in a county with a high density of hogs. Some like to throw that term about us also. In all honesty, I don't see "factory farms." All I see is . . .

Family farms.

These are the same families who attend my church, school and community functions. They are my friends, neighbors and family.

They are family farms.

The size of a farm does not mean an animal's well-being is negatively impacted. In fact, Tyson Foods just recently launched new initiatives in raising the bar in animal care - an example of how they are raising expectations. Here are a few of them.

Improving Animal Well-Being Through Video Monitoring

Animal well-being is important for Tyson Foods. They recently launched a new animal well-being program and the more I learn about it, the more I am impressed with the measures they are taking. As a true leader in the poultry industry, 33 poultry facilities will now be monitored by a third-party video monitoring company.

So what does "video monitoring" entail?

Trained, off-site auditors will monitor digital video with the sole purpose of improving animal well-being. Video cameras are installed in the processing plants, which allows auditors to monitor bird-handling activity and immediate follow-up can be implemented if needed.

In addition, the company is also launching a pilot project to video monitor on-farm catching of birds for transport to its plants. These initiatives will allow the company to help their animal welfare efforts be the *best* in the industry.

Animal Well-Being Specialists

Tyson Foods is the first in the industry to field animal well-being specialists across its operations. So what does an animal well-being specialist do? Specifically, they focus on the animal. For example, they come into the chicken houses and watch how the birds are behaving. Based on their observations, they will determine if any changes need to be implemented. Watch the [Tyson Foods Facebook Live session](#) where you will meet one of Tyson Foods' animal well-being specialists.

The company has deployed nearly 60 dedicated full-time animal well-being specialists. There is at least one specialist at every facility that handles live animals. Not only do they monitor animal handling, they also help educate and train employees on best practices. It really is about *training and education*. Once an employee has the proper training and education, not only does it create less stress for themselves, but it creates a much better environment and life for the animals.

CAS Pilot

Because Tyson Foods is an industry leader and on the cutting edge of technology, they will be piloting a new project called "controlled atmosphere stunning" at two poultry plants within the next year. Controlled atmosphere stunning is a method that exposes the chickens to a mixture of gas designed to gently put them to sleep. Think of anesthesia that humans receive going into surgery. One of the advantages is eliminating human handling of conscious birds at the plant, which could result in less animal stress and better animal handling.

Sounds like a win-win situation.

Chicken House Lighting and Enrichments

Another area of Tyson Foods research is chicken house lighting and enrichments and how it affects the birds' well-being. They will also work with poultry breeding suppliers on the important relationship between breeding and bird health.

I like how they are looking at the whole bird's life and finding ways to improve it. It's just another way that improves sustainability and the animal's well-being.

Animal Care is of the Utmost Importance

Having watched the [Tyson Foods' live Facebook video](#) from a chicken farm and understanding their new animal well-being initiatives, there is no doubt in my mind animal care and well-being is at the forefront when it comes to their business motto. One thing I know as a farmer is we are continually looking for ways to improve. As a leader in the industry, Tyson Foods has taken great strides in animal well-being and you can be assured as research and technology evolves, their animal well-being will also evolve.

But is it enough?

Farmers never have an absolute perfect end goal in agriculture because there is always ways to improve. But it is enough if you are on the continuous path of improvement, which is exactly where I see Tyson Foods.

Learn more about [Tyson Food's Animal Well-Being program](#) and [Tyson Food's Sustainability program](#) and their new high tech high touch animal welfare program [Press Release](#).

For more information about Tyson Foods, check out the [Tyson Foods Facebook Page](#).



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