

**REGENERATIVE
AGRICULTURE**
AND FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT 2023 USA



STORYTELLING

THE IMPACT STORYTELLING HAS ON ACCELERATING THE TRANSITION TO REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

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Research**

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF NARRATIVE AND COMMUNICATIONS IN MAKING REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE THE NORM?

According to Datassential, only 20% of consumers say they've heard the term "regenerative agriculture." This means that the time is now to strategically shape people's perceptions of regenerative farming and eating, so that we can make this concept one that's approachable and exciting for the masses.

With that in mind, we must create a regenerative food movement that speaks to people's core needs. Right now, the dominant narrative around regenerative agriculture leans on messages around purpose; we tell people:

BUY THIS FOOD BECAUSE IT'S GOOD FOR THE WORLD! BUT MOST EATERS DON'T MAKE FOOD DECISIONS BASED ON ALTRUISM. AND MOST FARMERS DON'T FARM BASED ON ALTRUISM - IT'S A BUSINESS.

This is not to say that we should keep sustainability out of the eater-facing messaging; quite the contrary. For many, it's incredibly powerful to learn that a shift in agricultural practices can sequester carbon, improve soil health, and ensure a vibrant, delicious food system. But, the messaging on planetary health must be tied to individual and community-based gains—be it cost savings, healthfulness, food access, time savings, job security, sense of identity, or food sovereignty.

FOR EXAMPLE, WE CAN TALK ABOUT REGENERATIVELY GROWN FOODS AS A WAY TO PROVIDE EATERS WITH SAFE, DEPENDABLE FOODS THAT ALLOW US TO CELEBRATE A DIVERSITY OF CROPS AND A DIVERSITY OF CULTURES, ALL WHILE MAKING OUR SOILS, AIR, AND WATER CLEANER AND MORE RESILIENT.



EVE TUROW-PAUL is an author, globally-recognized thought leader, and the Founder and Executive Director of Food for Climate League.

CAN YOU SHARE MORE ABOUT THE WORK FOOD FOR CLIMATE LEAGUE DOES TO MAKE CLIMATE-SMART EATING THE NORM?

Food for Climate League is a female-led 501(c)3 nonprofit. We create toolkits, programs, and campaigns—founded in original behavioral science research—that connect sustainable food culture to people's diverse needs, values, and cultures. In doing so, we aim to make climate-smart farming, cooking, and eating accessible, enticing, and culturally relevant to the masses. I helped found the organization in 2019 with seed funding from the Food Program at Google.

We believe that strategic shifts in narratives around food and climate can support a sustainable, nutritious, and equitable food future for us all. At Food for Climate League, we work to shift the perception of climate-smart eating, farming, and cooking so that more people can see themselves in the movement, and make it clear how climate-smart food culture can meet people where they are. We work with corporations, nonprofits, and governments to successfully communicate their climate-smart food and agriculture initiatives, and change behaviors along the way.

In your book **Hungry: Avocado Toast, Instagram Influencers, and Our Search for Connection and Meaning**, you cover how today's top trends reflect a global culture for control, community, and purpose.

BASED ON THOSE TREND INSIGHTS, WHY IS NOW THE TIME TO ACT ON REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE?

All of us share deep human needs for a sense of control and safety, a sense of community and belonging, and a sense of purpose and meaning. These needs show up in the ways people spend their discretionary time and income. Today, rates of loneliness, depression, anxiety and stress are sky high. People are yearning for a feeling of order, connectedness, and meaning. Regenerative agriculture and the products generated through regenerative agriculture offer a unique value proposition that can help people meet these core needs.

Foods grown regeneratively have the power to provide a sense of control to eaters and farmers alike. Regeneratively grown foods can meet rising demands for "immune-boosting" "superfoods." For farmers, regenerative systems are key to maintaining lucrative businesses that yield valuable crops and dependable income streams on land that's more resilient to a changing climate.

FOR OTHERS, REGENERATIVE FOOD SYSTEMS CAN BE A GATEWAY TO MUCH-NEEDED CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY OR TO PLACE. REGENERATIVE FOOD SYSTEMS ARE NOTHING NEW TO THE WORLD; THEY'RE AS OLD AS THE CONCEPT OF AGRICULTURE ITSELF, AND SO REGENERATIVE SYSTEMS CAN BE A WAY TO CELEBRATE ONE'S HERITAGE. FOR OTHERS, IT MAY SIMPLY BE A WAY TO GET TO KNOW THE INTRICACIES OF THE LAND BENEATH YOUR FEET, AND SEASONS AND CROPS OF YOUR HOME.

And finally, while sustainability does not drive most individuals' food decisions, the majority of people are alarmed and concerned about the climate crisis, and we cannot meet global carbon goals without rapidly adopting regenerative agriculture at a much larger scale. Regenerative agriculture is one of the greatest opportunities to improve human and planetary health. And so eating foods that are grown regeneratively, that contribute to this sustainable world, can also provide people a sense of purpose.

WHAT ESSENTIAL CHANGES NEED TO BE MADE IN ORDER TO DRIVE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS TOWARDS A MORE CLIMATE-SMART WORLD?

Our food system has the potential to be an astounding solution to many of the human and planetary health challenges we face today, and we can get there by farming, cooking, and eating a delicious diversity of foods. But, in order for that potential to be realized, we have to make sustainable food culture alluring, relevant, and accessible to the masses; climate-smart food culture has to shift from niche to the norm. And we need to make this transition while also considering the nutrition of food and who has access to it.

This means that we need to be mindful of the ways we position sustainable food products and practices, and we have to consider the widespread impacts of food system transformations. Of course, sustainable agriculture practices are essential for achieving a climate-smart world. But I encourage those of us who are dedicated to making this movement the new norm to think broadly of the potential benefits, and consider the needs and values of different populations: How might regenerative agriculture create cost savings and business security? How might regenerative agriculture support a more just food system? How might regenerative agriculture contribute to a more flavorful, fun, and vibrant food culture?

IF WE GET THIS RIGHT, WE CAN CREATE A MORE DELICIOUS, NUTRITIOUS, EQUITABLE, AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM. NOW, THAT'S A FUTURE TO BE EXCITED FOR.