

2026 continuous improvement report

Measuring What Matters



For the People, Animals
& Climate of Tomorrow



Nourishing Today
Sustaining Tomorrow

Data submitted as of September 2026, based on status at end of 2025



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A note from the Meat Institute’s President & CEO

Over the last several years, the Protein PACT has established a comprehensive framework for measuring progress across the meat sector, and that framework continues to evolve.

This year, the Meat Institute is taking the next step in that journey, evolving our targets through 2030 and introducing enhanced reporting features that simplify and streamline sustainability information for participating companies, their customers, and other stakeholders.

We have revised our data reporting framework from more than 500 metrics to approximately 50 core measures tightly focused on the information that is most meaningful for understanding performance and supporting constructive food systems solutions.

The changes made in 2026 are designed to make our data collection framework and reporting more useful — to companies reporting data; to customers seeking credible, transparent information about their supply chains; to the Meat Institute as we develop tools and resources that support continuous improvement, and to other stakeholders as we collectively develop strategies that support positive outcomes for healthy people, animals, communities, and the planet.

The approximately 50 core metrics reported this year establish a foundation for consistent measurement in the years ahead. They also show where progress is already being made and where additional attention, resources, and collaboration can make the greatest difference.

As we’ve always said, continuous improvement does not mean every company begins in the same place or follows the same path. It means measuring honestly, learning from results, sharing effective practices and always moving forward toward our common vision for a healthy future.



This report is just one place we share our experiences and actions, focused on the Meat Institute’s data reporting framework. Given our commitment to shaping meat’s role in the future of healthy diets, food security, and sustainable food systems, we also routinely engage with food systems organizations, nutrition experts, opinion leaders and influencers, decision makers, and other key audiences. We are committed for the long-term, and we are investing in broad, ambitious engagement as part of balanced dialogues focused on constructive solutions.

Through 2030 and beyond, the Meat Institute will continue to expand participation in our data collection and programs, strengthen the quality and usefulness of industry data, communicate, lead, and help translate shared goals into practical action.

Julie Anna Potts



Since 2023, the Protein PACT has convened more than 80 thought leadership events featuring more than 100 expert speakers, including academics, producers, and representatives of more than 20 animal agriculture organizations.

In addition to our continuous improvement targets, transparent communication is a core goal of the Protein PACT. We are committing to defining an affirmative agenda, advancing it proactively, and uniting not only our sector but all food systems stakeholders behind a shared vision for the future.



Our path to 2030 and beyond



Animal care

All member companies maintain a written animal welfare policy requiring direct suppliers to implement a comprehensive animal welfare program, and all companies handling live animals pass third-party animal transport and handling audits.



Food safety

All member companies use whole-of-company approaches to train, educate and advance food safety across their operations.



Worker safety

The sector will further reduce workplace injuries by 50% from a 2019 baseline, building on the 75% reduction achieved from 1999–2019.



Environment

The Meat Institute will support 100% of members in reducing impacts on climate, land, air, and water and increasing transparency, consistent with global science-based practices.



Protein PACT bold goals



Bold goals reflect the industry's values and inspire members to continuously improve and increase consumer trust.

The bold goals are aspirational, forward-looking, and intended to encompass the entire supply chain.

Why our data framework and targets have evolved

Targets are routinely assessed and revisited to ensure frameworks measure what matters most while accounting for dynamic stakeholder expectations, emerging scientific evidence, and lessons learned. Across all our focus areas, our targets are intended to verify progress, identify gaps, and inspire practical solutions.

Updates since our last report include a proactive new food safety target emphasizing the role of leadership, training, and culture across entire organizations, a refined animal welfare target focused on actions within member companies, and a shift in our approach to helping fill the "protein gap" affecting people experiencing hunger.

While we determined that our previous target was too broad for us to affect change individually, we have joined a coalition organized by Hatch for Hunger on this topic, and we continue to document Meat Institute members' meaningful contributions to their communities.



Data-based benchmarking to catalyze practical action sector-wide



Broad participation in our pre-competitive data collection framework is essential to building a credible picture of the sector's progress.

In 2026, 89 companies participated in Meat Institute reporting, including every company represented on the Executive Board and 71% of packer-processors represented on the full Board of Directors.

Participation provides the foundation for identifying areas of strength, understanding where further progress is needed, and developing tools and resources that help companies continue to improve.

89 reporting companies*

100% of Meat Institute Executive Board members

71% of packer-processors on the full Board

449 North American establishments covered by submitted data

*Including Meat Institute members and packer/processor members of the Canadian Meat Council





Providing the best animal care and raising healthy animals

The high-quality, nutrient-dense meat we rely on for healthy diets and sustainable food systems depends on healthy, well-cared for animals.

Our revised animal welfare target emphasizes the importance of understanding and embracing consumers' expectations that animal welfare is a shared responsibility by the whole supply chain, not just those handling animals.

2030 target

All member companies maintain a written animal welfare policy requiring direct suppliers to implement a comprehensive animal welfare program, and all companies handling live animals pass third-party animal transport and handling audits.

Achievement snapshot*

Species-specific best practices for animal care and handling are increasingly embedded in both company expectations and establishment-level practices.

74% of reporting companies have a written animal welfare policy for direct suppliers

96% of reporting beef and pork establishments maintain third-party animal handling and welfare training based on the Meat Institute Animal Handling Guidelines**

91% of reporting establishments maintain third-party animal handling and welfare training based on the relevant species-specific guideline.

82% of all reporting establishments that handle live animals passed third-party animal transport and handling audits

*Data reflect beef, pork, chicken, and turkey only. The number of bison, lamb, and veal establishments reporting data is too low for inclusion.

**Apply only to beef and pork.



Beef

100% of beef establishments passed an accredited third-party animal welfare slaughter audit

92% of beef establishments passed an accredited third-party meat industry animal welfare transportation audit

94% of beef establishments maintain third-party animal handling and welfare training based on the Meat Institute Animal Handling Guidelines

Pork

100% of pork establishments passed an accredited third-party meat industry animal welfare slaughter audit

89% of pork establishments passed an accredited third-party meat industry animal welfare transportation audit

97% of pork establishments maintain third-party animal handling and welfare training based on the Meat Institute Animal Handling Guidelines



Chicken

95% of chicken establishments passed an accredited third-party National Chicken Council (NCC) Broiler Welfare Audit (Processing Operations)

85% of chicken establishments passed an accredited third-party National Chicken Council (NCC) Broiler Welfare Audit (Catching & Transportation)

95% of chicken establishments maintain third-party poultry handling and welfare training based on the National Chicken Council (NCC) Broiler Welfare Guidelines

Turkey

75% of turkey establishments passed an accredited third-party National Turkey Federation (NTF) Slaughter Audit

63% of turkey establishments passed an accredited third-party National Turkey Federation (NTF) Catching & Transportation Guidelines

75% of turkey establishments maintain third-party turkey handling and welfare training based on the National Turkey Federation (NTF) Animal Care Guidelines



Turning measurement into action

1,000+ facilities are certified in one of the four Safe Feed/Safe Food certification programs administered by the American Feed Industry Association (AFIA).



More than 80% of U.S. beef comes from Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) certified farms and ranches; BQA helps producers continuously raise standards for sustainability and animal care.



99% of the U.S. milk supply comes from dairy farms that are participating in the FARM Animal Care Program, demonstrating U.S. dairy farmers' and the broader dairy community's commitment to assuring the health and welfare of dairy cows through exceptional cow care.



96% of the pigs on U.S. farms are cared for by employees who have received training like Pork Quality Assurance Plus (PQA Plus®).





Producing safe food without exception

Food safety is the foundation that consumer trust is built on. Our new food safety target further emphasizes the role of leadership, training, and culture across entire organizations in producing safe food without exception.

Meat processing and packing are among the most regulated industries in the United States. U.S. Department of Agriculture inspectors are continuously present in meat packing plants and oversee compliance with a wide array of regulatory requirements.

While preventing foodborne illness requires appropriate safety measures at every step in food's journey from farm to fork, we implement the highest standards for food safety measures.

2030 target

All member companies use whole-of-company approaches to train, educate and advance food safety across their operations.

Achievement snapshot

The Meat Institute is helping the industry move beyond food safety as a set of systems and procedures toward a whole-of-company culture in which food safety is understood as a shared responsibility, driven from the top.

Through its Food Safety Task Force and expanded training initiatives, the Meat Institute is helping leaders strengthen organizational ownership, embed food safety into decision-making, and reinforce continuous improvement across their operations.

95% of establishments regularly track/review food safety data

94% of establishments have a robust sanitation program in place

98% of establishments conduct foreign-material risk assessments

99% of establishments have root-cause-analysis programs for substantiated food safety incidents

98% of establishments conduct annual accredited third-party food safety audits

2,400+ people participated in online "Foundations of Listeria Control" training

Turning measurement into action

The Meat Institute Executive Board created in 2025 a "Food Safety Tool Kit for the Executive," which in 2026 was widely distributed to all C-suite leaders at Meat Institute member companies.

The Meat Institute and the Meat Science Association translated the "Foundations of Listeria Control" course into Spanish to allow for broader distribution to employees in the industry.

The Meat Institute is a member of the Alliance to Stop Foodborne Illness, expanding industry contributions to and adoption of food safety best practices.

U.S. dairy is proactive in protecting consumers. Initiatives such as through the Innovation Center promote excellence by convening U.S. dairy companies to share world-class practices, publishing tools and guidance including the U.S. Dairy Traceability Guidelines, conducting training and advancing scientific research.





Supporting a diverse workforce & ensuring safe workspaces

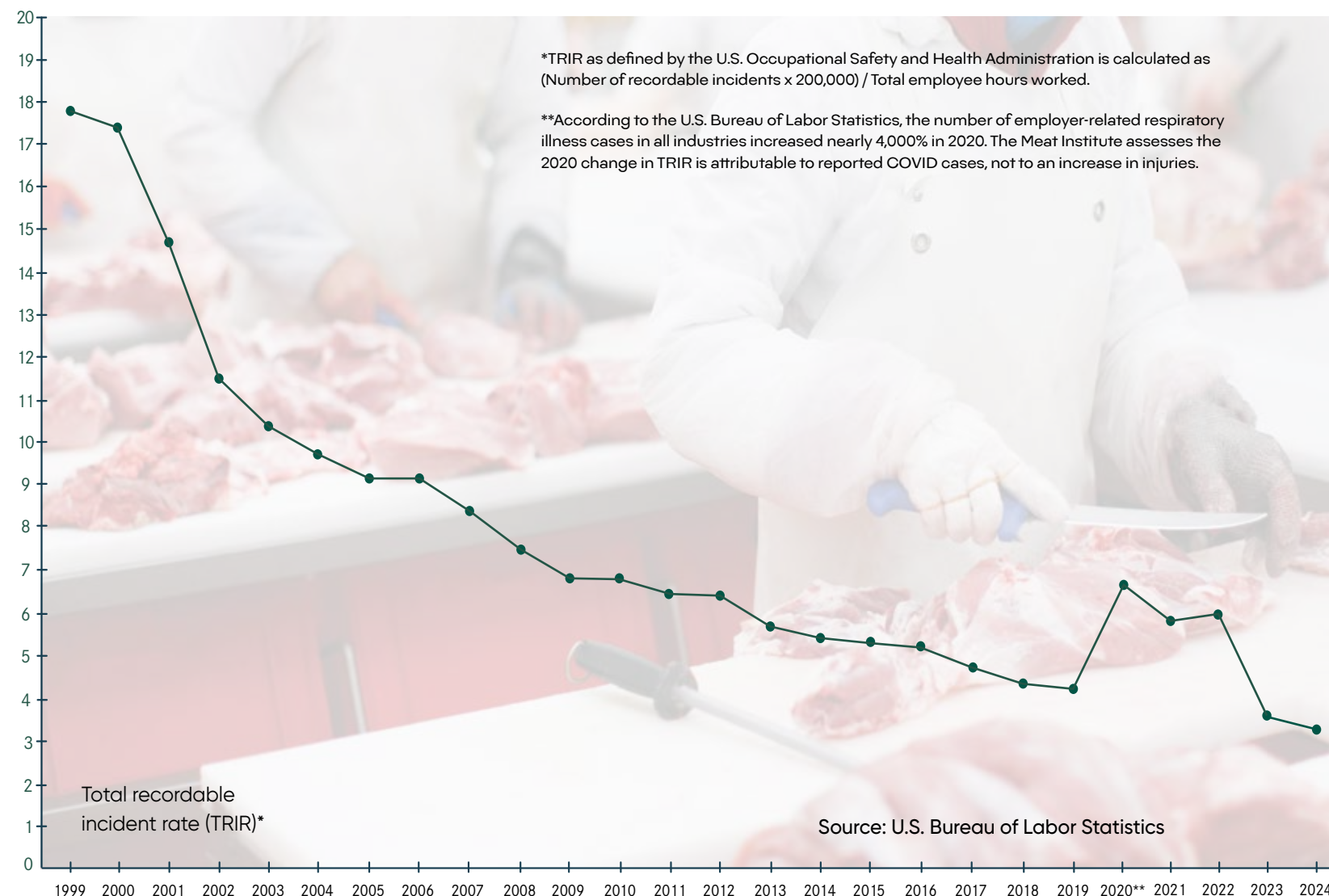
The 500,000+ dedicated people who work in America's meat companies keep nutrient-dense food on our tables and our farm economy running. They are our sector's greatest asset.

Official U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data for the 2025 Total Recordable Incident Rate (TRIR) is not available at the time of publication of this report (October 2026). Updates to digital versions will be made where possible.

2030 target

Further reduce workplace injuries by 50% from the 2019 baseline, building on a 75% reduction from 1999–2019.

Achievement snapshot



Federal data show continued and significant improvements in worker safety outcomes, and Meat Institute members demonstrate very high adoption of training practices and systems that create safer workplaces.

Meat Institute members report a lower TRIR (3) than the federal benchmark (3.2)

99.8% implement new-employee safety training

99% have continued employee/supervisor training

99% conduct annual injury-data analysis

94% have written incident-reporting policies



Turning measurement into action

- Launching print and digital “Worker Safety Topics of the Month” toolkits
- The Meat Institute is collaborating with the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA) as a partner on the Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) program, to launch updated worker safety training and education videos featuring best practices for individuals working with cattle in feedlots and in packer/processor facilities.

These training videos can be used across the cattle supply chain.





Supporting our communities and contributing to end hunger

Too many Americans are facing hunger, and meat and dairy are among the most requested products by those seeking assistance from food banks and charities. Yet, meat represents just 1% of food distributed by food charities, in part due to limited infrastructure for cold storage, packing, and distribution.

In addition to producing the nutrient-dense, high-quality meat recommended by the 2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) and by organizations like the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Meat Institute's members have committed to act on a non-competitive basis to help end hunger in the United States by openly sharing information and advancing industry-wide implementation of best practices - for example, increasing food banks' capacity to accept, process, and distribute donations of fresh meat.

These efforts contribute to filling the "protein gap" that results when people facing hunger don't have access to enough nutrient-dense meat. The "protein gap" worsens hunger and particularly impacts women, children, and older adults who have greater needs for the nutrients, vitamins, and minerals best, and sometimes only, found naturally in animal-source foods.

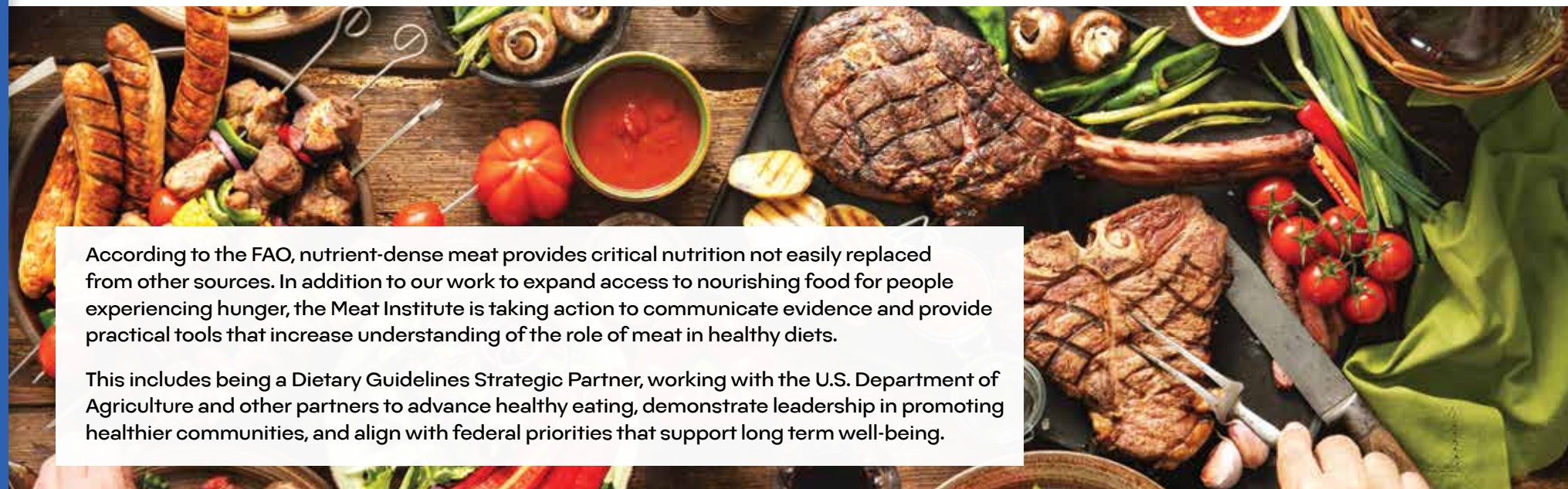
Improving access to high-quality protein has been part of Protein PACT from the beginning. As the initiative evolves, that work is increasingly focused on collaboration that can strengthen the charitable food system itself — alongside the extensive community support provided directly by member companies.

In 2026, the Meat Institute joined the Coalition to Close the Protein Gap, organized by Hatch for Hunger and also supported by member companies; partners in beef, pork, poultry and dairy; and the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services.

The coalition is a \$40 million public-private initiative that brings together leaders across government, agriculture, industry, philanthropy, and hunger relief to build a stronger, more efficient charitable food system. Together, coalition partners are investing in the infrastructure, partnerships, and supply chain needed to permanently close the protein gap and improve access to nutritious protein for families across America. The coalition's goal is to deliver 3 billion protein-rich meals per year and close the charitable protein gap for good.



HATCH
PROVIDING PROTEIN WITH PURPOSE



According to the FAO, nutrient-dense meat provides critical nutrition not easily replaced from other sources. In addition to our work to expand access to nourishing food for people experiencing hunger, the Meat Institute is taking action to communicate evidence and provide practical tools that increase understanding of the role of meat in healthy diets.

This includes being a Dietary Guidelines Strategic Partner, working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and other partners to advance healthy eating, demonstrate leadership in promoting healthier communities, and align with federal priorities that support long term well-being.

\$400m

Meat Institute members have a long record of charitable giving, and over the last decade have contributed an estimated \$400 million in charitable giving. Recent examples include:



Boar's Head

Boar's Head donated approximately 2.3 million servings of protein to families in need across the country in 2025. Its employees also supported All Faiths Food Bank in Florida through food drives and volunteer service; in 2024–25, employees packed more than 34,000 food kits, and the company funded a local school's food pantry and backpack program.



North Country Smokehouse committed in 2025 to fund its local school district's Culinary Arts Program for the remainder of the school year, demonstrating how member community investment extends beyond hunger relief to education and workforce development.



Northgate Gonzalez Market and its customers contributed \$239,425 to support Southern California wildfire victims in 2025, including \$100,000 contributed by the company alongside customer donations.

Smithfield

In 2025, Smithfield Foods donated more than 16 million servings of protein as well as \$150,000 to food banks across the U.S. Since 2008, Smithfield has donated more than 340 million servings of protein to fight hunger and address food insecurity through its Helping Hungry Homes® program.



Tyson Foods donated nearly 16 million pounds of protein in 2025 to support hunger relief and disaster response, including more than 11 million pounds distributed through Feeding America's network of 200+ food banks. Tyson also invested in programs addressing barriers to food access, including rural food-delivery initiatives.

Wegmans

Wegmans reported donating 36.8 million pounds of food in 2025, alongside extensive community giving and customer fundraising for local Feeding America food-bank partners.





Optimizing contributions to healthy land, air & water

Environmental stewardship begins with understanding impacts, managing them systematically, and developing practical pathways to act.

Environmental performance across facilities and supply chains remains an area of strong interest for customers, investors, policymakers, and other stakeholders that desire credible information about meat's impact on the environment.

The Meat Institute reporting framework provides a centralized pathway for companies to communicate their progress to reduce impacts on climate, land, air, and water while increasing transparency, consistent with global science-based practices and customer expectations.

2030 target

The Meat Institute will support 100% of members in reducing impacts on climate, land, air, and water and increasing transparency, consistent with global science-based practices.

Achievement snapshot

Reporting companies are investing in measuring their impacts, developing solutions, and implementing actions to reduce emissions, increase renewable energy use, improve water quality, and scale conservation.

The Meat Institute's role extends beyond measuring that activity. In 2026, we expanded the tools, technical resources and regulatory guidance available to members so companies of different sizes and at different stages of their sustainability journey can identify opportunities, meet evolving customer expectations and regulatory requirements, and make measurable progress.

57% of reporting companies have an energy-management program in place to increase energy efficiency

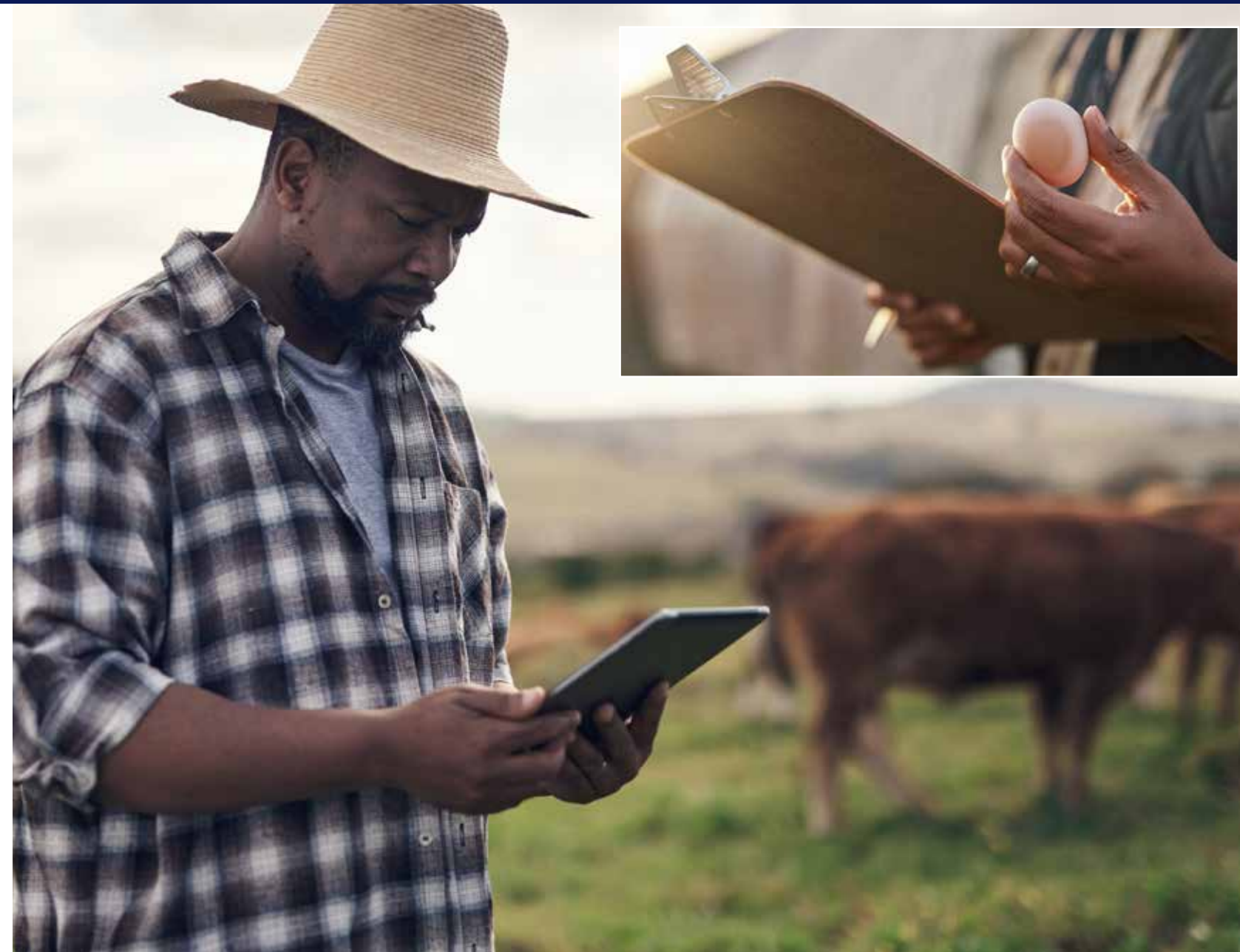
31% are undertaking projects to reduce Scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gas emissions through interventions such as cap and flare, anaerobic digestion, advanced wastewater processing, renewable energy transition for electricity and natural gas

87% have a waste-management program

69% have conducted water-risk assessments

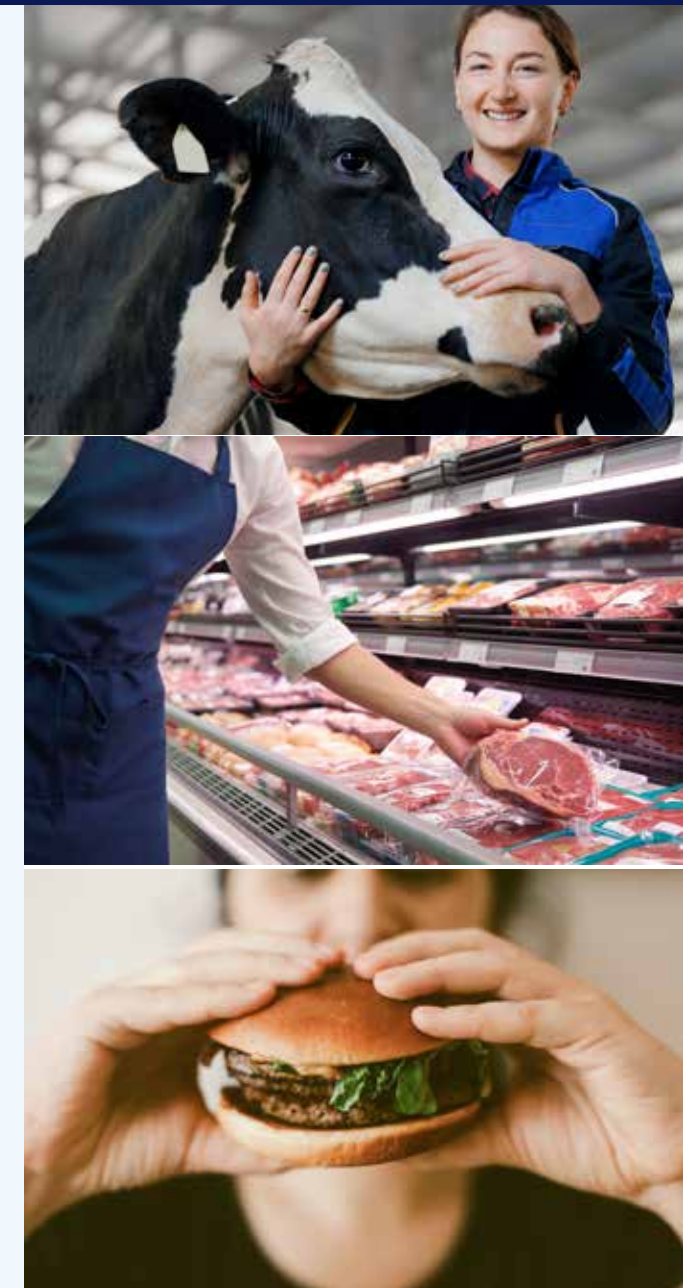
70% have an environmental-management system

12% participate in or lead land-conservation/restoration projects



Turning measurement into action

- New Meat Institute Environmental Resource Hub provides a one-stop-shop for stakeholders to explore best practices, industry tools, and effective policy outcomes.
- Monthly Meat Institute Sustainability Committee meetings provide an avenue for members to stay up-to-date on evolving policy, standards and best practices through facilitated dialogue, industry updates, and expert presentations.
- The Meat Institute Emissions Factors Brief was developed to highlight the need for sharing of best practices and alignment on scientifically grounded emission factor selection for scope 3, category 1 calculations. The report highlights 25 unique emission factors across beef, pork and poultry systems and five knowledge gaps where clearer guidance and alignment on best practices could make reporting easier and more reliable.
- The Meat Institute's California Climate Accountability Guide assists members in understanding how California's emissions reporting requirements apply to their businesses and what is needed for compliance.



Appendix A: Companies reporting data as of September 2026

- American Beef Packers
 - American Foods Group
 - Angus Meats Inc.
 - Art Leavitt Foods
 - Birchwood Foods
 - Bob Evans Farms
 - Branding Iron Holdings
 - Broadleaf Specialty Meats
 - Brown Packing Co.
 - BrucePac
 - Sysco-Buckhead Meat
 - Bush Brothers Provision Company
 - Cargill
 - Carlton Farms
 - Catelli Brothers
 - Caviness Beef Packers
 - Central Valley Meats
 - Certified Meats Products, Inc.
 - Coast Packing Company
 - Colorado Premium Foods
 - Conestoga Meats*
 - CS Beef Packers
 - CTI Foods
 - Dietz & Watson
- Empirical Foods
 - Fair Oaks Foods
 - Farmington Foods
 - Florida Beef, Inc
 - FPL Food LLC
 - Fresh Mark, Inc
 - Golden State Foods
 - Greater Omaha Packing Co.
 - Hill Meat Company
 - Honey Baked Ham
 - Hormel Foods
 - HyLife Foods*
 - Indiana Packers
 - Jack Link's Protein Snacks
 - Jack Stack BBQ
 - JBS / Pilgrim's
 - Johnsonville
 - K&M Food Service
 - Kayem Foods, Incorporated
 - Land O'Frost
 - Leidy's LLC
 - Lesters*
 - Lopez Dorada
 - Maple Leaf
 - Marcho Farms
- Michael's Finer Meats and Seafoods
 - National Beef Packing
 - Nueske's Applewood Smoked Meats
 - Oberto Snacks Inc.
 - Old Trapper
 - Old World Provisions
 - Olymel*
 - Omaha Steaks International, LLC
 - OSI Group
 - Pederson Farms
 - Perdue Premium Meat Co.
 - PFS/Middendorf Meat Company
 - Pineland Farms Natural Meats
 - Pitman Farms
 - Plymouth Beef
 - Preval AG*
 - Quality Refrigerated Services
 - Schweid & Sons
 - Seaboard Foods
 - Sigma
 - Smithfield
 - Sterling Pacific Meat Co.
- Strassburger Steaks
 - SuKarne
 - Superior Farms
 - Surlean Foods
 - Sustainable Beef
 - Swaggerty Sausage Company
 - Sonoma County Meat Co.
 - The Miniat Companies
 - Thomas Foods International USA
 - Triumph Foods
 - True North Foods*
 - True Story Foods
 - Tyson Foods
 - Upper Iowa Beef
 - Verde Farms
 - Washington Beef
 - West Liberty Foods
 - Winkler Meats*

*Canadian Meat Council member participant

Appendix B: Protein PACT partners

- Alltech
- Animal Agriculture Alliance
- Canadian Meat Council
- Dairy Management, Inc.
- Elanco
- Institute for Feed Education and Research
- Leather and Hide Council of America
- Meat & Livestock Australia
- Meat Institute
- National Corn Growers Association
- National Pork Board
- National Pork Producers Council
- U.S. Dairy Export Council
- U.S. Meat Export Federation
- U.S. Roundtable for Sustainable Beef
- U.S. Roundtable for Sustainable Poultry & Eggs





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