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Humane Pork Sourcing at Carleton College

Pork production has been among the slowest meat industries in the United States to adopt more humane methods (Festenstein and McKenna). Bon Appétit, Carleton College’s dining service provider, prides itself on a commitment to issues of sustainability and animal welfare, using its leverage as a large corporation to bring about gradual changes in the industry. We will evaluate Bon Appétit’s pork sourcing standards at Carleton and investigate the ethical question: are Bon Appétit’s current pork sourcing policies at Carleton College environmentally ethical? If not, how can their policies be improved? We claim that the current pork sourcing methods at Carleton College and Bon Appétit as a whole are unethical. We suggest that we must reduce pork consumption and eat pork solely from local farms, but that Bon Appétit should continue to exert pressure on the large-scale farms to cause more ethical changes.

Before we evaluate the ethics of the pork sourcing methods at Carleton, we must first establish what they are. We will then delve into the duties that Carleton College and Bon Appétit have as corporations to detail why we are calling for action. Following this, we will evaluate the ethics of the current situation and how to proceed with regard to Freeman’s stakeholder theory, Katz’s idea of primary concern for ecosystems, the utilitarian approach, and Peter Singer’s principle of equal consideration of interests. The current certification standards for the general system will also be evaluated. We will suggest optimal changes and solutions for pork sourcing at Carleton College; however, we will also include a more realistic approach.

**Current Pork Sourcing Methods of Bon Appétit and Carleton College**

The current status of Bon Appétit’s pork sourcing is best understood with a three-tiered model, as described by the company’s Midwest Fellow Alyse Festenstein. At the top of the pyramid, representing the company’s optimal, yet least prolific source of meat, is Bon Appétit’s Farm to Fork (F2F) program. F2F works to provide Bon Appétit’s clientele, namely over 500 cafés at various corporations and universities across the nation, with meat, eggs and dairy products from small-scale farms within 150 miles of the café. While these small-scale farming practices are not required to meet a third-party certification standard, the size of the operations allow for “lower density living environments, pasture-based settings, outdoor huts for pigs and piglets,” and direct relationships between the farmer and their pigs (Festenstein and McKenna). According to Festenstein, these practices are consistently sustainable and humane, as affirmed by her firsthand observations of small local partners of Bon Appétit on routine business trips.

Next are the mid-sized regional producers, defined as farms within 500 miles who meet one of the four third-party certification standards that Bon Appétit accepts: Animal Welfare Approved (AWA), Certified Humane (HFAC), Food Alliance (FA), and Global Animal Partnership (GAP). These standards define certain requirements for all dimensions of pig production, from feed and lighting to castration, physical alterations, and slaughter, in order to ensure a baseline level of pig welfare (Festenstein and McKenna).

Finally, constituting the bottom and largest tier of the pyramid by a considerable margin are the concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) that do not meet any of the four third-party standards, though they are subject to FDA regulations and internal standards, such as those established by the National Pork Producers Council. However, these regulatory systems emphasize sanitation and human health and leave the welfare of the pigs largely in the dark, and this does not sit well with Bon Appétit (Festenstein and McKenna).

The Bon Appétit Management Company, led by CEO Fedele Bauccio, is firmly committed to sustainable sourcing. Bauccio has not been shy to criticize the nation’s largest producers for their lack of consideration for animal welfare and environmental health and has forcefully pushed the company in the direction of humane and local food. However, the solution, as stated by the company Vice President of Strategy Maisie Greenawalt, is not as simple as “writing a bigger check to a different supplier.” She identifies three major obstacles that the company faces on its path to sustainable sourcing: the anatomy of the pig, finding the appropriate certification systems, and the American demand for pork (“How the Humane...”).

First, American preferences for pork are not in harmony with the anatomy of a pig, as Greenawalt explains that only about eight pounds of bacon can be obtained from a full-grown, upwards of 200 pound pig and that “we [the American public] will never buy enough baby back ribs to go through all the bacon we eat” (“How the Humane...”). Thus, pigs must be raised in such massive quantities due to our society’s pork preferences, in addition to the sheer overall demand for meat. Second, defining “sustainability” and developing an appropriately sustainable certification standard is not a simple task. Is a sustainable operation one that has the smallest environmental impact or that which treats its pigs most ethically? Few certification systems encompass pig welfare and environmental concerns, with Food Alliance being the exception that accounts for both. Greenawalt, who acknowledges that expecting farming operations to meet two separate certification systems is unfair, has found it difficult to persuade different third-party certifiers to harmonize their standards. Instead, she is currently working toward a scenario in which auditors are versed in two systems and are able to evaluate both simultaneously, at no great inconvenience to the farmer. Finally, Bon Appétit must supply enough meat to meet the voracious demands of its consumers. Thus, Bon Appétit is unable to abandon large producers altogether and has started to exert pressure on these huge third tier farming operations to adopt more sustainable farming practices. Notably, Bon Appétit’s current goals are to phase out purchasing from pig farms that use gestation crates and to source 25 percent of its food from third-party certified suppliers by 2015 (“How the Humane...”). Some Bon Appétit cafés are further along the path to sustainability than others, so how are we doing here at Carleton College?

Currently, Bon Appétit’s café at Carleton purchases three hogs a month from Hidden Stream Farm, a small Food Alliance certified operation in Elgin, MN, just over 60 miles from Northfield. The rest of the pork served in the dining hall comes from Smithfield Foods, the greatest pork producer in the nation and a third-tier farm in Bon Appétit’s model. None of the pork served at Carleton is sourced from a regional, mid-sized, third-party certified operation, as no such farms exist within a 500-mile radius of campus.

**Corporate Social Responsibilities of Bon Appétit and Carleton College**

The traditional definition of corporate social responsibility, articulated by Milton Friedman, is to maximize profits for the benefit of its shareholders. Under this interpretation, corporations do not have an obligation to groups outside of their shareholders who may be impacted by their actions. Additionally, Friedman argues that corporations should not create policies which sacrifice company profits for a public service, unless they align with the desires of the shareholders, or are expected in accordance with “the basic rules of the society” (Friedman). Company managers are not trained in the implementation of measures to protect social welfare, and Friedman argues that these measures essentially tax the shareholders of the company, impressing the opinions of administrative minority upon the majority.

However, philosopher R. Edward Freeman’s stakeholder model counters Friedman’s definition of corporate social responsibility. Freeman’s model of corporate duty greatly expands the responsibilities of corporations from the traditional viewpoint of duties to shareholders. He contends that all of “those groups who are vital to the survival and success of the corporation” (stakeholders) have distinct and valid interests in the corporate decision making process (Freeman 215). Freeman’s broader definition of the stakeholder includes “groups and individuals who benefit from or are harmed by, and whose rights are violated or respected by, corporate actions” (214). According to this model, corporations must balance the interests of their stakeholders with their own, even if it is at the expense of short term gains. In our analysis of corporate actions, we will adopt Freeman’s stakeholder model to define the duties of Carleton College and Bon Appetit with respect to this issue.

Both of these corporations have a host of different stakeholders. Carleton’s stakeholders include, but are not limited to, the student body, faculty, administration, facilities and dining hall employees, the greater Northfield community, the surrounding ecosystem, and Bon Appétit. Bon Appétit’s stakeholders include its clients (the 500 some cafés, such as those at Carleton), employees, suppliers, and the smaller communities surrounding each of their various operation sites. Looking specifically at pork sourcing, there are a few particularly important stakeholders of Carleton and Bon Appétit that we will consider in our analysis. For this inquiry, we will primarily discuss the Carleton students and the pigs. But are Carleton College and Bon Appétit obligated to consider the interests of the pigs?

By both of Freeman’s definitions, it is clear that pigs are stakeholders of the producers that raise them. Likewise, they may also be included among the stakeholders of Bon Appétit and Carleton College because Bon Appétit purchases the pork for consumption, and the Carleton community exerts a demand for pork products in the dining halls. Because the preferences of the student body affect how much pork is purchased, as well as the cuts of meat supplied, Carleton does have a responsibility to the pigs. As stakeholders, the interests of pigs must be considered in corporate decisions. However, while humans can advocate for themselves, pigs cannot defend their own interests. They require an advocate, or several advocates, to ensure that they receive the humane standard of living that they deserve. As the pigs are stakeholders of both Carleton College and Bon Appétit, these corporations owe the pigs improved welfare.

Bon Appétit’s three tiered system of meat sourcing provides for limited advocacy of porcine welfare by requiring mid-sized farms to adopt certain third party certification standards (which we will discuss in more detail later) and purchasing pork from local farms near enough to surveil. Unfortunately, there is no stringent standard for the large industrial farms of the third tier, from which Bon Appétit sources the majority of Carleton College’s pork. Because Bon Appétit is itself a significant stakeholder in the pork industry (as a valuable customer to Smithfield), it possesses significant leverage over the large scale farming operations. By the stakeholder theory, Smithfield has a duty to consider the interests of Bon Appétit. By this theory, Bon Appétit also has a corporate duty to its own stakeholders, the students at Carleton College. A ripple effect may be created when Carleton students, as stakeholders, demand more ethical pork from their dining service provider, and Bon Appétit in turn demands more ethical pork from its sources. As such, a solution may begin to coalesce via Freeman’s logic.

**Forward-Looking Responsibility**

Jessica Fahlquist would take this a step further and argue that Carleton College and Bon Appétit, considering their social and economic influence, have a forward-looking responsibility to promote animal welfare. She claims that we can “ascribe responsibility to governments and corporations” due to their “capacity to contribute to solutions to environmental problems” (Fahlquist 122). In addition, she states that the responsibility for solving societal problems should not merely be distributed based on equity but also based on “who is best apt at solving the problem” (Fahlquist 122). As such, corporations and governments with the means to effect social change have a greater “forward-looking responsibility” to do so.

Bon Appétit is a large entity in the catering company sector, with dozens of clients, including Google and eBay (“Who We Are”). As such a large entity, with over 500 places of business, Bon Appétit has a significant amount of buying power (“Who We Are”). Bon Appétit can make a difference, as the company has already demonstrated with its commitment to phasing out the use of gestation crates at its pork suppliers by 2015 (“Crate-Free Pork, Cage-Free Eggs”). Representatives from Bon Appétit worked with Smithfield to make this possible (Festenstein and McKenna). Because much of the pork purchased comes from the third tier, Bon Appétit had to ensure that prohibiting gestation crates would occur at this level, not just the small-scale and local farms. This was a significant act towards increasing animal welfare. The changes caused by this pledge suggest that Bon Appétit can make monumental changes in food production that lead to more ethical sourcing methods. According to Fahlquist, Bon Appétit acted in the appropriate way as a corporation. The company used its corporate power and aptitude to make a change to a societal issue - food sourcing (Fahlquist 122).

Carleton College is an educational institution, and in its mission statement, it sets the goal to “prepare its graduates to become citizens and leaders, capable of finding inventive solutions to local, national, and global challenges” (“Mission Statement”). The institution has the duty to lead its students by example. Sourcing food sustainably and ethically is inarguably a local, national, and global issue. If Carleton makes it apparent that it cares deeply about providing sustainably and ethically sourced food, the students will become more aware of how to be more ethically responsible when purchasing food such as pork. The goal is that the students would carry this with them throughout their lives. It is difficult for one person’s environmental and economic actions to make a difference; however, as a college, Carleton should put its efforts and monetary resources toward humanely and ethically sourcing pork (Fahlquist 122). The college has the potential to make a difference. It is the duty of the institution to take advantage of its connection with many people and help a change occur.

**Constructing Our Ethic**

When making a decision that may have different outcomes for different stakeholders in a biological community, Katz argues that one must first evaluate the impact of the proposed change on the overall health and vitality of the ecosystem. If “the health or welfare of the natural community is not at issue,” one then must assess “human action affecting the environment…by its relationship to natural individuals and species,” as “all individuals and species ought to be preserved and protected” (presuming their preservation does not have greater, adverse effects on the holistic well-being of the ecosystem) (Katz).

Katz defends this approach to environmental decision-making on the grounds that it is compatible with the interests of the contemporary environmentalist movement, in that it not only protects individual animals from unnecessary harm, but also preserves “inanimate natural entities” (i.e. stones, streams, oceans) and habitats (Katz). Holmes Rolston argues that natural habitats are essential to the value of an organism, stating that organisms are “what they are because of where they are” (Rolston). Katz would argue that if environmental decisions solely considered the welfare of individuals, “there would be no need to protect their natural habitat,” “as long as the individual animals… were healthy” (Katz). Hence, Katz claims that a primary concern for the ecosystem is the crux of his working environmental ethic.

But does Katz’s evaluation adequately encompass all our relevant ethical considerations? What if ecosystems were given too strong a preference over the welfare of individuals, and natural habitats were preserved at the expense of native life forms? We contend that the welfare of organisms cannot be sacrificed for ecosystem health when making decisions affecting the biotic community. In fact, proponents of CAFOs make the argument that the highly efficient industrial model has a negligible environmental impact per pound of meat produced (“Climate Change”), despite the definite environmental costs of CAFOs as presented in the following section. However, this intensive production system operates at the expense of the farm animals’ welfare.

John Rossi and Samuel Garner argue that industrial farm animal production is unethical in that it does not stand up to even a water-downed interpretation of the core moral principle of nonmaleficence, (i.e. that “it is wrong to cause extensive unnecessary harm to others without their consent”). As CAFOs “[cause] massive harm to animals (in the forms of suffering, confinement and death), this harm is (obviously) non-consensual, and the harm is unnecessary in the sense that alternatives to the products of [industrial production]... are readily available” (Rossi and Garner).

However, in order to confidently assert that CAFOs cause harm to pigs, we must define what we mean by pig welfare. Utilitarianism provides a strong groundwork for our ethical approach to welfare. This philosophy defines an ethical choice as one which maximizes utility, namely, that which increases happiness and wellbeing. Applying Freeman’s stakeholder theory, we believe that corporations should promote the happiness of all stakeholders, including the non-humans.

In addition, Peter Singer presents the “principle of equal consideration of interests” and extends it to non-humans (Singer 57). In this principle, all entities that could be affected by a decision, including non-humans, must be considered equally. He states that because “one being is more intelligent than another does not entitle him to enslave, exploit, or disregard the interests of the less intelligent being” (Singer 57). The methods currently used by CAFOs represent an egregious neglect of the welfare of pigs. Practices such as the provision of insufficient space, use of sub-therapeutic antibiotics, and nose-ringing cause direct harm to the pigs, and may even pose a threat to human and environmental welfare (as in the case of antibiotic use). The animals suffer in large-scale, concentrated feeding systems and are reduced to nothing. Because the pigs are affected by our decisions surrounding pork production, it is our duty to equally consider their well-being, health, and safety.

From a utilitarian perspective, the blatant disregard for a large population of stakeholders is unethical, even unprofitable. To optimize the pork production industry, pigs must be happy in addition to producers and consumers. But what is a happy pig? The problem with utilitarianism when it is applied to non-humans, is that our definitions of happiness become much more vague and unfamiliar. Happiness is not a quantifiable value, even as it applies to humans. Our stance is that a happy pig is one whose adaptive and behavioral needs are met, and who does not experience unreasonable stress. Unreasonable stress may fall under three scenarios, according to Fraser et al’s paper, *A Scientific Conception of Animal Welfare that Reflects Ethical Concerns.* These obstacles to animal welfare arise from a disconnect between the animal’s adaptive needs and the environment in which it is kept. They are as follows:

(1) If animals possess adaptations that no longer serve a significant function in the new environment, then unpleasant subjective experiences may arise...

(2) If the environment poses challenges for which the animal has no corresponding adaptation, then functional problems may arise...

(3) Where animals have adaptations corresponding to the kinds of environmental challenges they face, problems may still arise if the adaptations prove inadequate (187-188).

Our own definition of welfare mirrors that of Fraser et al by emphasizing the need to tailor farm conditions to best suit the adaptive behaviors of pigs.

Rutger and Robert Heefer state that there is inherent worth in the ability of an organism to “lead…[a natural life] through the development of their natural capabilities and adaptations” (Musschenga). A pig’s “animal integrity,” defined by Rutger and Heefer as “the wholeness and completeness of the species-specific balance of the creature, as well as the animal’s capacity to maintain itself independently in an environment suitable to the species” (Musschenga), requires the space to wallow, root, forage, graze, and travel in small social groups of two to four (“HSI Report”). Thus to raise happy pigs, not only must the animals’ immediate needs for food and shelter be met, but consideration must also be made of their instinctive behaviors and the conditions in which they naturally thrive.

When pigs’ needs are sufficiently looked after, and they are happy so far as can be determined by human faculties, there may be benefits extending beyond the animals’ welfare. One study suggests that pigs raised in environments that provide outdoor access and are suitable for rooting and bedding may be quantifiably superior than conventionally produced pigs. The specially raised pigs demonstrated a faster rate of growth and juicier meat on average than their conventional counterparts. This study concludes that because “an alternative production system…increased growth performance of pigs,” these results “[indicate] that the conventional system is not optimal for growth rate” (Lebret et al. 2446).

Factors such as the growth rate of pigs have significant economic implications for industrial farming. Measures that we consider unethical are usually taken by factory farms to increase efficiency and output. The contradictory information presented by studies such as Lebret et al’s comparison of conventional and non-conventional pigs has deep implications for the utility of continuing the current inhumane methods. If pigs respond positively and productively to better living conditions, then there should be little reason to maintain the current procedures. Evidence such as this puts the impetus on pork producers to change over to more ethical practices. Such a change would increase the pigs’ happiness as well as that of the producer, and possibly even the consumer presuming that juicier meat is more palatable.

In summary, as we evaluate the ethicality of the current state of pork sourcing at Carleton, we balance environmental impact and the ability of the pigs to express their natural range of behaviors, a definition of animal welfare that goes beyond mere suffering and functionality. However, even after establishing the cardinal directions for your moral compass, making these decisions can be difficult.

Take nose-ringing for example. Nose-ringing is the piercing of a pig’s nose in order to disincentivize rooting behavior with inflicted pain. Rooting poses a problem to farmers because it can be destructive to the environment, causing pasture degradation and erosion. However, it is an innate behavior which pigs are driven to perform. In fact, in absence of appropriate means of channeling their rooting instincts, pigs may compensate by “redirect[ing] this rooting behaviour towards pen fittings and pen-mates” (Marchant-Forde 197). Nose-ringing not only suppresses a natural behavior, but also does so in a way that induces unnecessary pain; thus, it is an unethical practice from an animal welfare perspective. Moreover, elimination of nose-ringing has the potential to cause cascading improvements in the pork industry. Without nose-rings, farms will be forced to search for means of satisfying pigs’ instinctual needs. It will thereby necessitate larger space provisions because rooting requires room to explore. However, greater space allocations for pigs and the resulting intensive rooting can cause significant ecosystemic damage due to vegetation loss, erosion and the destruction of natural habitats. The consideration of nose-ringing demonstrates that making ethical decisions about pig production is not always straightforward. In our analysis, we will weigh the interests of all stakeholders.

**Evaluating the Current Sourcing Methods**

Under Bon Appétit’s current three tier system, no third party certification standard is required for either first tier, locally sourced pork or third tier, industrially produced pork. Clearly the lack of certifications for the large-scale pork producers is an ethical concern, considering the pervading use of inhumane practices in the name of economic efficiency. However, to what extent is the lack of certification for first tier meat also a concern? As consumers we would like to presume that local, small scale meat producers are more sensitive to the needs of their livestock. This plays into the pathos of aesthetically ideal farmer-animal relationships romanticized in our conceptions of farm life. According to Alyse Festenstein and Katie McKenna, Bon Appétit has good justification for not requiring first tier certifications. First of all, many of the certification systems require membership fees, which can be economically unfeasible for small farms. Secondly, the proximity of these farms (within 150 miles) permits a closer relationship between customer and provider because it allows for supervision of the source (Festenstein and McKenna).

The middle tier is currently the only part of Bon Appétit’s meat sourcing plan, which requires a rigorous standard of certification. Bon Appétit accepts only meat that has been certified by the third party organizations Animal Welfare Approved, Food Alliance, Humane Farm Animal Care, or Global Animal Partnership (steps 2 and above) from medium sized farms (“Animal Welfare”). Each of these certifications holds pork production to a stringent set of regulations. They are fairly consistent across all major categories of pig welfare. For example, none permit nose-ringing or tight confinement. However, there are some exceptions to this generalization. Only AWA mandates the provision of wallows and continuous outdoor access (“Humane Farm Animal Care Animal Care Standards: Pigs”; “Pig Standards 2014”; “FA Sustainability Standard for Livestock Operations”). Although these are not required to satisfy the most pressing needs of pigs, they are arguably instrumental in an ethical conception of their well-being. From a cross-comparison of all of the standards, it appears that the AWA guidelines are the most rigorous. Ideally, all of the pork consumed at Carleton would be guaranteed humane by one or more of these certifications. But Carleton is not in a position that allows it to source any of its pork from middle tier farms. Thus none of the pork consumed at Carleton is even required to be held to these standards. Fortunately, the college’s first tier provider, Hidden Stream Farm, is Food Alliance certified even though it is not required to be by Bon Appétit’s policies (“Hidden Stream Farm”).

Large-scale production sites, often consisting of more than 10,000 breeding sows at a single locale, dominate the industry, with Smithfield Foods housing over 1.1 million sows at any given time (“HSI Report”). The pigs are often confined to tight indoor quarters, with the space allowance for each individual in a growing or finishing facility averaging a mere 7.7 square feet. When they do find themselves in an outdoor arena, the foraging pigs are on average only 12.5 feet from another member of the group (“HSI Report”). Further, CAFOs pose a host of additional threats to the vitality of the surrounding ecosystem, some examples including toxic dust and ammonia emissions, soil acidification and eutrophication, bacterial resistance due to non-therapeutic antibiotic use, and carbon dioxide and greenhouse gas emissions (“HSI Report”).

Smithfield Foods is not certified by any of the third-party standards accepted by Bon Appétit, but does match the provisions of the Pork Quality Assurance Plus (PQA Plus) standard developed by the National Pork Production Council (NPPC). However, this certification system largely focuses on the proper management of a pork production company, including stipulations such as “to use antibiotics responsibly,” “properly store, label and account for all drug products and medicated feeds,” “identify and track all treated animals,” and “follow appropriate on-farm feed and commercial feed processor procedures” (“Pork Quality Assurance Plus”). Thus, the PQA Plus standard, although mentioning a broad criterion to “provide proper swine care to improve swine well-being,” does not sufficiently address and regulate all relevant environmental and animal welfare concerns. Troublingly, the NPPC “opposes passage of the Waxman-Markey climate bill…because of the tremendous costs it will impose on producers” and has published on its “Environment and Energy” webpage a mathematical rationale as to why its contributions to Greenhouse Gas Emissions are negligible and thus not of serious concern (“Climate Change”).

The reality at Hidden Stream Farm is much brighter. The family farm does not use any chemicals, hormones or “unwanted antibiotics” and raises its pigs, as well as all other livestock, using a grass-based system in which the animals are provided with “fresh pasture every day or two” (“Hidden Stream Farm” 2014). The farm prides itself in producing meat that is of greater health benefits to the consumer, as “sun and grass produces [meat with]… Omega 3 Fatty Acids and Conjugated Lineolic Acids (CLAs)” (“Hidden Stream Farm”). Moreover, the practice is Food Alliance certified. The standard prohibits genetic modification and the use of pesticides, growth-promoting hormones, and feed additive antibiotics. Further, it requires corporations to meet a host of criteria under a number of evaluative categories: healthy and humane care of livestock; soil and water conservation/nutrient management; integrated pest, disease and weed management; wildlife habitat and biodiversity conservation; and safe and fair working conditions (“FA Sustainability Standard”).

In conclusion, our research strongly indicated that Hidden Stream Farm is an environmentally ethical source of pork whereas Smithfield Foods is not.

**Moving Forward: Solutions and Actions**

Realistically, it’s unlikely that a company as large as Bon Appétit can fully disengage from industrial farming. Factory farms produce 99% of the livestock in the United States (2002 US Census Data), and for a company of this size to avoid this class of suppliers is infeasible. In fact, Bon Appétit and organizations like it may be able to act for greater beneficial change by continuing to purchase from third tier farms.

As we learned in our interview, Bon Appétit is highly committed to improving the lives of the livestock they purchase (Festenstein, McKenna). From the perspective of justice for the biotic community, it may in fact be superior for individual companies to remain customers of these farms so the companies can exert market pressure towards improvement. Obviously if a wholesale, industry-wide boycott on factory farms (or even just the most problematic of the industrial farms), were to occur that would be the optimum, as the economic pressure would force the industry to transition to exclusively first and second tier farms. Additionally, Bon Appétit as an individual corporation could conceivably transition completely away from purchasing from third tier farms. However, until the market has changed sufficiently to support this purchasing structure, Bon Appétit can influence the farms from which they purchase pork. Bon Appétit has been effective in applying this pressure, as shown by their role in changing the policy of gestation crate use.

While Bon Appétit can comfortably purchase from third tier farms due to their impactful position in the industry, Carleton College cannot. There are several reasons for this, the first of which is a difference in stakeholders between Carleton and Bon Appétit. Additionally, Carleton can feasibly disengage from industrial pig farming due to the scale of Carleton. Let’s begin by discussing the stakeholder contrasts between Carleton and Bon Appétit.

Both organizations are corporations; they each have a responsibility towards numerous consumer groups, their shareholders, their farmers and those farmers’ livestock. While Carleton has some responsibility to their employees and trustees, the largest contingent of their stakeholders and the group that should have the loudest voice is the student body. Colleges have a multifaceted relationship to their students. The sheer breadth of this relationship requires a significant voice of the student body in decisions made by their colleges, as students possess the combined interests of clients, tenants, employees, and shareholders. Thus, if we are attempting to make a just decision on how Carleton should source their pork in the future, we should determine the feelings of the Carleton student body. To accomplish this task, we performed a survey.

Our survey consisted of a random sample of Carleton students. We collected this sample by emailing 800, 200 from each grade, 100 male and 100 female. We had 365 participants, but 299 answered our question. We asked the students: “From time to time, Bon Appétit at Carleton College evaluates its pork sourcing. Please rank the following qualities of pork production in order of importance to you personally, 1 being most important and 5 being least important.” The participants ranked the following factors: locally sourced meat, antibiotic-free meat, pig feed modeled on their natural omnivorous diet (grain-fed vs. varied), humane slaughter, and pig habitat similar to that of their natural environment. The results show that locally sourced meat was the quality most important to the sample with an average rank of 2.73 out of 5. It was followed by humane slaughter with 2.85, antibiotic-free meat with 2.94, pig feed modeled on their natural diet at 3.22, and pig habitat similar to natural habitat at 3.25. The mean ranking for the different factors was 2.998 and the standard deviation was .22906 rank units.

Table 1. Survey Question Results: Importance of Different Aspects of Meat to Student Body at Carleton.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Question | Local Source | Antibiotic free | Humane Slaughter | Natural Diet Model | Natural Habitat Model |
| Mean Response rank | 2.73 | 2.85 | 2.94 | 3.22 | 3.25 |
| Standard deviations from mean rank | 1.17 Standard deviations more important | .646 Standard deviations more important | .253 Standard deviations more important | .969 Standard deviations less important | 1.1 Standard deviations less |

The data that suggests the most important factor of pork sourcing to the student body is locality, and by a significant margin as well, more than half a standard deviation. Now, one could argue that the student body is insufficiently informed to make assessments of various different pork sourcing factors. Indeed, there is significant evidence for the existence of a dichotomy between a layman's understanding of what constitutes animal welfare, and the understanding of an animal advocate or welfare researcher (Lassen, J., P. Sandøe, and B. Forkman). With this in mind, our group constructed our survey to avoid qualities deemed too esoteric, requiring too significant a level of knowledge to be reasonable for a uninformed respondent to adequately assess (traits like nose ringing for example), as well as avoiding terms deemed disproportionately attractive due to their popular culture saturation (buzz words like organic or free range). Additionally, if the survey results strongly contradicted the ethical or scientific literature, we would necessarily have to take that into account with regards to the usefulness of our data. Encouragingly, the results supported our existing model. As we have previously established, a utilitarian approach leads one to the conclusion that industrial farming is unacceptable, and now with the will of the stakeholders in mind, it is our recommendation that Carleton transition towards exclusively sourcing its pork from first tier farms.

This transition would require a considerable reduction in the amount of pork consumed by the college. As we learned in our interview, the amount of first tier sourcing is as much a culinary decision as it is an economic one (Festenstein and McKenna). When pork is purchased from first tier farms, the entire pig is purchased. Using the entire pig becomes a struggle for the food prep staff of the college, as there are specialized cuts that the college diners prefer, i.e. bacon and sausage. For this reason, the college is only capable of purchasing three pigs per month. Thus, the pork consumed by campus would by necessity have to be reduced, as there is no way to supply the amount of pork the campus currently consumes while supporting the proper kind of supply chain. One could argue that we could source our food from so-called “soft alternative” networks. These networks are primarily national chain organic food suppliers and groceries. While these soft alternatives provide a comforting middle ground between current consumption patterns and real change in food sourcing, these soft alternative networks are insufficient to achieve change. Foley states in his paper *Choosing a Food Future*, “only strong alternative networks such as those of local producers...have the capability to produce social and political change in the United States” (Foley 49).

It is our opinion that while a transition to exclusive sourcing from first tier farm necessitates reduced consumption, there may in fact be strategies which Carleton could employ to increase its ability to purchase and use first tier pork, namely educating the student body about their pork sourcing. Millennials do desire to learn where their food comes from, and engage with opportunities to do so (Smith and Bower). Education of young people about the origin of their food may lead to positive change in the meat industry, as Temple Grandin indicated, stating “The meat industry must start communicating more effectively with these affluent young adults. Their influence will extend beyond the developed world because they will write future legislation and policies that will have an effect on the entire world” (Grandin).

From our own experience as members of this community, when we learned of the nature of pork sourcing at Carleton, we were surprised and somewhat distressed. It is also likely that if educated, the Carleton community would seek to contribute towards changes in line with their desires. We have seen this with other environmental justice causes in the past, such as the carbon divestment initiative last year. In addition, a few years ago Carleton students initiated a conversation with Bon Appétit at Carleton College to only source fair trade bananas. Bon Appétit responded to the interests of the students, coordinating banana sourcing with Bon Appétit’s operation at St. Olaf to make the deliveries economically feasible (Festenstein and McKenna). Considering their actions in past, in all likelihood Carleton students, if fully informed, would take action to support first tier pork sourcing and encourage the efficient use of whole pigs, primarily through menu changes. Regardless, the Carleton administration should make the education of their student body on the realities of the meat served on campus a priority, both as part of a duty to their stakeholders and to help facilitate the will of those stakeholders.

In the calculus of cost and benefit, one must include all those who may be affected by a decision. Corporate farms have historically disregarded the welfare of their livestock. Farming corporations primarily make decisions with their shareholders’ interests in mind, which has in turn led to deplorable conditions for pigs. Not only has this paradigm led to a decrease in the quality of pig life, it also has degraded the cherished relationship between the farmer and his livestock. We feel that moving forward, if we want to repair this relationship and correct this injustice, a major restructuring of the way we raise our food is required and morally necessary. Carleton College must abandon industrialized farming, return to small, localized, and intimate farms with a high degree of contact between farmers and their livestock. While this will require a shift in consumption patterns, it will move us back towards a positive farming relationship and once again provide our partners in the enterprise, the animals themselves, with the quality of life they deserve.

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