



Sentient

2025 IMPACT REPORT

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Executive Director's Summary

BY ANA BRADLEY • EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SENTIENT

We founded Sentient to address a glaring blind spot in mainstream coverage — the vast and often invisible impacts of factory farming on animals, the environment, public health and rural communities. Factory farming is one of the most destructive systems on the planet, yet its role in the crises facing our world is still largely out of sight. Our mission is to change that with rigorous, fact-checked journalism that exposes the forces behind this destruction.

In just a few years, Sentient has grown from a small newsroom into a trusted media organization, cited and republished by The Guardian, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal and others. Our work now reaches millions of readers and listeners, from policymakers in Washington to Iowa residents on the front lines of factory farm pollution.

In this report, you'll read how Sentient is changing the media narrative. Our work surfaces the stories of frontline communities, pushes the powerful to confront important truths and drives all of our journalist colleagues to produce a better news ecosystem. Thank you for helping us build a more transparent and informed public conversation.



Ana Bradley

Executive Director, Sentient

Changing the Media Narrative

Our vision is a new public discourse: from a news ecosystem where factory farming is underreported to one where the public sees factory farming for what it is. By adding critical information — rigorous reporting and incontrovertible data about climate emissions, air and water pollution, animal suffering, zoonotic disease and damage to frontline communities — Sentient is changing the media narrative, a critical component of changing the public narrative writ large. This new public discourse will enable and embolden frontline communities and influential decision makers alike to hold the industries that drive factory farming to account.

Sentient in action

Factory farming is one of the most damaging systems on the planet — harming animals, accelerating climate change, polluting air and water, increasing the risk of pandemics and draining rural economies. Yet most of the public still has no idea how their food is made or the impact it has on our planet. A Sentient analysis found that 96% of climate news stories neglect to mention animal agriculture as a source of carbon emissions. This analysis was featured in [The Guardian](#) and shared by media organizations including [Covering Climate Now](#).

Meat is a leading emissions source - but few outlets report on it, analysis finds

Sentient Media reveals less than 4% of climate news stories mention animal agriculture as source of carbon emissions



📷 A combine harvester powers through a soybean field in McLean county, Illinois, on 25 September. Photograph: Alan Look/ZUMA Press Wire/Shutterstock

BY THE NUMBERS

Sentient’s journalism is being cited, republished and read more widely than ever before — bringing the realities of factory farming into mainstream conversations about food, climate and public health.

3,000

Republications and citations

120 Million

Readers/listeners/viewers

2.5 Million

Video views

Sentient’s reporting drives journalists to strengthen their coverage of factory farms

Through our Food & Farming Journalism Network, collaborations with major outlets and growing visibility across the media landscape, our work is influencing the next generation of journalists and shaping how factory farming is covered. As our reach expands, so does our impact — fueling momentum for more accurate, consistent and in-depth reporting across the food and climate beats.

Food & Farming Journalism Network

Membership: 300



Members represent outlets including:



Changing the media narrative

At a glance

- The Washington Post’s [Climate Coach newsletter](#) featured Sentient’s reporting on biodigesters alongside coverage from The Economist and Inside Climate News.
- CNN climate journalist Bill Weir [reshared Sentient’s reporting](#) on water quality in Iowa on Bluesky.
- Subscribers to our newsletter, The Core, include journalists from the Atlantic, the Los Angeles Times, Grist, Civil Eats and Vox.
- Our feature story on the government’s denial of requests for avian flu data was republished by award-winning science outlet [Undark](#).
- A [Sentient story on dietary guidelines](#) was picked up by influencers, shared in a [TikTok video](#) with over 168.6k views and featured in [another video](#) by a creator who has 1.5 million followers on Instagram and 2.2 million on TikTok.
- A New York Times columnist cited Sentient’s “bad ass journalism.”

Top Sentient Stories of 2025



Hundreds of Iowa Meatpacking Employee Visas Revoked

BY NINA B. ELKADI



Police Bodycams Reveal Pattern of Deference to Meat Industry

BY GREY MORAN



Where Are the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and What’s RFK’s Beef With Beans?

BY SETH MILLSTEIN



Telling Stories With Frontline Communities

Sentient's regional reporting empowers frontline communities to agitate for change

Sentient's reporting is powered by real stories from the frontlines of factory farming, surfacing the stories to a national audience. Community residents have used our reporting to hold regulators accountable, and legal advocates and major media outlets have cited our work to push for greater transparency. Whether inside a Seaboard Triumph Foods pork plant or embedded with a transnational coalition to fight mega-dairy expansion, Sentient storytelling connects local experiences to national conversations.

How our readers engage with our stories

79%

say they are highly informed about the impacts of factory farming after reading Sentient's work

21%

use Sentient's work to inform lawmakers or decision makers

47%

use Sentient's work to inform their community about regional issues caused by factory farming

52%

use Sentient's work to inform their own reporting, writing, or speaking, about the impacts of factory farms

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Inside an Iowa Pork Plant



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Where Your Neighbor is an Alfalfa Farm



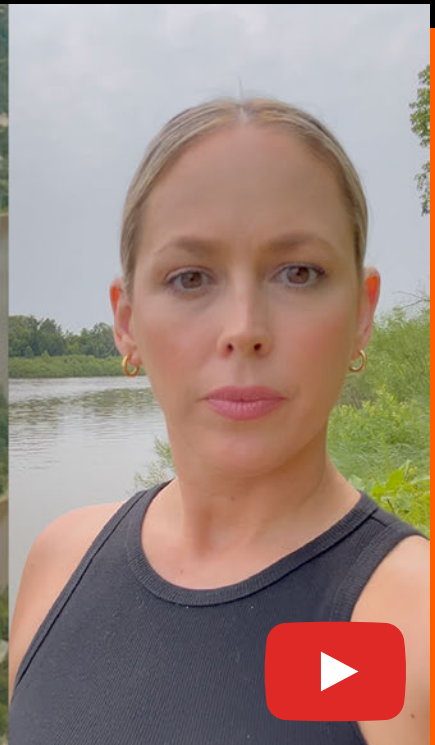
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Hundreds of Iowa
Meatpacking Employee
Visas Revoked



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Inside the Fight to Stop
New Mega-Dairies on
the Red River



Examples of regional impact:

- We published whistleblower video footage from the Seaboard Triumph pork processing facility which quickly reached over 1 million views on TikTok. Thousands of comments from locals included, “We have been screaming about our water and air quality for a while! Woodbury County deserves clean water & air!” and “Sioux City is just taking L after L from this meat plant. I used to load hogs when I was younger and I heard horror stories about it THEN, and that was 10 years ago. Good lord. What a mess.”
- Citizens filed a complaint with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources using Sentient’s reporting to show officials failed to take action despite their well-documented knowledge of the conditions.
- Sentient’s reporting on a [dairy manure spill](#) in Wisconsin spurred an official with Public Justice, a legal advocacy group that takes on corporate corruption, to reach out to an environmental legal advocacy group to file a lawsuit.
- Our local coverage is sparking national coverage. Sentient’s original reporting on cancer in Iowa, which included communications and documents produced by our records request, was then reported in a [Bloomberg](#) feature months later.
- In 2025, we published 13 articles exploring factory farming in Iowa and its impact on local communities and the environment. These stories have reached millions of readers throughout the U.S. through republications in various outlets from Yahoo! News to Floodlight News to Investigate Midwest and more. Our investigative reporter appeared on Iowa Public Radio (IPR) and The Talk of Chicago, which have a combined listenership of 400,000 people.

“

Good work on this story. We are trying to be vocal about the impacts of these policies on our farmers and rural communities.”

— Influential figure in Iowa agriculture in reference to our coverage

Reaching Lawmakers and Government Officials

Sentient’s investigations are informing decision makers and shaping real-world outcomes. Our reporting has been cited in a letter from Members of Congress to the USDA, referenced by lawmakers on the floor of the Senate and used as evidence in pending legal cases — demonstrating how independent media can impact policy and hold powerful institutions to account.

Phrases Newly Banned At USDA Include ‘Safe Drinking Water’ and ‘Climate Change,’ Leaked Memo Reveals

Over 100 words and phrases are now banned, many of them essential to any discussion of climate.



Credit: ANDREW THOMAS/Middle East Images/AFP via Getty Images

Reaching lawmakers and government officials

At a glance

- Our reporting was quoted in a [letter](#) to USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins signed by lawmakers, including Bernie Sanders and Cory Booker, as evidence of the Trump administration's directive banning certain words at the USDA.
- On the Senate floor, Senator Jack Reed [discussed](#) Cal-Maine's \$44 million bailout as part of a bill he would like to introduce to [limit indemnity payouts to poultry companies](#). Sentient was the first newsroom to report this figure and this story was widely shared.
- A law firm has cited our coverage of avian flu in a lawsuit against the California Department of Food and Agriculture over being denied avian flu data, specifically data on which farms are under quarantine.
- Sentient's reporting on the closure of the only federal [animal welfare lab](#) prompted a federal employee to host a [Reddit AMA](#), allowing the public to engage with and ask questions about animal welfare.
- Our coverage of the Farm Bill was republished by outlets including [Truthdig](#).
- Our newsletter audience includes federal agency officials.

Readers & Partnerships:

Our collaboration and partnership model means that our stories reach an ideologically diverse audience from lawmakers to frontline communities to journalists and content creators.



What's Next for Sentient?

Plans for 2026

In 2026, Sentient will scale its journalism and partnerships to strengthen public understanding of factory farming's impact on climate, health and frontline communities. Building on our momentum from 2025, we'll focus on expanding reach, deepening collaborations and embedding rigorous reporting throughout the broader media ecosystem.

Our priorities for 2026:

- **Expand local journalism partnerships** including collaborations with public radio stations and local newsrooms in factory-farm-affected communities.
- **Publish breaking news and deeply reported investigations** that expose the hidden costs of factory farming and connect local stories to a national audience.
- **Broaden and deepen relationships with editors** at leading climate, farming, policy and investigative outlets to make coverage of factory farming a consistent part of their reporting.
- **Publish a policy-focused newsletter** reaching lawmakers, agency staff and policy influencers with credible journalism that informs decision-making.
- **Grow the Food & Farming Journalism Network** to 400 members and support early-career journalists covering beats that intersect with factory farming.
- **Expand community engagement** by hosting listening sessions with frontline organizations and publishing multilingual content.

Together these initiatives will move us closer to our vision: a new public discourse where the realities of factory farming are visible, accurately reported and central to climate and policy conversations.

Editorial Standards

Editorial Independence

Sentient is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan newsroom dedicated to reporting on the impacts of factory farming. Our editorial decisions are made independently of anyone, including donors, partners and our Board of Directors. We maintain a strict separation between funding and editorial judgment and have published our gift acceptance policy on our website.

Memberships

Sentient is a member of the Institute for Nonprofit News, which sets standards for editorial independence, financial transparency and nonprofit governance across nonprofit newsrooms.

We are also part of the Rural News Network, powered by the Institute for Nonprofit News, a collaborative network of nonprofit outlets reporting on rural communities across the United States.

Sentient has also been accepted to join The Trust Project, a global initiative that helps news organizations demonstrate transparency through clear reporting standards and disclosures.

Reporting and Fact-Checking Process

Our reporters spend months building trust with sources, analyzing records and pursuing questions that often go unasked. Each story undergoes multiple layers of editorial review and is fact-checked by our dedicated fact-checker before publication. Key claims and statistics are verified against primary sources such as scientific research, government records and public documents.

For example, a single statistic in a story — such as the up to \$442 million in taxes avoided by the world's largest meat company, JBS — is checked by the reporter, editor and fact-checker to ensure it comes from an evidence-based source.

Transparency and Accountability

We believe transparency is central to building trust with readers. Sentient discloses its funding sources and publishes clear information about its editorial processes. We welcome reader feedback and corrections and treat our reporting as part of an ongoing conversation with the communities we serve.

Collaborative Journalism and Reach

Sentient’s reporting is designed to reach audiences beyond our own platform. Our stories are available for republication and distributed through partnerships with national and local newsrooms, helping ensure coverage reaches communities directly affected by the issues we cover.

Our stories have been cited or republished by outlets including The New York Times, The Guardian, The Washington Post and The Wall Street Journal, bringing underreported stories into the mainstream conversation.

