WE’RE CELEBRATING!

PLUS
“HIGHEST IMPACT” LOGO
GETTING SOCIAL
ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES
CELEBRATE SUCCESS

News that a national consumer survey by the Hartman Group—a leading authority on demand-side trends in the food industry—found that the Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW logo has the highest impact on consumer purchasing among any contemporary food certification label (see opposite) comes at a very special time. 2018 marks the year that we are also celebrating the many farmers and ranchers who embark on their 10th year of certification.

From humbling beginnings, Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW has rapidly grown to become North America’s most “highly meaningful” food label for farm animal welfare, outdoor access and sustainability, according to respected Consumer Reports. At a time when greenwashing is resulting in ever-greater steadfast commitment to robust farm standards and certification integrity—while remaining practical and achievable to most farmers and ranchers out there—is resulting in ever-greater levels of consumer recognition and trust.

Of course, none of this would be possible without the many farmers and ranchers with whom we work. They manage more than 3 million acres across 42 U.S. states and four Canadian provinces, and who are quite literally making our vision of a sustainable future a reality. So we’re using this issue to celebrate some of those who first certified back in 2008. It has been fascinating to find out how they feel the market has changed over the last decade; how our trusted farm certification has helped communicate the benefits of their farming practices to customers; and how they see the future unfolding. I want to take this opportunity to thank them for their dedication to high-welfare, sustainable management, as well as their work to raise awareness about the program. We wish them all continued success.

To reiterate the message from our Communications and Outreach Director, Emily Moore (see opposite), now is the time to make the most of your hard-earned logo. Use it on your website and marketing materials. Take advantage of our free label design service, worth hundreds of dollars alone. Order a new farm gate sign or vinyl banner for your market stall. With 77 percent of consumers saying they are “much/somewhat more likely to purchase” after seeing the logo on a product, it really is a no-brainer.

The Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW label has the highest impact on consumer purchasing behavior of any food certification label, according to a new report by The Hartman Group, a leading international food and beverage market research company. Since 2010, the Hartman Group has analyzed how consumers understand, prioritize and connect with the concept of sustainability (personal, social, environmental and economical), exploring differences between consumer demand for and actual purchasing of sustainable products.

Hartman’s latest Sustainability 2017 report analyzes consumer responses to 23 of the most common claims, certifications and seals found on food and beverage packaging. A nationally representative survey, carried out in summer 2017, reveals that 36 percent of consumers are familiar with the Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW logo, and a significant majority (77 percent) say they are “much/somewhat more likely to purchase” after seeing it on a product, making it the food label with the highest impact on consumer purchasing.

“Today’s consumers want to make better purchase decisions, and to do this they want to be better informed. They want to know ‘what’s inside’ before they buy,” according to the new report. Third-party certifications are key for engaged sustainability consumers, who look primarily for seals showing organic, fair-trade and non-GMO, and indicating animal welfare.”

“We’re thrilled with the results. It shows that when consumers see the Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW label, they buy it,” says Emily Moore, AGW’s Director of Communication and Outreach. “The Hartman Group’s statistics validate what we’ve been seeing anecdotally: consumers are increasingly hungry for reliable information about sustainability, and trusted third-party certifications now play a key role in their purchasing decisions. We’re proud to be a home for labels that meet consumer expectations and ensure the viability of high-welfare, sustainable farms.”

“If you’re not already proudly displaying your hard-earned AGW logos on your food packaging, websites and other marketing materials, now is the time to make it happen! For a range of branded promotional materials and can even help design new product labeling—just get in touch and we’ll be glad to help.”

Professional labeling support and merchandise is available to certified farmers and ranchers, as well as businesses selling certified products. Contact your regional Farmer and Market Outreach Coordinator (see page 20) for more information. For full details of AGW’s promotional materials, visit animalwelfareapproved.us/merchandise.

IN THE NEWS...

OBESITY COSTS

Obesity rates have risen dramatically in the U.S., driving up healthcare costs by 29 percent since 2001. A new Cornell University study found the overall percentage of U.S. national medical expenditures devoted to treating obesity-related illness in adults rose from 6.13 percent in 2001 to 7.9 percent in 2016, an increase of 29 percent. North Carolina, Ohio and Wisconsin now spend over 12 percent of all health care dollars on taking care of people with complications from obesity.

FARMERS FUNDED

Seven farmers received Fund-a-Farmer Grants from the Food Animal Concerns Trust (FACT) to help them become Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW. They were among nine independent farmers in 19 states across the U.S. to be awarded grants ranging from $374 to $2,500 from FACT, a national nonprofit that promotes the safe and high-welfare production of meat, milk and eggs. A total of $66,000 grants were awarded this year for projects that improve farm animal welfare. Visit foodanimalconcernstrust.org/farmer.

FARMER OF THE YEAR

Ronald Simmons of Master Blend Family Farms was recently named 2018 Small Farmer of the Year by North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University. Simmons owns Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW pigs outdoors on pasture at 30-acre Master Blend Family Farms, near Kenansville, NC. Simmons accepted the award (left) with his wife, Laurita, and thanked his family and team of workers for their support and dedication. Congratulations to the Master Blend Family Farms team!

STANDARDS UPDATE

The 2018 Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW standards are now available online, following the recent annual review process. Key changes include the acceptance of rubber noots as bedding in free stalls for dairy cows, provided cow comfort and welfare can be demonstrated using the AssureWell welfare outcome assessment protocol. AGW’s auditors will apply the new standards in the coming months. Thank you again to everyone who contributed to the standards review consultation. Visit animalwelfareapproved.us/Standards.

NEW REPORT

The AGW Food Label has highest impact on purchasing

New report confirms AGW’s food label has highest impact on purchasing

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Visit agreenerworld.org/blog

Read our blog at

agreenerworld.org

For full details of AGW’s promotional materials, visit animalwelfareapproved.us/merchandise.
GRASSFED DAIRY HEALTH BENEFITS

Cows fed a 100 percent grass and legume-based diet produce nutritionally enhanced milk, according to new research published in the Food Science and Nutrition journal.

In a collaborative international project involving the University of Minnesota, Johns Hopkins University, Newcastle University in England, Southern Cross University in Australia and the Aarhus University Hospital in Denmark, researchers found that cows fed a 100 percent grass and legume-based diet produce milk with elevated levels of omega-3 and CLA, providing a healthier balance of fatty acids.

The improved fatty acid profile in grassfed milk and dairy products brings the omega-6/omega-3 ratio to a near 1 to 1, compared to 5.7 to 1 in conventional whole milk.

Omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids are essential human nutrients, yet consuming too much omega-6 and too little omega-3 can increase the risk of cardiovascular disease, obesity and diabetes. Today, Americans consume 10 to 15 grams of omega-6 for every gram of omega-3.

“The nearly-perfect balance of omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids in grassmilk dairy products will help consumers looking for simple, lifestyle options to reduce the risk of cardiovascular and other metabolic diseases,” says co-author Charles Benbrook, a Visiting Scholar at the Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University. The team analyzed over 1,160 samples of whole grassmilk taken over three years from on-farm bulk tanks prior to any processing.

Employees at Weaver Street Market in North Carolina learned about the confusing food label landscape—and the benefits of AGW’s food certifications—at a dedicated AGW training day in late February.

Emily Morse, AGW’s Director of Communication and Outreach, was joined by Jeremiah Jones, President of Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW and Certified Non-GMO by AGW North Carolina Natural Hog Growers Association, Sam Suchoff, producer of Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW Lady Edison products and Sarah Blackin of NC Choices, to present to staff from Weaver Street Market’s three stores. Topics included a review of common food label terms and claims, and the benefits of third-party, independent certification and production practices.

“Weaver Street Market offers a number of AGW-certified products, and is really walking the walk when it comes to sustainability and transparency in retail,” says Emily Morse. “We were thrilled to be invited to talk about how to best position these products in the market—and encourage product sales. We look forward to more!”

If you are interested in similar in-store training opportunities, contact your Farmer and Market Outreach Coordinator (see page 20).

FREE LAND TRANSFER ADVICE

Farmers and landowners can now affordably access, transfer and conserve farmland, thanks to a new free online resource from the Center for Agriculture and Food Systems at Vermont Law School. The FarmLand Access Legal Toolkit is a user-friendly guide for farmers seeking to transition land to another farmer as part of estate planning or for other reasons. The toolkit explains legal arrangements with innovative models of ownership, leasing and estate planning that have worked for other farmers. farmlandaccess.org

RETAIL STAFF TRAINING SUCCESS

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GOOD FOOD AWARDS

Four Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW products won top honors at the eighth annual Good Food Awards, held at the historic San Francisco War Memorial in January.

American Pig’s Picante Salami made with certified pork from Hickory Nut Gap Farm in Fairview, NC, and Sweet Sopressata and Spanish Chorizo made by Lady Edison featuring certified pork from the North Carolina Natural Hog Growers Association won an award in the Charcuterie category, while Green Dirt Farm in Weston, MO, won in the Cheese category for their Prairie Tomme certified sheep’s milk cheese.

This year’s finalists were selected in a blind tasting of 2,057 entries from across the U.S. and also passed a rigorous vetting to confirm they met Good Food Awards standards regarding supply chain transparency, environmentally sound agricultural practices, animal welfare and deep community engagement. Congratulations to all goodfoodawards.org

CAPTIVE CONTRACTS

Farmers raising poultry under industry contracts do not run their own farm business, according to a new report from the Office of the Inspector General (OIG).

The OIG evaluated whether loans from the Small Business Administration (SBA)—a U.S. government agency that provides support to small businesses—were granted correctly to contract poultry growers. The report states that poultry corporations like Tyson, Pilgrim’s Pride and Perdue “exercised such comprehensive control over the growers” that the farm businesses were simply “affiliates” of industry.

As a result, the OIG concludes, “the SBA guaranteed circa $1.8 billion in loans that may be ineligible” and casts doubt on future loans.

“The poultry industry frequently touts its family farm production credentials, but the reality is that contract farmers and their families often end up as veritable indentured servants,” says Andrew Gunther, AGW’s Executive Director. “While official recognition of their terrible predicament is welcome, the concern is it could leave many farmers with limited options.”

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) officially announced the withdrawal of the Organic Livestock and Poultry Practices (OLPP) final rule on March 12.

“While official recognition of their terrible predicament is welcome, the concern is it could leave many farmers with limited options.”

The decision will hurt thousands of independent farmers who reflect the original spirit of the organic standards, disenchant consumers and damage the organic industry as a whole—perhaps irreparably,” says Andrew Gunther, AGW’s Executive Director. “The only real beneficiaries are the corporations and industrial producers who enjoy a market premium being certified Organic while doing all they can to bend and dilute the organic rules.”

“Producers going beyond the depressingly low baseline of U.S. Organic standards will continue to need an additional third-party certification to demonstrate high-welfare practices.”

USDA DROPS ORGANIC WELFARE RULE

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“While official recognition of their terrible predicament is welcome, the concern is it could leave many farmers with limited options.”

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Eat meat from people whose hands you can shake and whose ranches you can visit. This was the key takeaway from a recent Civil Eats OpEd, written by Ariel Greenwood, grazing manager at Freestone Ranch in the San Francisco Bay area. Greenwood beautifully outlines all the hard work they put in at the ranch to raise their cattle right and protect the local—and global—environment. But at the crux of her argument is a criticism of recent campaigns by some environmental groups to “eat less meat.” This messaging not only incorrectly brands all meat the same, she argues, but also misses an opportunity to explain to consumers that there are ways to produce meat that actually benefit the planet.

At AGW, we couldn’t agree more. But Greenwood’s advice to consumers to “eat meat from people whose hands you can shake and whose ranches you can visit” raises a number of concerns. Reconnecting farmers and eaters is one of AGW’s core goals. But is it realistic to expect every consumer to have the time and ability to visit every farm they eat food from? No. Most Americans are struggling to put food on the table; many work two or more jobs. They are both time and cash poor, and shop accordingly. Over 80 percent of Americans also live in urban areas. Expecting everyone to visit farms (or farmers’ markets) is unrealistic and, frankly, comes across as rather elitist. Like it or not, the supermarket is still king—at least for the time being.

Likewise, most farmers and ranchers just aren’t in the position to sell direct to consumers. Even if they wanted to (and many don’t!), most don’t have the urban centers on their doorstep, let alone the skills, time, training, extra staff and capital necessary for success in the direct-sale marketing models. Again, it is simply not a realistic solution.

Second, even if the average consumer could visit the farm, would they really have the necessary expertise to assess the livestock management practices, or what is being done to protect or enhance the environment? Absolutely not. This is not to say that consumers aren’t smart—it’s just that farming is far more complex than many give it credit for.

Assessing grazing management and farmland biodiversity or identifying the use of hormones or non-therapeutic antibiotics, mutilations and long-term confinement is not something that can be accomplished during a family walk around the farm on a summer’s day. Agriculture requires as much expertise, critical thinking and knowledge as any other high-level profession: No one would assume they could walk into an operating room or a mechanic’s shop and assess the work being done. So why do we assume this of agriculture? Is it because society chronically undervalues the role and expertise of farmers today?

Third, while I have no reason to doubt that Freestone Ranch is being managed how they claim, “sustainable” means very different things to different people. And, as with any business sector, a tiny minority of farmers (and companies marketing their products) will inevitably cut corners or look to make a quick buck by mislabeling the food they produce.

So what is the answer? Knowing your farmer and buying direct is a great thing, but it won’t deliver agricultural sustainability at a system level, nor at scale. As a movement, we have to think bigger.

Can we really expect consumers to shake every farmer’s hand, asks Peter Mundy?

LOOKING FOR A STANDOUT LABEL?

Our labeling team can help you create a high-impact design that complies with all relevant food labeling guidelines. Available FREE OF CHARGE* to farmers, ranchers and food businesses through A Greener World.

*For food producers and businesses in the AGW certification family.

Peter Mundy is Group Writer/Editor for A Greener World.
From humble beginnings in 2008, Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW is now the leading animal welfare and sustainability label across North America. A recent report from the influential Hartman Group, a leading food and beverage market research company, reveals the Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW label now has the highest impact on consumer purchasing behavior of any current food certification label (see page 3). Yet none of this would be possible without the farmers and ranchers who sit at the very heart of A Greener World. This article is a celebration of the many farmers and ranchers who, in 2018, embark on their 10th year of certification.

**ALBERT D. JONES FARM**
Chinquapin, NC

With over 50 years in the business, Albert “A.D.” Jones is an experienced pastured pig farmer. Like others farmers featured in this article, A.D. first became certified back in 2008 as a member of the North Carolina Natural Hog Growers Association (NCNHA).

“Farming has changed a lot since we started. But the market has changed for the better over the last decade, particularly since we joined the NCHGA,” says A.D and his wife, Judy. “People want food that is produced more naturally, without GMOs and the like. And more farmers are becoming cognizant of the fact that what you put into hogs will ultimately affect the health of people who eat them. That’s a good thing.”

**STUART FAMILY FARM**
Bridgewater, CT

Stuart Family Farm is a fourth-generation farm, specializing in the production of grassfed beef cattle. Bill and Deb Stuart (pictured) and their family raise around 250 Red Angus beef cattle on the 800-acre farm. The farm has been certified since 2008, after the family searched for a trusted farm certification that shared the family’s core values for the high-welfare, sustainable management of farm animals. In 2016, Stuart Family Farm also became the first farm in Connecticut to be Certified Grassfed by AGW for beef cattle.

The Stuarts sell Certified Grassfed by AGW beef through their retail farm store, and to several well-known retail outlets and local restaurants: “I think consumer demand for food that meets high animal welfare standards has overtaken all other criteria,” Bill says. “At the beginning it was ‘local,’ then it was ‘local and grassfed.’ Now our customers ask about our animal welfare certification and it is at the forefront of our business.”

“The majority of wholesale clients also express to us that their biggest concern when purchasing meat is if the animal was humanely raised and how well the animal was treated on the slaughter end. It is one thing to tell them ourselves, but to have this trusted certification to back it up is huge.”

**KEEPERS OF THE FLAME**

Join us in celebrating many of the farmers and ranchers across North America who embark on their 10th year of certification!
RARE EARTH FARMS
Raleigh, NC - rareearthfarms.com

Karl Hudson and Mann Mullen own and operate Rare Earth Farms, LLC. The farm raises AGW beef cattle and Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW pig operation. They manage around 100 Angus cross cattle and Ossabaw Island pigs, ideally suited for pastured systems.

Karl and Mann originally chose to pursue farm certification back in 2008, gaining Certified Grassfed as AGW status for their cattle in 2015. "Being Certified Grassfed by AGW provides a level of consumer trust that we could not achieve through other programs," Karl explains. "Not long ago, a woman walked up to me, looked me straight in the eye, and said, 'the only reason I buy through other programs," Karl explains. "Not long ago, a woman walked up to me, looked me straight in the eye, and said, 'the only reason I buy through other programs.'"

"The market has really changed for the better over the last 10 years... our certification is the one thing that stands out!" Mary and Nelson James, Dogwood Nursery Farms

GREEN DIRT FARM
Weston, MO - greendirtfarm.com

Sarah Hoffmann and her team raise Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW dairy sheep and extensive knowledge about livestock farming and, from a young age, Fred got involved with all aspects of raising animals. Learning through hands-on experience gave Fred the skills, confidence and inspiration to farm himself.

Today, Fred raises Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW pigs outdoors on pasture at Dobson Farm near Magnolia in Duplin County, approximately 55 miles east of Fayetteville.

"Over the years, the outreach team has been people who find me on the AGW website and then contact me about my products." Chris Wilson (pictured above) and family raise Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW sheep and laying hens at Clover Creek Farm, set in the hills of northeast Tennessee. Her extensive farming experience, combined with a keen interest in sustainable agriculture, has made Chris a respected leader in the field. In 1999, Chris was named Conservation Farmer of the Year in Washington County—the only woman to ever receive the title. "With the Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW label, people know how the product was produced, and that sets you apart," says Chris. "I’m proud of how I farm and I want my customers to recognize that I’ve gone that extra mile."

"Over the years, the outreach team has been really effective. Their work to encourage people to buy certified products is great. I’ve had a lot of people who find me on the AGW website and then contact me about my products."

GRASSROOTS PORK CO.
Beulaville, NC

Jeremiah and Jessica Jones raise Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW and Certified Non-GMO by AGW pigs and Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW laying hens.

Jeremiah (above) is also president of the North Carolina Natural Hog Growers Association (NCHNHA), established in 2007 when a group of hog farmers pooled their resources to build new markets for their pork. In 2009, the NCHNHA made third-party farm certification a requirement for all members to communicate their high-welfare and environmental management practices to customers. Today, NCHNHA farmers collectively manage Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW and Certified Non-GMO by AGW hogs on 4,000 acres, supplying restaurants, regional Whole Foods Markets and retail outlets across North Carolina—and beyond.

"AGW’s certifications offer a way to add value to group marketing efforts," says Jeremiah. "We can assure potential customers that every NCHNHA pig is raised outdoors on pasture or range without subtherapeutic antibiotics, beta-agonist growth promoters or GMOs. It gives our customers real proof of what they’re buying.

"Being certified gives us the credibility that our customers demand... a level of consumer trust we could not achieve through other programs" Karl Hudson, Rare Earth Farms

"The market for us has really changed for the better over the last 10 years." Mary and Nelson say. "Before we got involved with Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW and the NCHNHA, we were selling on the open market. Things have improved tremendously. Our certification has helped more than 10 years to match production with demand. Customers ask more questions about what’s in their food and how it was produced. Our certification is the one thing that stands out!"

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

HIGHS MEADOWS FARM
Delhi, NY - highmeadowssuffolksonline.com

Nestled near the Catskill Mountains, High Meadows Farm was the first farm in New York to become certified. Owners John and Laura Hussy have long been devoted to conserving rare and endangered livestock breeds. Working with livestock manager, Ann Van Arsdale, and co-worker, James Hodges, the Husses raise registered Tamworth pigs and are a certified source farm for breeding pigs, selling to other farms.

"We started out with our first Tamworths in 1994," Ann (pictured above) explains. "Today, we have between 15-18 sows at any given time."

"We sell the piglets from spring through autumn, with a list of regular customers. Most customers use outdoor, sustainable and high-welfare practices. There seems to be more and more people starting up with pigs and doing it in a small, sustainable farm setting," Ann adds.

BROOKLYN FAMILY FARMS
Yanceyville, NC - baldwinbeef.com

Growing up in Durham County, V. Mac Baldwin’s life-long interest in livestock began when he purchased his first calf at just 10 years old. Today, V. Mac and his wife, Peggy, raise Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW beef cattle at 1,000-acre Baldwin Family Farms, where they have been farming for nearly 40 years.

The Baldwins originally started as cattle breeders, but began raising beef “quite by accident” when they decided to market surplus stock themselves to local customers. Baldwin Family Farms high-quality beef is now available in many area retail outlets—including Kroger stores.

In 2008, the Baldwins first began to notice a growing concern about the high welfare management of farm animals among their customers: “Over recent years we’ve seen a real awakening among consumers. It seems like the awakening among consumers. It seems like the" public has rediscovered the farmer again.”

“You would not believe how many emails and calls we get regarding how the animals are treated. Our AGW logo is prominent on our packaging, front and back. I tell everybody ‘this is the gold standard for animal welfare and production.’”

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

DOUGWOOD NURSERY FARMS
Maple Hill, NC

“Being certified gives us the credibility that our customers demand... a level of consumer trust we could not achieve through other programs” Karl Hudson, Rare Earth Farms

"As the only label that guarantees pasture-based pig production: “From the start, I have been very particular about my farm practices, especially the safety and welfare of my animals,” he explains, and originally decided to pursue third-party certification for his pigs back in 2008. Fred feels his AGW certification offers customers the assurance that he adheres to the highest animal welfare standards in his farm management and practices—standards that promote the health of animals, humans, and the wider environment.

"The market for us has really changed for the better over the last 10 years... our certification is the one thing that stands out!" Mary and Nelson James, Dogwood Nursery Farms

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

DOBSON FARM
Magnolia, NC

Fred Dobson was born and raised on a working farm. His family has had extensive knowledge about livestock farming and, from a young age, Fred got involved with all aspects of raising animals. Learning through hands-on experience gave Fred the skills, confidence and inspiration to farm himself.

Today, Fred raises Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW pigs outdoors on pasture at Dobson Farm near Magnolia in Duplin County, approximately 55 miles east of Fayetteville.

"Over the years, the outreach team has been really effective. Their work to encourage people to buy certified products is great. I’ve had a lot of people who find me on the AGW website and then contact me about my products."
Selling direct? If you’re not using social media yet, you should be, says Stephanie Vanlochem

An online presence is now a necessity for most farming and food businesses. But it’s not just about having a website. Social media is a vital part of any communications and marketing strategy—particularly for those selling directly to the consumer.

Why social media? A basic website will allow customers to easily find you online, but it has its limitations. Customers can visit your website, look at it and leave—and then promptly forget about you. Unless you spend a lot of time updating your website with new content or dynamic features, there’s no reason for anyone to keep coming back.

Social media is very different. Social media is an umbrella term for a number of online tools or platforms that allow people to stay in regular touch with each other and share information, like photographs, news or ideas. These platforms are far more dynamic and interactive than a basic website: they are (quite literally) like conversations.

Unlike basic websites, social media platforms allow businesses of all shapes and sizes to communicate directly and continuously with new and existing customers. Customers can choose to ‘follow’ your business, enabling you to provide them with interesting, up-to-date information about what you are doing or the products and services you offer, as well as reinforcing the values you share. What’s more, you can do this for free—at its most basic, the only cost is your time.

The most popular social media platforms include Facebook and Instagram, the focus of this article. But there are many more, such as Twitter and LinkedIn.

What to post

It sounds crazy, but almost everything you do on a day-to-day basis will be of interest to your customers. Customers don’t just want to buy your products: they want to learn about life on your farm; they want to feel part of it all.

Spend a few minutes listing the basic daily management tasks you do, as well as notable seasonal events like lambing or farrowing or letting cows out after winter. You’ll be amazed at the range of things you do! Posting photos of simple acts like feeding cattle, cutting and loading hay, cleaning and packing eggs, fixing the tractor or even updating farm records for your upcoming audit (!) will prove fascinating, while shots of your family or team will bring a human element to your social media pages. Remember to briefly explain what’s going on in the photos to inspire, educate and inform—and encourage conversation.

What makes your farm stand out among others? Customers want to know why supporting you is better for the environment, for animals and for their health. So regularly highlight your high-welfare, sustainable farming practices and promote your AGW certification. You don’t have to put down other farms to be proud of what you do. Explain why AGW certification matters and what’s involved. Make sure your AGW logos are displayed prominently on products and social media pages.

Finally, you want social media to help sell your products, but don’t overdo it. Remind people once a week where they can buy your products, dates of upcoming farmers’ markets or any special offers and so on. Promote and ‘tag’ stores that stock your products on social media—and make sure you follow their social media pages, too.

Create your narrative

Social media is also about setting a ‘narrative’ for your business and building a sense of community among followers. Sharing information from other (credible) sources will help reinforce the values you and your customers share. Take time out to look at Facebook posts from other farms, businesses and organizations, such as A Greener World, and share their posts—they will usually reciprocate.

Look out for interesting news articles that support what you are doing, such as positive media about the benefits of pasture-based farming. However, try to avoid purveyors of ‘fake’ news. Reports that make sensationalist or unsubstantiated claims are best avoided, as they may undermine your credibility among customers. Similarly, you should consider setting up separate personal and farm social media accounts to avoid potential problems.

As often happens with new technology, ethical and regulatory frameworks have struggled to incorporate social media. Free services typically monetize their product by selling ads and/or personal data, so it’s a good idea to familiarize yourself with privacy and advertising policies.

Facebook

With 1.32 billion active global users, Facebook is the most widely used social platform—and by a large margin! If you’re just starting out, or only want to focus on one social media platform, choose Facebook.

Facebook provides your customers with a detailed, image-led profile of your business (with full contact details) and a ‘timeline’ to upload (or post) regular content that will inform, educate and entertain followers. You can easily create and upload content, such as where to buy your products or add farm photos, from a phone app, tablet or computer at any time. Facebook also offers the potential to create highly specific and localized advertisements to fit any budget.

Find out more: facebook.com/business/learn/
set-up-facebook-page

Instagram

Instagram is another very popular social media platform, designed specifically for sharing visual content. Photos of farm life scenes, animals and your products are ideal for this platform. Like Facebook, you can easily upload content using a smartphone, tablet or computer. Interestingly, Instagram users also tend to be younger than Facebook users. That can be a good thing, because many younger people are highly invested in seeking out sustainable products.

Find out more: help.instagram.com

Best practice

Be consistent. Post at least 3–4 times a week. Check for customer interactions at least twice a day—and reply.

Positive image. Use high quality photos or videos. Modern camera phones are all you need to take a good photo. Include a brief explanation, where appropriate.

Vary content. Posts with a visual component get more engagement. But you can also share interesting articles or reports that highlight and support your values.

Don’t oversell. Limit hard sales to ¼ of posts. Focus on education, conversation and engagement. Sales will follow.

Stephanie Vanlochem is a content developer with an education in marketing and new media. Find @cookbycolor on FB/Instagram

Facebook

Find @cookbycolor on FB/Instagram

A Greener World

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MORE HEALTH LESS DISEASE

In a new series of articles, Jennifer L. Burton explores the world of alternative livestock therapies—and the emergence of a more “integrative” approach to animal health

Simultaneous improvement in welfare, ecological impact and economic viability for food animals requires management that supports all three. Many “alternative” approaches serve these values well. But something—above and beyond every alternative practice—is a good fit for every farm. This series of articles seeks to help you choose health care that best suits your goals, values and lifestyle.

Since prehistoric times, we’ve been learning more about how living things function, and medical diagnostics, treatments and ethics continue to evolve worldwide. Many systems of public health and medicine emerged independently, advancing in concert with societal traditions and technologies. Over time, some populations integrated knowledge from abroad, while others continued to develop methods unique to their own values.

Germ theory
Community plays a major role in determining which ideas prevail. In 1843, Dr. Ignaz Semmelweis showed that handwashing could prevent deaths following childbirth. But his antagonistic approach did not sit well with his colleagues; they in turn ignored and even sabotaged his findings. Semmelweis was ridiculed, but a few years after he died Pasteur published evidence that many diseases are caused by microorganisms (“germ theory”), and handwashing promptly became standard practice.

As germ theory gained credence, many physicians continued to support alternate or complementary views. For example, Drs. Antoine Béchamp and Max Joseph Pettenkofer suggested that an individual’s health status and environment were as important as the germs themselves. In this case, public health outcomes decided the contest: a cholera epidemic was stopped by water treatment, which Pettenkofer had previously opposed, and his theories were dismissed.

Modern medicine: art and science
Today, medical practice is regarded as both art and science. Many physicians throughout history used careful observation, testing and measurement to identify predictable patterns. From this scientific approach emerged some great jewels of western medicine, including diagnostics and emergency care.

A study measuring how white blood cells respond to different doses of a substance provides invaluable information about how that substance affects white blood cells. It doesn’t tell us how its by-products in urine affect soil microbes, what we risk by delaying other treatment, or whether you can safely administer the substance to your sick animal. Whole-system or “ecological” health practice uses good science wherever it is available, and ensures that values are addressed even when science can’t tell us how. Semmelweis’ and Pettenkofer’s stories show that information is not enough; ecological healthcare must care for people, working together with community despite differences.

To consider the entire animal, farm and planet in every health decision is a tall order. The following questions are a good place to start:

- What are the impacts of harvest or manufacture, or of any by-products on pasture or in wastewater?
- What are the effects on the animal being treated, workers and consumers?
- What are the long-term environmental and community impacts?
- What are the consequences of not treating, or of trying something else first?

Some answers will remain unknown. But even acknowledging that fact represents great strides toward ecological healthcare.

Historical traditions, modern use
Medicines can be sorted by their action in the patient, physical form or historical context. The echinacea plant fits into many categories, as it has been used for centuries on three continents. Modern science provides evidence for what users across several medical traditions historically surmised: echinacea modulates immune function.

Research has shown that it can increase white blood cell counts in horses and some poultry, and enhance disease-fighting activity of white blood cells in cattle. It increased antibody production in laying hens and improved protection when used with coccidia vaccines. In clinical trials, echinacea reduced the incidence of piglet scours and mastitis-metritis-agalactia syndrome in sows.

Feeding echinacea continuously to chickens was not beneficial in the above studies, and in recent years practitioners have recommended that it be used at times of increased stress or disease risk, but not continuously. On the few sows farms where echinacea didn’t work, the swine researchers suspect the low-quality feed and poor sanitation were to blame, but those factors were not analyzed in that study. Do you think they matter? Dr. Béchamp probably would.

Similarly, calendula tinctures and ointments have been used to treat minor wounds since at least the 12th century. Laboratory studies have identified anti-inflammatory and antibacterial activities, as well as stimulation of new tissue growth. Some immune cells create free radicals to kill bacteria; calendula’s antioxidants may further speed healing by cleaning up that debris, preventing oxidative damage.

Known as botanicals or herbs, plant-based interventions such as those described above are prominent in many medical systems. Botanical medicines can include whole plant parts, distilled essential oils, extracts in water or oil, or tinctures that also contain alcohol. Although some botanicals are believed to act differently, the effects of many are characterized in the same way as pharmaceuticals, in terms of chemical interactions. Just as two tomatoes can taste very different, plants grown or processed in different ways can have different content. The research described above examined botanicals that were “standardized” by measuring how much of an active substance was present. Many plants contain more than one active substance, and quality and dosing can vary, so work with a veterinary herbalist if possible. If that’s not realistic, ask your veterinarian to advise on dosing.

Jennifer L. Burton, DVM, is a veterinarian and educator with a special interest in the intersection of food animal medicine and public health.

In the next issue: Dr. Burton will discuss risks such as residues and herb-drug interactions, and assessments to ensure timely, appropriate treatment.

KEY TERMS
Understanding the language of integrative medicine can help you find resources and work with veterinarians. We tend to call mainstream ideas “conventional” and everything else “alternative,” but many veterinarians prefer “integrative” —in other words, using what works regardless of origin. These three H’s are commonly confused:

Holistic: considering the whole patient or whole system
Herbal: plant-based, botanical
Homeopathy: a medical system that uses specific highly diluted remedies to treat disease, on the principle “like cures like”

CALENDULA

Used topically for superficial wounds, minor burns
Toxicity risk Minimum
Interactions None reported
Residues None reported

ECHINACEA

Used orally to bolster immune function during times of stress or increased disease risk
Toxicity risk Minimum
Interactions None reported
Residues None reported

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Whatever animal species you raise, the Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW standards will require you maintain a range of different records. Records are often seen as a chore—or even a waste of time. But they’re not only important to prove compliance: they hold real value for your farm and its business, as Anna Heaton explains ...

Farm records are not just important to prove compliance. They can hold real value for your business, as Anna Heaton explains ...

A RECORD FOR SUCCESS

What’s the point of records?

We’re all human and it’s easy to forget or misremember details. We’ve all been in situations where our recollections are different from those of others who were at the same event, and when you manage the same farming cycle year after year, it’s easy for all the lambing or calving seasons to blur into one. Equally, we often remember the great things that happen—in life and on the farm—but gloss over the bad. If you’re setting targets for your farm business it’s nearly impossible to work out if you’re meeting them without records. The basics may be as simple as recording what was born and what was reared; what you have brought onto the farm and what you have sold—whether individual birds or animals (breeding stock or feeders) or livestock products, such as milk, eggs or wool. What was born and what was reared; what got sick, what got treated and what died—and if you know why. What are you feeding and how much. You might also consider recording more detailed information. For example, two sows might each have reared nine piglets. The first sow reared nine even, well-grown piglets and still looked in good condition; the second reared a more variable litter, including three runts that will take a lot of care or feed to get them to grow into something that can either be bred or sold. The more detail you record, the more informed your decision making will be.

What if I don’t keep records?

If you’re willing to start keeping records, then the Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW program is willing to work with you! Ideally, you’ll have kept farm records before you apply. But, as outlined in our standards, farmers and ranchers who join the program have 12 months from their initial audit to get all the required plans and records in place. At your initial audit, we’ll let you know what records and plans you’ll need to comply with the standards.

If you commit to ensuring any missing records or plans are in place by your next audit, you can be put forward for approval (assuming there aren’t any other compliance issues that need to be resolved first). In other words, an absence of farm records is not a reason for your initial certification to be denied. But please note: We take your commitment to provide records and plans for subsequent audits extremely seriously. Failure to have them in place can lead to suspension or, in extreme cases, termination from the program.

A useful tool

In summary, if you already keep records (or are willing to start), we’d welcome your application to the Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW program. Record keeping should not add greatly to your days’ work and, once integrated in your management, will help with future decision making, improving farm productivity—and profits.

Anna Heaton is Lead Technical Advisor with A Greener World

Is certification right for you?

Given the choice, if you had to spend an afternoon updating your farm records or to hand-fork half a ton of stinking manure out of a poorly designed chicken shed, and you immediately reach for the pitchfork, you might want to rethink whether farm certification is right for you.

Joking aside, records are not only of use to your farm business, but form an integral part of any credible farm certification program.
Choosing the right goat breed is vital for high-welfare, sustainable production

Selecting the right goat breed for the farm environment is a key element in achieving sustainable production. This relates not only to its genetic ability to produce food of the desired type, quality and quantity (milk, meat, fiber) under prevailing conditions, but whether the animal can flourish within its natural environment without undue reliance on excessive inputs or management. This includes the breeds’ ability to thrive in the climatic conditions where it is farmed, as well as the potential environmental stresses associated with the local terrain, seasonal fluctuations in feed supply and water, inherent disease risk factors and potential for predators.

Goat breeds can be broadly classified into dairy, meat or fiber breeds. (For a more comprehensive online list, search for “Oklahoma State University Goat Breeds”.) However, studies show there is a lack of genetic structure among goat breeds compared to other domestic farmed species, meaning that many main goat breeds are sufficiently flexible to be productive across a range of environments. The downside is that there can be a lot of variation within breeds, meaning a goat from a supposedly good dairy breed might not actually be a good milk producer.

Given that goats commonly have multiple births, combined with a relatively short generation interval and good heritability estimates for production and conformation traits, there are good opportunities for genetic improvements. Most large-scale breeding programs have focused on production traits (milk, protein and fat content, conformation), physical characteristics associated with breed type ( stature, rump angle, udder shape/teat position), with some consideration of adaptation to the local environmental conditions and availability of feed resources. In some countries, consideration is increasingly given to functional traits that influence health and welfare, such as somatic cell counts, as well as achieving sustainability through selection for more efficient use of natural browsing and grazing.

Research also suggests some goat breeds are more resistant or resilient to gastro-intestinal parasites, and the impact of parasite burden on milk production is greater among breeds selected for yield, compared with those considered rustic or indigenous. However, it is unclear whether tolerance is associated with a genetic resistance or differences in production potential, as the level of milk production in dairy goats may influence the resistance and/or resilience to parasitism.

Article adapted from Farm Health Online. For more information about practical, science-based advice on high-welfare livestock management, visit formhealthonline.com

We get a lot of questions about scheduling farm audits. I thought it would be useful to review the most common queries we receive, and explain our overall goals and policies.

Why is my first audit delayed? We audit farms and ranches across the U.S. and Canada. It’s a huge geographical area, which can present significant logistical challenges. We aim to contact every farm within seven days of receiving an application so we can start the screening process, and assign an auditor. As a not-for-profit organization, we do our best to minimize the significant costs of auditing by bundling several audits together by location. Auditing an individual farm can cost three times as much as those we have combined as an audit bundle, so if we don’t have any farms awaiting audit in your location, we might ask you to wait a short period until we can bundle more audits. However, we will assign an individual audit if the wait is deemed too excessive.

Why does my audit date change every year? Your initial audit date generally reflects the time of year you applied to the program. But if we did not rotate the month the audit takes place, we would only ever see your farm at the same time of year. Rotating your farm audit allows us to audit your farm throughout different seasons and workloads of the year. It is important to audit farms during different seasons to understand how management meets the standards at different times of year. This gives us a true picture of the farm’s actual operation.

We’re calving: Can I rearrange the audit date? At some point, your audit will happen during a busy period, such as planting or birthing season. We understand that farmers are very busy and your time can be limited, but we cannot rearrange your audit because you are busy. It is absolutely essential for us to see how a farm manages these busy periods, as the farm must maintain compliance with the standards during peak times, as well as less stressful times.

Our professional auditor team will do their best to make the process as smooth as possible and only take up the minimum amount of time necessary to complete an audit. But it’s inevitably more complicated and time-consuming to audit a farm that is not familiar with the standards for their species or that does not have all the documentation required. Planning ahead and having all your records and plans up to date and all feed tags and other materials ready for the audit will save everyone a lot of time.

Why is the auditor contacting me so far in advance? We assign farms to auditors at least two months ahead of the audit so they can contact each farmer in the bundle and arrange audit dates that work best for everyone. It also gives them the chance to ask you if you’ve made any significant changes since the last audit. For example, you might want to add new species or include new production sites. With a bit of notice, we can put all the paperwork in place before the audit and ensure we have allocated sufficient time to complete all necessary tasks. It also means we can book travel in advance, minimizing costs—and allowing us to certify more farms!

Tim Holmes is Director of Compliance with A Greener World.
A GREENER WORLD

Your regional point of contact
From Alaska to Wyoming, Alberta to Saskatchewan, our outreach team offers a one-stop shop for farmers, ranchers and food businesses!

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Promoting A Greener World

AGW is proud to offer a new range of low cost branded promotional materials to help raise awareness of your certification and better communicate the wider benefits of your farming practices. Every purchase also supports our work to educate and inform consumers—and helps keep your certifications affordable!

Find more promotional materials and place your orders at animalwelfareapproved.us/merchandise
Or call 541-526-1119

TAKING PICTURES OF YOUR FARM

Good quality photos are increasingly important for promoting businesses—especially farms and ranches that sell direct. But taking good quality shots, particularly of animals, is far from easy!

Written with AGW’s go-to photographer, Mike Suarez of Gorilla Byte Media, AGW’s guide, Taking Pictures of Your Farm, will help you take better photographs on your farm or ranch for use in social media and other promotional materials.

Download a free copy at agreenerworld.org/library

COTTON APRON $25
• Perfect for farmers’ market or the kitchen
• 8 oz organic cotton/recycled polyester
• Two front pockets
• Adjustable neckline
• Cotton-webbing ties
• Available in black or stone
• Shipping fee $3.50 first class with USPS

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JUTE TOTE BAG $12
• Made from environmentally responsible jute
• 14¼” x 14¼” x 5½”
• Available in green ink only
• Shipping fee $3 first class with USPS

BASEBALL CAP $20
• Low-style cotton twill with Velcro strap
• Khaki crown/strap and navy visor/button
• Made in the USA by Workers United
• Shipping fee $4 first class with USPS

METAL SIGN $12
• Ideal for the farm gate or barn wall
• Full-color 10” X 15” aluminum
• Corner holes for easy mounting
• Shipping fee $3 first class with USPS

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CERTIFIED ANIMAL WELFARE APPROVED BY AGW STICKER LABELS $4.60
• 1” x 1” high-quality stickers
• Long-life adhesive
• 1,000 stickers per roll
• Shipping fee $2 a roll first class with USPS

CONSUMER BROCHURES $5
• Explains the benefits of certification
• Ideal for farmers’ markets, farm stores and other events
• 50 brochures per pack
• Shipping fee $2 a pack first class with USPS

Only available to Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW producers

CORK MOUSE PAD $9.50
• Durable full-color, 100% natural cork
• 8½” x 7”
• Hypoallergenic and lightweight
• Offers precise movement and cursor accuracy
• Shipping fee $2 first class with USPS

VINYL BANNER $15
• Ideal for farmers’ markets/displays
• 18” x 24” with corner grommets
• Full color imprint
• Hard-wearing 18 oz vinyl
• Shipping fee $3 first class with USPS

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Taking pictures of your farm

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Taking pictures of your farm

From advice on applying, label design and technical support, we’re here to help ...
Meet the farmer

A FAMILY AFFAIR

Fouch Farms is a family run operation near Yosemite National Park, managed by Jesse and Hannah Fouch and their four kids: Jensen (9), Gus (7), Poppy (5) and Henry (2). Born and raised in Mariposa, they are descendants of early pioneers and run cattle on land that has been in the family since the 1850s.

Can you give a short farming history?
We began farming in 2003, after getting married and moving back to our hometown after college. Our primary motivation was raising healthy food for our family and, secondly, to build a successful business and buy our own ranch. We met Emily, AGW’s Director of Communications and Outreach, at a Niche Meat Marketing conference in 2008. We felt the certification matched our values and would help market our products. I think we were among the first 50 farms to become certified with the program!

Describe a typical day in your life
We wake at 5–6 a.m. and Hannah goes to work as a nurse. Jesse and the kids homeschool until around 11 a.m., when they head out to do the daily chores, like feeding animals, milking, irrigation, moving and checking the cows, and so on. At around 1 p.m., we switch when Hannah comes home, and Jesse leaves for work as a State Trooper. The afternoon is spent homeschooling and doing projects around the farm. On weekends, we tackle bigger projects like moving cattle from field to field, setting up electric fencing and making general improvements to the farm. We take time off our day jobs during the busy seasons in the spring and fall to get bigger projects done, like putting up hay and planting. We try to travel often during slower seasons.

What do you love most about what you do?
Being able to eat the food we produce and watching our kids grow up on a farm. They already have such an uncommon and flexible outlook on life, even at a young age.

What’s the main benefit of being certified?
It easily conveys our values and helps us stand out from other producers.
“Certified Animal Welfare Approved by AGW is expanding the market opportunities available to us by putting our eggs a step above the competition, helping us get into bigger and higher-end restaurants.”

TYLER GORDON, Gordon Family Farms, Indiana