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## Animal Health Summit highlights how meat consumers feel about sustainability

*Access to veterinary care, advanced therapies and more showcased at KC Corridor-hosted event*

KANSAS CITY, Mo., August 28, 2024—Speaking at the 2024 Animal Health Summit hosted by the KC Animal Health Corridor this week, Danette Amstein, principal at Midan Marketing, presented an analysis of how consumers’ attitudes toward sustainability affect their meat purchasing decisions. Addressing an audience of more than 500 animal health industry professionals, Amstein emphasized the importance of understanding these shifts to meet consumer demands and maintain industry growth.

To begin, Amstein outlined five consumer segments identified by her group’s research:

- Connected Trendsetters (14%) are open to trying new products and are heavily influenced by trends.
- Claim Seekers (24%) actively look for production and sustainability claims when making meat purchases.
- Convenience Cravers (17%) seek easy solutions in their shopping experience.
- Committed Carnivores (23%) are primarily concerned about the taste of their meat.
- Classic Palates (22%) prefer traditional meat products and are less likely to change their purchasing habits.

Amstein noted that the strongest opportunities to influence purchasing habits with a sustainability message lie with Connected Trendsetters and Claim Seekers, both of whom index higher for millennials and Gen Z. However, these groups define “sustainability” differently.

“Connected Trendsetters equate sustainability with quality,” Amstein said. Claim Seekers, on the other hand, focus more on production practices and animal welfare. Amstein stressed the need for the industry to tailor its messaging to resonate with both of these consumer segments. Trust in livestock producers is strong, she emphasized, and efforts in transparent and authentic communication will continue to make an impact.



*Danette Amstein, principal at Midan Marketing, addresses 500-plus attendees at the Kansas City Animal Health Summit.*

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## **ACCESS TO CARE**

During a panel discussion focused on access to care, Andrew Luna, founder and CEO of software platform Hound, noted that a growing scarcity of veterinarians and technicians is a significant barrier. “The availability of care is increasingly limited by the shortage of qualified professionals,” Luna said, highlighting the importance of retaining the existing workforce and finding ways to combat burnout.

Aimee St. Arnaud, founder and CEO of Open Door Veterinary Collective, challenged the notion that pet ownership should be restricted to those with significant financial means. “The idea that ‘if you can’t afford a pet, you shouldn’t have one’ needs to go away,” she said, adding that even middle- and high-income pet owners are feeling the strain of rising veterinary costs.

St. Arnaud introduced the concept of financial triage, which involves assessing a client’s financial capacity and identifying payment solutions that ensure the patient receives care and the clinic receives payment. She’s found that payment plans can alleviate the financial pressure clients feel.

Carolyn Henry, DVM, DACVIM, professor and former dean at the University of Missouri College of Veterinary Medicine, touched on two “hot button” topics—telehealth and creation of a midlevel practice professional—as ways to address both care shortages and cost challenges. “What are we scared of when it comes to these solutions?” she asked.

The discussion underscored the importance of continuing education for both veterinary professionals and pet owners, the strategic use of technology to enhance efficiency and care, and the need for policy changes to support these efforts. Other highlights from the Animal Health Summit included:

## **MORE HIGHLIGHTS**

Additional takeaways from the Animal Health Summit included:

**Insights from top leaders:** Industry executives discussed the impact of technology on the future of animal health, with a focus on artificial intelligence (AI) and its role in enhancing care for both livestock and pets. “AI will change our industry,” said Steve Boren, vice president for livestock and equine with Boehringer Ingelheim. “It will enhance the decision-making ability of veterinarians and producers—but it will not replace them.”

Scott Bormann, senior vice president for Merck Animal Health, agreed. “The intersection of technology and biopharma innovation is driving us toward a more personalized approach to medicine,” he said, emphasizing that advancements such as remote monitoring and predictive analytics are poised to transform veterinary care.

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The panelists also highlighted the importance of fostering a sustainable pipeline of veterinary talent and the need for collaboration between large corporations and startups to fuel ongoing innovation.

**Advanced therapies panel:** This discussion highlighted both the promise and challenges of cutting-edge treatments such as gene and cell therapies in animal health. Participants noted that these modalities hold enormous potential to address unmet medical needs in pets, but the regulatory pathway can be murky and manufacturing hurdles remain significant. The discussion also underscored the importance of making these advanced therapies affordable for pet owners and practical for veterinarians to adopt in practice.

**EmGenisys wins Innovation Award:** EmGenisys took top honors among emerging companies pitching their technologies to investors at the Summit. EmGenisys has developed software that utilizes machine learning and computer vision to evaluate embryo health using 30-second smartphone videos. The system makes in vitro fertilization in livestock more efficient, affordable and sustainable, said CEO and founder Cara Wells, PhD.

**Craig S. Wallace awarded Iron Paw:** Craig S. Wallace of C.S. Wallace Investments + Strategy was honored with the Iron Paw Award during this year's Summit. Wallace has invested in and advised numerous early to mid-stage animal health companies, as well as serving in leadership roles at Ceva Santé Animale, Trupanion, and Fort Dodge Animal Health. "Those of us who live in the industry care deeply about it," Wallace said in accepting the award. "We thrive on innovation, and we are solving big global issues. I am deeply honored and humbled to be recognized among the brilliant people gathered here."

#### **ABOUT THE KC ANIMAL HEALTH CORRIDOR**

Companies with a business location in the KC Animal Health Corridor account for more than half of the sales generated by the global animal health industry. The Corridor, anchored by Manhattan, Kansas, and Columbia, Missouri, is home to more than 300 animal health companies, representing the largest concentration in the world. For more information, visit [www.kcanimalhealth.com](http://www.kcanimalhealth.com).

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