

## Tell Your Story

Sharing our personal stories is the key to any interview and farmers are in a strong position to speak from the heart with authenticity and confidence. But it takes a dash of thoughtful preparation and strategy. Read on for ideas on identifying your storytelling gumption and why this is important to growing your little corner of agricultural.

### 3 reasons we need to tell our stories!

1. As farmers and ranchers, we have the opportunity to be role models for others just getting started or thinking about making the leap into agriculture. By sharing our stories, we illustrate how diverse farm businesses can be and how many different paths there are to success. There is no one right way to start or grow a farm. Sharing our stories helps others understand how they might carve out a niche for themselves.
2. Few people understand farming and the food systems. Telling our story helps educate consumers and the general public. Plus, in a world where few people know that food originates from a farm or ranch and NOT from the corner grocery store, telling the story of your farm or ranch is a powerful marketing tool.
3. The more we tell our story, the more we reinforce our expertise. Farmers can be too quick to minimize efforts—through storytelling we become a more authentic voice in our own minds which in turn helps us grow in confidence. Think of it as educating, not bragging.

### Make an outline of the basic points you want to get across, which might include:

- Your origin story: Is it a generational farmer or new? What brought you to the farm?
  - Why, here on this land, in this place, growing these crops/herds/flocks?
  - Notable successes you've had.
  - Goal(s) you are working toward.
  - Challenges you have overcome, the learning curve: give your story a dramatic arc.
  - Your community, your network, your support system.
  - What drives you? What values guide you? Speak from the heart. It's the best way of engaging editors, writers, readers.
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