

# 2017 National Ag in the Classroom

June 22, 2018













# FOCUS: ALUMNAE CITY MOMS AND OTHER INFLUENCERS





# MILLENNIALS



# ADVERTISING



# County Outreach



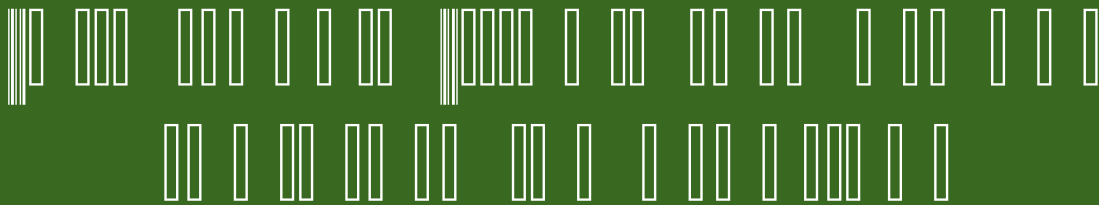


# Home Office Outreach





# Goal

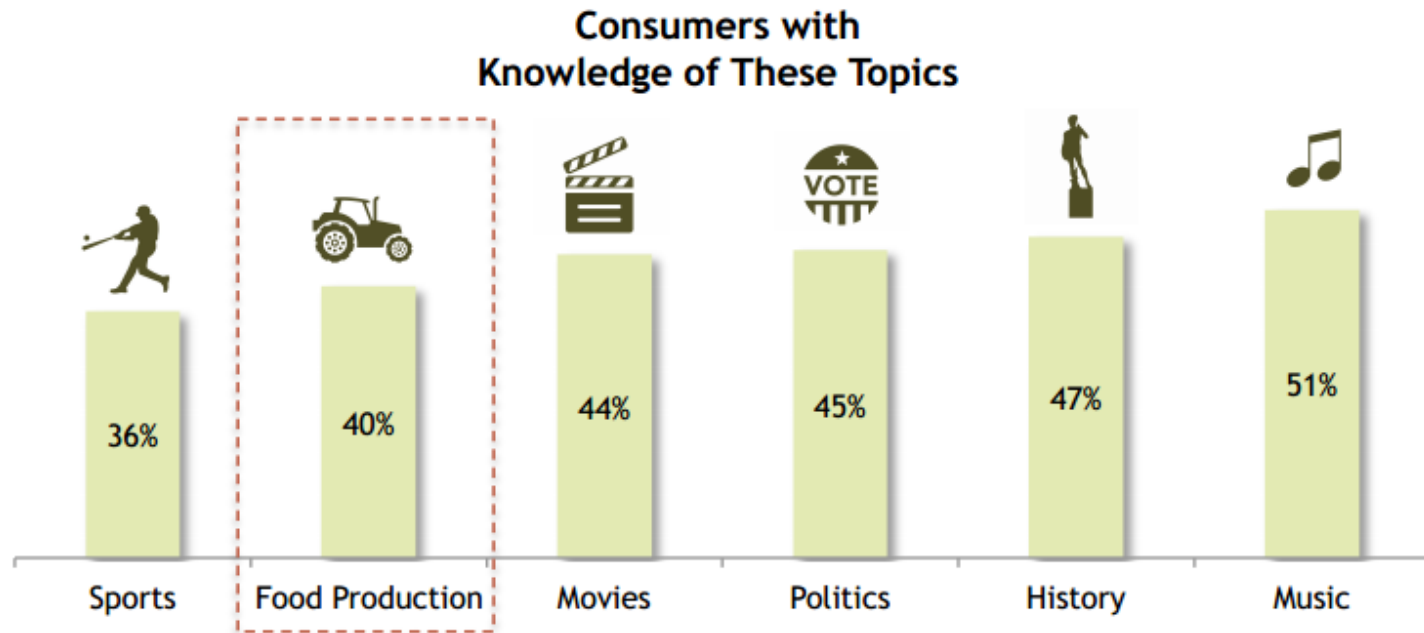


# Understanding Consumers' Questions






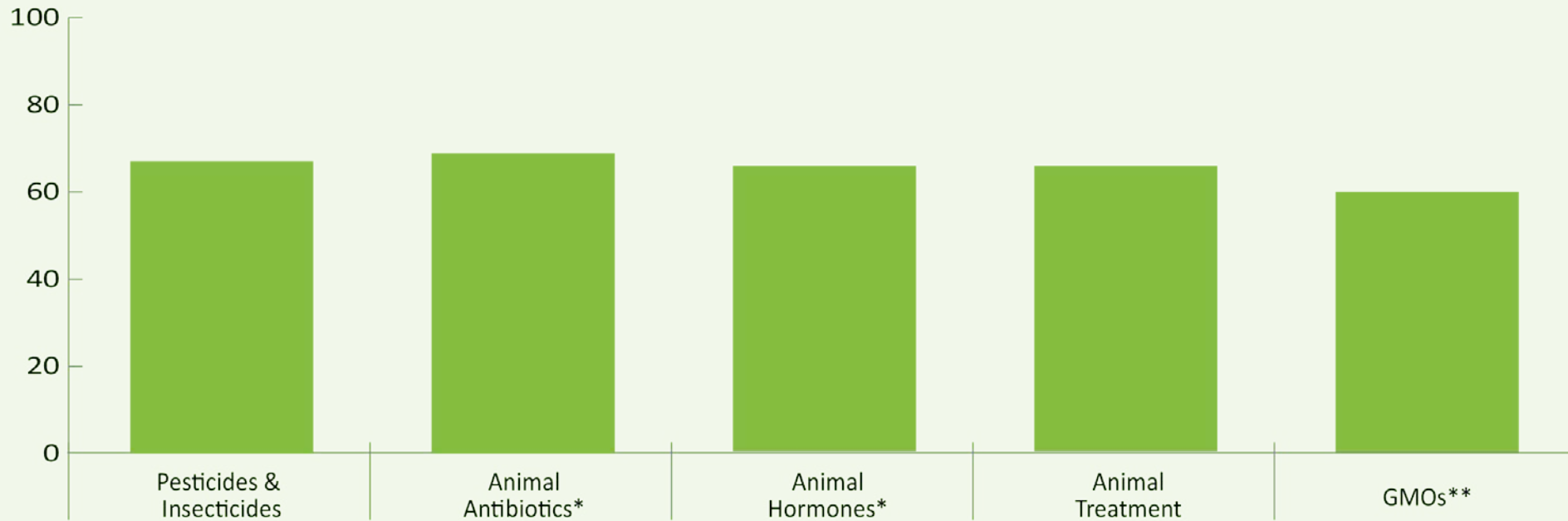
# Today's consumers know more about music, history, politics and movies than food



Q. Please rate your knowledge of the following topics. (Good/Excellent)

"Merging faith in food production," 

# Top concerns about food production topics



\*\*GMOs line item was a new addition to the survey in 2014.

"Merging faith in food production,"

# Connecting with Consumers

## Guiding Principles for Building Trust



# Consumers understand through a lens of “Do You Care”

## About:

- me, my family and my world?
- the safety of my food?
- your animals?
- the environment?



# Be yourself. Be authentic. Be transparent, forthcoming.

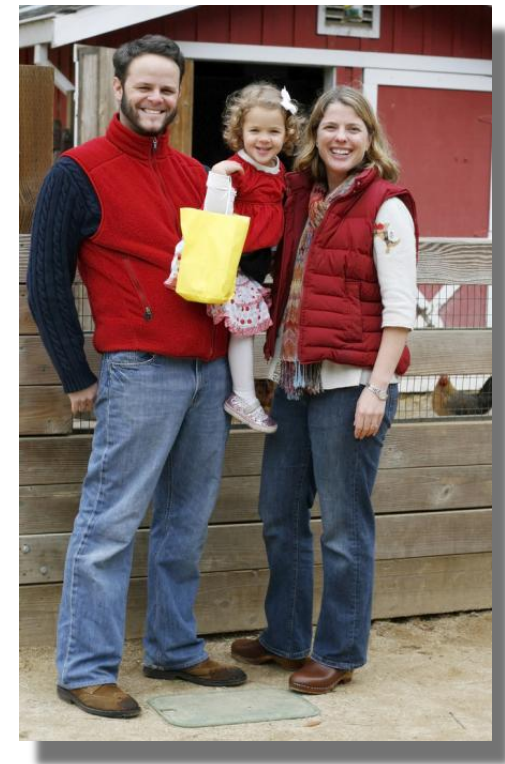
When consumers trust you, they trust what you are saying about food/ag

- Engage as a peer
- I trust people like me
- Share all sides of the story



# Listen and ask questions, stay out of the details, relate to consumers

- Engage in dialogue not monologue
  - Answer and ask questions
- Share daily activities and challenges
- Make them feel good about their choices
- Provide assurances not technical explanations





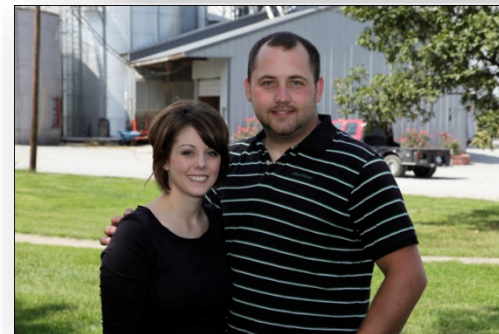
# Be confident; put a smile on your face

- If you're uncertain, you're suspect
- If you enjoy what you do, it will show
- If you're committed, you won't cut corners



# Offer firsthand experiences; share beautiful farm scenery

- Generates lasting impressions
- Evokes positive emotions
- Makes it personal
- Creates a connection



# Reach consumers on their terms

- Make it easy for them
- Connect where they think about food and farming
  - Conversations with friends
  - Online communities
  - Grocery stores/farmers markets
  - Festivals or museums





## Techniques for Engaging in Conversations

# It all begins with ...



# LISTENING



*“We are blessed with two ears and one mouth, a constant reminder that we should listen twice as much as we speak.”*

*– Unknown*

# A couple of “rules” for listening

Connect with a person’s heart before you can ask for the hand

- *People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care*

Be sincere, honest and focus on the other person’s needs

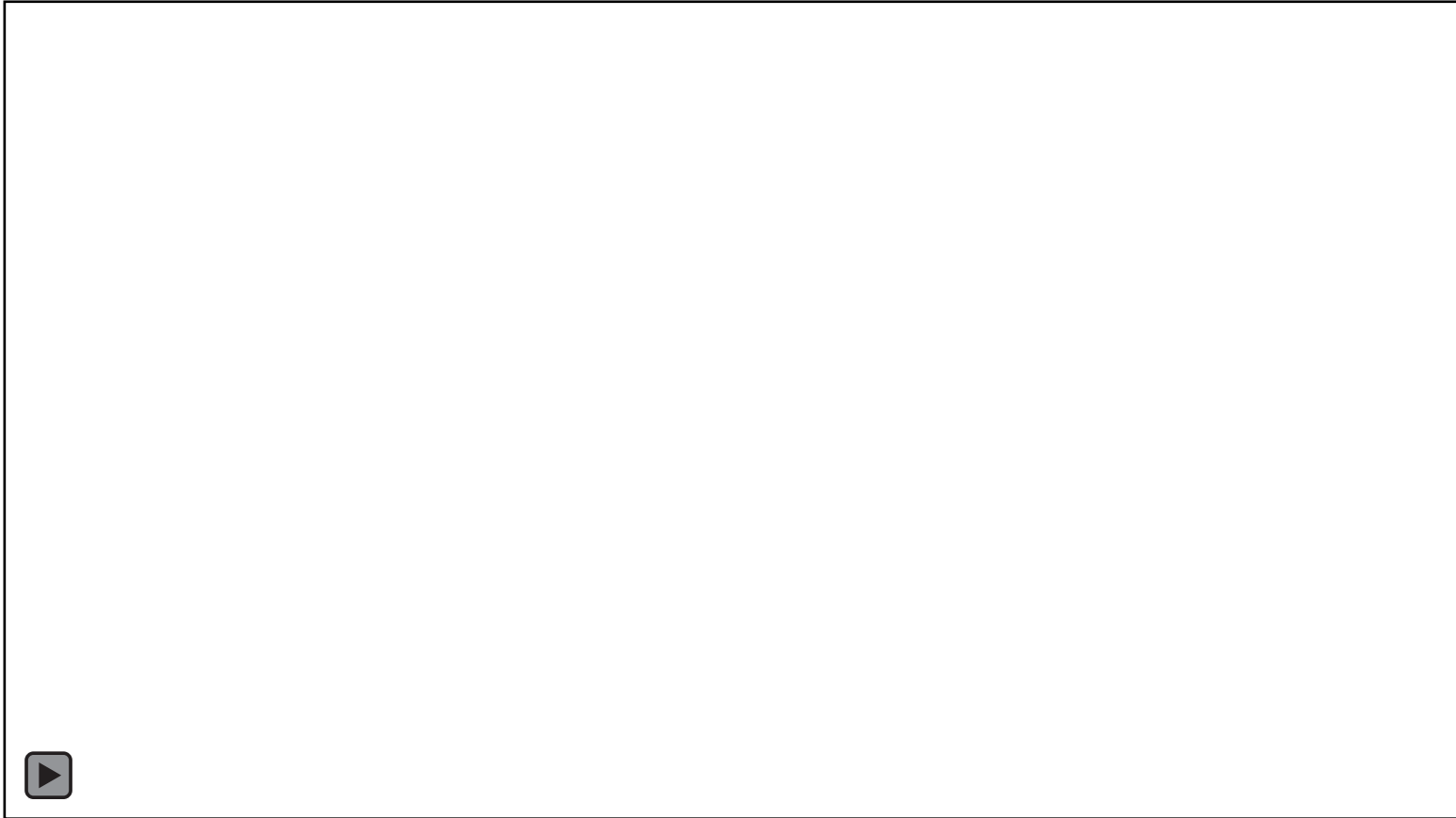
- *To the world you’re one person, but to one person you can be the world*



Listening gap



# Do we listen differently?



# Understanding perspective

Remember, perspective can cause two people to look at the same thing and see two totally different things.



# Let's talk farming

I run a beef and grain operation near CITY. I have 1,500 head of cattle and 3,000 acres of corn, soybeans and hay.



# Let's talk farming

I run a beef and grain **operation** near CITY. I have **1,500 head** of cattle and **3,000 acres** of corn, soybeans and hay.



# Listen through my ears

- Elevator
- Producer
- Livestock
- Operation
- Production agriculture
- Biotech
- Basis



# Terminology

## Rather than:

Operation

Producer

Produced

Good food

Livestock, # head

Sustainable or  
sustainably

Elevator

Family operation



## Use:

Farm

Farmer

Grown and raised

Healthy food

Animals, hogs, steers

Wise use of or preserving  
resources

Grain storage facility

5<sup>th</sup>-generation farm family

# Talking with Consumers







# How to Have Successful Conversations

- What do we mean by “successful conversation?”
  - Both parties walk away feeling heard and understand more about the perspective of the other party



**Bridget Ann** How do they get some strawberries so huge? We Stades Farm juicy. We pick them at the g tart, and whit



**Michele Aavang** Great question, Bridget! I had wondered that myself, so I just called Vern Stade, who's a friend of mine. He tells me that the difference in size is just the difference in variety. The larger berries were traditionally bred over the years for various reasons, including small, juicy berries that are great for shipping would not ship well. They'd be of days. Some people like the



**Bridget Ann** That makes sense. Thanks Michele. I didn't think about strawberries having different varieties for different purposes. Luckily Stades is close so we can get there during the short season. 😊

# How to Have Successful Conversations

- What doesn't lead to a successful conversation?
  - Being defensive
  - Disrespect
  - Making the conversation all about you

# How to Have Successful Conversations

- Transparency
  - Be open and honest about your farm, not defensive
  - The good, the bad, the ugly
- Stick to what you know
  - You have your area of expertise; it is okay not to have all of the answers
  - Don't be afraid to “phone a friend”

# How to Have Successful Conversations

- Alignment
  - Find common ground, align your values
  - When someone feels like your peer, their guard goes down
- Tell a story
  - Empathy leads to understanding
  - People remember feelings more than facts
  - Story must be relevant



“

While my dad and uncle grow grain, we are growing souls, friends ...

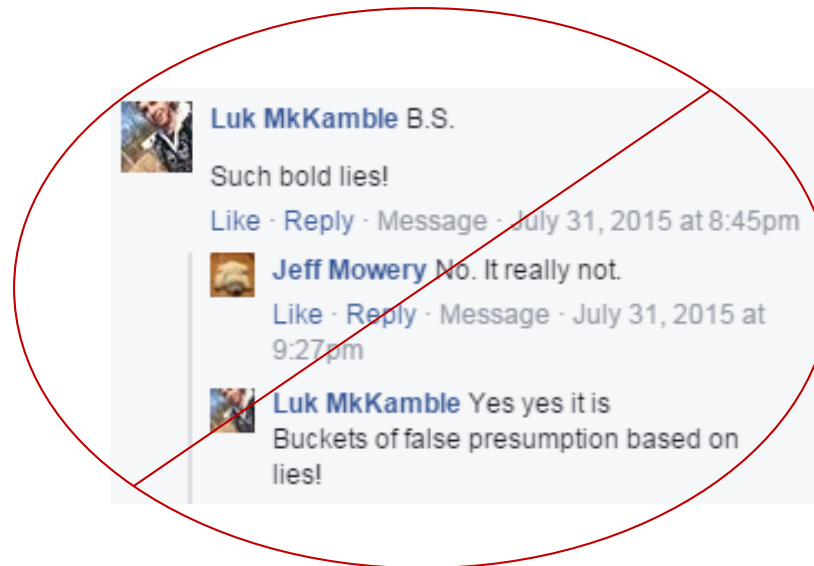
all hours of the night, watching out the window, worrying farmers and mothers are truly parallel beings”

# How to Have Successful Conversations

- Confirm
  - People seek confirmation for what they already believe
  - What people believe is their truth
  - Confirm their truth where you can, give a little to get a little
- Present counterarguments
  - Don't hide from counterarguments or misinformation that is out there
  - Present the arguments and show why they are incorrect

# Having Said All of That ...

- Not every comment warrants a response
  - You can't change everyone's mind
  - Choose conversations wisely



# Practice #1

## Responding to a question

Aren't small farms better?





1

## Uncover Core Interests

Ask questions to gain understanding.

- Start by listening
- Clarify the core interests by asking questions
- Resist the temptation to defend

What's

*I've heard about all these factory farms out there. I think they should be shut down.*

*Well, these farms are big and only care about profits. They are really bad for the environment and they treat the animals poorly.*

*I feel better about small, locally owned farms.*

2

## Put it Through the “Do You Care” Lens



Do you care about me, my family and my world?

- Do you care about the safety of my food?
- Do you care about your impact on the environment?
- Do you care about the treatment of your animals?



*The farm is large, so it must be a corporate/factory farm.*

*Farmers care more about profits than the quality of the food or the treatment of your animals.*

*Farmers cut corners that compromise my health.*

*It makes me wonder if the food is safe.*

*I wonder how your actions hurt the environment.*



### 3 Connect Through A Shared Value

Use a shared value to connect and start the conversation.

- Identify the shared value
- Make a statement that shows you share similar values
- Share stories about your family and your business
- Connect first, facts come later



*Farming is a family business – it’s how farmers support their family. Like you, the farmer wants to provide the best for their family. Farming is how they do it. Sometimes to be successful, businesses need to grow.*

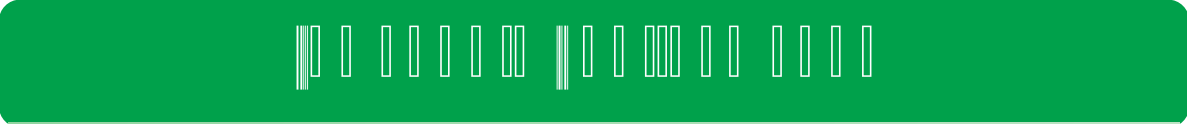
*Think about the small, family-run pizza place. It might be able to support the owner’s family. However, when the owner’s grown children decide to enter the family business, a small store can no longer support more families. The same holds true for my family’s farm.*



## 4 Give Reasons to Believe

Make them feel good about their choices.

- List reasons consumers should trust you
- Provide assurances
- Give both sides of the story
- Tell about others who help you
- Cite governing bodies appropriately



*Here are downsides to being bigger, too//the farmer's worries are bigger//if there is a stretch of bad weather, they worry more about how they'll*

# 5

## Check for Understanding



Ask for feedback and offer resources.

- Ask if you have answered the question
- Check to see if you uncovered another interest
- Offer resources for research
- Turn to your industry experts and organizations



*Did I answer your question?*

*You can learn more about farms at*

\_\_\_\_\_.

*You can learn more about farms in Illinois at [watchusgrow.org](http://watchusgrow.org).*

# Follow along

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# Questions?

# Thank You

