



Cargill on Oprah: Lifting the Veil of Mystery

Mike Martin
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Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan, December 8, 2011

Setting the stage: some background

- **Nearly two million pounds of Cargill ground beef products is recalled in 2007 due to possible contamination from E.coli O157: H7**
- **2009: approximately 830,000 pounds of Cargill ground beef is recalled due to possible contamination from Salmonella Newport**

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Setting the stage: some background

The New York Times
"The burger that shattered her life"
October 4, 2009

The News York Times
"Trail of E. Coli Shows Flaws in
Inspection of Ground Beef"
October 4, 2009

USA Today
"Salmonella recalls prompt call to
close meat plant for inspection"
December 9, 2010

E.coli O157: H7 victim Stephanie Smith
- New York Times photo

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Setting the stage: some background

Topeka Capital-Journal
"Burger story shows need for more
Transparency"
January 10, 2010

Minneapolis Star Tribune
"Ag Department recalls Cargill beef"
August 30, 2010

The New York Times
"Beef recall heats up fight to tighten
rules"
September 3, 2010

E.coli O157: H7 victim Stephanie Smith
- New York Times photo

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Cargill showcases food safety innovations

Minneapolis Star Tribune
Sept. 12, 2010

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So, what can we do to shape reputation?

**"The best defense,
is a good offense."**

Carl von Clausewitz, Prussian military strategist
or
Jack Dempsey, American prizefighter

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"Live the entire time" → Focus (be in the moment) → Maintain eye contact → Be yourself

WE CARE

- Nicole:
 - Grew up on a farm
 - Has a family to care for
- We feed tens of millions of Americans and millions around the world
- We care about:
 - **consumers** – food safety, nutrition, quality, affordability, availability
 - **customers** – food safety, quality, value, animal welfare, sustainability
 - **employees** – safety, education, accountability
 - **cattle** – welfare
- We respect animals used for food
- Temple Grandin designed Cargill's live animal aspects of our facilities
- Third party remote video auditing
- Animal welfare has been studied extensively

TRANSPARENCY

- People want to know where their food comes from
- We want to demystify beef production
- We have weekly tours at Fort Morgan for:
 - customers
 - regulators
 - NGOs (WWF, Nature Conservancy, etc.)
 - Media
- We welcome other points of view
- We welcome open dialogue and would like a seat at the table

SAFETY

- Food safety is critical to the ongoing success of our business:
 - interventions: hide-on-carcass wash, bromine spray, lactic acid spray, HAACP, testing, video auditing, vaccine trial, Helix (behavior).....
 - ongoing training
 - USDA inspection – every minute we operate
 - 700 Cargill people employed fulltime focused on food safety in our meat business
 - safety is not competitive – we share information with the industry
 - innovation/investment - \$1 billion over the past 10 years to improve our meat processing facilities

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Key Learnings

The primary learnings from this experience:

- Cargill got to tell its story, control the message and demystify the beef processing industry.
- In doing so, we deprived our critics of 10 minutes of the show's content, or approximately 25% of the total, non-commercial air time.
- 7.3 million U.S. households were reached that we would probably never reach any other way.
- Carefully considered and prudently taken calculated risks can pay off.

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Early Results:

- Show promo attracted 400+ comments
- 30,000 "likes" on Facebook the first few days
- Over 220 comments on Oprah's website within the first hours
- Slaughterhouse video had over 1,800 likes on Facebook the first day
- 7.3 million households saw the first airing

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Direct response to Cargill via phone, e-mail

Phone calls:

- > Consumer Relations in Wichita received dozens of calls, most from consumers wanting to find out where they could buy Cargill meat.
- > A man in Chicago was compelled to read up on Cargill and call Corporate Affairs with 15 minutes of admiration and a challenge for our leaders: "How can Cargill become more visible so that consumers who want to support Cargill can do so?"

E-mails:

- > Of the many received through cargill.com, the overwhelming majority can only be described as "glowing."

Jeffrey Fritz: Morgantown, West Virginia:

I saw the report on Oprah this afternoon about how Cargill slaughters and processes meat. I found it informative and helpful to me as a meat eater. I did nothing to deter my interest in eating meat, but did much to add to my understanding of the process and procedures that Cargill uses. Thank you for being willing to show to the media and the public what many of your competitors have been most reluctant to do. It was professional and very classy for you and your staff to have offered us this view into the meat packing industry.

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Kudos on Twitter ...

From a PR perspective, it took a lot of courage for @Cargill to allow Oprah's cameras in to see its cattle processing plant.

Cargill must have a strong PR department. They did a great job prepping the lady on today's Oprah show. She did a great job. -

Watching Oprah - good lord is the Plant Manager from Cargill ever well trained in media relations -

I am so impressed with Cargill right now. I cannot even express how much respect I have for them for opening their doors. #oprah #agchat -

#Cargill is doing a really good job of explaining things though... hats off to their PR department. #oprah #agriculture #farm

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To paraphrase our good friend and colleague Temple Grandin:

"Somebody opened up the door and we walked through."

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