Not just a man’s game
Female farmers are making their mark

Future of agriculture
Today’s students, tomorrow’s leaders

Feeding the masses
Addressing a growing population

THE AMERICAN FARMER ON THE TECHNOLOGY FRONTIER

FACE 7

EMPOWERING TODAY’S FARMERS

The agriculture industry is closing the knowledge gap between Americans and their food and enhancing consumer trust in the U.S. food system.

OPTIMIZING OUR CUSTOMERS GROWTH

BY PROVIDING THE MOST INNOVATIVE APPLICATION EQUIPMENT IN THE CROP PRODUCTION INDUSTRY

For over 65 years, Hagie Manufacturing has continued to provide our customers with a superior experience, while building on our family-owned traditions and values.

“Although we don’t aim to be the biggest, we do aim to be the best.” — Alan Hagie, President, CEO, Hagie MFG

800-247-4885 hagie.com Hagie Manufacturing Co Clarion, IA
It no longer matters if it is purchased fresh, bundled, frozen, wrapped, boxed, canned or bottled. Americans want to know more about their food. They want to know where it came from, how it was raised and if it is good for their health long-term.

The face of food in America

Farmers and ranchers see the face and the heart of agriculture and food in America. But for years, we have been so focused on raising and growing food for this nation that we didn’t stop to answer questions about how and why we raise and grow food the way we do. And without answering those questions, consumers started to become skeptical that we are doing the right thing. When trust is called into question, it’s hard, being family-focused and ranching when it comes to farming, women have always cared for farm animals.” That willingness to “get their hands dirty” has led to tremendous success. Karen Meyer, a fourth-generation farmer and mother of four, has worked with her husband to grow Falling Star Farm, a 30-year-old family farm, into a thriving dairy farm. In 1990, they purchased a chicken hobby hatching business—and have grown it into Meyer Hatchery, a 40-employee operation that hatches over 1 million chicken eggs per year and boasts over 400 varieties of poultry.

For Audrey Donahoe, a fifth-generation farmer and rancher, innovation is part of the plan. “Our cows’ health and comfort is our number one priority. We are environmentally conscious and grow our own feed. When our sons came home from college, he brought new ideas and a refreshing change to our goals.” Indeed, these women are constantly setting goals that change every year—but some things stay the same, notably their love of their land, their families and their way of life.

WOMENSday

When it comes to farming, Donna Biddle, Karen Meyer and Audrey Donahoe are passionate advocates of using old-school values—working hard, being family-focused and planning ahead—to meet the demands of modern agriculture.

Donna Biddle, who has a 10-acre hobby farm with horses and dogs and loves “country life,” says, “We aren’t afraid to dig in and get our hands dirty. Women have always been socially seen as caretakers which translates over to many of the major aspects in agriculture—whether it comes to tending our farms and ranches.”

Donna Biddle, Karen Meyer and Audrey Donahoe are the face of agriculture in America. They are the heart of agriculture and food in America. They represent our commitments to providing healthy choices for everyone. When trust is called into question, we need to recognize that change is inevitable. We can’t expect people who have valid concerns about their food to just “trust us.” We need to understand their concerns and find ways to make our industry better, stronger and more open.

We have created web resources to address consumers’ questions about how their food is raised and grown, including www.fooddialogue.com and the new FoodSource tool, a central portal to today’s most highly discussed food and agriculture issues.

With all of the advancements that agriculture has made over the decades, this movement is perhaps our most important one. I encourage everyone involved to learn more and join our conversation.

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MEDIA PLANET

AGRICULTURE IN AMERICA

In 2011, U.S. Farmers & Ranchers Alliance launched a movement to do just that.

A solid foundation

Building tools and mediums to tell our stories and provide hard-to-find information. We gained visibility by bringing everyone to the table who cares about food—e.g., if you don’t always agree with them. And we began shifting the way the industry communicates. We can’t just tell people what happens on farms and ranches. We need to share people. Create experiences. Demonstrate transparency. Lead with dialogue and discuss solutions.

Power of participation

Since our formation, we’ve doubled the participation of farmer- and rancher-led groups and continue to create ways for Americans—with farmers and ranchers—to engage in 360-view conversations about food production. “As leaders in the industry, we need to recognize that change is inevitable. We can’t expect people who have valid concerns about their food to just ‘trust us.’” We need to understand their concerns and find ways to make our industry better, stronger and more open.

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As Farmers and Ranchers, We’ve Raised Pretty Much Everything. Except Our Voices.

Join us in leading a conversation about the importance of today’s agriculture and our commitment to answering American’s questions about how we raise our food. Begin by sharing your voice at www.USFRAonline.org.
The reality is that within 30 years, there will be about two billion more people on the planet. And though available natural resources—land, water, and soil—are fixed, there are many ways to expand capacity, protect the environment and feed a hungry world.

Farmers confront challenges

When American farmers were surveyed about the biggest challenges they faced this year, they cited climate and weather problems as number one. Other challenges included weed resistance, disease prevention and people resources. But farmers and agricultural scientists contend that the problem is much bigger than simply weathering a tough year. It’s the long-term forecast that has them concerned. Overwhelmingly, they are concerned. Overwhelmingly, the most pressing concern is population growth and food supply.

According to Adrian Percy, Vice President, North America, Bayer CropScience, “The world population is growing rapidly. We just passed 7 billion and we are quickly heading towards 8 billion. Agriculture has to double its output in the next 40 to 50 years, and the way to do it is by leveraging technology.”

People who understand agriculture know that technological advances during the past 50 years have been a major boon for farmers, who have successfully been able to feed the growing American population—and export crops abroad. Percy says, “Agriculture is one of the best kept secrets in America. It was not kept secret in the presidential debates, but it plays a significant role in the economy.”

Growing a healthier world, one harvest at a time.

Our task is simple, yet monumental. To provide enough food for the world, while protecting it at the same time. We believe that with the right combination of innovative science, tenacious problem solving and unshakable passion, we can do it. We will meet the needs of today while laying a foundation for a better tomorrow. And in doing so, we will not only grow a healthier world, we will make sure that abundance endures for us all. Keep the #AmericanAg conversation going on Twitter @BayerCropsUS or connect with us on our blog: connect.bayercropscience.us.
In my youth, I seized the first opportunity. I had to begin in agriculture because I had small-town roots and the rural nature of the business was attractive to me. I quickly recognized the importance of the industry and that realization has driven me to where I am today. Being part of an industry that provides a safe, abundant and affordable source of food to the country around the world gives me great pride and personal satisfaction.

In the coming years, I plan to continue to engage in public service. Having grown up on a family farm in Hubbard, Iowa, American agriculture runs through my veins. At an early age, I experienced the hard work and passion this community commits to meeting the demands of the world population. The ag sector is setting the standard by continuing to bring new technologies and services in the areas of sustainable agriculture, environmental stewardship and making a positive difference in the communities where we live, work, and play.

Companies in ag must continue to innovate new technologies to benefit food producers, increase yields and overall improve the quality of life, balancing commercial success with environmental and societal needs. We need to improve the general public’s understanding of the necessity for modern ag technology. With global population expected to exceed nine billion by 2050, no single technology, strategy or intervention is the answer to feeding a hungry planet. We need to use all the tools in the agriculture toolbox.

My career has been with companies in banking, food and manufacturing industries. Each company has enjoyed special connections with their primary customers, and today I am fortunate to be a leader who provides products that support livestock producers, private farms and recreational animal owners. These rural/industrial markets are legacy elements of the U.S. economy and are vital to our future way of life.

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Through individual and association contacts, business leaders should seek to keep abreast of opportunities and risks to the agriculture economy. Aligning with and supporting these issues makes for good business and good citizenship. I do that through personal and professional involvement with producer and industry associations, including the Corporate Sponsor Board of the National FFA Foundation. Attending livestock and agriculture trade shows provides additional insight.

My passion for agriculture can be attributed to growing up on a family farm and today, remaining highly engaged in the operation is the opportunity to provide innovative solutions that make a difference for farm and agricultural operations is an experience that I have found to be personally rewarding and a privilege. I encourage you to pursue what inspires you and make a difference.

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We understand our customers’ expectations because we are in the same business. Being actively involved in growing my farm operation has allowed me to relate to customer needs and understand the challenges they are facing in the agricultural sector. Maintaining a factory-direct business model offers an opportunity to deliver superior customer service and play an integral role in all aspects of the customer experience.

The importance of agriculture to the U.S. economy and food security cannot be overstated. One in twelve jobs in the U.S. is related to agriculture and we increasingly feed the world. Any U.S. business with a national or global footprint should be engaged in agriculture to maintain a strong connection with the American farmers and ranchers who provide the world’s safest, most abundant and affordable food supply. It is crucial that we are the best listeners in the industry, as producers and agribusinesses are not able to predict the solutions they need and are facing in the agricultural sector. It is our job to put the pieces together, take chances and create innovative solutions for the evolving agricultural industry.
A new generation of “Avocates” are talking about a revolution

Silent and pressure-prone people to understand the nuances of proposed legislation—and how farmers are affected. In order to do that “advocates,” also known as “agvocates” are starting conversations with their peers about American agriculture.

Challenging consumer perception

According to Detruit, “there’s a lot that goes on in agriculture; so many people working so hard. You have grocery stores full of every food you want, but consumers’ perceptions are skewed.” Instead of assuming that the agvocate groups are using social media and face-to-face get-togethers on college campuses to engage students thinking about college majors, the answer is an emphatic “no!”

Think about the social movements that have changed history—the Civil Rights movement, the Black Spring uprisings, the Stonewall protests, the Civil Rights movement in the United States and the student movements of 1968 that occurred throughout Europe and the United States. Each of those movements was started and fueled by the passion of young people. A new revolution is underway and is being led by young people committed to helping others understand where their food comes from.

As an agriculture educator, Silcott recently took a group of graduate students on an industry tour of a dairy farm and then to a stockyard farm. “Many people thought the dairy farm was dirty and started using hand sanitizer, whereas they were eager to touch the baby chicks because they were ‘cute.’ In fact, dairy farms are designed to produce clean milk, but they are not a backyard—and the chicks are not clean just because they are cute. There is a process in place. There was a high level of interest in seeing this industry, but a surprisingly high baseline level of ignorance.”

In 2009, Dr. Scott Vernon, Professor of Agriculture Communications at California Polytechnic State University, and several of his students, including Silcott, Luke Detruit, and Anthony Panzino, decided to advocate on behalf of farmers with the goal of defeating Proposition 2 (Standards for Confining Farm Animals). The law passed. Silcott says, “This law was already underway, but hurt a lot of farmers in the process and created an uneven playing field in California.”

To sustainably provide safe, affordable, nutritious food, it is essential. Creative problem solvers who understand the challenges of feed technology of the industry. To grasp the science, business and agricultural leaders need a solid understanding of the industry, the markets and cultures.

Strong interpersonal skills of communication and teamwork are essential. Creative problem solvers who are contributing their time, talents and passion—and giving agriculture a voice.”
The American farmer on the technology frontier

One of the biggest misconceptions about farmers is that they do not have access to the latest technological advancements and that they are not well educated people. However, according to Mike Haley, a crop and cattle rancher from Ohio, “The reality is that farmers have embraced the use of technology on farms to help them keep better records, become better stewards of their land and their livestock, increase their sustainability and ensure better opportunities in agriculture for future generations.”

While Haley and like-minded farmers and ranchers are spearheading the future in technology, as social media experts (or also known as social media influencers) are using the power of this medium to get their message out.

Farmers are real people... and they text

Prock, a dairy farmer in California’s central valley blogs at dairypro.com. He says, “The biggest thing I would like to communicate is that farmers are real people too and we truly do care about what you buy.” Now, thanks to social media, the voices of farmers are being heard by everyone else food for the other 97% of the population. The food you buy is grown by American farmers who represent 2.5% of the population, yet they produce enough food, feed, fiber, and fuel for the nation. They are using social media to share their stories.

In 2009, AgChatTM, a not-for-profit focused on empowering farmers and ranchers to connect communities through social media, was formed. Three of these main AgChat founders—Haley, Ray Prock and Jeff Fowle—are at the forefront of a movement helping farmers and ranchers become tech-savvy, who utilize Twitter, Facebook, blogs, YouTube, LinkedIn, and other forms of social media to get their message out. Farmers are real people... and they text.

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In addition to AgChat, these three farmers also started just-farmers.biz, which is now at the epicenter of the agricultural social media revolution. Through just-farmers.biz, farmers and ranchers are actively developing and implementing social media action plans to help shape their messages, target specific audiences and build their brands.

Broad topics, broad minds

Topics vary. In a recent post, Prock put up photos of a new-born spring calf. He has also posted pragmatic posts about weed management and dealing with bloated cows. Recently he posted a sadly insightful post about a beloved Lieutenant in his town, who perished in Afghanistan.

Prock says, “When I signed up for Twitter in 2009, I discovered a whole new world that has allowed me to meet and talk with a larger and more diverse audience without ever leaving the tractor cab.”

Prock loves blogging because he values feedback and likes the “back and forth” of real conversations. He says, “It is essential to be able to keep an open mind, be respectful, honest and sincere.”

Haley agrees: “Social media provides a wonderful opportunity to reach customers person to person, hear their concerns and questions and be able to answer them directly.”

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For over a century, RedBrand has been serving rural America with its best-performing fence products available anywhere. We continue that same legacy into the next century. As supporters of FFA since 1947, Red Brand understands and appreciates the vital role that FFA plays in the lives of our country’s young people. Through the development of funding and educational programs the impact the success of FFA today, we are investing in the future of the ag leaders of tomorrow.

To learn more about these programs, visit RedBrand.com/FAA.
THERE WILL BE 100 MILLION NEW MOUTHS TO FEED NEXT YEAR.

The world’s demand for food is growing at an alarming pace. And the pressure on today’s farmer grows with it. To meet those demands, producers will need equipment and technology that can get the most out of every acre. Innovations that help them work more efficiently. And advice from people who know the field as well as they know their equipment. The world of farming is changing. And Case IH is ready to help. To learn more, visit caseih.com/ready.

BE READY.