

2023

ANIMAL AG ALLIES

IMPACT REPORT

AGRICULTURE ENGAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



ABOUT ANIMAL AG ALLIES


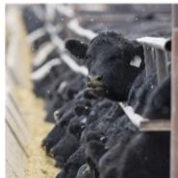


Animal Ag Allies is an initiative of the Animal Agriculture Alliance, a nonprofit organization working to safeguard the future of animal agriculture. The program empowers farmers, ranchers, veterinarians, and industry professionals to be outspoken advocates for agriculture online and within their communities. Through the Allies program, the Alliance is working to find emerging voices in the dialogue around modern animal agriculture and connect program participants with one another as well as industry experts. We provide opportunities for networking, training and continuous development of issue expertise and communications skills. The Animal Ag Allies are on the front lines of responding to emerging issues and sharing positive and factual content about animal agriculture. Thanks to the Alliance's training program, Allies are well-equipped to represent the agriculture community online, in the media and various other venues.

The Animal Ag Allies program consists of two phases: online communications training and a private forum to discuss engagement strategies and emerging issues. Each participant in the program is asked to complete a set of five interactive online modules and then are invited to join a private networking group. The modules are all available online via the Alliance's website and may be completed at the participant's own pace.

Modules include:

- Animal Ag Resource Roundup – an overview of ten sectors of the animal agriculture community: dairy, beef, veal, pork, chicken, turkey, egg, sheep, aquaculture, and animal feed. Participants are given resources to learn more about each commodity.
- Hot Topics & Emerging Issues – updates on the latest developments in key issues facing animal agriculture, including animal welfare, sustainability, and antibiotic use.
- Addressing Contentious Issues – advice for how to successfully engage in conversations about controversial issues.
- Growing Your Social Following & Reaching Outside of the Choir - tips for increasing follower and engagement rates, as well as making sure you're reaching the right people.
- Public Outreach 101 – an introduction to public speaking, developing key messages and working with media, including engagement strategies and interview suggestions.

Welcome to Animal Ag Allies!

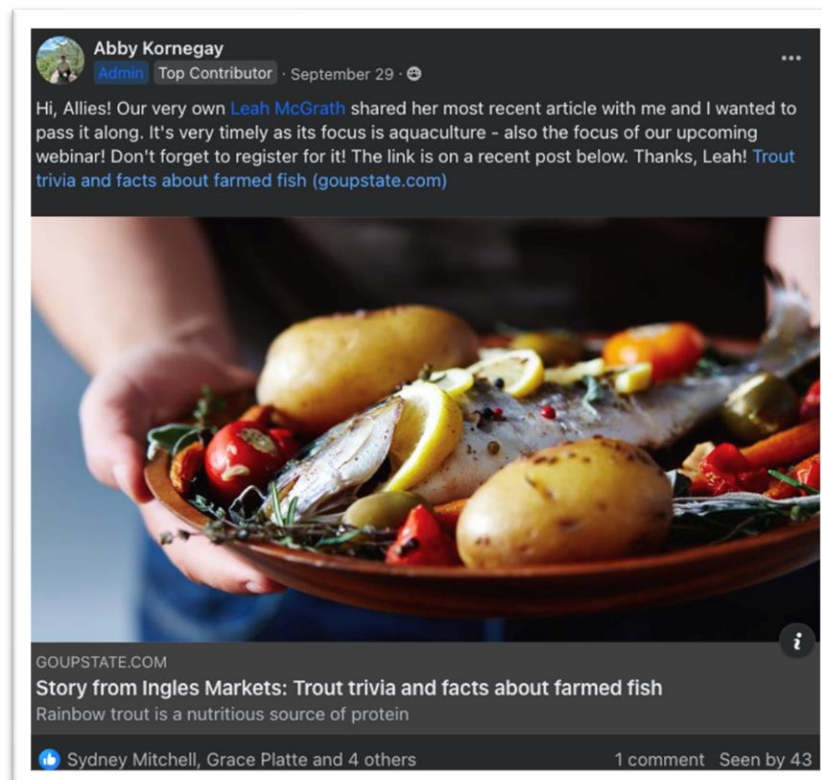
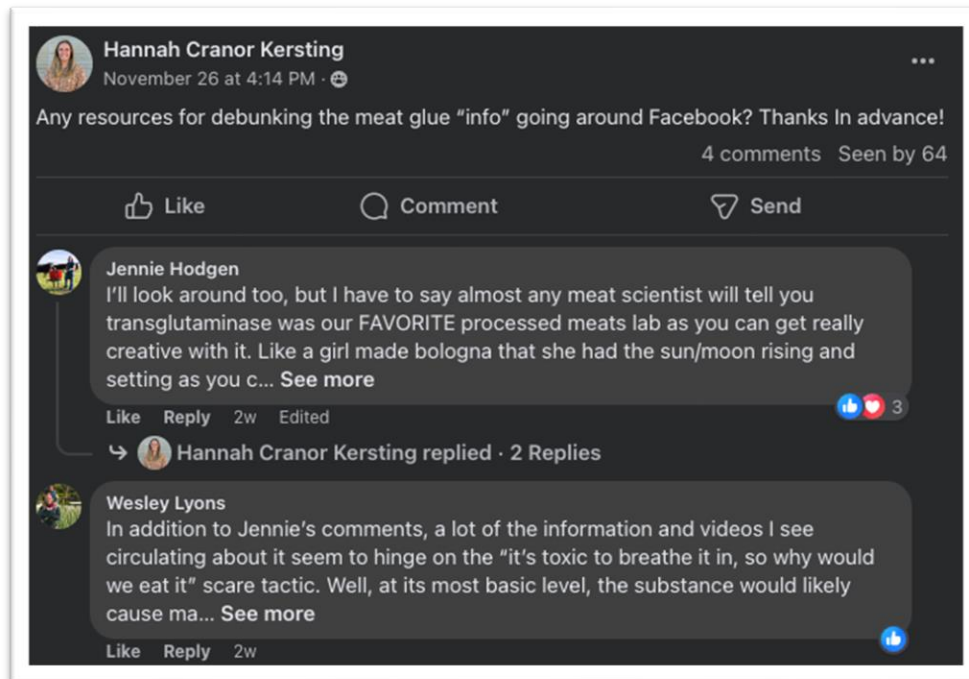


The Animal Ag Allies modules are your home for articles and videos, practice scenarios, and practical tools to help you grow as an Animal Ag Ally. You will be able to **bookmark links**, **download resources**, and **track your progress** as you uncover new ways to engage. We know you already bring a lot to the table – knowledge, experience, community, passion, and so much more. Are you ready to broaden your view and tackle some tough topics? Then you're in the right place. **Let's get started!**

[CLICK HERE TO BEGIN!](#)

Following the completion of the training modules, participants are invited to a private online networking group where they can interact with other program graduates, Animal Ag Alliance staff, and other select organizations, including program sponsors. Participants are encouraged to use the group to get advice on growing their online following, engaging on certain issues, responding to comments and messages, and any other relevant topics.

The Alliance team fosters discussion by regularly posting questions and discussion prompts. Quarterly learning opportunities are also offered to the group and all program graduates are encouraged to participate. These sessions cover emerging and hot topics issues, new resources to share, and tips from farmers and veterinarians who are already social media rockstars.



2023 ANIMAL AG ALLIES PARTICIPATION

Goal

The Alliance's goal was to host four classes of Animal Ag Allies and have 40 participants complete the training modules between January - December 2023. The Alliance aimed to attract a diverse group of participants in terms of roles (farmers, ranchers, veterinarians, industry professionals) and sectors of the animal agriculture community represented. By the end of 2023, we endeavored to have at least 160 total graduates that had completed the program and progressed to our private networking group.

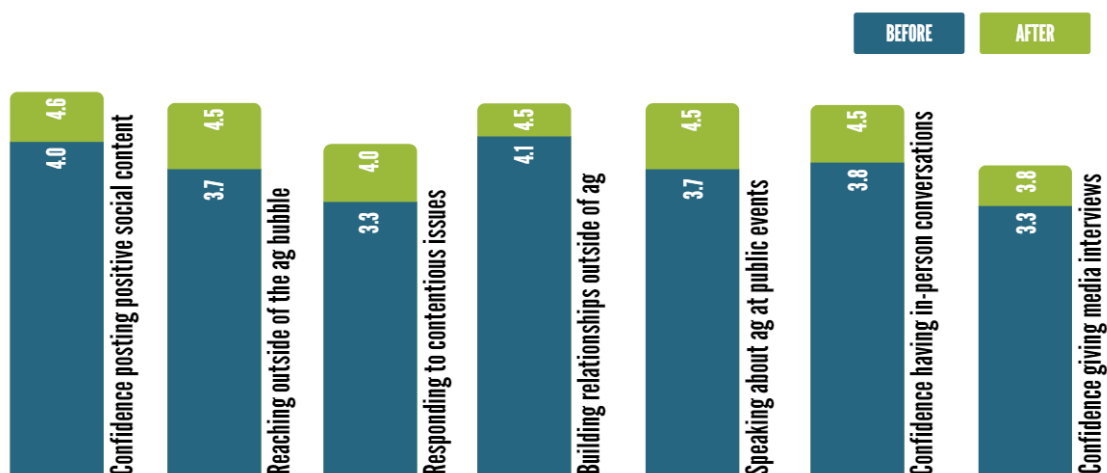
Outcome

We hosted four quarterly classes and had 25 participating farmers, ranchers, practicing veterinarians, and industry professionals enroll in the Animal Ag Allies program this year. After finishing the final class of 2023, the total number of graduates is 152, just shy of our 160-person goal.

While focusing on making major updates to the program, recruitment efforts slowed which contributed to falling short of our participation goal for this year. We plan to create more opportunities to increase participation in 2024, including ramping up promotion at trade shows (such as the American Farm Bureau Federation's Annual Convention and the International Production and Processing Expo) and speaking engagements. The Alliance has begun a pilot partnership with the Kansas Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (KSAND) where the Alliance is offering complimentary participation to KSAND dietitians to complete the Animal Ag Allies modules. In return, KSAND helped to promote the modules to their members. This year, 26 KSAND members enrolled in the Animal Ag Allies program in addition to the 25 farmers, rancher, practicing veterinarians, and industry professionals.

The Alliance asks participants to complete a survey after finishing the required program material to judge the effectiveness of the modules and the value of the program. Since the beginning of the program, surveyed participants have rated the overall value of the modules in terms of providing new information and useful resources for future use as a **4.7 out of 5**. Most survey participants responded positively about the value of the Allies modules to their engagement efforts and that their efforts had increased since completing the training.

Confidence levels in seven key skills increased after participants completed the modules:



PARTICIPANT TESTIMONIALS

- "The training that I received in Animal Ag Allies made me feel more comfortable telling the story of American animal agriculture. This program taught me invaluable skills that I can use in my everyday life!"
- "Appreciate the connection between ag and health/nutrition professionals. Thanks for doing this - we are all connecting to the same audiences who need understandable answers about complex topics. Working together will help successfully answer those questions and reconnect people to the food supply chain in an

authentic and useful manner in a way that keeps people, animals, and planet top of mind.”

- “Overall, I thought the course was great. I feel more confident now that I have resources to fall back on when a contentious issue arises. I hope I can put what I learned to good use on social media and its people. I would recommend this course to anyone looking to improve their agriculture advocacy skills.”
- “Very comprehensive training and materials. I learned quite a bit, especially in areas outside of my expertise. I'm very excited to move forward!”
- “I am so grateful that I was able to be a part of the Animal Ag Allies program! Even though I work in the cattle business every day with my own farm, the information I learned through these sessions will be invaluable as I move through my professional career.”
- “I love learning about other livestock sectors, it makes it easier to speak with other individuals who work in the agriculture industry, and more importantly with consumers who have questions. Thank you again to the Animal Ag Alliance for the opportunity, I look forward to staying in touch with the organization!”
- “I am thankful for this program opening my eyes to other sectors of agriculture and how I can still play a role in promoting them although I am not directly involved.”

CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

This year, the Alliance hosted three “continuing education” webinars for participants.

- **Committed to Sustainability: A Beef and Dairy Perspective**
 - Industry leaders Dr. Samantha Werth, US Roundtable for Sustainable Beef, Chase DeCoite, Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy and Jacqi Coleman, Dairy Management, Inc., joined the Allies to share how their respective sectors of animal agriculture are innovating to enhance the sustainability of beef and dairy. This webinar shared how the beef and dairy communities remain committed to furthering progress through industry-wide goals to continue reducing its environmental impact.
- **Leveraging New Media for Agricultural Science Communication: Creating Trusting Relationships with Consumers Online**
 - Allies joined Dr. Jacqueline Aenlle, Kansas State University, to discuss the strategies behind developing trust in agriculture and agricultural science. As this trust continues to fluctuate, it is important to continue creating opportunities for scientists, producers, and other experts to communicate with the public and develop a trusting relationship with consumers. This workshop discussed various dimensions of trust and trust building within the agriculture community, how to better prepare to speak with consumers on public/digital platforms, and relevant concepts of conflict resolution that can be used by agriculture advocacy platforms.
- **Aquaculture 101**
 - Charlie Culpepper, National Aquaculture Association, joined the Allies to share an overview of the aquaculture community, common myth and misconceptions about the way seafood is raised, and current advocacy efforts being pursued by the National Aquaculture Association.

FUTURE PLANS

The Alliance was excited to complete our first full year with the online modules housed on our website. After completing that big transition, we are looking forward to exploring new opportunities for advancement. This includes looking for new ways to engage our existing graduates as well as continue to bring in new users to the program. As the Alliance participates in various trade shows and conferences throughout the year, Animal Ag Allies will continue to be one of our top speaking points to engage with new potential participants. To foster more engagement among existing Allies, the Alliance is planning to host our first ever in-person event for Allies participants in 2024.

We plan to continue our outreach to “influencers” in the nutrition community knowing that they are often on the front lines fielding questions from clients and patients about where their food comes from and the nutritional benefits associated with consuming animal protein. The Alliance also plans to explore partnerships with similar continuing education programs such as National Cattlemen’s Beef Association’s Masters of Beef Advocacy to draw in other industry professionals and be a “next step” for others completing similar industry programs. These industry leaders and allied partners are often facing questions from the modern consumer regarding animal welfare,

sustainability, and other hot topics surrounding animal agriculture.

We will also plan for other long-term adjustments to the program based on survey results and feedback.