impact

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Waste to Worth 2025 tours boost profound impacts of experiential learning

AT A GLANCE

Three technical tours during Waste to Worth 2025 held in Boise provided the conference participants with valuable opportunities for networking and boost a profound impact of experiential learning.

The Situation

Waste to Worth 2025 (W2W 2025) was an international conference held in Boise during April 4-11 that focused on animal production waste and resource management. W2W 2025 was co-chaired by Extension personnel from University of Idaho and Utah State University and was organized by the Livestock and Poultry Environmental Learning Community (LPELC), a group of professionals from across the U.S. (and Canada) with an interest and expertise in animal agriculture and environmental stewardship. To enhance the overall impact and value of the W2W 2025, it is essential to provide participants with opportunities that go beyond traditional presentations and discussions. Conference technical tours offer a structured way to connect theoretical knowledge with real-world practice by exposing conference participants to relevant local industries and innovations. Technical tours create immersive learning experiences, strengthen networking in informal settings, and showcase Idaho's unique situations and strengths. Including technical tours ensures that participants gain deeper insights, form meaningful professional connections, and leave with a more comprehensive understanding of the conference themes.

Magic Valley Tour featuring a visit to a dairy processing facility at one of the tour's stops.

Our Response

UI Extension personnel teamed up with LPELC and local industry leaders to host three technical tours including 1. Magic Valley: Aquaculture, dairy processing, water/wastewater management; 2. Treasure Valley: Water/wastewater management; 3. Treasure Valley: Agricultural production and sustainable regenerative agriculture showcase. The three tours intended to provide conference participants with networking in a relaxed environment, offer the attendees the chance to experience Idaho innovation in dairy waste management, municipal wastewater treatment, and sustainable regenerative agriculture, and give the attendees memorable impressions that increase the perceived value of W2W 2025.

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Program Outcomes

One hundred thirty-four people attended W2W 2025. Eighty of the 134 conference attendees participated in the three technical tours. Fifty of the 80 tour attendees responded to a post-conference survey. The post-conference survey demonstrated clear learning gains and meaningful impacts for the tour participants "I learned something new about agriculture in Idaho."

Overall, participants rated the information gained from the W2W 2025 tours as relevant to their own work (4.2 out of 5 rating). Tour attendees also highlighted valuable opportunities for networking and the profound impact of experiential learning.

Table 1. Magic Valley: Aquaculture, dairy processing, water/wastewater management

Comment Themes	%	Example Quote
Broadening Perspectives	35%	"…they were very informative and something I would not see where I work/live."
Relevant Topics	30%	"Understand about water issues and commitment with water management in the Magic Valley"
Networking	15%	"Valuable personal connections made."
Experiential Learning	5%	"The most valuable aspect for me was seeing the Chobani Yogurt plant, and it helped me to learn how they made use of all their waste products."

Table 2. Treasure Valley: Water/wastewater management

Comment Themes	%	Example Quote
Relevant Topics	64%	"The whole wastewater treatment process, especially the struvite precipitation helps my future waste treatment programs."
Broadening Perspectives	18%	"I hadn't seen biosolids used this way before."
Networking	9%	"I enjoyed speaking with the professionals that ran the facilities."

Table 3. Treasure Valley: Agricultural production and sustainable/regenerative agriculture

Comment Themes	%	Example Quote
Relevant Topics	47%	"Learning about water and its role in agriculture sustainability."
Broadening Perspectives	16%	"Hearing from local agency professionals was most beneficial for me in the long run because it allows a glimpse into the big picture of local systems and how problems are/have been approached."
Networking	16%	"Being on the bus with people and networking."
Experiential Learning	11%	"Was able to see a functioning system which solidifies understanding much more than reading about it ever could."

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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