It’s time to tell your farm story.

Presented by Jessica Ziehm
NY Animal Agriculture Coalition
Northeast Dairy Producers Association
March 9, 2016

Farming requires a social license to operate today.
Public support for animal agriculture

Most consumers are here

Activists are here

Farmers are here

The Good News!

Consumers rank Dairy Farmers in Top 3 for who they trust when it comes to animal issues.

97% of Americans eat meat, milk & eggs.

Take a page out of the activists’ playbook

“We must tell stories, not statistics, and appeal to the audience by citing the popularity of the movement,”
- Nathan Runkle, Mercy for Animals

“The activists have done a much better job of communication with the public. When you get bashed, you need to be opening a door, not shutting a door, because when you shut the door, that’s automatic implied guilt.”
- Temple Grandin
Today’s Agenda
1. Need to own our actions
2. Be transparent to gain consumer trust
3. Speak with passion and get personal
4. Engage in two-way conversations
5. Identify a strategy that works best for you
6. Enlist the help of others, if needed
7. Repeat as often as possible

Own our Actions
Everything we do on our farms is for the health and betterment of:
- Our animals,
- Our employees,
- Our environment,
- Our products, and
- Our community.

If it is not, we vow to change it!

Transparency
Operating in a way that is easy for others to see our actions and the 'why' behind them.

Elements of Trust
Building Transparency
- Accuracy
- Motivation
- Disclosure
- Stakeholder Participation
- Clarity
- Relevancy

7
Farmers to Farm!

Get Personal.
- Smile
- Be positive
- Talk about yourself
- Be silly
- Talk about your kids or your animals
- Share milestones
- Open yourself up to criticism – and be ready for compliments!

It’s all about shared values.

Communicating shared values is 3-5 times more important than sharing your skills, your competence or science with consumers.

What values do you share with others?

We have two ears for a reason.
What to Do?

- Knock on some doors
- Host a farm tour
- Public open house
- Get on social media
- Newsletter for neighbors
- Exhibit at county fair
- Host a dinner at home
- Assist with county ag event
- Adopt a calf to a classroom
- Be in a local parade
- Offer free sweetcorn
- Sponsor local sports team
- Speak at town board
- Write a letter to the editor
- Volunteer at local school
- Buy an ad on diner placemats
- Do community service
- Send postcards as thank yous
- Be on the town board
- Farm tee shirts
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Help is a Phone Call Away

- New York Animal Agriculture Coalition
- Northeast Dairy Producers Association
- Policy organizations – Farm Bureau
- Check off – ADADC and DMI
- Animal Ag Alliance
- Cornell University & Cooperative Extension
- Veterinary community
- Agri-Businesses – feed, seed and semen companies
- Brand names & marketers
- Neighboring Farmers
- More!

Mission

To enhance the public’s understanding of and appreciation for animal agriculture by fostering a dialogue with consumers, engagement with farmers and cooperation among members of the industry.

Vision

To reside amongst a culture of understanding, trust and a positive image about animal agriculture, where consumers recognize the earnest effort of farmers as they care for their family, animals, environment and community.

Issues Management Team

Addressed 45 inquiries in 2015 on a variety of topics
Just do it!

- Be proud.
- Don’t cater to the 1%.
- Own your actions.
- Be transparent.
- Speak with passion.
- Use your ears.
- Have a game plan.
- Call in help if needed.
- Do it again.
- And again. And again.

Listen to Will

“Sometimes I think we (agriculture) put so much emphasis on how we share our story that the story itself gets a tad on the bland, PC (politically correct) side.”

- Will Gilmer, Alabama dairy farmer

Follow Will @gilmerdairy

Thank You!

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