

A TWO-MONTH TWITTER CHALLENGE:
WHY #AGRICULTURE PRODUCERS SHOULD BE ON TWITTER

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I know many agriculture producers are skeptical of social media, particularly Twitter. Twitter is very different from other types of social media and I urge livestock producers to give Twitter a chance. Not only is Twitter the best way to get and share information today but it is also a powerful networking and marketing tool.

There are five major reasons why agriculture producers should be on Twitter:

1. **Get Informed.** Twitter is quickly becoming the fastest way to get and share news and ideas. Livestock producers can easily follow all major news sources (e.g., CNN, Fox News, New York Times, local newspapers) and agriculture publications (e.g., Beef Magazine, Cattle Network). Whether it is news on a vote in Congress, scores from a high school basketball game, updates from an agriculture conference or livestock show, or news about the livestock industry, you can get this information first on Twitter. News junkies are very attracted to Twitter for that reason because it is the best way to get “breaking news.”
2. **Get Involved.** Twitter is a unique forum for discussions on issues affecting the agriculture industry. The agriculture community on Twitter has a powerful presence. Each Tuesday night at 8pm Eastern Time, ag tweeps have an #AgChat or #FoodChat to discuss issues affecting the food and agriculture industries. These discussion groups have done a great job fostering communication among people in the ag industry and tweeps from all different backgrounds and geography participate.
3. **Meet and Greet.** Twitter is a great networking tool. Facebook is more about who you know while Twitter is more about who you want to know. I have easily met more people through Twitter than any other social networking site alone. Before long, you are exchanging emails with tweeps outside of Twitter and making plans to meet-up in real life. There are many Ag “Tweet-ups” (“Meet-ups”) around the country. Twitter has highlighted just how intertwined the agriculture industry really is and how we all share common goals. As a cattle girl, I might not have met other types of livestock producers if it wasn’t for my Twitter presence.
4. **Showcase Your Talent.** Twitter is a great marketing outlet. If you have a farm or ranch blog, then having a Twitter presence is a must. By posting your links to your updating blog entries on Twitter, you can increase your readership exponentially. Additionally, Twitter is a great place to brag about your business accomplishments or highlight your knowledge of the industry. Also, Twitter is a great venue to meet agriculture journalists and marketing experts that will help get the word out about a particular livestock operation.

5. **Tell Your Story One Tweet At a Time.** Twitter is a perfect way for agriculture producers to tell their story to the public-at-large. There are a lot of non-ag people on Twitter and folks in the agriculture community are using Twitter as a platform to explain what they do to try to communicate with the consumer. Twitter is like a giant conversation happening around the country – shouldn't the agriculture industry be a part of that conversation?

So take two months and give Twitter a try. Get informed. Get involved. Meet and greet. Showcase your talent. And tell your story. Your life will change- I promise.

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