



The Power of In-Person: Influencer TASTE Tour Highlights Sustainability

GLADSTONE, Mo. – Monday, Sept. 26, 2022 – Soy and soybean farming were on the menu this summer when 10 food bloggers took part in the June 2022 Best Food Facts TASTE Tour in the Des Moines, Iowa, area. The tour, coordinated by The Center for Food Integrity, with support from the United Soybean Board, was designed to highlight on-farm sustainability and showcase the many nutritional benefits of soy.

“We hand selected food bloggers who have a passion not only for food, but for sustainability, and who have large and loyal audiences,” said Roxi Beck, CFI consumer engagement director.

The influencers have a combined audience reach of over 35 million, and following the tour distributed a total of 90 posts regarding soy sustainability and recipes featuring soy.

“The bloggers simply want to know that the farmers growing, raising and producing their food are doing so responsibly, with care for crops, animals and the planet,” said Beck. “And they’re always on the lookout for innovative recipes to share with their readers.”

The 10 influencers were immersed in all things soy during the tour, from soy on dinner menus to conversations with Des Moines-area soybean farmers.

The two-day tour took them to the Dave Struthers farm in Collins, Iowa, to learn about family legacy, growing soy and raising livestock. In addition, Iowa soybean farmers Cassie Franklin, Dan De Vrise, Ethan Crow and Pat Murken joined bloggers at dinner events where conversations were had and many questions were answered.

“I’m from the Bronx and we didn’t have farms in New York City,” said Marta Rivera Diaz, with the blog Sense & Edibility. “What sticks out to me most about sustainability and soy is that it’s not a new concept. Everybody is on this kick that food has to be sustainable and meanwhile I’m learning from these farmers that they’ve been practicing sustainability for decades, if not centuries.”

The trip also included a visit to the World Food Prize Hall of Laureates in Des Moines, which pays tribute to Dr. Norman Borlaug, Nobel Prize winner and World Food Prize founder, for a lifetime of work in agriculture advancements.

The tour ended with a culinary experience at the National Pork Board Innovation Kitchen where South Dakota farmer and registered dietitian Charlotte Rommereim talked about the many nutritional benefits of soy and sustainable farming. Following, bloggers put their newfound knowledge to work in the National Pork Producers Council Innovation Kitchen to create and enjoy several soy-based recipes.

“Charlotte is a dietician and fifth generation farmer,” said Amy Locurto, with the blog Living Locurto. “I found it so interesting, some of the facts that she told us about soy.”

“Soy is such a versatile product,” said Rachael Yerkes, with the blog Eazy Peazy Mealz. “I forget about some of the other uses beyond tofu, like fermented soy miso, soy sauces and edamame. It’s just great plant-based nutrition.”

The tour is an example of the power of influencer experiences to earn trust in agriculture and the food industry.

“It’s important that we not only tell the story about soy sustainability, but we let people engage with it and create opportunities for them to ask questions and also experience the passion we have for producing safe reliable products,” said Jack Cornell, United Soybean Board Director, Sustainable Supply. “Consumers value third-party, objective information and that’s what this type of outreach provides as these influencers share content. Their excitement and takeaways are a testament to farmers’ ongoing commitment to producing nutritious food for consumers and an important protein source for animals in the most sustainable way.”

“I’m always impressed by the passion of the farmers,” said Cathy Trochelman, with the blog Lemon Tree Dwelling. “I’m impressed by how much they know and how much they put into the work that they do.”

Content, tour videos and links to the blogger websites can be found on bestfoodfacts.org.





