

Introduction

- The growing population of our society is widening the knowledge gap between producers and consumers, pushing the understanding of modern animal welfare practices to be uncommon information (Croney, 2014).
- Consumers reported little to no knowledge of animal welfare practices and procedures (Kallas et al., 2013).
- Consumers want to see an increase in awareness about animal welfare (Alonso et al., 2020).
- Consumers seek out information through social media, and these platforms are essential for organizations to communicate with their audiences (White et al., 2014).

Purpose & Objectives

- This study aimed to determine how swine producers view welfare communication and where future communication on this topic should be directed. The following research objectives guided this study:
 - **RO1:** Identify how swine producers perceive current animal welfare communication.
 - **RO2:** Determine what swine producers think future animal welfare communication should discuss.

Theoretical Framework

- The Social Exchange Theory (SET) describes how individuals interact with each other based on a cost-benefit basis (Liang et al., 2008).
- Knowledge sharing allows individuals with different perspectives and opinions to build relationships by sharing knowledge with the expectation of receiving a future return (Liang et al., 2008).
- The SET recognizes rewards between individuals, such as "material (economic) and symbolic (attention, advice, and status)" (Liang et al., 2008, p. 7).

Methodology

- Six qualitative, semi-structured interviews were conducted with swine producers in the Midwest.
- Participants were selected by their involvement in swine production, size of operation, and presence on social media.
- All interviews were recorded and transcribed with Otter.ai. Transcripts were then analyzed in Microsoft Word for emergent themes through open and axial coding.
- An audit trail was used throughout data analysis to aid in theme formation, and researchers reviewed it to determine the consistency and confirmability of research findings (Cutcliffe & Mckenna, 2004).
- Findings were reviewed by peers to ensure no discrepancies within the results (Anney, 2014).

Findings/Results

- **Purposeful communication** was a prominent topic of discussion, leading it to become an overarching theme of this study. Two subthemes emerged: **innovative sharing techniques** and **structured and strategic communication with consumers**.
- Producers were then asked a series of questions to determine how they thought this kind of communication should be structured in the future. The themes that emerged from these questions were **sharing factual information about animal welfare** and **bridging the knowledge gap**.

Conclusions/Recommendations

- Understanding the point of view of swine producers is crucial when creating messages about swine welfare communication.
- The connection between swine producers and communicators needs to grow for consumers to know the most important information to producers.
- With the application of the SET and the benefits of an agriculturally literate society, agricultural communicators can build back this break in knowledge.
- All participants noted that short-clip videos are effective when sharing complex information. Animal agriculture organizations should begin or continue using short-clip videos.

SWINE FARMER PERCEPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF ANIMAL WELFARE COMMUNICATION

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