

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 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.

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 18 million views.



2) Michelle Miller "Farm Babe"

(<https://www.facebook.com/lowaFarmBabe>)

Michelle Miller's social media presence is a great example of how utilizing social media can have a large impact on the public's perception of modern agriculture. "Farm Babe" keeps her message positive and honest both about her personal life and the agriculture community. She has gained the trust of her audience through her transparency about her non-agricultural background and her journey through adulthood that led her to

advocate for farmers. Openly talking on social media platforms has led Miller to a successful career as a keynote speaker, writer and columnist.

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 what we do.



3) Tara Vander Dussen “New Mexico Milkmaid” (<https://www.facebook.com/newmexicomilkmaid>)

Tara, also known as the “New Mexico Milkmaid” uses social media platforms and her personal blog to advocate for modern dairy farming. She can connect and resonate with a wide range of viewers through her diverse background of being a fifth-generation dairy farmer, environmental scientist, mother, and wife. “New Mexico Milkmaid” uses eye catching images and graphics to share important and emerging topics within the agriculture community.

To find other fellow “advocates” check out our [“Farmers to Follow”](#) blog post that includes the handles of farmers and ranchers within animal agriculture. This post includes dairy, pig, poultry, sheep, and cattle farmers you can follow on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to get an inside look at how these “advocates” are using their platform!

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 platform 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: 2.85 billion

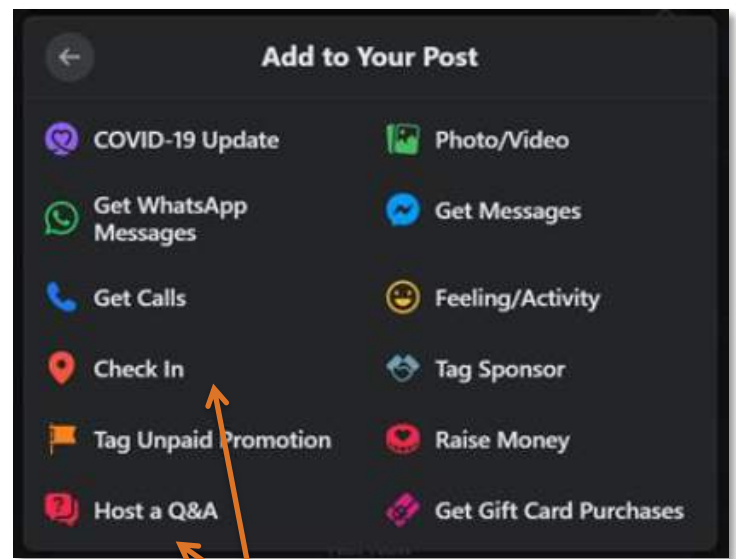
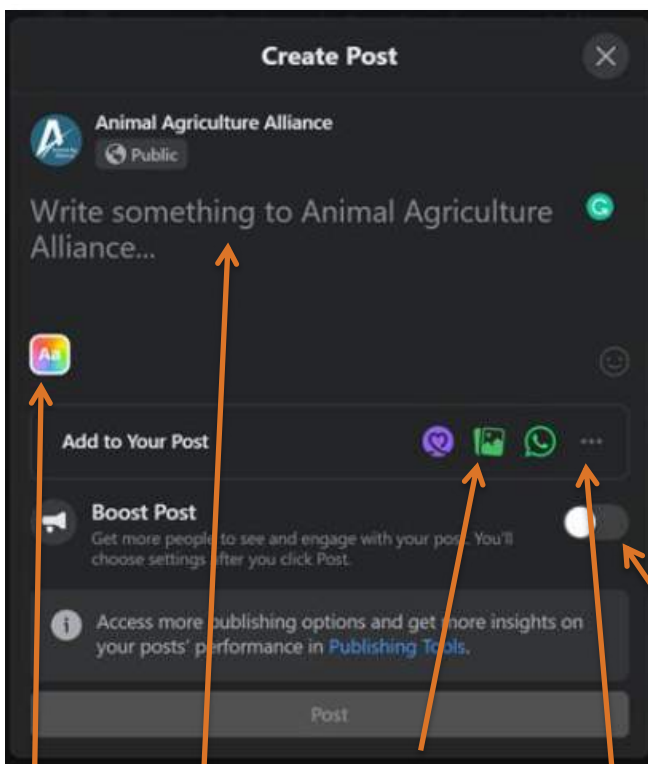
Facebook is great for connecting with people as it is the most-used social media platform worldwide! 1.8 billion of its users are active every day! You can post updates about activity on your farm, share pictures, and see what friends, celebrities, organizations, and groups are up to. Your Facebook community often consists of people you know in real life.

Facebook Dictionary

- **Profile:** To utilize Facebook you must create a profile for yourself. This is where you can share information about yourself, such as your interests, photos, videos, and where you are from/live. To see your profile, click on your name or profile picture at the top of your screen while on Facebook. You must have a personal profile to create or manage a page.
- **Timeline:** The timeline is your main personal homepage that chronologically lists all your personal activity and other items which your friends have tagged you in. It is also a part of your profile. You can navigate to your timeline by clicking on your name at the top of your Facebook home page.
- **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.
- **Newsfeed:** The main homepage of the platform is a continuous newsfeed following everyone that you are connected to and every page that you “like.” It also includes updates from your friends.



- **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.
- **Pages:** Facebook offers pages as an option for artists, public figures, businesses, organizations, and nonprofits where they can connect with others with the same interests and/or customers. If your personal Facebook is gaining a large following, some “agvocates” and influencers decide to switch to a page rather than posting on their personal profile. Having a Facebook page allows interested followers to simply ‘like’ a page rather than sending a friend request.
- **Insights and Analytics:** Both are powerful tools for those who want to track their interaction and traction on Facebook. Insights allow page users to view their performance, content reach, post/page interactions and engagements. This will allow you as an “agvocate” to know what content people are most interested in and how people interact with you and the content you are sharing. Facebook Analytics is a free tool that tells you what information your audience prefers to see from you.



Your content goes here.

Add your own photo(s) to your post.

With a page you can pay to boost a post to your target audience.

Interact with your followers by utilizing the Q&A tool.

Add the location from where you are posting to get more interactions from people within the area.

Add a pre-made background to your text.

Access additional tools here.

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, a note about activity on your farm, or give 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. 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 over sharer—make sure that you're posting fresh, interesting and interactive content.
3. **Don't sync your accounts.** 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 go "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.



Instagram

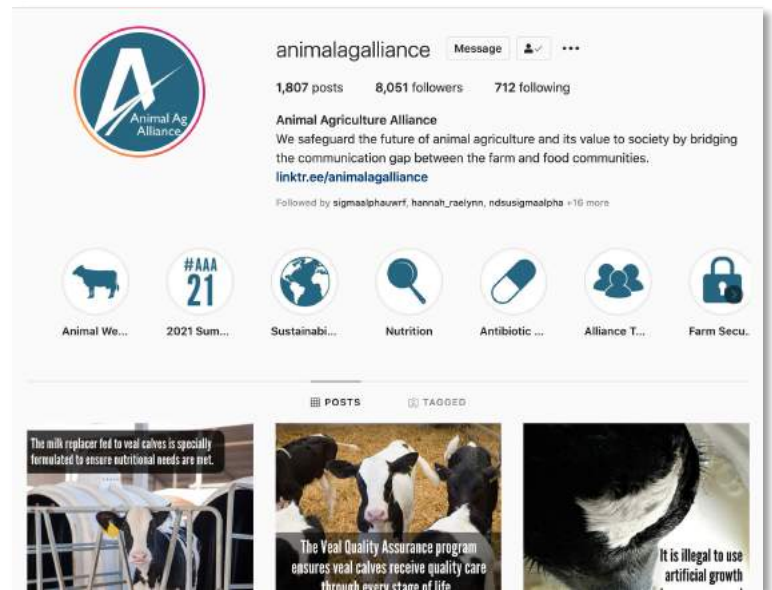
www.instagram.com

Active users: 1 billion

Instagram focuses on sharing pictures and 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.

To use Instagram to the fullest extent, you will need to download the application on a mobile device. There is also a desktop version but features are limited. 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. Once your profile is created, add a bio to allow other viewers to quickly get to know you and your interests.
- 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 to reach a wider audience.
- 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 Instagram Story for your followers to watch. Stories appear at the top of your home feed. This is similar to Snapchat. Enhance your story by using the tools available such as adding text to an image, GIF's, filters, etc. Share other influencers content by posting it on your story. This can easily be done by tapping the icon that looks like a paper airplane on their original post and then it will appear on your story. Make sure to give the user credit by tagging them!
- 8. Save story highlights.** Unlike regular Instagram Stories that vanish after 24 hours, highlights can live permanently on your profile! Highlights are a collection of stories that you archive, housed directly under your bio and above your feed. Users can have multiple highlights which allows easy labeling and organization.
- 9. Post a video.** 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. This tool also allows you to post longer videos to your feed. Instagram reels are much like TikTok videos. Reels allows you to create and discover short videos that can be shared with your followers or anyone on Instagram. You can record and edit multi-clip videos with audio and effects. This is a great way to give viewers insight into your daily life on the farm!

Twitter

www.twitter.com

Active users: 300 million

Twitter is a popular option that allows you to “tweet” 280-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.

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. 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. If you are trying to tweet about a hot topic, there are typically hashtag(s) associated with the public conversation. People use the associated hashtag(s) to stay relevant and add to the conversation. Before posting you can check the number of interactions with certain hashtags to pick the most frequently used one to gain traction with your own tweet. Examples include #MeatMatters or #RealPigFarming).



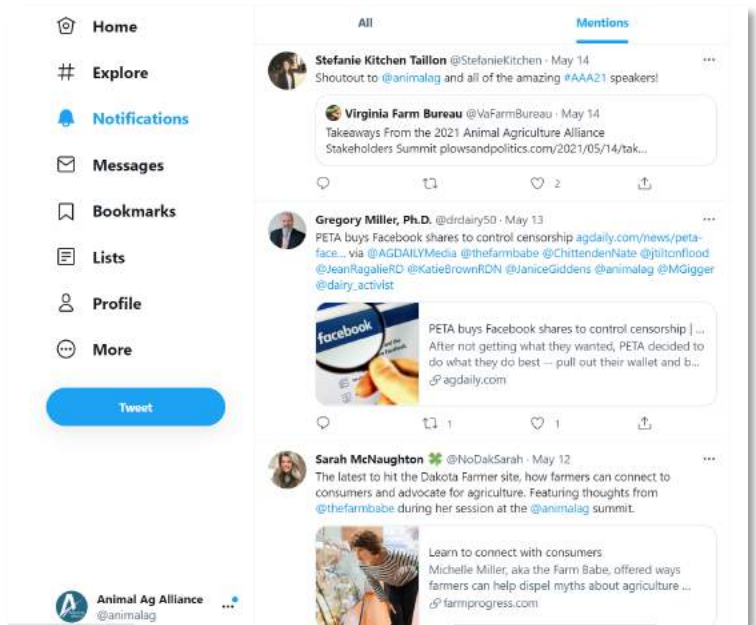
Twitter users to follow:

@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

Twitter Tips & Tricks

1. **Have a personality.** Show who you are as a person, have character, experiment with different tones of voice in your posts. Engage your followers and send out a wide variety of content to gain a wide variety of followers.
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, which can help you reach more followers and tweet interactions. Re-sharing content from credible sources is always a great practice to use when you do not have any personal agriculture content to share.
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 and interact with others, the more often they will in turn promote and interact with 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. Remember, it does take time to gain an audience and following.
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 2-3 hashtags.
7. **Save tweets for later.** Liking tweets is a great way to ‘bookmark’ tweets for easy retweeting in the future. Twitter has a feature that allows you to access all the tweets you have liked in the past. Previously liked tweets can be found on your profile page in the ‘Likes’ section. Within your profile you can also find the ‘Tweets & replies’ section which allows you and your followers to see all your previous tweets, retweets and what you have commented on.



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 using hashtags to find relevant conversations.
- Connect with other advocates.
- 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.

Free Twitter apps

1. **Tweetdeck**—View important profiles, hashtags, mentions, etc. all at once in an online dashboard.
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. **Cinchcast**— allows users to share audio messages online that you have recorded using your computer or smartphone.

Pinterest

www.pinterest.com

Active users: 459 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.

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 are typically 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. Tip: The [“Pin It” button](#) for your web browser is easy to install and allows you to post images easily.
- **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.



Animal Agriculture Alliance

animalagalliance.org @animalag · We safeguard the future of animal agriculture and its value to society by bridging the communication gap between the farm and food communities.

1.6k followers · 150 following

2.4k monthly views

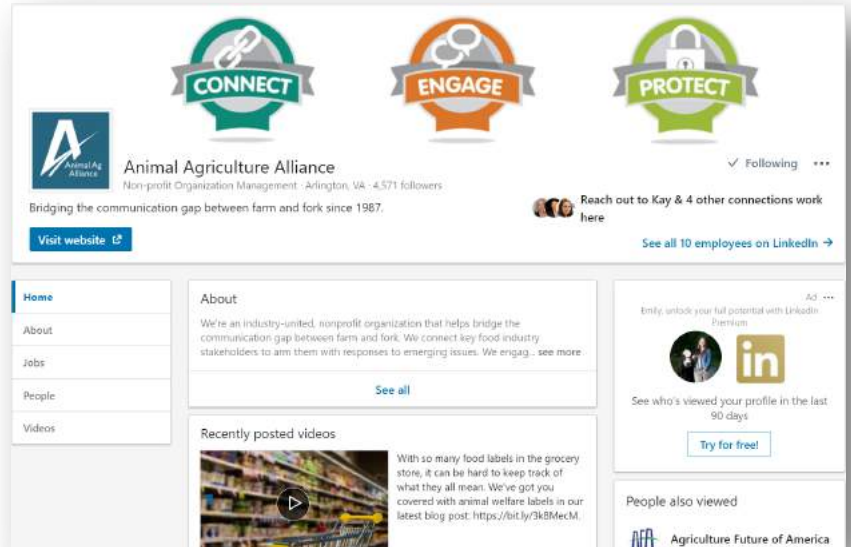
LinkedIn

www.linkedin.com

Active users: 690 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. 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. [US Department of Agriculture \(USDA\) Agricultural Research Service \(ARS\)](#)
2. [US Poultry and Egg Association](#)
3. [American Feed Industry Association \(AFIA\)](#)
4. [Dairy Farmers of America](#)
5. [American Angus Association](#)
6. [Agricultural and Farming 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.

Click the search bar at the top of the Facebook page, then type in a group's name or a keyword and press ↵ Enter. For example, if you wanted to find groups that focus on dairy farming, you might type "dairy farm" into the search bar.

Snapchat

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

Active users: 280 million

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

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 you are friends with on Snapchat- this method is ideal for reaching the most people.

Flip between front and back camera.

Flash or no flash.

Click here to take a picture or hold to record a video.

The smaller circles are filters and lenses you can apply before taking an image.

Access all trending filters, people, sounds, etc. here.

Browse is the default when taking pictures or videos.

Scan allows you to identify items and objects.

This allows access to all available filters.

Save images or videos to your phone or app.

Add images or videos already saved on your phone.

Add text

Draw

Add a GIF, location, sticker, etc.

Make a sticker of something within your image.

Add music.

Link to a URL.

Crop your image

Change how long someone can view your image/video.

Choose who to send your photo or video to and decide if you'd like to add it to your story.

Snapchat users to follow

Gilmerdairy – Will Gilmer, Alabama dairy farmer
Nationalffa – National FFA
Ranchhouseinc – Ranch House Design Inc.
Realpigfarming - Real Pig Farming, National Pork
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
Cristencclark – Cristen Clark, Food & Swine
Hmilller361 – Hannah Miller, social media guru

TikTok

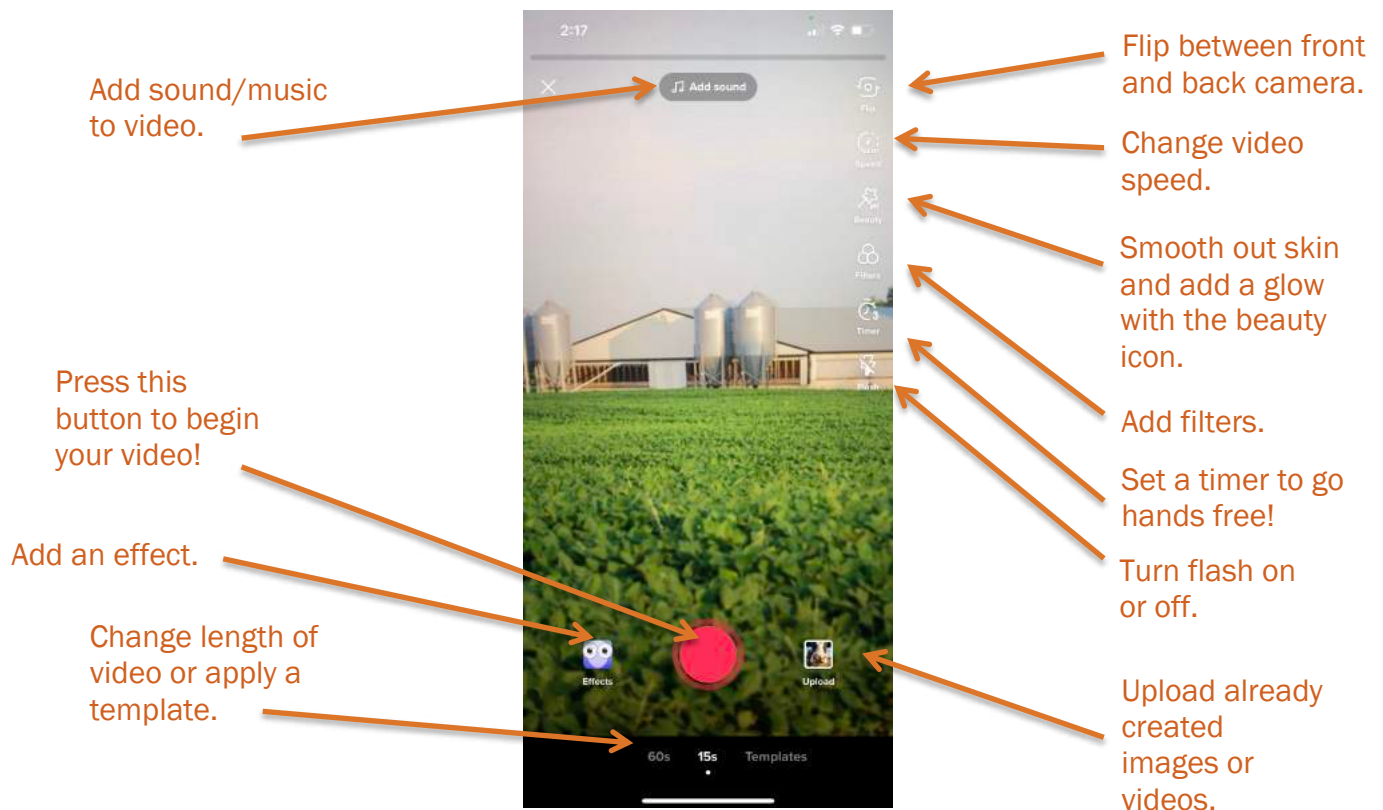
<https://www.tiktok.com/>

Active users: 700 million

TikTok is not only the fastest growing social media platform of 2020 and 2021 but it is also one of the fastest growing social media networks of all time. TikTok is a mobile app for creating, sharing, and discovering short videos.

To use TikTok, you will need to download the application on a mobile device. You can view videos and accounts on a computer but can only upload premade content from the mobile app. Once you've downloaded the app and set up an account, you're ready to become a creator! To get started:

1. **Create an account.** TikTok assigns all users a random username, but it is not catchy, so change it! 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. Once your profile is created add a bio to allow other viewers to quickly get to know you and your interests.
2. **Find other farm accounts to follow.** Find farmers and farm accounts sharing relevant and positive stories of agriculture that you can promote and follow. You can help amplify their message through interacting with their content such as commenting, liking, and sharing with others. Hopefully, they'll return the favor!
3. **Reach others.** Just like Twitter and Instagram, you can tag your videos on TikTok with hashtags to help other users find your relevant content. Using hashtags helps you gain more exposure on your account and videos because it will help populate your content on others 'for you page.' However, unlike other platforms, the length of a video, captions, sounds and stickers also influence your visibility on the app. If you use a trending sound on your video the likelihood of it showing on others' "for you page" is much higher according to the TikTok algorithm.
4. **It doesn't have to be perfect.** TikTok videos are not meant to be perfect! The beauty of this platform is that people go trending every day for their video imperfections. Show your personality and let viewers see the everyday things that happen on a farm – even the littlest things can catch viewers' attention!
5. **Engage!** Interact with other creators! When scrolling through your "for you page" comment on other creators' videos! Engaging with other people will help you gain more followers and potential likes on your videos in the future!



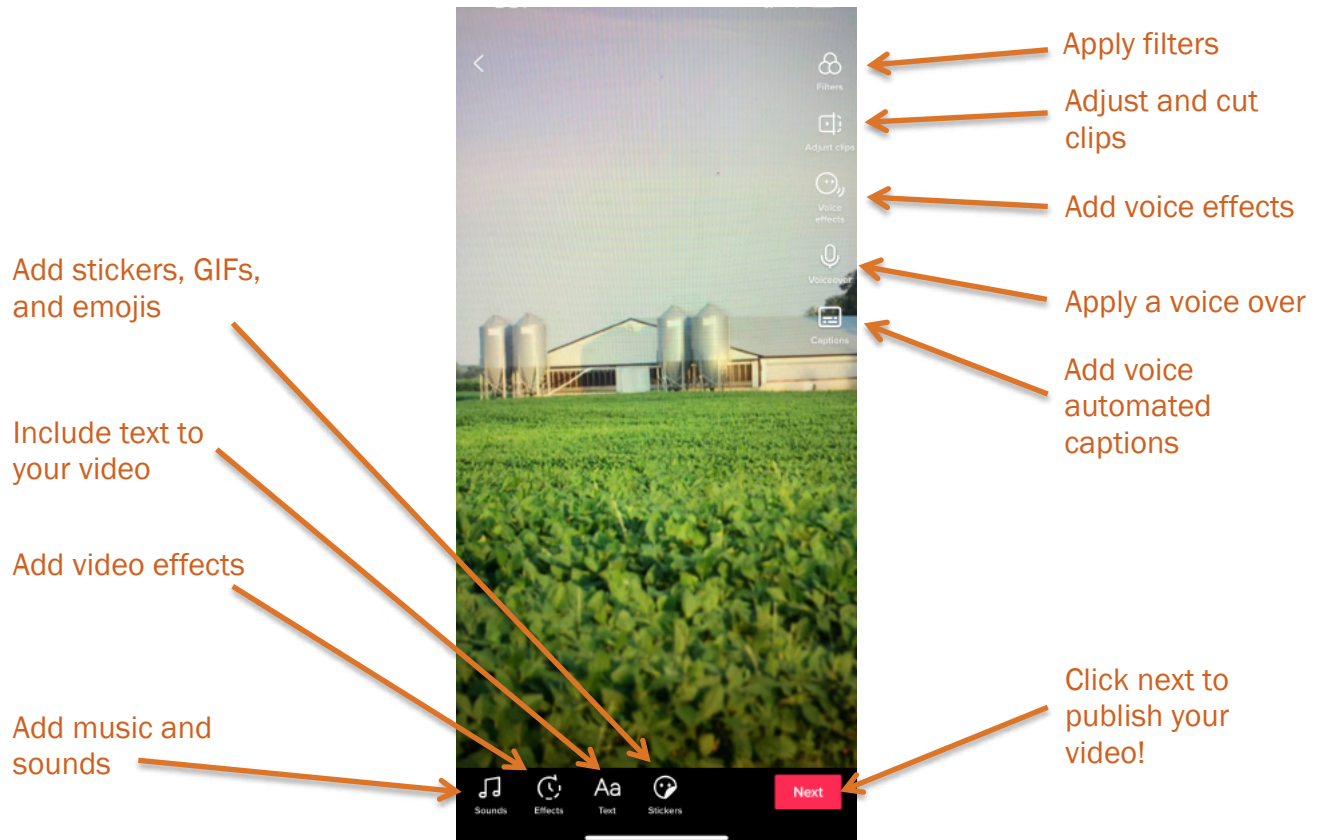
TikTok Recording Editor

At first glance, TikTok's video editing tools can seem daunting but we promise they're user-friendly and you'll be a TikTok video editing wiz before you know it!

1. **Create.** To begin creating, tap the '+' button at the bottom of the home screen. Once you tap in, your camera opens in selfie mode. You can also create videos using the stitch or duet features. To film a video using these features, find a video you'd like to use and tap the arrow and select!
2. **Video Length and Template.** Under the record button, you will see a toggle which includes the video length options and templates. Choose if you would rather have a 15 or 50-second video. If you tap on templates, you can choose to record using one of TikTok's pre-made templates.
3. **Effects.** You can access all TikTok's built-in video effects by tapping the effects button. When you tap in, you will see a lineup of AR filters and other special effects that you can apply to your face or whatever you are trying to capture. You don't have to use a video effect, but they can be a lot of fun and can bring more attention! As mentioned, there are always some effects that are trending so before you apply, check out your 'for you page' to see what is "in"! You can apply an effect before or after shooting a video, but some effects only work if applied before shooting.
4. **Sound.** TikTok has a great music library that can be accessed at the top of the screen. If you want to show something off without speaking, adding a sound is a great alternative that draws viewers in! Browse through all TikTok's sounds is easy as the music is organized into different categories like trending, dance moves, and top 40. It is super easy to find music that is popular within the app!
5. **Camera Rotation.** TikTok defaults to the front-facing camera but to rotate to the back camera, just tap the icon that looks like a camera that says 'flip' underneath.
6. **Speed.** You can change the speed of your video; this is a great option if you want to quickly show something, or really grab the viewers' attention and slow the video down. Change the speed from 0.3x to 3x and any speed in-between!
7. **Beauty.** Having a rough day and not looking your best? We all have those days and TikTok has thought ahead for us! Click on the icon that looks like a fairy stick labeled beauty to apply a filter.

that smooths out skin and gives you a nice glow.

- 8. Filters.** Don't let bad lighting stop you from capturing a perfect moment! By clicking on the icon that looks like three circles that is labeled filters you can access all the filters your heart could ever desire. TikTok has specific filters for filming portraits, landscapes, and food. There is also a section labeled 'vibe' that include even more filters! You can change the intensity of the filter from anywhere between 0 (no filter) to 100 (full intensity) with the red moveable line.
- 9. Timer.** We all know sometimes there is never enough hands! Select the timer option to turn on an auto-record countdown to film hands-free.
- 10. Upload.** Already have great videos and images? No worries! Add your already created content and adjust the length of your clips and merge videos and pictures together once on the app!



TikTok Video Editor

Once you are finished recording or uploading your video, hit the red checkmark to switch to TikTok's video editor. Make sure you recorded all your footage before moving into the editing stage. Going back into TikTok's recording editor will erase any edits you have already applied to your video!

- 1. Video Effects.** Add effects to any part of your video! Within this tool you can add visual effects, change how viewers see the video image, create transitions, split screen and video, and so much more!
- 2. Add text.** Click on the 'Aa' labeled text on the bottom of the screen to add additional context for viewers at first glance. Text is also a great way to be inclusive by adding captions. Select the font, color, and position for how you would like your text to appear.
- 3. Add Stickers and GIFs.** At the bottom of the screen click on the 'stickers' icon to add effects, sounds, filters and of course stickers to your video!
- 4. Voice Effects.** Add a bit of humor by applying a voice over! There are multiple options that will be

applied to your recording and original audio.

5. **Voiceover.** Have a video that needs a bit of explaining? Add a voice over, choose where and when you would like to apply a voice over and begin recording!
6. **Auto Caption.** You can turn on auto captions for all or some of your TikTok videos! This is a great practice to get familiar with because this tool makes your videos more accessible to deaf or hard-of-hearing viewers and allows your viewers to still enjoy your content when they cannot use their sound.
7. **Publish!** Once you have your video exactly how you want like, it's time to publish! Tap the red 'next' button in the bottom right-hand corner. Here you will be directed to the final page where you can add hashtags and tag friends. You can also customize how people interact with your video. Once finished hit the red publish button!

8 ways to gain traction on TikTok

1. Consistency is key! Post high-quality content often.
2. Find your niche.
3. Think outside the box.
4. Identify trends and join in on the fun!
5. Embrace who you are and the story you are trying to tell.
6. Accept that your content is not for everyone!
7. Network with other TikTokers.
8. Collaborate with brands that align with your values.

TikTokers to follow:

@Shayfarmkid – Shay Myers, Crop Farmer
@tr_jones – TR Jones, Dairy Farmer
@nyfarmgirls – 3 sisters on a Dairy Farm in New York
@highheelsandcanolafields – Lesley Kelly, Crop Farmer

@saskdutchkid – Jan Kielstra, Dairy Farmer
@hueybcool – Huey Boelen, Dairy Farmer and Greenhouse Grower
@dairymuse – Dairy Farmer
@dairycarrie – Carrie Mess, Dairy Farmer
@beefrunner – Ryan Goodman, Beef Farmer

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.

Someone asks you a question pertaining to agriculture... and you don't know the answer.

Be honest: No one expects you to know the answer to all things agriculture – that would be nearly impossible! When you get a question that you don't know the answer to, be honest about it and point them to an expert or resource that can answer their question. Always remember: it's best to speak from your

own personal experiences and not try to speak for every industry and farm.

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

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

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

Pinterest: pinterest.com/animalag

LinkedIn: linkedin.com/company/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. **Visuals.** 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, video or some other type of visual than a post with only text. Most social media algorithms favor videos over pictures, so be sure to incorporate videos in your content.
2. **Key message or fact.** What do you want your followers to learn or take away from your post? This is the purpose of "advocating" online.
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 and voice.** 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>

Beef Cattle:

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

Sheep/Goats:

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

Dairy Cattle:

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

Turkeys:

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

Veal:

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

Crops:

- <http://ncga.com/home>
- <http://www.afia.org/>
- <http://unitedsoybean.org/>

Broiler Chickens:

- <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/>

Genetic Engineering:

- <https://gmoanswers.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
- Flickr

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, 1080 x 1080 pixels works for both Facebook and Instagram, however the recommended sizes are as follows:
 - Twitter: minimum 600 x 335 pixels, maximum 1200 x 675 pixels.
 - Facebook: 1200 x 628 pixels
 - Instagram: minimum 1080 x 1080 pixels
 - Pinterest: 1000 x 1500 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. Here are some free tools to 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 600 pixels
 - Limit height to 1100 pixels
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. Here are free tools to 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 give people the opportunity 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, TikTok, or Instagram Reel.
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 desired.
4. **Share the video file on social media when possible.** Facebook in particular likes it when you share upload the video file directly, instead of using a YouTube or video platform 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.** TikTok, 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 (here's an example: <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. Here are free tools to get the job done:

1. Social media apps (TikTok, 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. **Pick a blog site.** [Wordpress](#) 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. If you already have an established brand on social media, be sure to incorporate the same style into your blog for consistency.
5. **Menus.** Creating 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, link research and sources, or link 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 – take a survey, tell their friends why they support agriculture, become active on social media, reach out to 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/>
- Dairy Carrie, Carrie Mess - <http://dairycarrie.com/>
- The Farmer's Daughter - <http://www.thefarmersdaughterusa.com/>
- Buzzard's Beat, Brandi Buzzard - <http://www.buzzardsbeat.com/>
- The Pinke Post, Katie Pinke - <http://thepinkepost.com/about/>
- Kids, Cows and Grass, Debbie Lyons-Blythe - <https://www.kidscowsandgrass.com/>
- Agriculture Proud, Ryan Goodman - <https://agricultureproud.com/>
- Success is Reason Enough - <http://www.sexsoncharolais.com/>
- Food and Swine - <http://foodandswine.com/>
- Crystal Cattle, Crystal Blin - <https://www.crystalblin.com/p/about.html>
- Prairie Californian - <http://prairiecalifornian.com/>
- Best Food Facts - <https://www.bestfoodfacts.org/>