

# The Power of Social Media in Agriculture: A Guide to Social Media Success

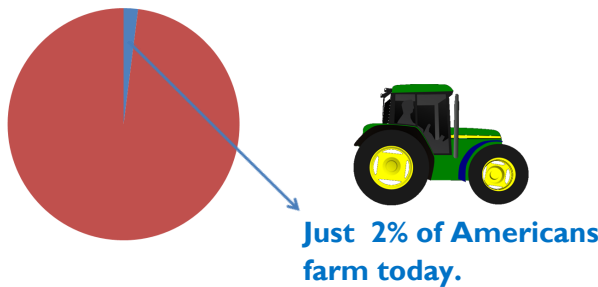


## What is social media and why is it important in agriculture?

Social media is all about people. It is a way to build relationships, share information, and connect with diverse audience of people you may never meet in real life.

So, interacting on social media, whether it is Twitter, Facebook, or Pinterest, allows you to develop a community and share your story in a way that was never possible before now.

The general public still has faith in farmers and ranchers, but some are still wary of modern farm practices. It is important that agriculture unites and it has a chance to tell its side of the story. Social media is one way to make your voice heard.



### What should agriculture's story be?

Evolving	Way of life	Essential
Family	Leadership	Integrity
Business	Passion	Stewardship

## Examples of Successful Online 'Agvocracy:'

1) "Farming and I Grow it" YouTube video (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=48H7zOQrX3U>)

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 7 million views.



2) Agriculture Proud Farm Blog (<http://agricultureproud.com/>)

Ryan Goodman's Agriculture Proud blog is a great example of how one rancher, utilizing social media, can have a large impact on the public's perception of agricultural practices. Goodman keeps his message positive and honest, which has gained the trust of his audience. By openly talking on his blog, he has also been featured as a guest author for blog posts in CNN's *Eatocracy*.



3) "Keeping It Real: Through the Lens of a Farm Girl" (<https://www.facebook.com/lens.of.a.farm.girl>)

This iconographic page showcases farm values through pictures and words. This method of social media is easily shared and attention grabbing.



## 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. Consistency is key. Once you choose the tool 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 tools:**

### facebook

Facebook is great for connecting with people; it has more than 900 million active users. 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.



Twitter is a popular option that allows you to “tweet” 140 character updates and connect with people from around the world. You can share news links, pictures, or inspirational quotes. Retweet messages to increase their reach, and send direct messages is another way to share your thoughts. Twitter allows you to connect with people who you have never met but share like-minded interests.

### LinkedIn

LinkedIn is geared toward the professional community. It allows you to network with work colleagues and is a powerful 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.

### Pinterest

Pinterest is currently the fastest growing social media platform. 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.



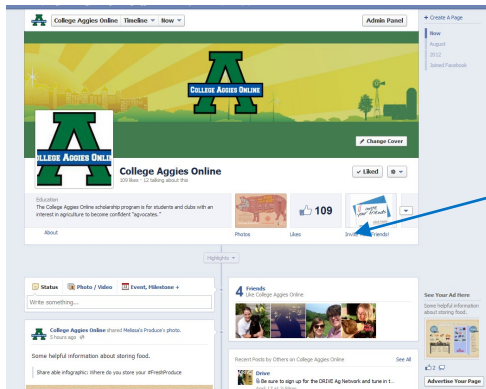
## All about Facebook:

Facebook isn't hard to get the hang of once you know the basics. Here are the three main things you need to know:

- 1) **Timeline:** The timeline on your main homepage chronologically lists all of your personal activity and other items which your friends post on your page. It is also where you create your personal profile with your name, picture, and anything else that you want others to know about you or your farm.
- 2) **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.
- 3) **Newsfeed:** Your homepage is a continuous newsfeed following everyone that you are connected to and every page that you "like." It also includes updates from your friends' activity.

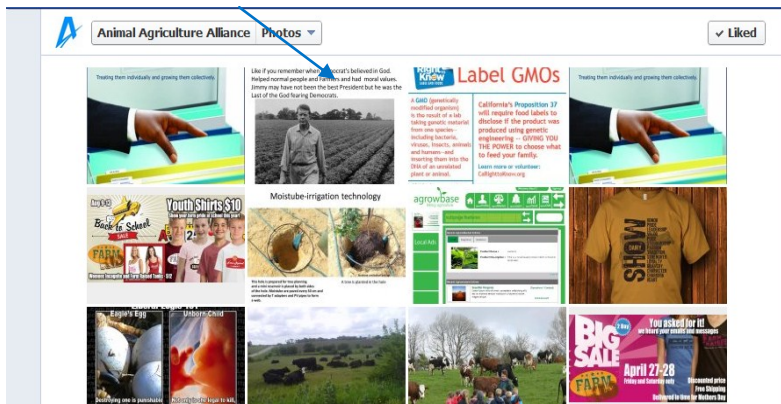


Sample post



Timeline

Photos



## How to use Facebook for Agriculture:

Facebook is a great place to start a positive conversation about agriculture, connect with the younger generation, 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 of your operation, a note about activity on your farm, or a tour of your barn.
- 6) Advertise agri-tourism events.



## All about **Twitter:**

Twitter has more than 140 million active users and 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) and find interesting people to follow.

### Common Twitter Definitions

**Tweet:** A 140 character message that you use to share and communicate.

**Re-Tweet (RT):** How to share what someone else has tweeted or give credit to someone else on Twitter.

**Direct Message (DM):** A private 140 character message.

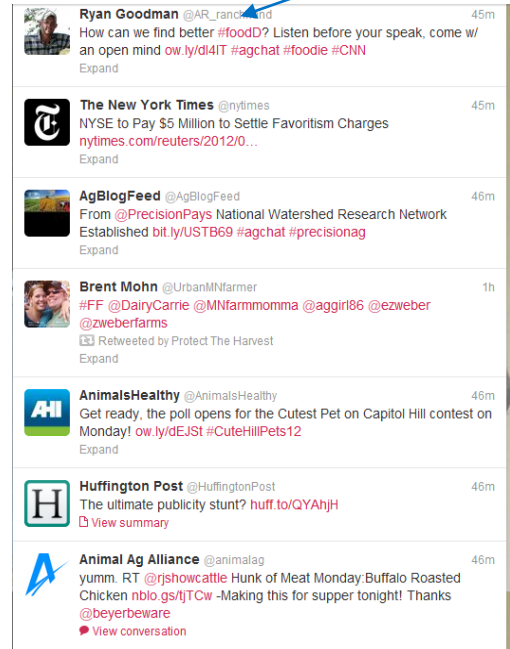
**Feed:** A stream of tweet updates from the people you follow.

**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.

**Hashtag (#):** A hashtag is used to denote a larger conversation and see what other people are talking about based on subject, words, and themes (examples: #agchat or #harvest).

### Feed



## Top 10 Animal Agriculture Twitter Users to Follow:



@animalag **Animal Agriculture Alliance**



@ProtectHarvest **Protect the Harvest**



@agchatfound **Ag Chat Foundation**



@TurkeyGal **National Turkey Federation**



@NPPC **National Pork Producers Council**



@AR\_ranchhand **Ryan Goodman**



@UnitedSoy **United Soybean Board**



@cowartandmore **Kathy Swift**



@Feedstuffs **Feedstuffs**



@mpaynknoper **Michelle Payn-Knoper**

## All about Pinterest:

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 has 12 million users and is growing quickly. Its users skew female and represent a wide age range.

Things to know:

**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.

**Board:** A board is a set of pins– It can be titled anything you want (Example: “Life on the Farm”) and can feature any subject.

**Re-pin:** You can search and re-post other images from other user’s boards.

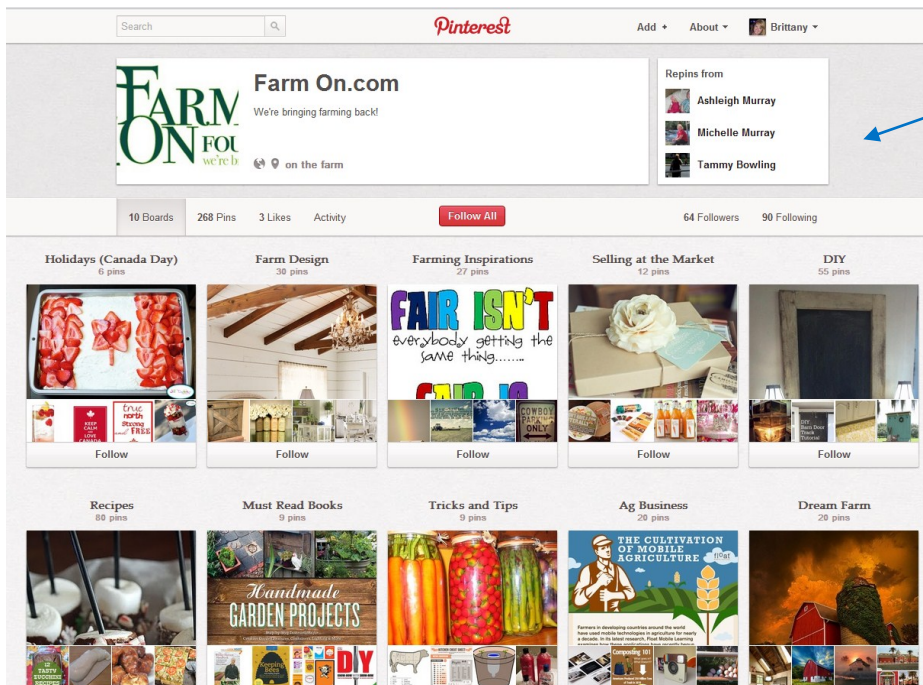
The “Pin It” button for your web browser is easy to install and allows you to post images easily. You can install the button directly through the Pinterest page, under “Pinterest 101. “ You can also follow people and see what they are posting on their boards.



Sample pin



An example account with boards



## All about **LinkedIn:**

LinkedIn helps you connect with other professionals, looking for jobs, or posting one. 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.



## How to use **LinkedIn for Agriculture:**

LinkedIn can be used to spread positive messages of agriculture through group forums. It is important to continue sharing knowledge to consumers, and other professionals, as well.

- 1) Use LinkedIn to reach professionals that may not be connected through other types of social media.
- 2) Share information or resources that highlight your area of expertise. It is a great way to connect with like-minded people and start deeper conversations about animal agriculture.

## **Animal Agriculture Groups:**

- 1) Animal Agriculture Alliance
- 2) Livestock Animal Health Industry
- 3) US Poultry and Egg Association
- 4) American Feed Industry Association
- 5) Agri-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.

- 1) To find a specific Group, navigate to [LinkedIn.com](https://www.linkedin.com), click the "Groups" tab and then "Groups You May Like". Based on your profile information, you'll be served with a list of suggested Groups.
- 2) Many LinkedIn Groups are set up to only accept members who are relevant to the Group.
- 3) Other Groups are open and will accept anyone who joins. An open Group can mean to less-focused subject matter.

## Other Forms of **Social Media:**

There are many other popular forms of social media, including blogging and YouTube. Blogging can communicate positive messages about agriculture through longer posts. However, to have a successful blog, it takes time and effort to cultivate a steady following. Visit the Alliance's website for a list of great agriculture blogs.

YouTube is another visual social media tool that is user-friendly and reaches a large population. YouTube is the third most popular search engine.

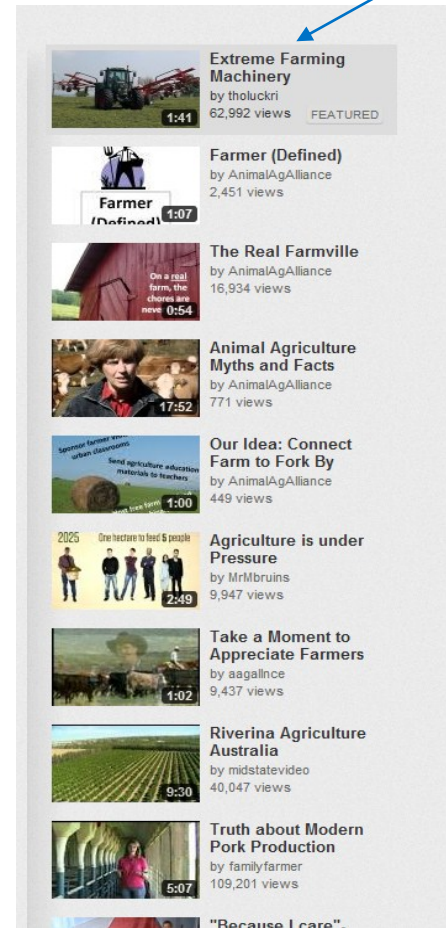


[Youtube.com/animalagalliance](https://www.youtube.com/animalagalliance)

## What to Remember About **Social Media:**

- 1) Keep all posts positive and build your community.
- 2) Step out of your comfort zone.
- 3) Showcase agriculture and your personal story.
- 4) Be transparent and honest.
- 5) Don't forget to listen to others on social media. You might just learn something!

Sample videos





## What To Do **When:**

1) **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.

2) **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 its easiest to not engage in conversation. Know when it is worthwhile to engage, and when it is best to move on.

3) **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 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 its 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?

## College Aggies Online:

CAO is the Animal Agriculture Alliance's annual online agriculture advocacy scholarship contest for college students.



1st place club:

*\$1,000 and a trip to Washington, D.C. for one representative to attend Alliance's Stakeholders Summit*

1st place Individual: \$1,000

2nd place Club: \$500

2nd place Individual: \$500

College Aggies Online participants earn points through creative blogging, sharing photos about agriculture, and hosting agriculture advocacy events on their campus.



Need more info?

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# Agriculture Needs Your Voice!





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