

I was fortunate enough to grow up in a small town in southwest Minnesota on my family's wean-to-finish swine farm, which significantly impacted the food I consumed. I was raised in a traditional family where we sat down as a family for every meal. Every Sunday, my grandma hosted a large meal for all of our family as well as the farmhands that were a part of our farm. Our meals were always homemade and included a lot of pork. Sunday lunches were one of my favorite memories from growing up. As I got older, our family meals started to become less frequent and the traditions changed. Fast food started to become a more common meal within my family and the Sunday lunches occurred a lot less often, partly due to the increase in sports and extracurricular activities that my siblings and I participated in. The rise of social media, the availability of fast food, and the improvements in food technology have led to a change in the way we get and consume our food, and this change will only continue.

The social media trend started in 2004 with Facebook and YouTube followed in 2005. Facebook and YouTube are now very popular sources where individuals, including celebrities, have started to share and research their food choices. It's very easy and common to find recipes and read food blogs to make changes to our own diets. Social media gives us the option to learn about all of the food options available and hear from all the people trying unique diets or new recipes. The information is very easy to access and requires very little effort for consumers to learn about new food options to try.

Social media and technology advancements have also changed the way we access our food. We now have the option to order our food online and have it delivered directly to our doorstep. We have the option to no longer visit a physical grocery store to obtain our food. Social media has also led to lots of different fast food delivery options. We no longer have to call a restaurant directly, we can use an app to order our food and have it delivered right to us. We

also have the option to order a meal kit to get delivered to our homes. The meal kit consists of all of the ingredients needed to make a homecooked meal and bring back some of the old family traditions. We don't have to put in the effort to get our food like we had to in the past which has significantly changed the desires of the food consumer.

I've also witnessed the change that social media has made on the food that my family and I have consumed. As a college student, I still prefer homemade meals, but it is a lot easier to order food online or through an app and have it delivered to me. Personally, I have contributed to the changes in the desires of the food consumer because I have participated in utilizing an app to have my food delivered to me and have learned about the different food diets on social media.

Social media and technology advancements will continue to impact future desires of the food consumer. I don't think that farmers will ever be able to fully educate consumers and gain their full trust, because, with less than 2% of the population directly involved in production agriculture, we just don't have enough people that live this lifestyle. I do think that consumers are becoming more curious about their food and have started asking more questions. Producers and farm groups have tried to answer some of those questions but have been unsuccessful in many cases due to activist groups using social media and sharing false information.

Over time, food consumers have begun to show an interest in what they are consuming and have started reading food labels more intently. Consumers continue to push for changes in the agriculture industry, and producers have tried to compromise where possible. Cage-free chickens, and antibiotic-free livestock are examples of ways producers have adapted to consumer demands. I think that consumers will continue to push for more changes in the agriculture industry, and as producers, we need to continue to listen and share our stories in hope to connect with consumers and make sure these are positive, productive changes.