

Agriculture and Social Media



There was a time when farmers got together at the local feed mill and talked about the weather or what was happening in the world of agriculture. Communicating with others was called socializing. It was done face to face and was generally local. Now people, farmers included, spread the word—whether personal or farming-related—using social media tools, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and blogs.

Why should agriculture producers care about social media tools? It's really quite simple: mass influence.

Consumers aren't just learning about food production at local farmers' markets; many are using social media to educate themselves. Today, most farmers use computers, the Internet, cell phones, smartphones, and even electronic tablets or notebooks. But when it comes to social media, many still lag behind. That may mean they are missing great opportunities to interact with and educate the public, not to mention promote their farms and their products.



Social media refers to Internet-based applications that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content. The value of social media is that it blends technology and social interaction. Social media is a culture changer, not a fad. In an era of 500 million Facebook users, 50 million tweets, 450 million mobile Internet users, and 68 million bloggers, society has shifted.

Traditionally, agricultural information exchange was dominated by industrial media such as newspapers, television, and magazines. In recent years, however, technology awareness and computer literacy have increased across all demographics. Various forms of social media are being used more and more by people looking for news, education, and other information related to agriculture.

If you have a one-on-one conversation about an issue, only the person you're talking to benefits from the information you deliver. But if you share that information using social media, there is the potential to reach millions of other growers asking the same questions or facing similar problems.

Social media also provides growers with a quick and easy way to build relationships and interact with people in agriculture. Social media creates a much broader agriculture community, so obstacles like physical distance and isolation are issues of the past.

Agriculture and social media fit together. Social media is the platform of engagement and agriculture is the content. Social media gives farmers and rural businesses a voice and provides invaluable networking opportunities for continuous two-way communication. Be sure you're taking advantage of all the opportunities social media offers.

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