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SmartBrief

Concern for animal well-being influences meat-buying habits

[Tyson Fresh Meats](#)

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(Tyson Fresh Meats)

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When consumers are filling their grocery carts, it's increasingly common for them to consider not just the finished product on the shelf but the story behind how it was produced. In the meat aisle, these origin stories are of utmost importance as more shoppers seek out meat from producers that go the extra mile to ensure livestock are raised responsibly.

More than half of consumers say they are more concerned about food animal well-being than they were a few years ago, according to a [2017 consumer survey](#) from Packaged Facts. Additionally, 69% of consumers say they want more information about a company's practices including those that concern animal well-being, according to findings from The Hartman Group's "[Sustainability 2017](#)" report.

Health, morality drive interest in animal welfare

Personal health concerns are the top driver of consumer interest in animal well-being, according to The Hartman Group's [report](#), which also found that the morality of animal well-being influences purchase decisions.

Concerns about drug-resistant bacteria created from the overuse of antibiotics in cattle prompted the Food and Drug Administration [last year](#) to limit use of antibiotics in livestock. Buying meat from cattle raised without antibiotics or hormones is a top concern for health-conscious consumers, many of whom also consider the impact these and other features have on animals' lives. Having more information about the way livestock were raised is likely to make shoppers feel more confident in their purchase.

What callouts do shoppers look for in the meat case?

In the meat aisle, a few terms have emerged as key purchase drivers for shoppers that have animal well-being top of mind. Meat in the antibiotic-free/no antibiotics ever category had dollar gains of 44.7% and volume growth of 84% over 2017, according to IRI data cited in the "[2018 Power of Meat](#)" report.

"The claims with the highest awareness-to-purchase likelihood conversion are humanely raised, hormone-free and antibiotic-free," the report said, "with upwards of 65% of shoppers who have seen the claim reporting they would be more likely to buy the item over a conventional counterpart."

Partnering with trusted producers gives retailers an edge

Knowing the appeal that humanely raised meat products have for consumers, [retailers](#) can deliver by partnering with companies that are committed to animal well-being and provide a clear picture of the path from farm to store.

[Tyson Fresh Meats](#) offers attribute-based products that address key consumer demands, such as its Open Prairie Natural* Meats brand, which includes beef and pork products with no antibiotics ever, no added hormones or growth promotants** and are vegetarian fed, except for milk.

Tyson Foods launched its [FarmCheck](#) program in 2012 to monitor its products throughout the supply chain and paint a picture for customers of where their meat comes from. The program includes more than 11,000 independent farmers and ranchers across the US, which are evaluated by third-party auditors retained by Tyson. Auditors visit farms to make sure animals have access to food and water, and that farms provide workers with proper training. Over the course of three years, FarmCheck program auditors conducted more than 1,275 audits of farms and feedlots and reported no acts of abuse.

Starting with its FY2018 sustainability report, Tyson will share progress against key welfare indicators such as number dead on arrival and falls, prod scores and wait time to unload for cattle and hogs. Reports like these offer a deeper level of transparency and give retailers and consumers another resource to understand and identify products that meet their expectations.

*Minimally processed. No artificial ingredients. **Federal regulations prohibit the use of added hormones or growth promotants in pork.

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