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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



AGRICULTURE IN AMERICA

THE AMERICAN FARMER ON THE TECHNOLOGY FRONTIER

PAGE 7



JEFF FOWLE Owner/Operator KK Bar Ranch; Partner, Just Farmers LLC



MIKE HALEY Owner, Haley Farms; Partner, Just Farmers LLC



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CHALLENGES



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



are the face and the heart of agriculture and food in America. But for years, we have been so focused on raising and grow-

ing 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, we have an obligation to bring the industry together to answer questions, tell our stories and demonstrate our commitments to providing healthy choices for everyone. In 2011, U.S. Farmers & Ranchers



Alliance launched a movement to do just that.

A solid foundation

How do you create a movement? The first step is to build a solid foundation and reputation. For USFRA, we started by building tools and mediums to tell our stories and provide hard-to-find information. We gained credibility by bringing everyone to the table who cares about food – even if we 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 show people. Create experiences. Demonstrate transparency. Lead with dialogue and discuss solutions.

Power of participation

Since our formation, we've doubled participation of farmer- and rancherled 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.

We have created web resources to address consumers' questions about how their food is raised and grown, including www.fooddialogues.com and the new FoodSource tool, a central portal to today's most heavily 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 yet. I encourage everyone involved in food to learn more and join our conversation.



NE RECOMMEND



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 9 billion. Agriculture has to double its output in the next 40 to 50 years, and the way to do it is by leveraging technology."

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Words to grow by from no love to farm nen w

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 Beadle, 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 be tending to fields or caring for farm animals."

That willingness to "get their hands dirty" has led to tremendous success. Karen Meyer, a fourthgeneration farmer and mother of four, has worked with her husband to grow Falling Star Farm, a 50-yearold family farm, into a thriving dairy farm. In 1985, they purchased a chicken hobby hatching business—and have grown it into Meyer Hatchery, a 30-employee operation that hatches over 1 million chicks per year and boasts over 160 varieties of poultry.

For Audrey Donahoe, a fifth-generation dairy farmer and mother of six, who owns ATRASS farm with her husband, 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 son 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.

> NICOLE GRAY editorial@mediaplanet.com

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U.S. FARMERS & RANCHERS ALLIANCE

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HUNGER GAMES: Feeding a growing population

The reality is that within 38 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, 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 9 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 mentioned even once in the presidential debates, but it plays a significant role in the economy."

According to Percy, there are numerous technologies and pro-

"Agriculture is one of



the best kept secrets in America. It was not mentioned even once in the presidential debates, but it plays a significant role in the economy" cesses that can increase production, including chemicals to control diseases, high-quality, diseaseresistant seeds that are tolerant to environmental stressors, and biologics that lead to increased yields. Increasing production is a collaborative process that also involves equipment and fertilizer manufacturers and modern irrigation processes to preserve water.

Leveraging technology

Trey Hill, a fourth-generation farmer, who owns Harborview Farms in Kent County, Maryland, is the perfect example of an American farmer who uses modern agricultural equipment and technology to increase production of his crops corn, soybeans and winter wheat.

Hill explains, "We use almost all GMO (genetically modified organism) seeds, which allow us to grow more corn in drought conditions-a common problem in Maryland. We are also using GPS (global positioning systems) to steer the sprayers, tractors and combines. The operator literally does not have to touch the wheel. GPS helps reduce the overlap. We are able to fertilize the crops without double dosing them. The net benefit is both environmental and economic. And now we're moving towards all new equipment that meets tier-4 emission standards and helps with environmental integrity."

Hill is especially proud of the recent installation of a 200-watt solar array to power all of the grain silos on his farm. "My goal is to move towards



a sustainable approach towards production agriculture," he says.

Countering the 'technology is bad' rap

Despite Hill's view of himself as "an environmental steward," many would view him as an enemy of environmentally sound practices, because he uses GMO seeds. His response: "We were early adopters of GMO. I read all of the journals and so far no one has come up with anything that says it's bad. The GMOs do need some tweaking, but I don't think they are responsible for obesity or bad health. A lot of things get misreported in the consumer press. For example, corn and soybeans are healthy products and GMO wheat does not even exist."

In fact, when surveyed, farmers cited customers' negative perceptions of technology as a significant challenge. However, Percy feels that as people become better aware of the scientific rigor that drives agricultural production, they can better appreciate that human health is always an important consideration.

More talent, more food

Towards that end, Percy says, "We need to develop our scientific talent at the university level. There are not enough qualified scientists, crop biotechnologists, breeders, and agronomists. Technology, after all, is driven by humans."

It all comes down to supply versus demand—human talent to drive technology, and technology to drive production. "The goal is to increase yields and get the most out of each acre, so we can feed a growing population. We have a lot to do in a short period of time," Percy says.

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PANEL OF EXPERTS

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67		What drove you to a leading career and role in the agricultural sector?	2 In what ways do industry leaders look to connect with American farmers and ranchers?	What role can companies play in the future of agriculture?
	Jim Walker Vice President, Case IH North America	In my youth, I seized the first opportunity. I had to begin a career 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 pro- vides a safe, abundant and affordable source of food for our country and the world gives me great pride and personal satisfaction.	Today we listen more to our customers than ever before. We've trained our dealers and our company field staff to spend time with customers to understand their needs. We've increased the size of our field orga- nization to provide more product expertise closer to home. And we make tremendous efforts to connect with farmers and ranch- ers at industry events. It's about listening to producers and using that learning to drive innovation in the future products, technolo- gies, and services.	Directly, new technology developed by equip- ment manufacturers helps producers grow and raise more food using fewer natural resources and fewer inputs, benefitting the environment and consumers. Indirectly, we have joined with others in our industry to advocate on its behalf through agricultural trade. We need founda- tion and association alliances to help educate the next agricultural generation and advocate for policies that help our farmers and ranchers provide the world's safest, most abundant and affordable food supply.
	James Blome President & CEO, Bayer CropScience LP, North America	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 continu- ing 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.	It's important for agriculture industry leaders to cultivate ideas and answers within our organizations and with our customers, communities, and partners. We need to continue to understand the challenges farmers face and the need to work together up and down the food chain to find solutions to help them grow healthy crops and successful businesses. It's important to create one-to-one touch points — from hosting growers at research headquarters, to meeting them in their fields, to engaging with them on social media.	Companies in ag must continue to innovate new technologies to benefit food production, 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 feed a hungry planet; we need to use all the tools in the agriculture toolbox.
	Doug Wright Vice President Sales & Marketing, Wire Products, Keystone Steel & Wire Company	My career has been with companies in banking, food and manufacturing indus- tries. Each company has enjoyed special connections with their primary customers, and today I am fortunate to be with a leader- ship company who provides products that support livestock producers, private farms and recreational animal owners. These rural/agricultural markets are legacy ele- ments of the U.S. economy and are vital to our future way of life.	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 Spon- sors Board of the National FFA Foundation. Attending livestock and agriculture trade show events provide additional insight.	The importance of agriculture to the U.S. economy and to 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 concerned about maintaining a healthy agriculture sector here. Actively promoting economic, political and legislative concerns and opportunities should be a general business focus.
	Alan B. Hagie President & CEO, Hagie Manufacturing Company	My passion for agriculture can be attrib- uted to growing up on a family farm and today, remaining highly engaged in the operation. Having the opportunity to pro- vide innovative solutions that make a dif- ference for farm and agribusiness opera- tions 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.	We understand our customers' expecta- tions because we are in the same business. Being actively involved in growing my farm operation has allowed me to relate to cus- tomer 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.	It is crucial that we are the best listeners in the industry, as producers and agribusi- nesses are not able to predict the solutions they will need in the future. By having a solid understanding of agricultural trends and staying connected with customer needs, it is our job to put the pieces together, take chances and create innovative solu- tions for the evolving agricultural industry.

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NFWS

Q & A



W. Dwight Armstrong, Ph.D. Chief Executive Officer. National FFA Organization

What qualities make for strong leaders in the agriculture industry?

To sustainably provide safe, / affordable, nutritious food, agricultural leaders need a solid grasp of the science, business and technology of the industry. To understand the challenge of feeding a growing global population, they must view the world as interconnected systems of resources, markets and cultures.

Strong interpersonal skills of communication and teamwork are essential. Creative problem solvers are needed to overcome obstacles and create opportunities.

Lastly, agriculture needs principled leaders guided by the highest ethics and a commitment to social responsibility, for they are stewards of our future.

In what areas of study do you think the greatest career potential exists in the agriculture sector?

Agriculture is exploding with opportunity. In addition to farmers, the rise of technology is demanding more workers in science, engineering and related professions. Increasing complexity in production agriculture requires more workers in support fields of sales, service, processing and transportation.

Huge opportunities exist in finance, operations, marketing, research and technology.

> W. DWIGHT ARMSTRONG, PH.D. editorial@mediaplanet.com

A new generation of **"Agvocates"** are talking about a revolution



PUTTING A FRESH FACE ON AGRICULTURE Groups of young people step up to be eatalysts for conversations among their peers. PHOTO: I LOVE FARMERS FILE PHOTO

Question: If you had to grow your own food, would you know how?

Answer: If you are like most Americans who have responded to those questions, the answer is an emphatic "no!"

Think about the social movements that have changed history - the Occupy movement, the Arab Spring uprisings, the Tiananmen Square 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 these movements was started and fueled by the passion of young people. A new revolution is now underway and is being led by young people committed to helping others understand where their food comes from and how supporting the interest of farmers supports healthy living for everyone.

Improving industry communication

Megan Silcott, an agriculture educator, explains, "Agriculture needs to communicate better. We want young people to know 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 turkey 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 DeGroot, and Anthony Pannone, 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 pretty detrimental to the poultry industry. It expedited a process that was already underway, but hurt a lot of farmers in the process and created an uneven playing field in California."

understand the nuances of proposed legislation-and how farmers are affected. In order to do that "catalyst groups," also known as "agvocates" are starting conversations with their peers about American agriculture.

Challenging consumer perception

According to DeGroot, "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 customers' perceptions are skewed." In order to overcome that bias, the catalyst groups are using social

Silcott and her peers want people to media and face-to-face get-togethers on college campuses to engage students. The opening question: "Do you know where your food comes from?" The result: A broader understanding of and identification with American agriculture among a diverse group of young people nationwide.

> Dr.Vernon says, "What we've been doing in the last three years is truly making a difference. Young people are contributing their time, talents and passion - and giving agriculture a voice."

> > NICOLE GRAY editorial@mediaplanet.com

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INSPIRATION

Question: Why is it so important for farmers and ranchers to leverage social media? Answer: Farmers and ranchers are less than two percent of the population, yet they produce enough food, feed, fiber, and fuel for the nation. They are using social media to share their stories.

The American farmer on the technology frontier

One of the biggest misperceptions 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 row 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 investing in the future, as social media experts they also have to be hyperfocused on the here and now. Haley who blogs at haleyfarms. com/blog has more than 16,445 followers on twitter. In fact, there are currently at least 840 agricultural twitter handles—and the ranks of farmers who blog is growing rapidly. In 2009, AgChatTM, a not-forprofit focused on empowering farmers and ranchers to connect communities through social media, was formed. Three of the main AgChat founders—Haley, Ray Prock and Jeff Fowle—are at the forefront of a movement helping farmers and ranchers become techno-experts, 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

Prock, a dairy farmer in California's central valley blogs at raylindairy. wordpres.com. He says, "The biggest thing I would like to communicate is that farmers are real people too and we truly do care about doing the right thing whether it is protecting the environment, caring for our animals or just being good community members."

Fowle, a hay farmer/cattle rancher from Northern California who owns and operates KK Bar Ranch and Siskiyu Percheron, 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."

In addition to AgChat, these three farmers also started justfarmers.biz, which is now at the epicenter of the agricultural social media revolution. Through justfarmers.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, Haley 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.

Haley 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."

Fowle 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." His blog commonsenseagriculture.com allows him to communicate with more than 53,000 followers.

True to form, social media marries visuals with words with sounds. On March 8th, 2012, Prock posted AdFarm's youtube video "National Ag Day." The question posed was simple: "Would you be able to grow your own food?" Prock introduced the post by thanking "everyone who supports agriculture with the foods you buy." Now, thanks to social media, the voices of farmers are giving everyone else food for thought.

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