

How to Deal with Agriculture Skeptics

Overall Goal: Students will understand and demonstrate research-driven methods to effectively communicate with consumers about agriculture.

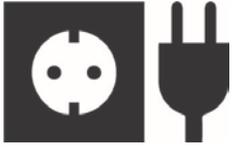
OBJECTIVES:

1. *Students will memorize and practice the formula for effective values-based consumer conversations.*
2. *Students will discuss techniques to avoid the major pitfalls of ineffective agriculture conversations with consumers.*



Action:

Session Time: 1 hour 15 minutes	Connection: 15 minutes Objective 1: 30 minutes Objective 2: 25 minutes Review: 5 minutes
Materials Needed:	Setup: five different types of stickers for students when they arrive, five colors of notecards (one color taped under five tables – one for each group) Connection: blank scratch paper for tweets, masking tape for fort lines, trash cans Obj. 1: scrambled steps one letter per notecard (one color for each step), masking tape to hang letters on walls, candy, Learn Books Obj. 2: clues to decode numbered and taped around the room.
Flipcharts to Create:	Preview: preview poster Obj .1: Steps poster (cover until revealed) Obj. 2: 10 Tips poster (cover until revealed), 10 blank half sheets (labeled with sticky note for each tip), two questions for tips billboard
Special Notes:	A/V Needs: “Yeah” and “Yeah Fast Version” songs Other Special Needs:



Connection:

[As students arrive, give them a sticker. There should be five different colors/options. Mix up students as much as possible.]

Agriculture Skeptics Snowball Fight

Welcome to How to Deal with Agriculture Skeptics – a session for real talk about Twitter trolls and tough consumer questions! We're excited to talk through some easy steps and tips to ensure we're not just talking at consumers, we're connecting with them. I'm _____. And I'm _____. And we're here to make this fun, fast paced and something you can actually use when you head back home! Ready to get started?!

We're going to kick things off with an Agriculture Skeptics Snowball Fight. Together, we'll brainstorm some of the common criticisms of agriculture and FFA and attempt to respond.

First, let's split into three groups. We'll go around the room counting off, but instead of using numbers, we'll use boots, and, cats. If we count off fast enough, it will sound like we are beat boxing. [Demonstrate. Go around the room until everyone is split up.]

In just a second, the Boots And Cats will commence the most epic indoor snowball fight the world has ever seen. Boots, raise our hands! [Pause.] Boots tune in. Everyone else tune out.

Boots, we'll be the agriculture skeptics. It's our job to write as many common criticisms of modern agriculture and FFA on these slips of paper as we can in tweet form. Feel free to use hashtags. Staying behind our fort tape line, we'll ball them up, and throw them over to the Cats. It's our goal to overwhelm them with snowballs faster than they can return them. If they throw any snowballs back, we can write a response on the bottom and lob them back over. Remember, we're critical of agriculture and FFA.

Cats, put up a paw! [Pause.] Cats tune in. Everyone else tune out.

Cats, we'll be the agriculture defenders. It's our job to catch as many snowballs as we can and respond to the skeptics in tweet form. Again, it's OK to use hashtags. If a snowball hits the ground before we can catch it, it stays where it lays. Staying behind our fort tape line, we'll ball up our replies to the snowballs we've actually caught and throw them back over to the Boots. It's our goal to catch, respond and return as many snowballs as possible.

Ands, put our hands up! [Pause.] Ands this is all for you. Everyone else, tune out.

Ands, we'll be the Twitter spectators! Staying between the two fort lines and seated, it's our job to intercept snowballs from both sides and either retweet them by copying them on another sheet of paper or respond on the bottom with additional questions or comments. Then we'll ball them up and launch the snowballs at either the Boots or the Cats. We can pick up and respond to any snowball, even those that have hit the ground. Our goal is to keep our middle area clear of snowballs.

Everyone, tune back in! To recap, Boots – we're agriculture skeptics. We tweet ag and FFA criticisms and throw them over to the Cats and respond to any snowballs that make it back to our side. Cats – we're agriculture defenders. We catch the snowballs, and tweet informed responses back at the Boots. Ands – we're the Twitter spectators. We intercept the snowballs and either copy them on another sheet of paper to retweet or add our two cents and keep them going. What questions are there? [Long pause.]

Boots, grab your pens and meet on this side of the room. Cats, grab your pens and meet on this side of the room. Ands grab your pens and take a seat on the floor in the middle. [Play music and give everyone time to get into position.]

The group with the least number of snowballs on their side of the fort line at the end of two songs, will be our winner! When the music starts, so will the snowball battle... [Play two songs and assist with in the moment questions, rule policing and encouragement.]

Snowballs down! If you have a snowball in your hand drop it on your side. Facilitators, let's count up the snowballs for each group. [Count snowballs, compare results, declare a winner.]

Everyone, let's ditch the snowballs in the trash and head back to our seats. [Play music and get everyone back to their seats.]

Processing Questions:

- *What were some of the criticisms we wrote or read?*
- *What about some of the responses?*
- *Ag defenders – what made this such a hard task?*
- *How is this similar to actual conversations about agriculture that happen on social media or in person?*
- *With so few people involved in agriculture, why are there so many questions? Why do we struggle to answer?*

Even though many of us have researched ag-related topics for papers, speeches or demonstrations, some of us struggled to figure out effective responses and juggle all of the snowballs being thrown at us. To be real, it can be hard to answer tough questions about agriculture. This session is all about learning the best way to have those conversations and make sure we actually connect with consumers in the process. Sound like something we can actually use? We think so, too!



Preview:

So, to master these tough conversations and build real relationships with consumers, we'll:

- *Step It Out – and figure out five easy steps to making consumer conversations effective*
- *Jump the Hurdles – and understand what's preventing us from making real connections*
- *Add It to the POA – and see what all of this has to do with our chapters*

Transition into first objective

Now that we have our plan of attack, let's step it out and learn to rock those tough consumer convos!

Objective 1: Students will memorize and practice the formula for effective values-based consumer conversations.



Support:

Step It Out Go Get It Race – Students will break into five teams, racing around the room collecting hidden notecards with letters on them. The first team to collect and unscramble their notecards wins! Students will memorize the unscrambled steps using a song and motions.



Point:

Step It Out – There are five steps to effective consumer conversations based on research from the Center for Food Integrity about trust:

1. Know Your Platform – Know what's important to you and why
2. Listen, Don't Judge – Actively listen to show trust and show you care
3. Ask Some Questions – Identify what's important and why
4. Use Shared Values – Listen and utilize values you have in common
5. Give Next Steps – Include the result of the conversation (follow-up, agree to disagree, resources, etc.)



Application:

Consumer Conversation Practice – Students will have an opportunity to role play as a concerned consumer and an opportunity to respond to concerned consumers using the five-step formula.

SUPPORT:

In just a second, we'll be abandoning our snowball groups and joining with a new team in a race against the clock. Let's meet our teams and get started! We'll have 30 seconds to find everyone with the sticker we received on our way in the door and grab a table. 30 seconds – Go! [Play fast-paced music.]

Now that we have our teams, it's time for a little friendly competition. Throw your eyes around the room. Scattered and hidden we see notecards with letters on them. As a team, we'll sprint to collect our letters on our color of notecards, unscramble them and grab _____ or I to confirm. Find, Unscramble, Check. The first team finished, takes home some candy. Questions?

The cards you'll be collecting are taped under your tables! Let the race begin. [Play fast-paced music. Check for correctly unscrambled notecards. Award first and second place teams a piece of candy.]

Phew! Nice hustle everyone. The five phrases we just unscrambled describe the five steps to taking conversations with consumers from blah to wah-la! Let's review the steps and copy them down on page 11 of our Learn Book as we go. Fill in the blanks and take notes in the lines between each step to help jog your memory later. [Quick pause so everyone can get their Learn Book turned to the correct page.]

POINT:

Green group, what was our phrase? [Audience response – Know Your Platform, reveal poster] Great! Before even starting a consumer conversation, it's important to understand the values that are most important to us as leaders in agriculture. Maybe that's family, hard work or integrity. Whatever the values, we have to know and cement these in our brains ahead of time.

Pink group, what was our phrase? [Audience response – Listen, Don't Judge, reveal poster] Nailed it! While it's tempting to butt in and start dropping some facts and figures on our unsuspecting victims, the first real step in a conversation with consumers is to LISTEN with an open mind. We shouldn't be brainstorming our response. We should be listening for key words and concerns.

Yellow group, what was our phrase? [Audience response – Ask Some Questions, reveal poster]

Exactly! Even though someone on the surface may be asking a question about GMOs or sustainability, they might actually be concerned with food safety or clean water. Before attempting to respond, ask some questions to drill down to what's really eating at the consumer. What do they really care about?

Orange group, what was our phrase? [Audience response – Use Shared Values, reveal poster] Got it! Once we have a better idea about what a consumer really cares about, we can find common ground. Remember those values we talked about a minute ago in “Know Your Platform?” This is where they came to the forefront! What shared values do you and the consumer have? Care for the environment? A passion for taking great care of animals? Whatever it is, lead with this common ground!

Blue group, what was our phrase? [Audience response – Explore Next Steps, reveal poster] Bingo! So we know our values, we've listened, asked clarifying questions and built a bridge of shared values. Cap off the conversation with some sort of action. Invite them to your farm or a local Breakfast on the Farm. Share some websites or farmer blogs. Offer to follow-up with additional information. Agree to disagree. The end of this conversation should be positive and result in some sort of action.

Make sense? They seem like easy, common sense steps, but it's amazing how much they can add to our conversations. In the moment, it can be tricky to remember them however... So can I let you in on a little trick we use to keep them fresh?

Everyone, let's stand up and push our chairs back. [Pause.] The first step, “Know Your Platform, Know Your Platform.” [Accompany with hands on heart.] Let's do it together. KNOW YOUR PLATFORM. KNOW YOUR PLATFORM. [Accompany with hands on heart.]

Next up, “Listen, Don't Judge; Listen, Don't Judge.” [Accompany with hand behind ear, shaking finger.] Together. LISTEN DON'T JUDGE. LISTEN DON'T JUDGE. [Accompany with hand behind ear, shaking finger.]

So the first two steps together:

- *KNOW YOUR PLATFORM, KNOW YOUR PLATFORM [hands on heart]*
- *LISTEN DON'T JUDGE. LISTEN DON'T JUDGE. [hand behind ear, shaking finger]*

Third, “Ask Some Questions, Ask Some Questions.” [Model question shrug hand motion.] All Together. ASK SOME QUESTIONS. ASK SOME QUESTIONS. [Model question shrug and hand motion.]

From the top:

- *KNOW YOUR PLATFORM, KNOW YOUR PLATFORM [hands on heart]*
- *LISTEN DON'T JUDGE. LISTEN DON'T JUDGE. [hand behind ear, shaking finger]*
- *ASK SOME QUESTIONS. ASK SOME QUESTIONS. [question shrug and hand motion]*

Next, “Use Shared Values, Use Shared Values.” [Model share hand sweep.] Join with me. USE SHARED VALUES. USE SHARED VALUES. [Model share hand sweep.]

So our first four steps are:

- *KNOW YOUR PLATFORM. KNOW YOUR PLATFORM. [hands on heart]*
- *LISTEN DON'T JUDGE. LISTEN DON'T JUDGE. [hand behind ear, shaking finger]*
- *ASK SOME QUESTIONS. ASK SOME QUESTIONS. [question shrug and hand motion]*
- *USE SHARED VALUES. USE SHARED VALUES. [share hand sweep]*

And last but not least, “Give Next Steps. Give Next Steps.” [Model two-step march, booty shake.] Together. GIVE NEXT STEPS. GIVE NEXT STEPS. [Model two-step march, booty shake.]

Let's put it all together:

- *KNOW YOUR PLATFORM. KNOW YOUR PLATFORM.* [hands on heart]
- *LISTEN DON'T JUDGE. LISTEN DON'T JUDGE.* [hand behind ear, shaking finger]
- *ASK SOME QUESTIONS. ASK SOME QUESTIONS.* [question shrug and hand motion]
- *USE SHARED VALUES. USE SHARED VALUES.* [share hand sweep]
- *GIVE NEXT STEPS. GIVE NEXT STEPS.* [two-step march, booty shake]

_____, do you think they're ready? Do you guys think we're ready to add a little music?! Alright, I think you can handle it with the help of Usher! [Play "[Yeah](#)" and when the beat drops (about 20 seconds in), repeat the five step cadence three or four times.]

Solid! But I think we can take it up a notch. You ready for this?! [Play "[Yeah Fast Version](#)" and when the beat drops (about 34 seconds in), repeat the five step cadence three times.]

Phew! You killed it! Give three people a high five and let's head back to our seats. [Play "Yeah" as everyone returns to their seats."]

APPLICATION:

Now we've got the steps on lock, let's try putting them into practice! Before we each get to try out putting these steps to use, let's hear an example. Volunteers, you'll be reading out of the Learn Book – no pressure. Let's get two volunteers with their Learn Books up front. [Pause to get volunteers up front.]

Thanks for your help! We have [let students introduce themselves]. _____ you'll be our concerned consumer on page 11 and 12 you'll be our passionate agriculturalist.

First, let's start off with a not-so-great example. [Ask students to read "When Consumer Conversations Go Wrong" role play.]

So what went wrong during that conversation? What steps did we miss? [Audience response.]

Alright, let's listen to another conversation, putting your suggestions into practice. _____ and _____, will you read us the exchange on page 12. [Ask students to read "When Consumer Conversations Go Right" role play.]

Thanks! Let's give our volunteers a round of applause as they head back to their seats. [Lead applause.]

So what was good about that conversation? What steps did they hit out of the park? [Audience response.]

Now, it's our turn. At your table, lock eyes with someone not sitting next to you. They'll be our partner for this next piece.

When the music starts we'll grab our partner and find a spot around the room. The person with the longest hair will be our concerned consumer first. The person with the shortest hair will be the passionate agriculture leader. We'll have three minutes to have a conversation using the steps we've mastered on the poster up front and scenario one on page 11. Three minutes. Five steps. Positive, effective consumer conversations. Questions? Let's get started! [Play music. Give time checks with two minutes left, one minute left, 30 seconds left.]

Freeze! Now it's time to switch roles. The person with the longest hair will now be the agriculture leader and the person with the shorter hair will be our consumer. We'll have three minutes to have the conversation described in scenario two on page 11. Questions? Let's go! [Play music. Give time checks with two minutes, left, one minute left, 30 seconds left.]

Give your partner a pat on the back, and let's head back to our seats. [Play music for return to seats.]

Let's share five things our partners really rocked at when they were playing the role of agriculture leader? [Get five responses.]

Anything we personally would like to improve on before trying these steps with actual consumers? [Get three responses.]

And for one last review before we move on, everybody up! [Play "Yeah" and repeat the steps three times.]

Transition into the next objective:

We just cruised through the majority of the heavy lifting of this session, *Stepping It Out* as we learned the five steps to effective consumer conversations and tried on the steps with our partners. Now, let's forge ahead to *Jump the Hurdles* that could trip us up as we build relationships and trust with consumers.

Objective 2: Students will discuss techniques to avoid the major pitfalls of ineffective agriculture conversations with consumers.



Support:	Consumer Messaging Obstacle Course – Students will split into 10 groups and race to decode a clue (one for each of the 10 tips).
Point:	Jump the Hurdles – Sometimes it's not just what we say, it's how we say it! Connecting with consumers means hurdling the common pitfalls ag-people fall into and focusing on the 10 tips for win-win conversations with consumers.
Application:	Tips Billboards – Students will work in 10 mini-groups to dive into one of the 10 tips and create a billboard explaining the tip. The group will take a road trip around the room capturing snapshots of the billboards to use later.

SUPPORT:

In just a second, we'll be competing as teams to decode the 10 tips for acing consumer interactions. There will be 10 teams each decoding one of the tips.

Tune in for the details. When the music starts we'll each be given a clue to decode. When we think we have the answer our entire group will sit down and raise our hands. One of us will then come over and check your work. The top three teams will get a prize. What questions do we have?

Let's split into teams! We'll go around the room counting off from 1-10. [Count off everyone in the room and direct them to 10 stations where the clues are taped upside down to the wall.]

Everyone ready? When the music starts, flip over your clue, decode and sit and raise your hands when you are done! [Start music. Patrol the room and assist as needed to decode each clue.]

Clues

1. "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care": (people) (care crossed out) how much you (brain) until they (brain) how much you (heart).

2. Ask for clarification before answering: Ask 4 (fuzzy picture to clear picture) before answering
3. Speak slowly and plainly, no alphabet soup: (person talking) (slow moving vehicle sign) and plainly, (crossed out can of alphabet soup)
4. Shared values are greater than skills, economics and science: (share icon) values > skills, (\$) and (test tubes)
5. Have conversations, not lectures: Have (picture of people talking), not (person at a podium)
6. Make your point and stop: Make your (finger pointing) and (stop sign)
7. Walking the walk is greater than talking about it and builds trust: (Person walking) the (cooking wok) > (person talking) about it & (tools) (hands shaking)
8. Stick to what you know and phone a friend: (tape) to what you (brain) and (phone) a (Facebook friend icon)
9. Share your personal passion and relate: (share icon) your personal (person celebrate) & re – (person checking watch)
10. What's in it for me is greater than Feeding the World: WIIFM> (filled plate) the (earth)

And the top three teams are _____! Congratulations! Grab a piece of candy, and let's head back to our seats.

POINT:

Now that we're back to our seats, let's take a closer look at the 10 tips we decoded. Turn to page 13 in our Learn Book and let's fill in these blanks: [Audience responses.]

1. "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." –Theodore Roosevelt
2. Ask for clarification before answering
3. Speak slowly and plainly, no alphabet soup
4. Shared values are greater than skills, economics and science for consumers.
5. Have conversations, not lectures
6. Make your point and stop
7. Walking the walk is greater than talking about it and builds trust
8. Stick to what you know and phone a friend
9. Share your personal passion and relate
10. What's in it for me (consumers) is greater than feeding the world

APPLICATION:

So we have these great tips, but what do they really mean and how do we use them? In just a second, we'll be taking a road trip to dive into each of these tips a little deeper.

In groups, we'll create a billboard showcasing our tip and answering the following questions [refer to questions on a poster in the front of the room]:

- *What does this really mean? What's an easy way to describe this tip in greater detail?*
- *What does this look like? (phrases, pictures, personal examples, etc.)*

We'll have two songs to work with our group to answer these questions and create our billboards. Questions? [Pause]

Grab two or three people you haven't worked with today and gather around one of the tip billboards around the room. Your two songs start now! [Play two upbeat, but little known songs. Do time check ins with two and one minute left.]

Nice work! Let's head back to our seats.

As you can see, we have some pretty awesome billboards around the room. Great resources to

help us really take these tips to heart. When the music starts, we'll turn to page 14 in our Learn Book and capture the key points on each billboard. We'll have two songs, so we've got to make this a quick road trip, copying down the high points fairly quickly. Let's grab our books and get this road trip started! [Play two calm songs. Do time check ins with two and one minute left.]

Let's put it into high gear and park it back at our seats.

What were three things we learned from the billboards? [Audience response.]

What were three things we hadn't considered before? [Audience response.]

Where can we use these tips after today? [Audience response, three volunteers.]

Phew this has been a busy session!

Transition into the review and close:

We've figured out the five steps to effective consumer conversations. We've decoded the 10 hurdles and tips to connecting with consumers. But how can we use this back at home? How can these five steps and 10 tips add value to our chapters.



Review and Close:

Turn to page 66 of your Learn Book. We'll take one song in complete silence to brainstorm at least three ways we can use the five step conversation method and 10 tips and tricks we conquered in the session back at our chapter.

- Think about ways we can relay these five steps to all the students in our chapter so they can better explain what we do in agriculture education and FFA.
- How can we use the 10 tips and tricks to enhance our chapter activities?
- What events or places in our communities could we put these conversation skills to practice to help answer consumer questions?
- Think about things your chapter already does and new ideas you could try.

Take one song, brainstorm at least three ideas and jot them down on page 66! [Play music.]

Thanks for a great session jammed packed with competition, fun and great ideas! As a whirlwind review...

- First we committed to **Step It Out** when it comes to consumer conversations. Those five steps were... [Play "Yeah," students say the words and motions]
- Then we worked with our team to **Jump the Hurdles** and decode 10 tips to connect with consumers. Let's list five of them... [Audience Responds]
- Finally, we brainstormed ways to **add the steps and tips into our chapter Program of Activities**. What were three ideas we came up with? [Audience responds]

Hands in! [Demonstrate] Thanks for actively participating and getting the most out of this session. Your chapters, schools and communities will be better off because we were all in during this session. On the count of three, we'll shout "LISTEN FIRST, CONNECT WITH VALUES" then we'll head outside for a five minute break before our next session.

One. Two. THREE! LISTEN FIRST, CONNECT WITH VALUES!!!

How to Deal with Agriculture Skeptics



5 Steps to Rock Consumer Conversations

Based on consumer trust research from the Center for Food Integrity; www.foodintegrity.org

How to Deal with
Agriculture Skeptics

1. _____ – Know what’s important to you and why

2. _____ – Actively listen to show trust and show you care

3. _____ – Identify what’s important and why

4. _____ – Listen and utilize values you have in common

5. _____ – Include the result of the conversation
(follow up, agree to disagree, resources, etc.)

Consumer Conversation Scenarios

1. You are wearing an FFA t-shirt at the local grocery store and hurry into the dairy aisle to pick up a gallon of chocolate milk before heading home. A concerned mom with a baby in her cart stops you and says, “Are you a farmer? I’m really struggling about what type of milk to get for my family. I don’t want hormones or antibiotics in it. So many farms are big and just care about money these days. What should I do?” How do you respond?

2. You are in a restaurant after district FFA contests and an older gentleman pulls you aside and says, “Future Farmers of America! I remember those blue jackets from my country school back in the day. It’s too bad all these corporate factory farms are coming in to push all the little guys out of business. I just feel better getting my hamburger from the small farmer down the road than from the grocery store because it’s better for me and doesn’t just support the corporations.” How do you respond?

When Consumer Conversations Go Wrong...

Consumer [grabbing a gallon of organic milk at the local grocery store]: I'm so glad they have organic, GMO-free milk here! I don't want those hormones and antibiotics in my milk. I'm sure you agree as a Future Farmer of America! [She points to your chapter FFA t-shirt.]

FFA member: Actually, there's no scientific difference between organic and genetically modified products. There are hormones in practically every food you eat. Plus there's way more estrogen in a birth control pill than milk. People are so misinformed about their food these days... You're worried about a bunch of things that don't even matter. And FFA doesn't stand for Future Farmers of America anymore.

Consumer: Yeah, I'm sure the corporate factory farms want you to think that there's no difference. But then why would it be on the label?! The government just doesn't want us to panic so they pay off all the researchers, those that aren't already on Monsanto's payroll. I'll gladly pay extra to make sure food is safe for my family!

FFA member: But it is safe! Milk is tested for antibiotics before it's offloaded from the trucks, and the entire load is dumped if they find any antibiotics at the cost of the farmer. Check the label. No rBST is even used in Michigan's fluid milk supply. Farmers are business people. They don't want to lose all that money!

Consumer: Just another example of corporate greed in action. I'll stick to my GMO-free, organic gallon - thank you!

When Consumer Conversations Go Right!

Consumer [grabbing a gallon of organic milk at the local grocery store]: I'm so glad they have organic, GMO-free milk here! I don't want those hormones and antibiotics in my milk. I'm sure you agree as a Future Farmer of America! [She points to your chapter FFA t-shirt.]

FFA member: Oh really? Tell me more about why you buy GMO-free and organic products.

Consumer: Well I'm a mom, and I have two kids under 5 at home. I just want to make sure I give them something that's healthy and safe for them. So I'll pay the extra to make sure I give them the best food possible.

FFA member: I totally understand! I have a younger sister and brother, and family is definitely the most important part of my life. So just like you, we always purchase the safest, most nutritious food possible, which is why we feel comfortable getting the traditional Meijer brand milk. It actually comes from farmers right here in Michigan! In your mind, what's the major difference between my gallon of milk and yours?

Consumer: I'm glad we both put our families first. It's great to actually talk to someone who knows real farmers and still cares. Well I just think there are fewer antibiotics and hormones in my gallon, which makes it safer.

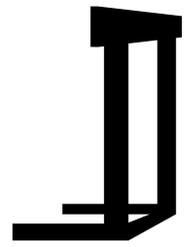
FFA member: Yeah, all the food labels are really confusing! It's hard to know what the right choice is sometimes. I have a friend who is a dairy farmer, and she has shown me the process they use to make sure antibiotics don't get into the milk supply. Did you know milk is tested multiple times for antibiotics before it gets to the grocery store?!

Consumer: I had no idea!

FFA member: You know, my friend loves giving tours. Would you be interested in coming to her farm with your family?

Consumer: Sure! That would be great! I'm sure my kids would love to see a real farm. Let's exchange emails, and we'll get something set up.

10 Tips to Jump the Hurdles during Consumer Conversations

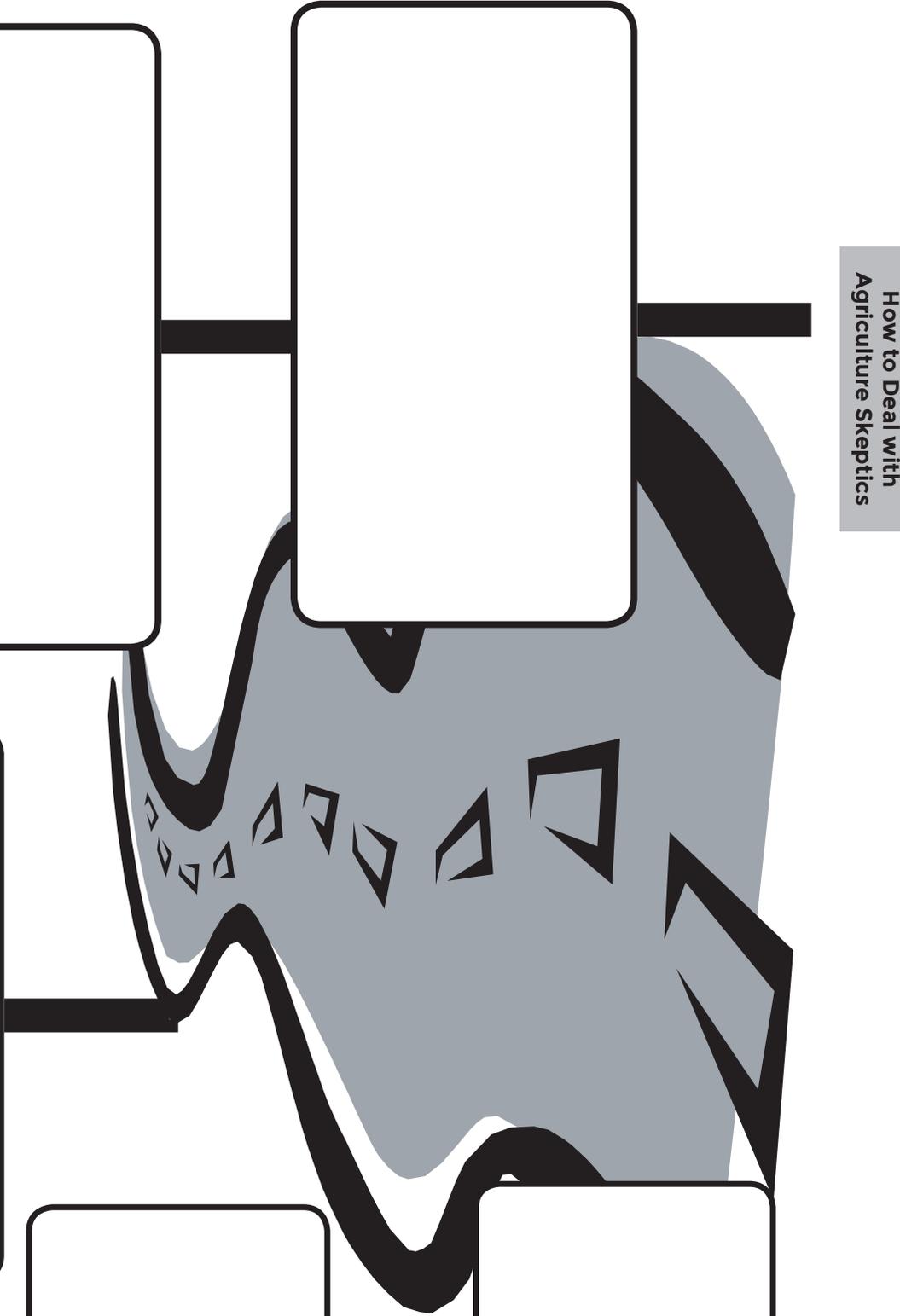
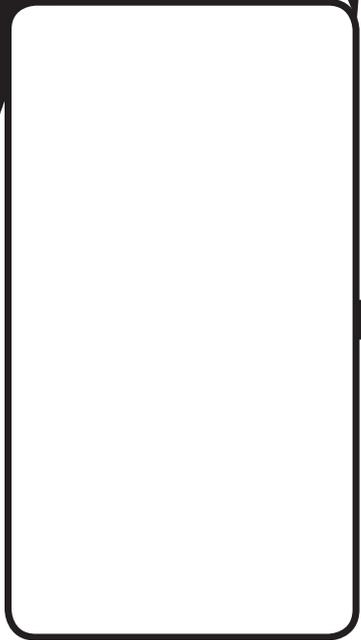
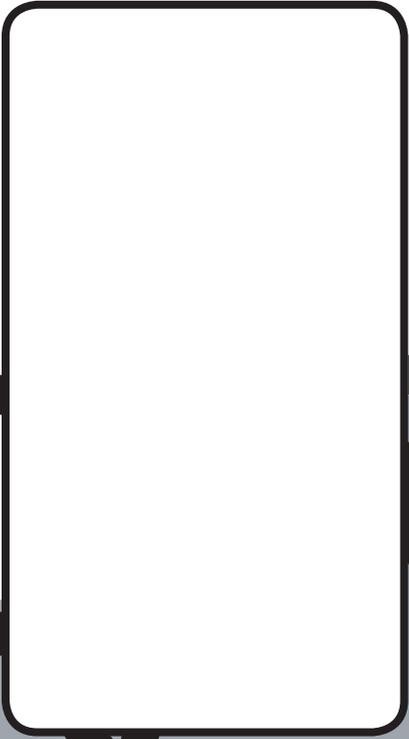
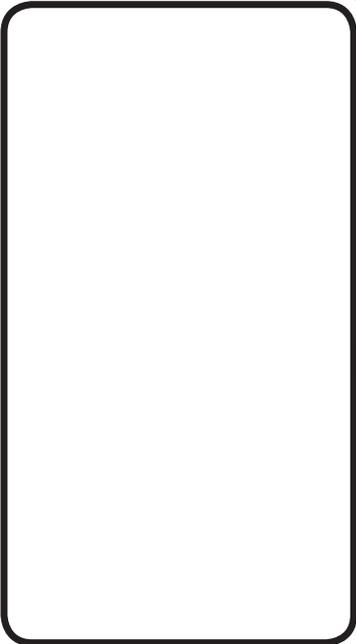
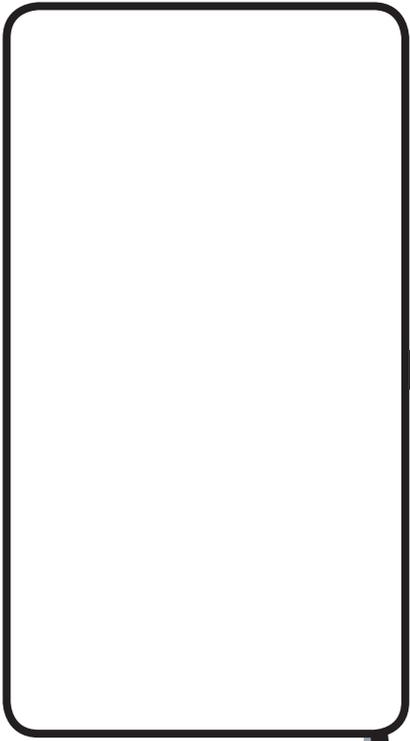
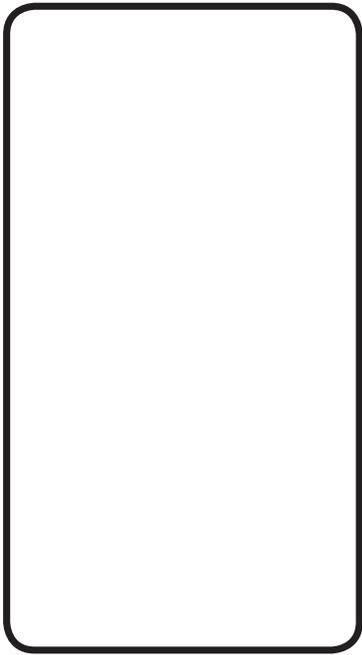


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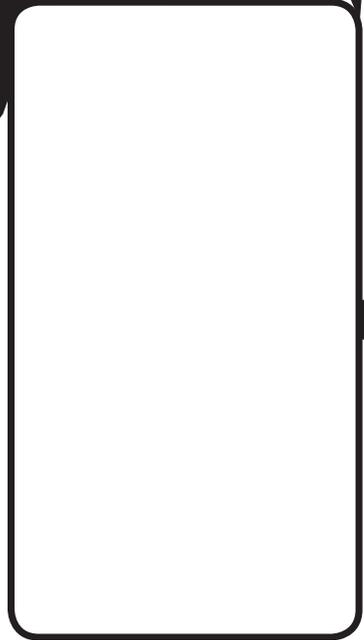
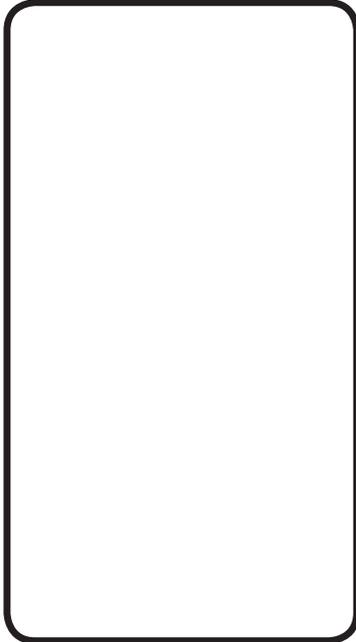
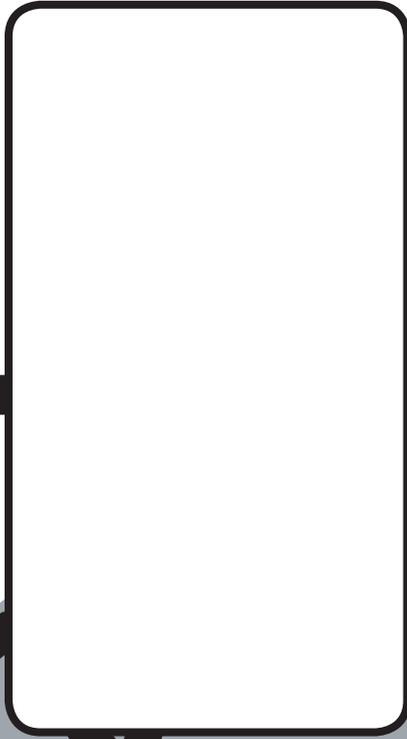
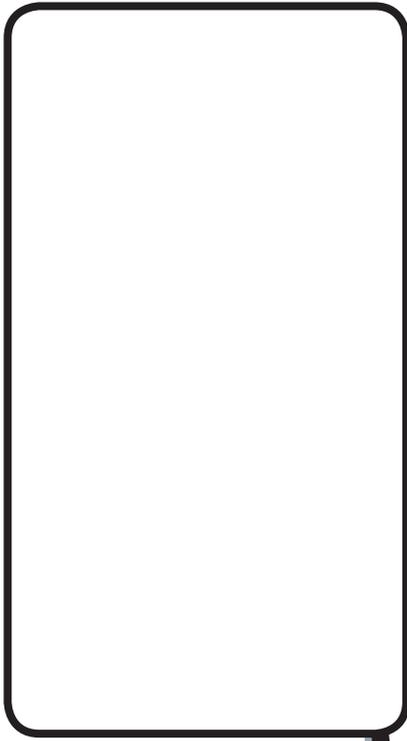
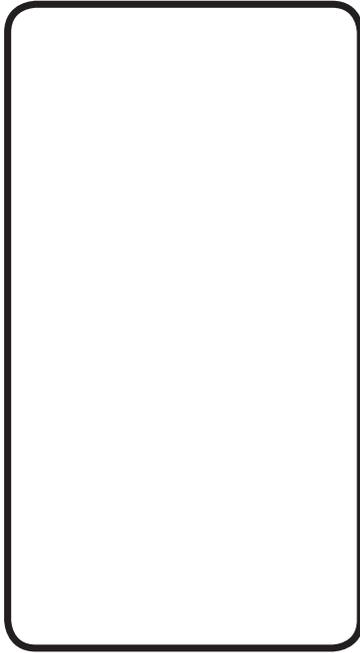
1. “ _____ how much you _____ until they _____ how much you _____.” – Theodore Roosevelt
2. Ask for _____ before answering.
3. _____ and plainly, _____.
4. _____ values _____ skills, _____ and _____ for consumers.
5. Have _____, not _____.
6. Make your _____ and _____.
7. _____ the _____ about it and _____.
8. _____ to what you _____ and _____ a _____.
9. _____ your personal _____ and _____.
10. _____ is greater than _____ the _____.



Consumer Interaction Tips Road Trip



Consumer Interaction Tips Road Trip



Conversation with EASE



An overview on how to join the conversation about the food you produce

Purpose of USFRA's Conversation Movement

Conversations about how food is produced are happening. But the voices of farmers and ranchers have been less than representative in the conversation about food production.

Engaging in a conversation about food production – rather than defending food production – helps farmers and ranchers understand what consumers want and helps consumers learn more about how food is produced from the people who actually produce it.

By listening to their questions, engaging in conversation and talking about how we continually improve what we do on our farms and ranches, we learn from each other's perspectives. In the end, we all have an interest in food.



Talk is not cheap. Conversation is a powerful tool.

It can change opinions. It can enlighten. Productive conversation can be done with **E-A-S-E!**

ENGAGE	ACKNOWLEDGE	SHARE	EARN TRUST
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >> Start the conversation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >> Acknowledge peoples' questions and concerns >> <i>"I can understand why you're concerned about that. At our farm..."</i> >> Avoid defensive positions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >> Talk about meaningful details about how you grow food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >> Make it clear that you want to earn their trust >> If you don't trust someone, you don't trust their facts

ENGAGE

Look for a connection, such as

- >> Selecting/buying food
- >> Flying to the same town
- >> Reading a book or magazine
- >> Visiting a farmers market



ACKNOWLEDGE

Acknowledge that your audience has questions and concerns, even if they are not the same as your own.

- >> Consumers are not necessarily criticizing farmers and ranchers
- >> They may not know what happens in the food supply

Old arguments fall flat.

YOU SAY:	THEY HEAR:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >> Safe >> Affordable >> Abundant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >> <i>We don't know if pesticides, antibiotics, or hormones are safe in the long-term</i> >> <i>How? At what expense to quality?</i> >> <i>We have an abundance of food, and it's part of America's health problems</i>

SHARE

You are always improving, and consumers are inspired by what you do. Share examples of continuous improvement.

Don't	Do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >> Communicate as if everything all farmers and ranchers do is 100% perfect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >> Acknowledge that there is always room for improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >> Talk about producing MORE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >> Talk about using less: less land, water and resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >> Focus on improvements your audience isn't asking about (safety, affordability, abundance, feeding the world) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >> Tailor your examples to address their real concerns

EARN TRUST

This is about trust. If you don't trust someone, you don't trust their facts. Trust is cultivated when you **E**ngage, **A**cknowledge, **S**hare to **E**arn trust.

What is a Gateway Message?

USFRA is about conversation. USFRA advocates an approach rather than a message. All points of views are welcomed. Listening to others and sharing your story around continuous improvement are the pillars of USFRA's approach.

Yet, the research shows there are persistent questions being asked by consumers. By having a conversation about these questions rather than a debate about whose beliefs or facts are right, we can better understand consumers and consumers can better understand us, the growers of their food.

TOP CONSUMER PRIORITIES



To the extent you have concerns about the methods conventional farmers and ranchers use, what concerns you most?

	Total
– Unintended long-term health effects	37%
– Poor treatment of animals	23%
– Environmental harm	12%
– Unintended short-term health effects	11%
– None of these really concerns me	17%

ml+p, October 2011, n=1,400

USFRA believes there are gateway messages that create a productive conversation around these questions – a conversation in which understanding can be achieved.

Gateway messages provide a starting point to discuss food production in a meaningful way with consumers. Think of the gateway message literally as a gate you pass through to have a conversation about your farm or ranch and what you do to produce healthy food for all.

Top Ways to Communicate Gateway Messages

Here are a few overarching keys to a productive conversation:

1. **Acknowledging concerns with open-minds.** Concerns are real. They are not right or wrong. You don't have to agree, but you do need to acknowledge concerns exist. Some examples: "I understand your concern ..." "I can see why you feel that way ..." "A lot of people have that same question ..."
2. **Talk about what concerns consumers ... not what you want to talk about.** We need to know more about what they're asking, so we can know how to answer them.
3. **Don't refute with facts alone.** Addressing a concern with a refuting set of facts just dismisses the concern and does nothing to open a conversation. Everyone has their own set of facts. If you don't trust food production, you don't trust its facts. The goal of conversation is to achieve understanding about each other.
4. **Turn off your defense.** This is not personal. It's about the food we eat, not the people who grow it. Always approach every conversation – even the ones that feel like an attack – as an opportunity to share your story.
5. **Don't claim to be 100 percent right.** Who is? Farmers and ranchers don't always get it right, but we do get better. Share your story about how you have 'gotten better' on your operation.
6. **Talk about using less instead of producing more.** Less is the flip-side of more and in many of these cases, consumers are more receptive to hearing it this way. We use less resources and still produce healthy food for all is a gateway message to your farm or ranch story that addresses many concerns.



Fundamentally, what consumers are asking: what are the long-term implications on my health of what you are doing to raise my food?

Address each of the concerns flagged in the research (pesticides, GMOs, antibiotics/ hormones, environmental impact, animal welfare). We're looking here to provide "bridge message direction" not "message answers". Here is an example of how this works:

Consumer Question	+	Gateway Messages	+	Your Story	=	Productive Conversation
CONSUMER QUESTION		GATEWAY MESSAGES		YOUR STORY		
>> What about antibiotic use?	>>	It's about caring for animals so they live healthier lives (preventing animals from getting sick/providing care when they need it)		<p><i>You fill this out with your own stories and experiences in these areas. The point is that consumers want to hear from YOU in your OWN WORDS and with your OWN VOICE.</i></p>		
>> What about the use of hormones?	>>	It's about helping animals maintain lean muscle growth				
>> What about biotech seeds?	>>	Using biotech seeds helps develop stronger, more resilient crops				
>> What about animal welfare or "factory farms"?	>>	Is it fair to characterize all large farms as "factory farms" that abuse animals?				
>> What about fertilizer use?	>>	It is beneficial to farmers to nurture crops with the nutrients they need to grow				
>> What about sustainable agriculture?	>>	We've seen drastic increases in the past several years, but those increases don't mean anything unless we continue to build on them and become more sustainable				

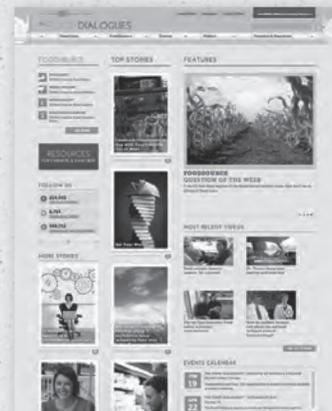
Join the conversation today

Start a conversation about farming and ranching. Go online to **FoodDialogues.com**, **facebook.com/USFarmersandRanchers**, or add **#FoodD** to your tweets.

Or start a conversation where you are: at the grocery store, at the airport, at a sporting event or on your personal blog or facebook page.

To contact us regarding additional feedback about this, email **info@FoodDialogues.com**.

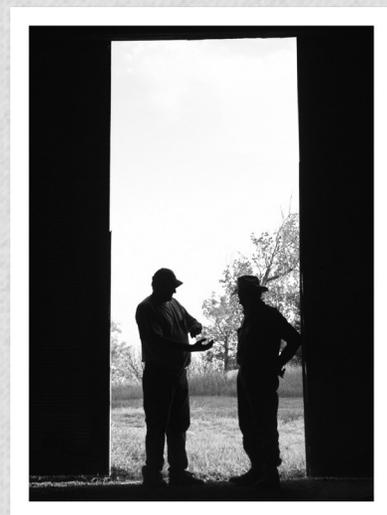
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www.FoodDialogues.com
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PUTTING IT TO WORK

We found that farmers and ranchers are not always comfortable speaking out. Consumer Food Connectors are not always interested in listening. So how do we put this new research to work?

Create something compelling featuring certain farmers that attracts wider attention



THINK V-I-S-U-A-L

V

Videos and images

I

"I" is for the consumer—what's in it for ME and what's in MY food

S

Storytelling and entertainment, not messages

U

Uncover cool technologies on farms

A

Authentic, real farmers and ranchers

L

Look for neutral, honest brokers to answer questions and tell stories

It's about visual and video. It's about entertaining and storytelling, now messaging. It's about using honest brokers to help tell the story. It's about real stories on technologies and real farmer challenges.

To find out more or for help with consumer-focused programming, contact USFRA at info@FoodDialogues.com or call 636-449-5086.



ABOUT USFRA

U.S. Farmers & Ranchers Alliance (USFRA) consists of more than 80 farmer – and rancher-led organizations and agricultural partners representing virtually all aspects of agriculture, working to engage in dialogue with Consumer Food Connectors who have questions about how today's food is grown and raised. USFRA is committed to continuous improvement and supporting U.S. farmers and ranchers efforts to increase confidence and trust in today's agriculture.

Reflection and Application

How to Deal with Agriculture Skeptics

What was my number one take away from this session?

How can my chapter utilize this information to further develop our Program of Activities:

To help develop students' leadership skills, personal growth or career success?

To help enhance our chapter events, activities or outreach?

To help give back, educate and connect with our community?
