News Release

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In addition to working with farmers, I often get the opportunity to speak to various professional and civic organizations both locally and in other states. Many times I am asked questions by someone who has read something or seen a video clip or movie produced by people with agendas. While there is nothing wrong with watching or reading such things the problem is the average reader or watcher has no foundation of knowledge through which to filter the information.

We have come to a point in our society where we are on average three generations from the farm. There was a time when every young person spent time each summer with their dad, granddad, uncle or neighbor pitching bales, feeding calves or picking up rocks. Today they are more likely to be texting, playing video games or sports. However, there is a cost to this lack of knowledge and misinformation is part of it.

The biggest casualty however is often civility. My hope is with information most of that can be avoided since we have a big job ahead of us as we continue to lead the world in feeding the world. One of the things while seemingly small that has caused is...
the evolution of our language and how many people allow perceptions to drive their thinking.

At one point a person like myself would have earned a degree in animal husbandry, which even sounds warm and caring. However, in the late 60’s or early 70’s that didn’t sound sophisticated enough so in an effort to make agriculture seem more academically rigorous the name was changed to animal science. Nothing but the name had changed.

No matter what your degree said you still took chemistry, biology, biochemistry, and physics as well as your specialization requirements courses such as physiology, nutrition and different specie specific management courses.

The unintended victim was perception, now it is science and most people conjure up Dr. Frankenstein in their minds when they hear that. Whether you call it science or husbandry all good farmers treat their animals humanely which is not to be confused with treating like they are human.

So how can you help, which is often a question I get asked after a talk. First, I will share something a friend shared from a group called Grow Food Not Lawns, “Friends don’t let friends grow lawns”.

While I share some of the sentiment I am not sure that is the complete answer. I will share some thoughts of one of my favorite writers Wendell Berry. First, participate in your own food production as much as you can. Only by growing your own food can you begin to understand what it takes to get something from field to the kitchen. Next, prepare your own food. This will take learning or reviving your kitchen arts.
Learn what is involved in best farming and gardening practices and where your food comes from, most fresh foods have labels of origin. And whenever possible deal directly with a local farmer, gardener or orchardist. Not only will the food be fresher but they are a wealth of knowledge. By learning through direct observation and experience you will become a better consumer and in the long run a better citizen.

And I guarantee you when eating becomes less about consuming calories and more about the food you will not only be nourished you will be fulfilled.

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