

REWIND SERIES EPISODE THREE, FOOD.

Feeding the world—in episode three we discuss how to provide food security for a growing global population, and why cattle will be critical to that mission.

Despite cowhide's status as a by-product, leather will always be linked with the farming industry and therefore food. By 2050, the world's population is projected to rise to more than nine billion. We are already in a position where almost a third of the global population suffers from food insecurity.

In order to cope with this increased demand for food, we must farm more efficiently and more sustainably. Just as by-products of the farming industry, including cowhides, are wasted, so is a lot of food. What does the response look like? We need to turn food waste, for example soy husks,

into edible protein, use marginal lands to extend our productive areas, improve soil quality to increase yields, and we need to reduce our use of fossil fuel derived fertilisers. The outtake: Think natural and sustainable. Cattle have a vital role to play in each of these cases.

In this episode we examine how people's eating habits and expectations can help drive more sustainable food production systems, we look at the challenges of cost and overconsumption – and how good farming can produce food efficiently AND sustainably. Not just for those with developed economies but for the whole world.

LOCAL IS BEST

“FAMILY-OWNED FARMS ARE THE HEART OF US AGRICULTURE, MAKING UP 98% OF ALL FARMS AND 88% OF PRODUCTION.”

Source: [United States Department of Agriculture](#)

**REAL
LEATHER.
STAY
DIFFERENT.**



“In 2021, 51.0 percent of all US farms had less than \$10,000 in sales and 81.5 percent of all farms had less than \$100,000 in sales.”

Source: [United States Department of Agriculture](#)

Despite the image often presented outside of the country, US farming is not dominated large-scale intensive, industrial agriculture. Smaller, family farms dominate food production in the US with larger scale farms contributing just 12% of crops and livestock.

“There are an estimated 570 million farms in the world.”

Source: [Our world in data](#)

“Five of every six farms in the world consist of less than two hectares, operate only around 12 percent of all agricultural land, and produce roughly 35 percent of the world’s food.”

Source: [Food and Agriculture Organization, United Nations](#)

The vast majority of farms worldwide are less than the size of two football pitches. Small farms can be more efficient: they produce more than a third of the world’s food from only 12 percent of its agricultural land. Many of them provide food and employment in some of the most disadvantaged areas.

FEEDING THE WORLD, EFFICIENTLY AND SUSTAINABLY



“BY 2050 WE WILL NEED TO PRODUCE 60 PER CENT MORE FOOD TO FEED A WORLD POPULATION OF 9.3 BILLION.”

Source: [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations](#)

In less than thirty years’ time, in order to feed the world, we will need to farm more efficiently and waste less. Maximisation of food can not be done at the expense of the environment. If we end up using more manmade, oil-derived fertilisers and pesticides, the effects on climate change will be devastating.

“We need to rear livestock to feed the world – that is all two thirds of the world’s farmland is fit for.”

Source: [Food and Agricultural Organization of The United Nations](#)

“More than 50% of farms in Great Britain use cattle manure as fertiliser”

Source: [UK Government](#)

Not only is the production of livestock the only way to get high-quality protein from otherwise unproductive land, it is vital if we are to feed the growing population of the world. Livestock also produce natural fertilisers, negating the need for manmade, chemical ones.

“Many of the poorest people in developing countries depend on livestock farmers for the provision of protein.”

Source: [United States Food and Agriculture Organization](#)

Livestock farming is often the only option for people living in areas with land that is unsuitable for growing crops.

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“WE WASTE AN ESTIMATED 560 MILLION SQM OF HIDE EACH YEAR, THAT’S ENOUGH TO COVER 78,000 FOOTBALL PITCHES OR TO PUT SHOES ON THE FEET OF MORE THAN A BILLION PEOPLE.”

Source: [Leather & Hide Council of America](#)

2.5 billion tonnes of food is wasted every year

Source: [World Wildlife Fund](#)

As well as the waste of by-products including hides, the food industry is prone to waste at almost every point in the supply chain. Harvesting, packing and preparation can all be improved. Waste as supermarkets over-order, and as consumers buy too much food also has a huge impact.

2.3 billion people are moderately or severely food insecure– over 29% of the global population.

Source: [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations](#)

A 25% reduction in food waste would account for 12 per cent of the increase of production needed to feed the 2050 population of the world.

Source: [World Resources Institute](#)

Before we start producing even more food, we need to look at waste reduction. Using as much of the food that is produced as possible should be the first step to feeding the growing world population.

If you found this of interest, keep an eye out for an additional factsheet supporting the final episode 'The Future' - to be released next week via chooserealleather.com

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