

Viewpoint: Improving the marketplace for consumers

This page highlights efforts by Consumers Union and others to improve the marketplace

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Heroes & Watchdogs: Kinder, gentler meat from two next-generation cowboys

★ White Oak Pastures has been in Will Harris' family for five generations, during which time the Georgia farmer has witnessed the agricultural industry come full circle: His dad's decision to industrialize the business was for practical and financial reasons, but Harris says, "there were unintended consequences, most felt by the animals we raised and to our land, water, and air resources." That's why he and his children have returned White Oak to the environmentally sustainable, high animal-welfare model used by his great-grandfather 150 years ago. The overhaul meant five years when the farm was "just hemorrhaging money," he says. Today, though, White Oak has hit its stride: It has zero-waste red meat and poultry processing plants, and it even powers its tractors with biodiesel from its on-farm restaurant's cooking grease.



Will Witherspoon's resume doesn't look like the typical farmer's, but the former St. Louis Rams linebacker says the inspiration for Shire Gate Farm—his 700-acre, Animal Welfare Approved cattle business—was a clause in his NFL contract. "It says that we're ultimately responsible for what we put in our bodies," he says. So he educated himself about sustainable farming techniques and hung out his shingle in 2007. "One of our big goals is to eliminate the elitist factor that comes with 'grass-fed,'" he says. "We may live in a fast-food world, but more and more, educated consumers are proving that the value of high quality is up their alley."

