Advancing Animal Agriculture
We’re Talking But What Are They Hearing?

Opening the Barn Door: An Experiment

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Strategic Direction

Goal:

Strengthen non-farmer, consumer confidence

Counter negative perceptions of modern agriculture, so you can farm
Year 1

• Research based measures
  – Focus groups
  – One-on-one interviews
  – Quantitative research of 1,100 Chicago-area consumers
Here’s what we learned...

• Moms are a powerful consumer
• Consumers want to feel good about their food choices
• They respect farmers
• Farmers are trustworthy, honest, hard-working and nurturing
• They’re not sure that what you do today is really considered “farming”
Here’s what we learned...

• Actual experience with farmers and farming is limited.

• 40% said their information came from farmers markets.

• 37% said it was by driving by farms.
Here’s what we learned...

• Only 1 in 4 feel knowledgeable about farming practices.

• Only 2 in 5 feel somewhat comfortable of how our food is being grown and raised on Illinois farms.

• Consumers thought that more than half of the farms in Illinois were corporately owned.

• 8 out of 10 moms want to see farms and farmers, 9 out of 10 want to take their kids on field trips.
Now what do we do?

• We must have conversations with consumers!
Consumers’ Opinions of Farmers
**Words to Lose**

- Producer
- Operation
- Produce
- Ag Industry
- Profit
- Efficient
- Sustainable
- Self-Policing
- Affordable/Abundant Food
- We Feed the World

**Words to Use**

- Farmer
- Farm/Land
- Grow/Raise
- Farm Community
- Earn a Living
- Wise Use of Time/Man Hours
- Wise Use of Land/Water
- Best Practices/Ethical Standards
- Healthy/Wholesome Food
- I Grow Food for My Family and Yours
Understand consumers listen 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, authentic farmers are credible
Be transparent, forthcoming

- Engage as a peer
  ✓ I trust people like me
- Share all sides of the story
- Remember: When consumers trust you they trust the food you raise
Listen and ask questions
Stay out of the details, relate to mom

- Engage in dialogue not monologue
- Answer their questions
- Make them feel good about their choices
- Provide assurances not technical explanations
  > Avoid: efficiency, faster, profitability, productivity
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 first-hand experiences
Share beautiful farm scenery

• Generates lasting impressions
• Evokes positive emotions
• Makes it personal
• Creates a connection
Reach consumers on their terms

• Connect where they think about food and farming
  ✓ Grocery stores
  ✓ Farmers markets
  ✓ Festivals or museums
  ✓ Online communities

Watch these moms discover the simple truths about their food and the Illinois farm families who grow it.

www.watchusgrow.org
Year 2

1) Equip Farmers to Engage

2) Create Experiences
Hi, I’m Brent, one of the Illinois family farmers from Polo. I’d like to give you free groceries for a year.
Meet the Field Moms

Learn more about Field Moms Touring Our Farms.

**Amy Hansmann**
River Forest, IL
I'm an active, educated, stay-at-home mom of two.
Watch Amy Hansmann on Tour

**Angel Ishmael**
Chicago, IL
I cook every night for my family and I love healthy, yummy food.
Watch Angel Ishmael on Tour

**Farrah Brown**
Glendale Heights, IL
I'm a part-time nurse, so it's challenging to cook every night.
Watch Farrah Brown on Tour

**Joelen Tan**
Chicago, IL
I'm a private chef/caterer, so food is very important in our lives.
Watch Joelen Tan on Tour

**Pilar Clark**
Little, IL
I'm a long-time writer and social media strategist and work-at-home mom.
Watch Pilar Clark on Tour

**Amy Rossi**
Naperville, IL
I'm involved with my church, and I volunteer at school.
Watch Amy Rossi on Tour

**Betsie Estes**
Elk Grove Village, IL
I'm back in Illinois after spending eight years in Texas.
Watch Betsie Estes on Tour

**Jennifer Weiss**
Big Rock, IL
I grew up in Kentucky, and I would love to reconnect with my agricultural heritage.
Watch Jennifer Weiss on Tour

**Julie Barreda**
Chicago, IL
I'm a former marketing and corporate training professional.
Watch Julie Barreda on Tour
Field Mom Tours

Follow the Tours

See what happens when Field Moms visit Illinois Farm Families to ask the tough questions about what happens on farms today. Watch the videos to hear their discussions on animal welfare, antibiotics, grass-fed vs. grain-fed beef, cuts of beef, etranoil, manure, harvest, sustainable farming, hormones and family farms.

Stay tuned for more from the Field Moms. They’ll visit hog production farms later this winter and take a soybean and corn farm tour in late spring 2012.

Tour 1: Larson Farms and Lindale Holsteins  October 15, 2011

Asking about antibiotics

The Field Moms ask veterinarian, Brian Gerloff, and Illinois farmers about antibiotic use and how farmers ensure food safety. Watch our video.

Hormones in meat and milk

The Field Moms ask about artificial growth hormones in meat and milk. Watch their discussion on hormone use and food safety with farmers and veterinarian, Brian Gerloff. Watch our video.

Field Moms tour our farms

The Field Moms take their first farm tour and see how beef is raised, corn harvested, and milk is produced. Watch our video.
“Meet Up” & Events

And THIS is why I applied to be a field mom. ... I want to get closer to the truth. Not the media version, not the PeTA version, not even the Hormel-spun version – I want to sit down with the farmers themselves and hear what they have to say. Chris .. was just a guy, telling a table of ladies about a trip he took. I think that’s about as close to the unspun truth as this suburban mom is going to get, and I’m so thankful to have the opportunity to hear it firsthand.
What Did the Moms Say?

• “...each family farm valued the land they had, but were also aware that their actions affect others down the road or downstream.”

• “...each farm and related industry requires multiple rounds of testing to assure that animals receiving antibiotics are not entering the food chain.”

• “I got to put my thumb in the device used to milk them and feel the amount of pressure that’s used – it was actually pretty comfortable for me, so it was good to know the cows aren’t being hurt while they’re milked.”
Social Media
Frequently asked questions

- Are specific breeds of cows bred to create the "dairy cow"?
- Do cows continue to produce milk after their calf has been taken away? At what age are cows first bred?
- Do you feel wind turbines can affect farm animals and even cause them to die?
- How does one go about becoming a farmer?
- I am interested in becoming a farm owner one day. Although I would love to inherit my family farm, it’s just not in the cards for me. What are the requirements for starting an urban farm in the city?
- What are typical work hours for a farmer?
- What percentage of corn gets made into ethanol?
- What’s ethanol, and why do we need it?
- What’s high-fructose corn syrup, and is it bad for my family?
- When the weather affects the crops, how do the farmers recoup their losses?
- Why do you treat animals with antibiotics?
- Wouldn’t it be better if we didn’t use antibiotics?
Expand and Drive to Experience

1. Expand Experiences
   - Tours, Meet-ups, events
   - Template activities
   - Classroom outreach

   ✔ Social Media
   ✔ Traditional Media
   ✔ Online/offline advertising
   ✔ Website Optimization
   ✔ Speaking Opportunities
Audience #1 – Moms

• Outcomes
  ✓ Moms are aware of, trust IFF as credible information source
  ✓ Balance in the media
  ✓ Community support of conventional farmers and practices
  ✓ Repository of accurate information

• Outputs
  ✓ # of moms/dialogues at Meetup events
  ✓ # of consumers/dialogues at farmers markets, zoo events, State Fair
  ✓ # of FaceBook, Twitter posts and followers media
  ✓ Message impressions in consumer media
  ✓ Consumer-accessible, accurate info at website
Audience #2 – Farmers

**Outcomes**
- Farmer leaders who understand consumer mindset, use consumer language
- Farmers who believe IFF is worthwhile, valuable
- Farmers who engage in consumer dialogues (in person, social media)
- Farmers advocating involvement for IFF programs

**Outputs**
- # of farmers who participate in training, attend events where IFF is shared
- # of farmers reached with *IFF Happenings*, coalition member communications
- # of farmers featured on watchusgrow.com
- IFF impressions in trade media
- Farmer resources (IFF signage, materials, collateral)
We are Illinois farm families, growing your food with care.

• Consumers have questions about their food. Who will give them the answers?
Any questions?

THANK YOU!