Trust, Communication and Farm Freedom to Operate

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Here’s what I do:

Funding and Reimbursement: www.kevinfolta.com/transparency
Slides: www.slideshare.net/kevinfolta
Today’s Presentation

1. Who is today’s consumer?
2. How do we engage effectively?
3. Where do we engage?
4. Application to questions in apples.
Consumers are reacting to information

Pesticides
Antibiotics
Hormones
Fertilizer
Gluten

Understanding makes me a better consumer.

I don’t know what to believe, so I just won’t buy it.
Consumers are seeking information

Where do the ingredients come from?
Is it nutritious?
Will my family like it?
Do I trust the company?

Is this a good value?

What are these long words on the label?
Is this one of those GMO things?
Is it full of the glutens?

What would Dr. Oz think?

THIS IS A VERY GOOD THING.
EMOTION vs. EVIDENCE

FEAR

Activist groups, internet celebs, TV personalities, etc

ERODE TRUST

One-off studies, misinterpretation, extrapolation, poor quality, bad design, weak stats, unpublished.

FACTS

Scientists, farmers, ag industry
EMOTION vs. EVIDENCE

Why?

Ideology
Misinformation
Anti-corporate sentiment
Lack of trust
Profitable
Appeals to nature

But don’t forget:

Concern for health
young families
aging boomers
millennials
People love farmers and scientists. They just don’t trust farming and science. How do we change that?
Scientists, ag producers, ag-related industries failed to bridge that gap.

1. How do we do it effectively?
2. Where do we engage?

It is necessary to have participation.
How do all of us become more effective in communicating with a concerned consumer?

Audience – Empathy – Values – Evidence
I don’t know what to believe, so I just won’t buy it.
WHO IS NOT YOUR AUDIENCE?
Many have no interest in understanding facts. They are not a good investment of your time.

WHO IS YOUR AUDIENCE?
Most of the time these are people that don’t know about science and are concerned about food. Share science with them.
2. LISTENING

Must start with empathy

Active listening

Others have to feel a sense of power and control in the conversation

Intellectual Charity

Only move to next steps once you understand their concerns, and they know it.
Lead With Your Ethics.
State your priorities up front

- Environment/Conservation
- Farmers
- The Needy
- Consumers
The Pork Farmers in Oklahoma recognize our obligation to build and maintain the trust of customers and the public in our products and our practices. To promote confidence in what we do and how we do it, we affirm the following ethical principles.

**Food Safety**
We affirm our obligation to provide safe food.

**Animal Safety**
We affirm our obligation to protect and promote animal well-being.

**Environment**
We affirm our obligation to safeguard natural resources in all of our practices.

**Public Health**
We affirm our obligation to ensure our practices protect public health.

**Employee Care**
We affirm our obligation to provide a work environment that is safe and consistent with our other ethical principles.

**The communities in which we operate**
We affirm our obligation to contribute to a better quality of life in our communities.
Old Way of Engaging

Engage deniers.

Here are the facts.

Here’s where you are wrong

Ugh, you don’t get it.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Way of Engaging</th>
<th>New Way of Engaging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engage deniers.</td>
<td>Engage the curious.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Here are the facts.</td>
<td>I’m listening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Here’s where you are wrong</td>
<td>Why do you feel this way?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ugh, you don’t get it.</td>
<td>I understand why you’d feel this way, right?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Here’s what is important to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Here is the evidence that supports my values.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What Evidence Do We Use?

Facts don’t matter

(until you’ve established trust)
Keep Factual Information Simple.

Facts largely don’t matter

If you are teaching, you might have lost the discussion

Everything you do must have a basis in shared values!
Keep Factual Information Simple.

Why do farmers have to use crop protection?

What are neonics and how do they contrast against legacy insecticides?

What is IPM?

How do these ideas support shared values?
Lead with your values.

Sustainable farming-
Lead with your values.

Sustainable farming- balance between ecological concerns, orchard health/productivity and economic viability.
Lead with your values.

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Consumers understand this--
-- producing wholesome fruit product
-- need more fruit in a healthy diet
-- orchard ecology is critical to productivity
Lead with your values.

Sustainable farming- balance between ecological concerns, orchard health/productivity and economic viability.

Consumers DON’T understand this--
-- Tree crops present unique challenges
-- Once they are gone, it is tough to recover
-- Management requires use of chemistry as part of an IPM program
Lead with your values.

Helping Consumers Understand the Complexities

- What is IPM?
- Scouting calendars
- Pre-harvest intervals
- Teaching them that IPM involves everything from pruning, beneficials, removal of debris, etc.
- The role of weather
- Potential for biological control
Lead with your values.

What are technologies that are consistent with those values?

-- pest-specific controls (Bt, etc)
-- Systemics vs broadcast
-- stage-specific disruptors
-- promoting secondary species that balance orchard ecology, insect diversity
Lead with your values.

Pollinators and Win-Win

Livestock honey bees not the only useful pollinators

Clear statement that insecticides kill insects.

Steps can be taken to ensure services of wild bees

- adjacent planting
- awareness of insect controls and spread
- insecticide use paired with flowering time
Lead with your values-- But *share your story*.

Do you enjoy spending the money on controls?

What steps do you take to ensure minimal use? Precise use?

What are your realistic concerns and how do you integrate safety into the use of controls?
Scientists, ag producers, ag-related industries failed to bridge that gap.

1. How do we do it effectively?

2. Where do we engage?

BE READY TO PARTICIPATE!
Social media has been a conduit for bad information. We need to take it back.
The 15 minute challenge.

Dedicate 15 minutes a week to promote your operation, discuss farming, food, or associated science/technology—*in social media space.*
The 15 minute challenge.

Obtain a separate email account for this work. Free ones at gmail, yahoo, etc.

Use your real name.

Develop a professional Facebook page, make your personal one private

THREE POINTS-- Content, Amplification, Network
The 15 minute challenge.

Where to participate?

• Comments-section discussions of news articles
• Write a Blog – Post YouTube Videos
• Facebook discussions
• Twitter, Reddit, LinkedIn
The 15 minute challenge.

Engaging:

HUG YOUR HATERS
How to Embrace Complaints and Keep Your Customers
JAY BAER

From the New York Times bestselling author of Youtility

Foreword by Tom Webster, Edison Research
The 15 minute challenge.

Engaging:

John Z. wrote a review for Taste of Venice
12/15/2016

The food was awful, service horrible. If you think this is Italian food go home and open a jar of Prego. You’ll be happier. This might be a taste of Venice if you drink the canal water. I’d never eat there again.

Was this review ...?
The 15 minute challenge.

Engaging:

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Was this review ...?

Chef Mario wrote a review for Taste of Venice
12/15/2016

Obviously you don’t know anything about Italian food. It is my family’s restaurant, and I hope you never return. We don’t need people like you here.

Was this review ...?
The 15 minute challenge.

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Was this review ...?

Chef Mario wrote a review for Taste of Venice
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I’m sorry you had a bad experience. Meals out should be special times and I understand why you are disappointed. My family has run this business for 15 years and customer satisfaction is our first priority. We’d love to try again, so come in, ask for Chef Mario, and dinner is on me. I’d like to sit down with you and learn about what you found objectionable. We want to get it right, and I’m sorry you were disappointed.

Was this review ...?
The 15 minute challenge.

Amplification

You can make a tremendous difference by staying current in the news and amplifying important messages.

News, blogs, scientific findings, reports…. Share!
#farm365

**AMPLIFICATION**

**Food and Farm Discussion Lab**

Public Group

**The FOOD DIALOGUES**

Answers to questions about how food is grown and raised

**FOODSOURCE**

Antibiotics: How is the industry working to lessen the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) guidelines 209 and 215 are affecting?

Antibiotics: What are the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) guidelines 209 and 215 and how do they affect animal agriculture production?

Antibiotics: What is the PCASD Report and

**RESOURCES FOR FARMERS & RANCHERS**

COW APPRECIATION DAY

Calf Care from Day One

Face of Farming & Ranching and dairy farmer Carla Watter shares her story about raising calves.
Amplify messages from experts.

Jennie Schmidt

Brian Scott

Sarah Schultz
Networks

Networks are powerful ways to disseminate information

Strive to build your networks

Get out of your echo chamber
The Power of Amplification and Networks

Pre-Internet

Now

10 k contacts
The Power of Amplification and Networks
The Emergence of Tribes and Echo Chambers
The Power of Amplification and Networks

Farmer Bloggers

Foodies  Scientists

Mom Bloggers  Triathletes
How do you get into those tribes?

Offer to write for them

Participate in the discussion sections of news articles and websites.

Share your stories and experiences.

*Ag producers are viewed as trusted and competent-if you are not telling the story, **someone will tell it for you!**
The Opinionated Cook

GMOs, Safety, and Lost Opportunities

by Kevin M. Fota

The question of GMO food safety comes up all the time, and because it’s a topic that is often hotly debated, it can reveal the limits of scientific reasoning. Modern technologies have tremendous potential to do good things for farmers, the environment, the needs and food enthusiasm—but only if they result in foods that are really safe to eat. I’m extremely concerned about the risks of GMOs, but I’m also very wary of simply saying they are “safe” without any consideration of the potential risks.

GMOs are generally safe to eat, but they carry risks that are not yet fully understood. It’s important to remember that GMOs are not just about modifying a single gene; they are often designed to improve multiple traits, which can complicate the safety assessment process.

The majority of consumers believe that GMO food is safe, but the scientific community has shown that these claims are not always supported by evidence. In some cases, GMOs may carry unintended consequences, such as the development of herbicide-resistant weeds or the transfer of genes to non-crop organisms.

In the 1990s, scientists tested the safety of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in various ways and found that they were generally safe. However, since then, more research has been done, and some studies have raised concerns about the potential risks of GMOs.

The debate over GMOs is often fueled by fear and misinformation, and it’s important to separate fact from fiction. The scientific community has a responsibility to communicate with the public about the potential risks and benefits of GMOs in a clear and transparent way.

In conclusion, GMOs can be a valuable tool for improving food production, but they are not a panacea and must be evaluated carefully to ensure their safety. The scientific community must continue to work to address these concerns and provide clear and transparent information to the public.
Important to understand:

“Feed the World” does not resonate.

Past vs. Future- “5th generation” not as compelling as “leaving it for the 7th”.

Always discuss strengths and limitations

Don’t ever claim there is a single solution!

Always cultivate ideas/opinions, acknowledge blindspots

Never forget the real audience
Conclusion

Know your audience

Listen and understand their concerns

Talk about your values, your motivations

Discussion ag innovations that can satisfy your common values

Participate in social media discussions

Be nice. Represent ag/science with grace.
I don’t know what to believe, so I just won’t buy it.
“Don’t tell me it can’t be done, tell me what needs to be done and help me do it.”

Thank you.

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