Social Media & Blogging

Keep it relevant and simple, and make it personal
Social media is like hosting a cocktail party where you need to keep lots of conversations going at one time without getting stuck in any of them.
Rule #1
Don’t freak out or get overwhelmed.
Get a Plan

• How do you measure/define successful use of social media?

• Once goals are defined, write a loose social media plan (editorial calendar, objectives and strategies, timeline to address, revisiting and evaluation)

• If multiple people are responsible, how will they stay on task?

• Correlating various tones – sales versus service versus education?

• Ensuring that the “stuff” and the busywork (promoting events, releasing news etc.) doesn't get in the way of telling the story that matters – the chill bump factor.

• Why does the work you're doing matter, and are customers hearing that story?
Guidelines

• Your grammar and spelling should be *impeccable*. *The moment you post “U are the best LOL!”* or misspell a word, your personal brand and your farms reputation take an enormous hit. It *does matter, and people do care. Take the time to do it* right. Even an omitted letter or missing punctuation matter – stop and think.

• Be succinct – brevity is essential.

• Don’t just talk about yourself. Counterintuitive – but use the same idea you use in life – if you stand at a party and drone on about yourself without asking about others, you'll find yourself standing alone very quickly.

• Frequency is good – but overdoing it is not. Find a good stride – for some people, daily posts are good, and for others, once a week is ideal. There will be days when you post several times throughout the day, but try not to overwhelm.

• The quickest way to acquire an “unfollow” is for someone's feed to be nothing but your posts for hours on end.
Facebook (www.facebook.com)  
A Great Place to Start

• Set up a page for your farm/agribusiness – NOW, TODAY
• Add a fabulous, unique profile picture
• Remember your voice and timing – every move you make is very visible.
• Tag others (@), mention other brands (like them first) and share the love.
• Best place to post plenty of photos.
• Be interactive and reciprocal.
Twitter (www.twitter.com): serves as a news aggregator and microblog

• Set up a profile, and complete all settings (photo, website, bio).
• Don't be silly – your username should make you or your business findable.
• Worried about having more followers? 1. Don't. 2. Follow others.
• Comment, retweet, contribute substance to the conversation.
• Avoid “Good morning” or “Just had oatmeal for breakfast” tweets.
• RT (retweet), D/DM (direct message), # (hashtag), @ (username)
LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com): your online resume and/or business card

- Set up a profile, follow prompts to 100% completeness.
- Invite current contacts and prospective customers to connect.
- Give it a little attention – once a week at least – to grow your network.
- Not just a jobseeker's tool – excellent for the organization's brand as well.
- Great way to replace business cards or exchange post-event information.
- • Set up a group or page for your business/farm.
Using YouTube as part of social media with a goal to generate sales and educate is useful because the videos can be easily shared amongst a like-minded audience on other social networks.

While you shouldn’t set out to make a viral video, creating a unique, entertaining, and helpful video that attracts a targeted audience will have the potential to reach more people than your other social networks, and these people could be easily converted into paying customers.
Blogs
your press release/microphone

• Conversational, more casual and interactive.
• Enthusiasm and genuine sentiments prevail.
• Be approachable – in real life and online.
• Set up profile, link to special email address as appropriate.
• Press releases and brochures require formality – a blog is conversational.
• Grammar/punctuation remain impeccable, but take liberties with voice/tone.
• Let your enthusiasm come through!
• Perfect platform for day to day updates that don't warrant newsletter articles.
• Excellent tool to show your fellow farmers and customers a little bit of love.
• Real time news – wax poetic here, link from Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn.
Tips & Tactics
Use a manager such as Tweetdeck (preferred), Twhirrl, Twitterific, Hootsuite

• Manage multiple accounts, multiple social media tools, searches, key words.
• Post the same update across multiple accounts.
• Leave it running in realtime and scan updates quickly.
• Make quick posts throughout the day without multiple logins and delays.
• Schedule and time posts to go at key times or to cover absences.
Manage your time intelligently

• Once you get the hang of it, establish a routine – should be natural like email, not a burden.
• 10 minutes each morning is sufficient, maybe a nightly check.
• Weekly is fine – less frequently, your voice may be lost, inconsistent or unrecognizable.
General Tips

• Create a well-developed and well-rounded brand.
• Increase numbers with contests.
• Follow farmers that excel in social media - Madison Creek Farms, Mary Jane’s Farm.
• Follow professional associations, competitors, people and companies you admire, those with whom you'd like to do business or connect.
• Search by demographic: in your area, in a specific field of work.
• Be shameless in inviting others, asking for connections – be direct, but not overwhelming. Don't stalk/broadly chase people you don't know.
QUESTIONS?