

THE POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN AGRICULTURE

A guide to social media success



What is social media and why is it important in agriculture?

Social media is all about people. It is a way to build relationships, share information, and connect with diverse audiences of people you may never meet in real life.

So, interacting on social media, whether it is Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram or another channel, allows you to develop a community and share your story in a way that was never possible before now.

The general public still has faith in farmers and ranchers, but some are wary of modern farm practices. It is important that agriculture unites and has a chance to tell its side of the story. Social media is one way to make your voice heard.

Just 2 percent of Americans are engaged in production agriculture today. Social media helps us connect with the other 98 percent to share information about our industry.

Examples of successful online 'advocacy'



1) "Farmer Style" Video

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LX153eYcVrY>)

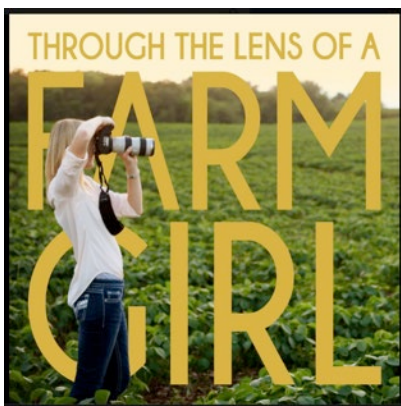
This video successfully showcases the younger generation's ingenuity and creativity through a positive depiction of farm life. The video is fun and witty, playing off a popular song, but it also has an important message. The video has received more than 16 million views.

2) Agriculture Proud Farm Blog

(<http://agricultureproud.com/>)

Ryan Goodman's Agriculture Proud blog is a great example of how one rancher, utilizing social media, can have a large impact on the

public's perception of agricultural practices. Goodman keeps his message positive and honest, which has gained the trust of his audience. Openly talking on his blog has led to Ryan being featured as a guest author for blog posts in CNN's *Eatocracy*.



3) "Keeping It Real: Through the Lens of a Farm Girl"

(<https://www.facebook.com/lens.of.a.farm.girl>)

This iconographic page showcases farm values through pictures and words. This method of social media is easily shared and attention grabbing.

Getting started

The easiest way to get started on social media is to choose one way to participate at first. Consider what your objectives are. Always the photographer at parties? Try Instagram. Love trying out and sharing new recipes? Pinterest may be for you. Consistency is key. Once you choose the tool that works best for you, all you need to do is sign up! Do not feel like you need to be active on every network. Choose one to focus on at first and grow from there. **Here are a few of the most popular social media platforms:**

Facebook

www.facebook.com

Active users: 2.6 billion

Facebook is great for connecting with people. Nearly 1 billion of its users are active every day! You can post updates about activity on your farm, share pictures, and see what friends, celebrities, organizations, and groups are up to. Your Facebook community often consists of people you know in real life.

Twitter

www.twitter.com

Active users: 330 million

Twitter is a popular option that allows you to “tweet” 140 character updates and connect with people from around the world. You can share news links, pictures, or inspirational quotes. You can also retweet posts from other users to increase their reach and send direct messages to share your thoughts. Twitter allows you to connect with people who you have never met but share like-minded interests. You can use hashtags to find other users talking about topics you’re interested in.

LinkedIn

www.linkedin.com

Active users: 300 million

LinkedIn is geared toward the professional community. It allows you to network with work colleagues and is a powerful tool for brands and job seekers. You can post your resume, connect with other professionals, and keep up to date with industry news. You can follow groups focused on topics relevant to your industry.

Pinterest

www.pinterest.com

Active users: 416 million

Pinterest was the fastest growing social media platform of 2014. It is an online pinboard where users share pictures, interests and hobbies. It is a great tool to share pictures from the farm, your favorite agriculture fact, or your grandma’s recipe. Pinterest focuses on visual sharing.

Instagram

www.instagram.com

Active users: 112 million

Instagram focuses on sharing pictures and 15-second videos. Users can edit and add filters to their photos and share them directly to Facebook and Twitter in addition to posting on Instagram. Hashtags can be used on the platform to tag photos or videos with relevant keywords.

Snapchat

<https://www.snapchat.com/>

Active users: 314 million

Snapchat is a mobile app that allows users to share photos and 10-second videos with followers. Users can add filters and text to their photos and videos, but the content only stays active for 24 hours.

All About Facebook

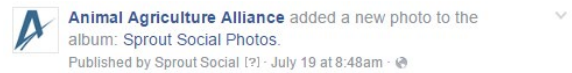
Facebook isn't hard to get the hang of once you know the basics. Here are the four main things you need to know:

1) **Timeline:** The timeline on your main homepage chronologically lists all of your personal activity and other items which your friends post on your page. It is also where you create your personal profile with your name, picture, and anything else that you want others to know about you or your farm.

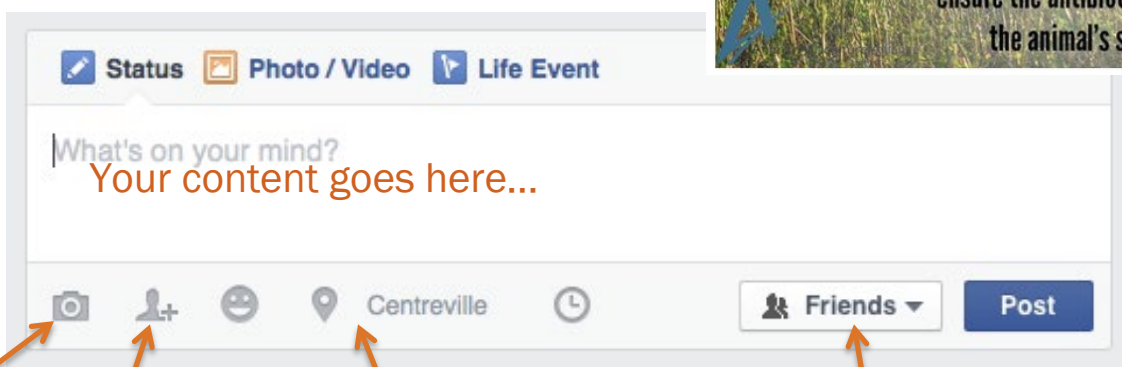
2) **Friends:** After you create your profile and set up your timeline, it is time to search and add friends. You can search for old high school buddies or "like" your favorite agricultural organizations. You can search using your email contact list to get started.

3) **Newsfeed:** Your homepage is a continuous newsfeed following everyone that you are connected to and every page that you "like". It also includes updates from your friends' activity.

4) **Likes and Reactions:** By hovering over the like button on a post, you can react to a post with a like, love, angry, sad, wow or laughing icon.



Did you know...
If livestock or poultry are treated with antibiotics, they must go through a specific withdrawal period (determined by the antibiotic prescribed) to ensure enough time has passed for the antibiotic to leave the animal's system before being processed. For more about antibiotics, visit <http://bit.ly/1X2r9KY>



Add a photo. Tag a friend.

Add your location.

Who can see this post?

How to use Facebook for

agriculture

Facebook is a great place to start a positive conversation about agriculture and get people excited about farming.

1. Post photos from the farm.

2. Share agricultural messages.
3. Connect with agriculture pages.
4. Share farm facts on your page.
5. Post videos of your operation, a note about activity on your farm, or a tour of your barn.
6. Advertise agri-tourism events.

Facebook Tips & Tricks

It's not enough to just be "on" Facebook anymore – we have to use it effectively. Here's how:

1. **Post interesting status updates.** Most of the people who "friend" you or "like" your page won't hang out on your page browsing your photos, videos and past posts. Rather, 90 percent of their experience with you on Facebook will occur through status updates that show up in their news feeds. **Ideas** – experiment with different voice and tone, post links to videos and websites, share powerful quotes or statistics to engage and respond to comments, likes and shares.
2. **Don't over-do it.** Post no more than one or two status updates per day—or less! Don't be an oversharer—make sure that you're posting fresh, interesting and interactive content.
3. **Don't sync your accounts.** There are plenty of tools available that will allow you to post the same content to multiple social media communities. Don't be fooled! Remember that each online community is unique with its own "best practices."



Status update content ideas:

- **Success stories.** Everyone loves a good happy ending. So share a triumph you've had, an anniversary or milestone you've celebrated or just some good news.
- **Photos.** On social media, a picture really is worth a thousand words. Pictures are GREAT for telling (and showing!) agriculture's story. Just make sure your photo is high quality, and add a short caption.
- **Videos.** Whether you've created your own video or you're sharing a video that someone else made, videos are great if done well. They elicit strong feelings of support and empathy and draw interest. Now Facebook allows you to post videos live, so you can interact with your followers in real time while giving them a tour around your farm or holding a question/answer session!
- **Calls to action.** Engage your friends/fans! Make sure some of your posts are interactive, whether it's a call for recipes, photos, signing online petitions or attending events.
- **Breaking news.** Social media is driven by breaking news. On Facebook, either link the news story directly or write a few paragraphs about the story in a blog and share your blog. Make sure it's a current story – old news doesn't garner much of a response on social media.

All About Twitter

Twitter is easy to use once you get a hang of the lingo. All you need to do is sign up, create a username (which can be as creative as you want, though we suggest keeping it professional and including your name or key words) and find interesting people to follow.

Twitter Dictionary

Tweet: A 280-character post that you use to share and communicate.

Re-Tweet (RT): How to share what someone else has tweeted or give credit to someone else on Twitter. Twitter also allows you to **quote** tweets, where you can add your own comments to the retweet.

Direct Message (DM): A private message.

Feed: A stream of tweet updates from the people you follow.

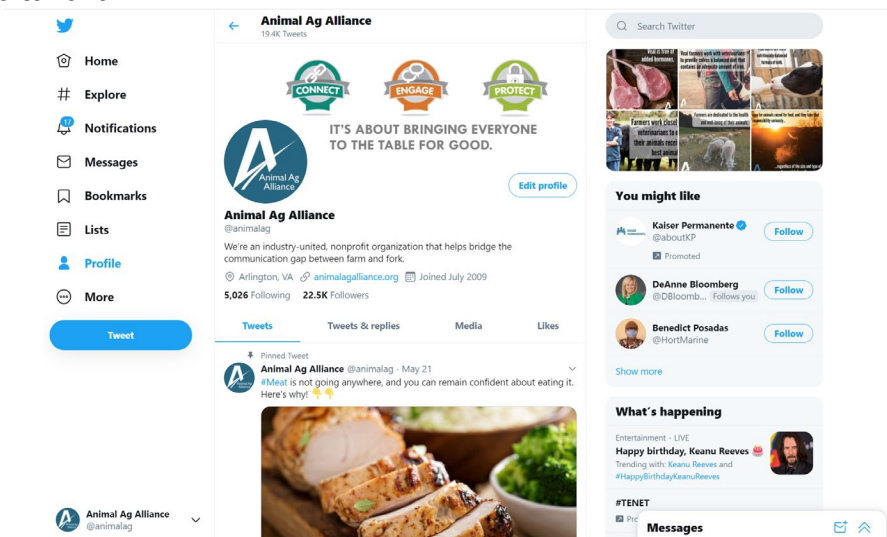
Handle: Your username (example: @animalag)

Mention (@): What you use when referencing another user by their handle (such as @animalag). Use @ to communicate publicly with other users. Put a period in front of the handle if you are starting a tweet with a handle and want your followers to see the tweet (@animalag has a great infographic about...)

Hashtag (#): A hashtag is used to denote a larger conversation and see what other people are talking about based on subject, words, and themes (examples: #agchat or #harvest).

Twitter users to follow:

@AnimalAg – Animal Agriculture Alliance
@PorkCheckoff – National Pork Board
@DairyGood – National Dairy Council
@MeatInstitute – North American Meat Institute
@ChickenCheckin – National Chicken Council
@FarmBureau – American Farm Bureau Federation
@Beef – National Cattleman's Beef Association
@TurkeyGal – National Turkey Federation
@SheepUSA – American Sheep Industry Association
@UEPCertified – United Egg Producers
@UnitedSoy – United Soybean Board



Search Twitter for topics you're interested in to find more people and organizations to follow.

Twitter Tips & Tricks

1. **Have a personality.** Have personality, have character, experiment with different tones of voice in your posts. Engage your followers and send out a wide variety of content.
2. **Track your links.** You can use a third-party Twitter app, like Bit.ly or Ow.ly to track and shorten your links. The shorter your links, the more characters you have to spare!
3. **Don't be afraid to share others' content.** Tweeting only about yourself is boring! Tweet articles or blog posts from your favorite newspapers, bloggers, and partner organizations. If the tweet is useful, then it reflects well upon you and increases the likelihood of reciprocal tweets.
4. **Retweet and reply often.** Retweet unto others as you would have them retweet unto you is the Golden Rule of Twitter. The more often you promote others, the more often they will in turn promote you.
5. **Follow on a 1:1 Ratio.** From a strategic communications point of view, you have nothing to lose and everything to gain by following on a 1:1 ratio—meaning if you have 1,000 followers you should be following 1,000 people. However, having more followers than the amount you are following will convey that you are an influencer – which is what every agvocate strives to be.
6. **Use hashtags strategically and authentically.** Hashtags function as a means to organize tweets, spread information and find new followers. Don't overdo it though—any given tweet should not have more than 1-2 hashtags.
7. **Use likes.** Liking tweets is a great way to bookmark tweets for easy retweeting in the future. Also, using the likes function to archive your most important tweets gives them added exposure to your followers.



How to use Twitter for agriculture

- Share quick updates on what you're up to on your family farm or ranch.
- Participate in a twitter chat.
- Connect with other agvocates.
- Share farm facts.
- Post videos of your farm, a note about activity on your farm, or a tour of your barn.
- Advertise ag events and/or promote outreach efforts.

Five free Twitter apps

1. **Bit.ly**—shortens links for tweets.
2. **Twtpoll**—creates simple multiple-choice polls that can easily be tweeted and tracked.
3. **Twitpic**—share photos in real time from your smartphone or tablet, or via email.
4. **Twibbon**—allows groups and clubs to create “Twibbons” (ribbons/banners) that Twitter users can overlay on their own Twitters.
5. **Cinchcast**— allows users to share audio messages online that you have recorded using your computer or smartphone.

All about Pinterest

Pinterest lets you organize and share visual information. It is a unique way to share agriculture's story through pictures. By creating a board dedicated to agriculture, other users can see what a real-life farm, ranch, barn, or crops actually look like. Pinterest's users skew female and represent a wide age range.

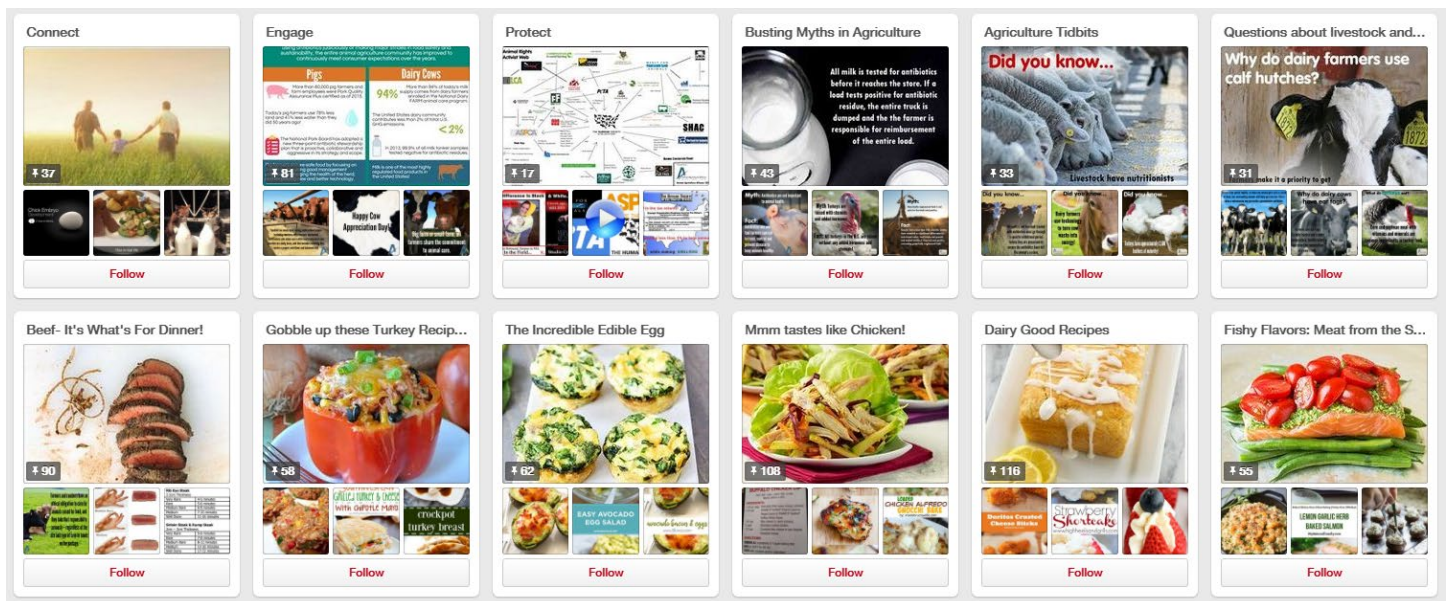
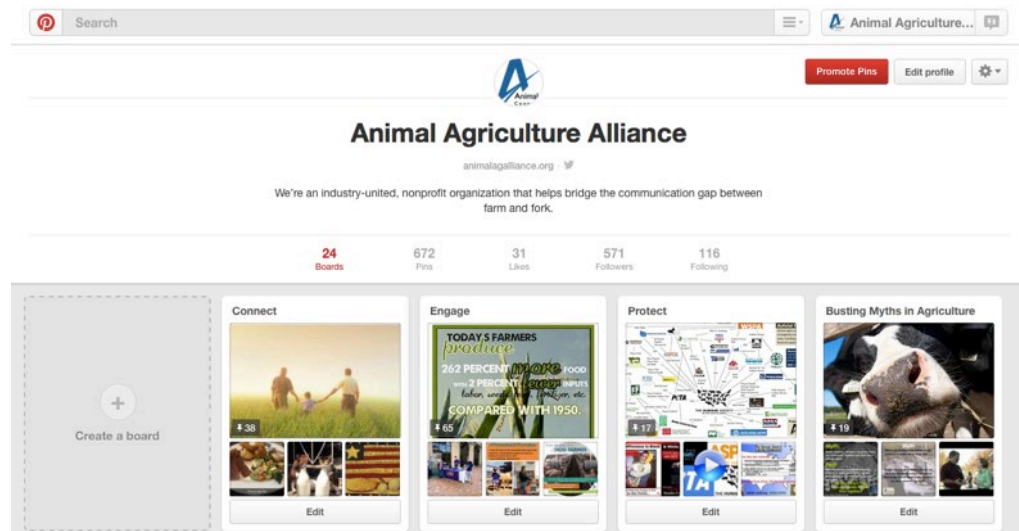
Pinterest Dictionary

Pin: A link or image added to Pinterest. It can be an image added from the web using the "Pin It" button or uploaded from your computer.

Board: A board is a collection of pins. It can be titled anything you want (ex: "Life on the Farm") and can feature any subject.

Save: You can search and repost other images from other users' boards.

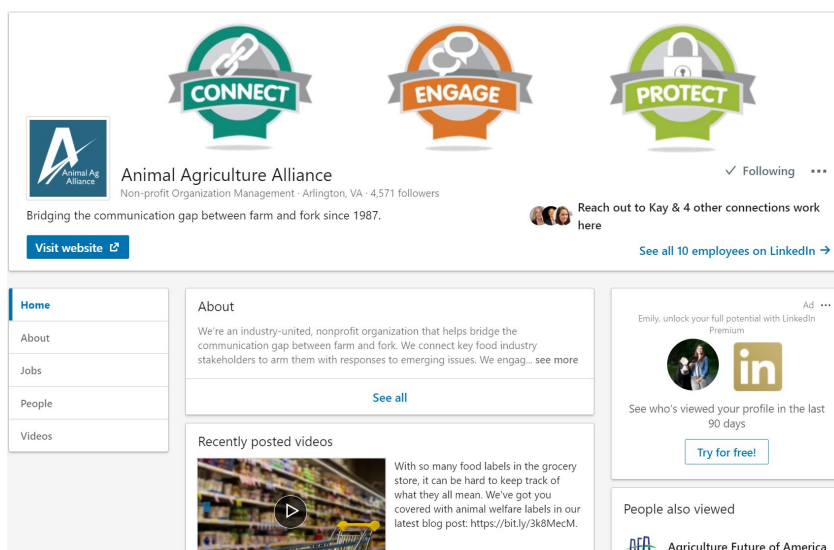
The "Pin It" button for your web browser is easy to install and allows you to post images easily. You can install the button directly through the Pinterest page, under "Pinterest 101." You can also follow people and see what they are posting on their boards.



All about LinkedIn

LinkedIn helps you connect with other professionals, look for jobs, or post one. Here are some tips to get started:

1. **Create a profile.** The more complete, the better. There are places to put your job history, post your resume, list your skills, and join groups.
2. **Find connections.** Use your email contacts to search for people that you know, either family, friends, or coworkers, to expand your “network.” After your network expands, you can search for “people that you may know” using LinkedIn’s search tools.
3. **Join groups.** Joining groups is similar to finding connections. Search for alumni groups or professional pages. Share content with experts, ask for advice, or job hunt.



Animal Agriculture Groups

1. Livestock Animal Health Industry
2. US Poultry and Egg Association
3. American Feed Industry Association
4. Agri-Jobs

How to use search and add groups

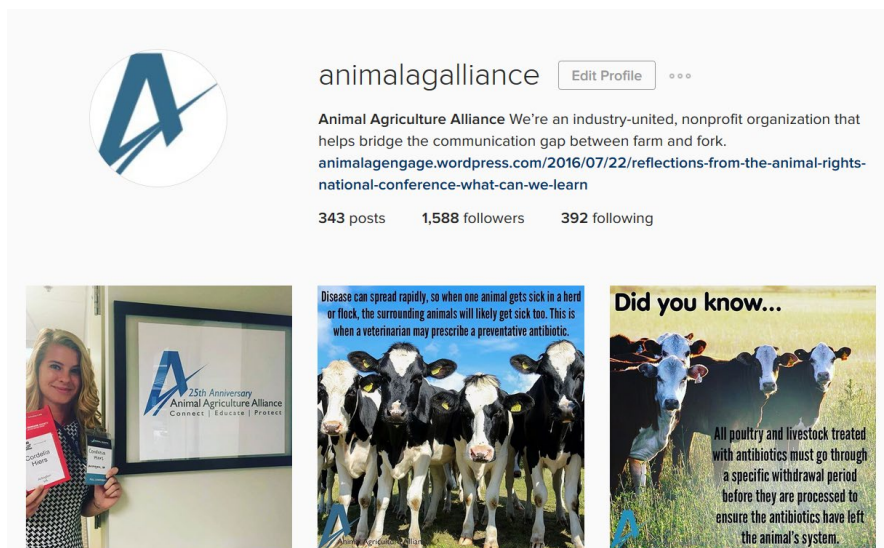
After you join a LinkedIn group, you’ll probably want to see who’s in the group and how the group members are connected to you.

To find a specific Group, navigate to LinkedIn.com, go to “Interests,” click on “Groups,” then “Find a group.” Based on keywords, you can search for relevant groups. Many LinkedIn groups are set up to only accept members who are relevant to the group. Other groups are open and will accept anyone who joins. An open group may be less focused on the subject matter.

All about Instagram

To use Instagram, you will need to download the application on a mobile device. You can view posts and accounts on a computer, but can only upload content from a mobile device. Once you’ve downloaded the app and set up an account, you’re ready for your close up. To get started:

1. **Create an account.** Keep your username professional and easily searchable. Your name is great if it's available. If not, try to keep it descriptive of what



you'll be posting so people can find you easily when they search that topic.

2. **Find other farm accounts to follow.** Find farmers and farm accounts sharing relevant and positive stories of agriculture that you can repost and amplify their message. Hopefully, they'll return the favor!
3. **Use hashtags to find relevant content.** Just like Twitter, you can tag your photos on Instagram with hashtags.
4. **Try out different filters.** Instagram makes editing photos simple and easy. Experiment with the different filters and editing options available to make your photos look their best. Beware of going too extreme – you still want your farm pictures to look natural.
5. **Think beyond the photo.** Memes and infographics are images too! Try sharing them on your Instagram.
6. **Connect with social trends.** Pay attention to what's trending and how you can connect it to agriculture. "Throwback Thursday" is one example of an Instagram trend you could use to share old pictures from your farm or when you were a kid.
7. **Create a story.** Post a video or picture to your "story" for your followers to watch. Stories appear at the top of your home feed. This is similar to Snapchat.
8. **Reels and IGTV.** Reels and IGTV allow you to share live or pre-recorded videos with your followers. These show up on your newsfeed and on your account profile page.

All about Snapchat

To use Snapchat, you will need to download the application on a mobile device. Snapchat allows you to take short videos or pictures and share them with your followers. Here are some things to know as you get started:

1. **Promote your new platform.** It's OK to promote your snapchat account on your Twitter, Facebook or blog! As mentioned before, cross-posting is something you want to stay away from, but it's OK to use platforms that you already have a decent following on to promote a new platform you want your followers to know about!
2. **Share to your story!** You can share photos/videos with individuals by sending the content directly to them (you can also share with multiple individuals). If you add a video or photo to your "story" then it will be shared with everyone who follows you – this method is ideal for reaching the most people. To add a video or photo to your story, click the icon with the "+" at the bottom of your screen after you take your photo/video.
3. **Add text.** You can add text over your video or photo. This is a good feature to have on a photo when you want to explain what is in the photo to people not familiar with agriculture. To add text, click the icon "T" at the top of your screen after you take your photo/video. You can also write on your content by clicking on the pencil icon at the top of your screen or add emojis to your content by clicking on the sticky note icon also at the top of your screen.
4. **Select time.** After you take your photo, you can adjust the amount of time photos are viewed. Your followers can view a photo or video as many times as they like before it



disappears, as long as you share it to your story.

5. **Use geofilters.** Geofilters are filters you can put over your video or photo that indicates where you are. Your city, town or state may have filters you can use or if it is a national holiday, more geofilters will become available for a period of time. Other filters include time and temperature. To apply the filters, swipe your finger from right to left over your photo/video until you find the one you want to use. You can also create your own filter by visiting <https://www.snapchat.com/geofilters>.
6. **Your video or photo will disappear.** Once you share your photo/video, your content will only remain viewable for 24 hours. You can see how many people viewed your content by clicking on your story. If you only send a photo to an individual, it will show whether or not they opened the snap.
7. **Save your content.** Before your snap disappears, you can save it by downloading it to your phone. To download your snap, click the icon with the down arrow at the bottom of your screen. Now you can reuse your content in a blog post to further promote your Snapchat account to earn more followers. Keep in mind that other people can screenshot your snap, but Snapchat will notify you if someone does take a screenshot of your photo or video.
8. **Memories.** Snapchat memories allow you to upload photos and videos from your camera roll.
9. **Videos and photos.** It's good to share both videos and photos. Some things you would want to share in the format of a video to show something in action (cows running out to pasture, an animal care process like cleaning a cow's udders before she is milked), while other things may work better for a photo.

Snapchat users to follow

Animalag – Animal Agriculture Alliance
Gilmerdairy – Will Gilmer, Alabama dairy farmer
Hilljay45 – Jay Hill, NM farmer
Monsantoco – Monsanto
Nationalffa – National FFA
Ranchhouseinc – Ranch House Design Inc.
Realpigfarming - Real Pig Farming, National Pork Board
Kansaspork – Kansas Pork
White-househogs – White House Genetics
National4h – National 4H

Ilcorn – Illinois Corn Association
Nwsslivestock – NWSS Livestock Show
Ffaalltheway_ig
Nyfarmgirls – Maple Lane Farms
Howfarmswork
Hunterw1997 – Hunter White
Eat.chicken – National Chicken Council
Nppc – Nation Pork Producers Council
Cristencclark – Cristen Clark, Food & Swine
Hmilller361 – Hannah Miller, social media guru
Aggrad – Ag Grad

What to do when...

A Facebook friend posts something inaccurate about farming.

Reach out to them: If you are friends on Facebook, it is likely that you know the person who posted the inaccurate information. However, you probably want to avoid conflict. So, don't start off by telling them that they are wrong. Approach them with another option. Listen to why they believe the information that they posted, and tell them that while you value their opinion, you can send more information about the subject if they would like. Provide links to factual information.

Someone that you don't know asks about "factory farms" on Twitter.

Be positive: Direct the person to correct information, but stay positive. Share details about your personal farm experience if you are comfortable. Sometimes it's easiest to not engage in conversation. Know when it is worthwhile to engage, and when it is best to move on.

You receive a negative blog comment.

Don't take it personally: It is important to promote a civil conversation on your social media pages. If the comment is referring to agricultural practices, attempt to engage the person. Remember that you represent the agricultural community and you are an important link between urban customers and farmers.

Need some more ideas about what to talk about online?

1. What is your favorite place on your farm? Why is it so special?
2. Post pictures of your farm and explain why it's important to you to care for the welfare of your animals.
3. Post pictures of your family and what it means to them to work on the farm.
4. Post weekly updates about what is going on at your farm (harvest, births, new fences, etc.)
5. Create or share a video about what sustainability means to you and your farm.
6. Discuss the one thing that you would like the public to understand about agriculture and farming.
7. Describe a typical day on your farm either in words, pictures, or video.
8. Engage other farmers in conversation and learn about what they do differently on their farm.
9. What does animal welfare mean to you and your farm?
10. Who is your role model in agriculture?

**Now that you're social media savvy, connect with
the Alliance!**

Facebook: [Facebook.com/animalagalliance](https://www.facebook.com/animalagalliance)

Twitter: [@animalag](https://twitter.com/animalag)

Instagram: [@animalagalliance](https://www.instagram.com/animalagalliance)

Pinterest: [Pinterest.com/animalag](https://www.pinterest.com/animalag)

Snapchat: [animalag](#)

LinkedIn: [Animal Agriculture Alliance](#)

TOOLS AND TRICKS TO CREATING SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

Now that you've set up your social media accounts, it's time to add content to your pages and be the best advocate for agriculture. Sharing other people's content is good, but you also want to have some content of your own too, right?? Here are some tools and tricks to creating and sharing all kinds of content from blog posts and photos to videos and infographics.

General Guidelines for Content

Rules and guidelines vary depending on which social media platform you are using, but as a rule of thumb it is always good to include the following in all your social media posts:

1. **A visual.** When people are scrolling through their Facebook or Twitter feeds, they are more likely to stop and look at a post that has a photo or visual than a post with only text.
2. **Key message or fact.** This is the purpose of your 'advocating.' What do you want your followers to learn or take away from your post?
3. **Link for more information.** It is never a bad idea to give your followers a factual, science-based resource for more information – after all, sometimes you only have 280 characters so providing more information can help answer questions and provide people with a credible source they can revisit in the future if they have questions.
4. **Create your own brand.** As you become more comfortable creating content, consider the fonts and colors you use to make your content your own. You can also add your handle or logo to photos and graphics. Another thing to consider as you identify your brand is the tone you use in your posts.

Information Resources

Not everyone is an expert on every species and you are not expected to be a walking encyclopedia on everything agriculture-related, but it is helpful to know where you can find information about the subjects you are not as familiar with so you can learn more and direct others to factual, science-based information. These resources can also help you think of content ideas for your social media. Here are some helpful websites and links for each species to get you started in addition to the Animal Agriculture Alliance's website:

Pigs

- <http://www.porkcares.org/>
- <http://nppc.org/>
- <http://www.pork.org/>
- <http://www.ilpork.com/home>

Dairy Cows

- <https://dairygood.org/>
- <http://www.dairydiscoveryzone.com/>
- <http://www.dairymax.org/>

Beef Cattle

- <https://factsaboutbeef.com/>
- <http://www.explorebeef.org/>

- <http://www.beefusa.org/>

Genetic Engineering

- <https://gmoanswers.com/>

Veal

- <http://www.vealfarm.com/>
- <http://www.americanveal.com/>

Turkey

- <http://serveturkey.org/>
- <http://eatturkey.com/>
- <http://minnesotaturkey.com/>

Chicken

- <http://www.chickencheck.in/>

- <http://www.chickenroost.com/>
- <http://www.nationalchickencouncil.org/>

Laying Hens

- <http://uepcertified.com/>
- <http://www.incredibleegg.org/>
- <https://www.uspoultry.org/>

Crops

- <http://ncga.com/home>

- <http://www.afia.org/>
- <http://unitedsoybean.org/>

Sheep/Goat

- <https://www.sheepusa.org/>
- <https://www.americanlamb.com/>
- <http://www.tsgra.com>

Photos

Photos are a great way to tell a story. You can share other people's photos with permission, or you can use free photos for your social media. Here are some things to remember when sharing photos:

1. **Don't plagiarize.** If you are not sharing your own photos, be sure to either give credit to the source if they allow you to use their photo, or use free photos that don't require attribution.
2. **Pay attention to detail.** Examine every pixel of the photo before you share it. You don't want to overlook something in the background of your photo that may distract from your message.
3. **"What is the worst that could happen?"** Before you share your photo, ask yourself what the worst thing is that could happen or what's the worst thing someone could comment? Training your brain to think in these terms will help you when putting together content to pay attention to every little detail from the topic and photo to the copy of your post.
4. **Context.** If your photo does show something controversial or unfamiliar, provide context as to what is going on in the photo so your followers don't have to guess.

Here are a couple of free photo sites to get you started:

- Pixabay.com
- Foter.com
- Unsplash.com

Social media graphics

A social media graphic is taking a photo to the next level – but not as far as a full infographic. Social media graphics include a photo or background color and text. Social media graphics can include memes. Here are some tools and tricks for making graphics:

1. **Size.** Depending on what social media platform you are posting to, there may be an ideal size for your graphic. As a general rule, 800 x 800 pixels works for both Facebook and Instagram, however the recommended sizes are as follows:
 - Twitter: 1024 x 512 pixels. This is the one platform where size can make a difference.
 - Facebook: 940 x 788 pixels
 - Instagram: 1080 x 1080 pixels
 - Pinterest: 735 x 1102 pixels
2. **Text placement.** When choosing a photo to use for your graphic, keep in mind where you envision your text being. Use the rule of thirds when selecting photos.
3. **Can you read it?** This goes along with text placement. Make sure when the final graphic is finished your followers will be able to clearly read the message you've placed on the photo.
4. **Proofread!** Typos and grammar errors can impact your credibility. This can also affect how many of your followers share your content – they may be hesitant to share something with typos even though they approve of the overall message. Be sure to proofread everything before you hit the publish button!

Creating social media graphics

There are several tools you can use to create your graphics, some more advanced and costly than others, but there are free tools that can get the job done:

- <https://www.canva.com>
- <http://www.fotor.com/>
- <https://spark.adobe.com/>

Infographics

Infographics are a way to explain a concept or process in a visually appealing way. Here are some things to know about infographics:

1. Focused data

- Use relevant data
- Use reputable sources and fact check
- Only use data relevant to your infographic's message
- Credit your sources

2. Clear design

- Limit your color palette (3-4 colors max)
- Use simple graphics that tie to your data
- Use data visualizations that most clearly illustrates the data
- Convey the message at a glance
- Establish a connection between sections (good infographics utilize the hierarchy of information)
- Make sure the graphics and numbers match
- Limit width to 735 pixels
- Anything over 5000 pixels tall will lose attention

3. Shareable story

- Answer an interesting question to grab audiences
- Use rational data to elicit an emotional response
- Use as little text (as possible) in a clear font

Creating infographics

There are several tools you can use to create your infographics, some more advanced and costly than others, but there are free tools that can get the job done:

- <https://piktochart.com/>
- <https://www.canva.com/>
- <https://venngage.com/>

Videos

If a photo is worth 1,000 words, a video is worth 1 million. Videos can give people a way to step in your shoes to see an aspect of agriculture that is foreign to them and learn something new. Here are some things to know about videos:

1. **Don't make them too long.** People have a short attention span – videos should be no more than 3-4 minutes in length. You can also try creating a GIF, which is a very short, animated photo.
2. **Create a theme.** Your video should flow and have a cohesive theme that includes limited colors and fonts – similar to the guidelines for creating an infographic.
3. **Add background music if appropriate.** Based on your content, background music may or may not be appropriate. If your video is animated, background music may work, but if your video is a live or an

interview, then background music would not be appropriate. You can also add background music to the beginning and end of your video if that works.

4. **Share the video file on social media when possible.** Facebook in particular likes it when you share the video file directly, instead of using a YouTube link. Sharing the video file directly will result in more views because the video will automatically start playing when someone scrolls over it.
5. **Use social media platforms for creating videos.** Facebook, Snapchat and Instagram make it possible to create a quick video directly from your phone – sometimes this is the best option.

Types of videos

There are several types of videos you can create, but one may work better than another depending on your goal for the video. Here are some examples of videos you can create:

1. **Parody.** An imitation intended for comic effect (an example would be The Peterson Farm Brothers singing videos).
2. **Live video.** A video broadcasted live to your social media channel. This could be of you feeding calves and doing other farm chores, a video of a veterinary visit on the farm, or simply holding a Q&A session with your followers.
3. **Interview.** Asking a farmer or industry professional questions on camera.
4. **Vlog.** A video blog which includes supporting text and images usually housed on YouTube.
Examples: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLGsCn98VLhXXR4U4LnmfRMW971cObeocM>
5. **Animation.** Using video clips and/or photos to create an animated video.

Creating videos

There are several tools you can use to create your video, some more advanced and costly than others, but there are free tools that can get the job done:

1. Social media apps (Facebook live, Instagram Reels and IGTV, Snapchat, etc.)
2. Periscope – live video
3. Built-in video software – some computers have video-making software included.
4. Video makers – note: there are free versions available, but if you want to get the full package without any watermarks, etc., you will need to pay a small fee.
 - a. <https://biteable.com/>
 - b. <https://www.wevideo.com/>
 - c. <https://studio.stupeflix.com/en/>
 - d. <https://wave.video/>
 - e. <https://www.apple.com/imovie/>
 - f. <https://www.adobe.com/products/premiere-rush.html> (Note: many schools and universities offer free or reduced access to Adobe programs.)

Blogging

Some things are better said in 500 words than 280 characters. This is where blog posts come in handy. A blog is a website typically owned by one individual or company that is updated regularly with a conversational writing style.

Starting a blog

Here are some things to think about before starting your own blog:

1. <https://wordpress.com/> is a popular site to use.
2. **Name.** Pick a unique name for your blog that describes what the content of the blog will be about.
3. **About page.** Include an about page on your site with your biography so your followers get to know a

little bit more about you.

4. **Branding.** Pick a template and color palette that suits your personality and the tone you want your blog to convey.
5. **Categories and menus.** Creating categories and/or menus to organize your blog posts will help readers navigate your site and find content they want to read and hopefully share.
6. **Schedule.** Think about how much time you have to dedicate to your blog and work it into your schedule. This could be a new post once a week or once every two weeks, etc.
7. **Social media.** Use your social media platforms to share your blog posts. A first blog post may be an introductory post about yourself and why you decided to start a blog.

Writing a blog post

Here are some tips to remember when writing a blog post:

1. **Stay relevant.** Writing about timely topics is key to getting the most views.
2. **Attention-grabbing title.** Pick a title for your post that you think your intended audience is likely to click on, but don't get too crazy that your title has nothing to do with your post.
3. **Include links.** Adding hyperlinks to your blog is an easy way to provide more information. You can include hyperlinks when you mention organizations, to link research and sources, or your social media platforms.
4. **Categories and tags.** Organize your blog posts by categories and/or tags. This will help your followers navigate your site and find other posts you've written about a certain topic they find interesting.
5. **Divide with headers.** People have a short attention span, so dividing up a block of words can help your readers get to the end of your post. Think of the headers like a mini title for the content directly following.
6. **Photos and videos.** Adding photos or videos can help explain your message. When adding photos, they should be inserted in an alternating pattern (first photo is left-aligned, second photo is right-aligned, third photo is left-aligned, etc.).
7. **Call to action.** Include what you want readers to do whether it is taking a survey, telling their friends why they support agriculture, becoming active on social media, reaching out to their friends when they see misinformation, etc.

Blogs to follow

Here are a few great blogs to follow and to use as example blogs if you are thinking about creating your own in the future!

- Animal Agriculture Alliance - <https://animalagalliance.org/news/blog/>
- New Mexico Milkmaid, Tara Vander Dussen - <https://newmexicomilkmaid.com/>
- Paint the Town Ag, Lauren Arbogast - <https://www.paintthetownag.com/>
- Dairy Carrie, Carrie Mess - <http://dairycarrie.com/>
- The Farmer's Daughter - <http://www.thefarmersdaughterusa.com/>
- Agriculture Proud, Ryan Goodman - <https://agricultureproud.com/>
- Nurse Loves Farmer, Sarah Shultz - <http://www.nurselovesfarmer.com/>
- Food and Swine - <http://foodandswine.com/>
- Prairie Californian - <http://prairiecalifornian.com/>
- Real Pig Farming - <https://realpigfarming.com/>
- Dr. Leah Dorman, Veterinarian - <http://animalantibiotics.org/meet-dr-dorman/dr-dorman-blog/>
- Best Food Facts - <https://www.bestfoodfacts.org/>
- Facts About Beef - <https://factsaboutbeef.com/>