

Clean Your Plate Wisely

Growing population necessitates wasting less, producing more.

by **MIRANDA REIMAN,**
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If you've ever tossed leftovers or overripe fruit without considering tomorrow's lunch or creative baking,

you're part of the problem.

"We throw away 242 pounds (lb.) of food per person per year," said Brad

Morgan, senior food safety and production efficiency specialist with Pfizer Animal Health. That's about 1,400 calories per person per day, and roughly 1.3 billion tons of food per year.

Morgan shared these facts at this year's Feeding Quality Forum in Grand Island, Neb., and Amarillo, Texas.

"We spend about 7% of our disposable income to feed our families," he said. "In Europe they spend anywhere from 13% to 28% of their income. What am I getting at? One, we take food for granted. Two, it's cheap. And three, we always expect it to be there."

But many have heard the stats pointing to the need to feed 9 billion to 10 billion people by 2050. That'll take more technology for certain, he said, but also, "We've got to become less wasteful."

That goes for every step of the chain, from harvest to distribution to the consumer level.

"In World War I, they talked about food as a weapon. Don't waste it. Buy it wisely," he said, "World War II they said it again. Rationing, grow your victory gardens, do your part."

As prices escalate, the conversation turns in that direction again.

"Whenever we have times like this, I think it forces us to do things we never would have done before," Morgan said.

Other countries provide examples. In South Korea, they charge citizens for food waste disposal. During the first year of implementation they cut food waste by 20%, or \$4.3 billion worth.

Some European grocery stores have changed from "buy one get one free" marketing to "buy one now, get one free — later." During a shopper's return visit to the store, they can pick up the free item so it doesn't go bad in the meantime.

Another alternative

Reducing waste is one part of the global food supply equation. "It's just the right thing to do," Morgan said. The other variable is increasing production, which requires new innovations; however, Morgan cautioned that it can't be at the expense of consumer satisfaction. In this country, shoppers still have the luxury of being discerning.

"People buy beef for a reason, and it's not because it's cheap," he said. "They buy it because they like the flavor of it."

Technology that makes animals "stronger, faster, more efficient," needs to be used judiciously.

"There has got to be a balancing act, because it doesn't matter how cheap or efficient it is to get it there if people don't want to buy it," Morgan said.

The seventh annual Feeding Quality Forum meetings were co-sponsored by Pfizer Animal Health, Purina Land O' Lakes, Certified Angus Beef LLC (CAB) and *Feedlot* magazine. For more information or event proceedings, visit www.CABpartners.com.

Editor's Note: *Miranda Reiman is assistant director of industry information for Certified Angus Beef LLC.*