



NEWS RELEASE

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2011 NIAA Annual Conference White Paper Reflects Strategies to Address the Disconnect Between Consumers and Animal Agriculture

Colorado Springs, CO – "Animal agriculture cannot educate its way to public trust. Animal agriculture must reframe and readdress who we are and what we do and communicate messages that are 'ethically sound,'" according to Charlie Arnot, CEO of the Center for Food Integrity.

Arnot spoke at the general session of the 2011 Annual Conference of the National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA) conducted April 11-14, 2011 in San Antonio, Texas. His words echo the meeting's theme, "Consumers Stake in Today's Food Production: Meeting Growing Production Demands with Integrity," and several of his key points are included in the 2011 NIAA Annual Conference White Paper, now available at <http://www.AnimalAgriculture.org>.

The purpose of NIAA's Annual Conference was to bring together leaders in animal agriculture and agribusiness to discuss the growing importance of involving consumers as stakeholders in food production and to work collectively to develop consensus on key issues. Areas considered included the food supply, food security, food safety, animal agriculture's importance in the ecosystem and effective ways to communicate with consumer stakeholders.

The conference featured two general sessions in which experts identified the elements of a stable food supply, with conference participants then working in committees and councils to develop a direction for needed research, information, development and production methods to meet the food production challenge.

Consensus points identified at the two-day Annual Conference and highlighted in the White Paper include the following:

1. Animal agriculture must continue to produce food, milk and fiber in responsible and sustainable ways and continue to earn and maintain a social license by doing what is right.
2. Approaches to animal care must be continually evaluated and updated, using science as a basis with appropriate consideration to ethical and societal values and expectations built into the equation.
3. Because public perceptions affecting one segment of agriculture are often easily transferred to another, agriculture needs to speak with one voice on important issues. Fragmentation is not an option.
4. To more effectively communicate with consumers, it is important to learn, understand and integrate the “language of the consumer” into communications.
5. Those involved in American food and fiber production and delivery in general—and animal agriculture in particular—must do a better job of **listening and speaking** with the consuming public, using venues and language appropriate to age and lifestyle of the consuming public. Open, frequent, continuous and bi-directional dialogue—allowing for differences in experiences, values and expectations—must take place in formats and time restrictions conducive to effective delivery of the agricultural message. Messages should be age- and experience-specific and should start no later than with individuals ages 5-6 years.

Please visit <http://www.AnimalAgriculture.org> for more information about the meeting, [proceedings](#), speaker presentations and to [download the White Paper](#). In addition, other animal agriculture resources are available at the website.

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The National Institute for Animal Agriculture (NIAA) is a non-profit, membership-driven organization that unites and advances animal agriculture: the beef, dairy, equine, goat, poultry, sheep and swine industries. NIAA is dedicated to programs that work toward the eradication of diseases that pose risk to the health of animals, wildlife and humans; promote a safe and wholesome food supply for our nation and abroad; and promote best practices in environmental stewardship, animal health and well-being. Farmers, ranchers, veterinarians, scientists, state and federal officials and business executives comprise NIAA’s membership. More information is available at www.animalagriculture.org.