

Small Farm & Business Marketing Workshop

February 23rd, 2023

Documents to Share

- Slides (Karyn Owens - New View Farm & Grapevine)
- Slides (David Smiley - ASAP)

Welcome

- This workshop is part of the Blue Ridge Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training (CRAFT) Workshop Series - giving people in the area an opportunity to learn, meet with each other, and network

Introductions: Name, Farm Name (or what are you working towards), Your Current Marketing Strategy?

- Jess McClelland - BRWIA's Producer Programs Coordinator; runs Daybreak Homestead; marketing: makes reels, uses Instagram, word of mouth
- Shannon Carroll - BRWIA's Finance Coordinator; Sun Catcher Greenhouses: fenced-in garden, eventually hopes to list things on Food Hub; marketing: website, social media experience in past for Food Hub & for BRWIA
- Carly - farm in the works; here with Susan (see directly below)
- Susan - property in Ashe county; goal is to homestead & find overlapping business opportunities; marketing: we haven't really started marketing until we figure out what our plan is; has experience with corporate marketing
- Karyn Owens- full-time farmer at New View Farm; also a marketing & tourism specialist, farmers market specialist; raises pigs & pastured birds
- David Smiley - ASAP's Local Food Campaign manager; has been with the organization for 9 years; raises baby trees!
- Taylor Campbell - BRWIA's Food Hub Manager; in the search for land; prior to this job built & managed a flower farm; now wanting to do cut flowers
- Alex - helps Jess out at Day Break homestead; teaches full-time at App State; runs a consulting factory on the side; marketing: uses Instagram - we post with bursts of energy, also word of mouth, trying to figure out Google SEO
- Nora - operates Laughing Springs Farm in Boone; marketing: struggles with Instagram, posts in bursts also, finds it exhausting & feels awkward; is here for tips & encouragement
- Pete - working at the FIG farm this summer; a student of agriculture at App State; hoping to get started with marketing: uses Instagram & word of mouth, hoping to expand
- Katie - "What Pete said;" early in the process
- Cori - Covered Creek Flower Farm; marketing: is starting a website!

- Leah Sweeney - bought property in April of past year; want to have homestead, “trying a bunch of things” to find what we like; we want to try to sell some things through the food hub; accounting background & wants to learn more about marketing: doesn’t enjoy social media

Karyn Owens: New View Farm (Lawndale, NC) - Farmer & Farm Marketing Consulting (with Grapevine Local Food Marketing)

- Grapevine: everything from farm websites to social media, Google SEO - we can help!
- Karyn’s Background
 - Born and raised in southern Maryland
 - Started her farming journey in 2012 for a local veggie CSA farm
 - 1st student at the UMD Terp Farm (campus farm)
 - Graduated from college of Agriculture and Natural Resources in 2015
 - Worked on farm for 5+ years, moved into nonprofit work
 - Full-time farmer, farm marketing consultant, & marketing/tourism specialist
- Where it all started
 - Affinity for animals and everything outdoors
 - First generation farmer
 - Started raising animals in 2017; purchased pigs in 2019
 - Partnered with another local farmer to raise meat pigs in March 2020 and leased land
 - Began looking for land in March 2021 and purchased the farm in September
 - Came to Boone 5 years ago - fell in love!
 - Now in Shelby
- New View Farm
 - 9 acres; ~80 animals on the farm; one of her most popular events is “piglet yoga” (great way to market to people who she otherwise wouldn’t reach with just pork/meat)
- Grapevine Local Food Marketing: here to help farms because farmers are out in the field & don’t have time to always do all of this
 - Graphic design - logo, print materials, social media
 - **TIP: Have a circular logo: it can go on literally everything!**
 - Farm websites - certified & partnered with 8+ platforms
 - Email & SMS marketing (text message is a great way to reach people)
 - Google marketing & SEO (could do a whole workshop on this)
 - Marketing strategy/Marketing plan
 - Advertising
- What is marketing?
 - Responses from audience:
 - How to connect people to your brand & your business

- Sharing your story
 - Hard
 - Definition:
 - “The activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large” (American Marketing Association)
- Why is it important for your farm?
 - So that we can stay in business
 - People can’t buy your stuff if they don’t know about it
 - “To keep your customers informed, connected, & wanting to come back!”
 - No perfect way to do it. Find your “comfort area.” This will also be informed by where you want to sell your products.
- Marketing outlets: what suits you most?
 - Farmers’ market
 - Grocery stores
 - Restaurants’
 - Cooperatives
 - On-farm sales/CSA
 - Wholesale/auction
 - **TIP: Where you sell can dramatically affect your marketing strategy!**
- Who are your customers? Target their behavior & preferences:
 - Foodies - most likely found at farmers’ markets or farm to table restaurants and willing to pay more for higher quality products
 - Families - shopping for kids, looking for staple items, interested in easy pickup & delivery options
 - Green customers - care about sourcing local, sustainable, and healthy food. Motivated by a social cause, likely to be at a natural food store or buy directly from the farm
 - Traditional - motivated by low price & high value. Most likely shopping at grocery store
- Platform Comparisons - **TIP: you need a multifaceted approach**
 - Social media
 - Facebook - solid platform for sharing events, specials, farm updates (wide audience); target audience: 30-55 year old women
 - Instagram - best for sharing farm life, telling your story, connecting deeper (target audience: 20-45 year olds); if you’re a visual person this can be great

- TikTok - popular to attract younger audience (target audience: 10-20 year olds - so probably not most of your customer base); this isn't going to be your local audience but more national
 - Youtube - engaging customers thru educational videos or farm progress - people want to see the mess & babies being born, & rainy days too!!!
 - Twitter - have not seen this prove to be successful for most small farms
 - Email marketing & SMS
 - Mailchimp - newsletters, weekly picks (veggie farms, CSA, market farms) - great for weekly picks/harvest list
 - Drip - analytics, automations - if you are selling products on a website online - you can track everything including "who is buying what" off your website so you can target those customers more specifically
 - Square - catered to your audience (great platform for making online stores & great email marketing platform that you can put on your website)
 - Other useful platforms
 - Canva - simple and easy design templates (Canva can do it all for you - you look through existing templates, even if you don't have faith in your design skills)
 - Google My Business - ***a must!*** Totally free & very easy to set up - number one way for people to find you when they Google search. Can include phone number, website, photos, your hours, people can leave reviews. A great way to heighten your SEOs. You don't have to post your farm address or all of your public info, but you can include "areas we serve."
 - Community guides & resources (like ASAP's local food guide)
 - Local newspapers/magazines (if you know someone local who is a writer)
- Some ideas for posts
 - ***TIP: keep it simple & easy to replicate***
 - Weekly harvest/pick up list
 - Market set up
 - New farm projects
 - Partnerships with other local business
 - Product specials/recipes
 - Baby animals/new animals
 - Sunrises/sunsets
 - Staff intros (including farm dogs!)
 - Daily farm life. ***TIP: people want to see what you're up to! Even "little" stuff!***
- Unique ideas to create brand recognition (with your circular logo - hint hint)
 - Custom merch: shirts, hats, stickers, magnets, market bags
 - Decals/wraps for farm vehicles
 - Postcards with care tips or recipes

- Market banners and signage
- Finding time to market - the million dollar question
 - Set a dedicated hour each week (to think about posting, create a post, create something in canva)
 - Schedule posts as much as possible (you can schedule posts ahead on some platforms)
 - Customer engagement is key (not even just posting on your platform, but commenting back when people comment on your post; like other farms; share the things customers are already cooking)
 - Take pictures as often as you can
 - Encourage customers to snap a photo of your products (easy way to market)
 - Outsource marketing support if needed (like using Grapevine!)
- Marketing checklist - getting started
 - What are your skills & talents?
 - Where are you selling your products?
 - Who are your target customers?
 - How are you going to reach them?
 - When can you make time to focus on marketing?
- Things I've learned after 10 years of farming
 - Burnout is real, be sure to take care of yourself. Marketing can be exhausting
 - Find a mentor and/or follow other farms (on media) to learn what you like/don't like
 - Do your research. Visit farms, go to markets, explore area you're interested in
 - Create marketing plan & revisit as often as you need
 - Set goals for the season
 - Lay out timelines
 - SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats)
 - Strategize tactics
 - Make a list
 - Set quarterly reminds
 - Consider setting a budget
 - Get professional farm photos done, if possible
 - Ask for help
 - Use all local resources - extension, farm credit, SCD, NRCS, FSA, ASAP, BRWIA
 - Don't be afraid to ask questions!!
- Find us online:
 - @theheartofham on IG & on FB: The Heart of Ham at New View Farm
- Questions from audience:
 - What platform are you building your website on?

- Square Space (because I'm not looking to sell meat online) - this is the easiest platform to make changes on the back end
- How hard is it to change/transfer content if you're not enjoying your platform?
 - Depends on where you are now
 - If the content you have is the content you have on new website - relatively easy to migrate
- Karyn has a SquareSpace discount code (20% off 5 new websites) if anyone wants to use this platform!

ASAP: Local Food, Strong Farms, Healthy Communities (David)

- Asheville based non-profit, work with 850+ farms within 100 miles of Asheville
- Mission + vision in a nutshell: help local farms thrive
- David's Background
 - Farm intern at Johnny's Gardens & Balsam Gardens
 - Market manager and board member at Haywood Historic Farmers market
 - Studied agroecology at University of Florida
 - ASAP's Local Food Campaign Program Coordinator (2014-2019)
 - ASAP's Local Food Campaign Program Manager (2019-present)
- Key services + programming
 - Free consultations
 - Local food guide (pseudo-website through ASAP) - great way to boost SEO
 - Trainings and workshops
 - Annual farm tour (20 farms/year)
 - Packaging materials (that you can get through BRWIA)
 - [ASAP Mini-grants](#) (business cards, banners, signage, swag, packaging labels - 75% reimbursement for these items; apply early because funds go fast)
- Why is a farm story important?
 - Why are people buying local?
 - Transparency and trust. People want to know where their food is grown, how it is grown, & who grows it
 - By telling your farm story, it allows people to learn these things about you
 - Consumers are seeking direct experiences with local farmers, farms, and food
- Storytelling is a tool for:
 - Establishing yourself in people's memories
 - Stories help to differentiate your farm
 - Lots of products look exactly the same
 - Inspiring customer commitment/deepening relationship/building trust
 - 80/20 rule (80% of sales come from 20% of customers, target existing customers)

- Adding value to your farm produce
 - Production practices, ethos, etc.
- Grant support/business development
 - Grant funders are people too, want to fund business with a lot of “heart” in there
- Connecting with customers
 - A brand’s values and ‘personality traits’ are what make people call in love
- ***TIP: Doesn’t need to be the BEST farm story ever - but what are you passionate about? What sets you apart? Make it personal!***
- Good stories don’t happen by accident
 - Clear
 - Connection to people’s live and be compelling
 - Pre-decided pilots, not just random series of events
 - Outcome-oriented (or if you are a new farm: we need help, this is an action step we need your help with!)
 - Clarity
 - Craft your story to direct people to take action: come to your farm for U-pick, try a new product, buy a CSA
 - Story doesn’t have to be about YOU - can be about your product - or small snapshot of your farm business (Ex: rare italian plums)
- Owning your story
 - Story must first engage you
 - Transfer your emotion to the audience
 - What resonates with you?
 - “What you are about” matters more than content
- Crafting your farm story?
 - Create clear, straightforward story that can be adapted for audience and time
 - ***TIP: use social media as a great way to tell your story & engage your customers, especially if you are introverted. Include a photo!***
- Building Blocks of a Story
 - WHO: Who are you/your connection to time/place?
 - Who (or what) is the “hero” or main character in your story?
 - You, product, animals, family
 - WHY: Why do you farm?
 - What is your vision?
 - ***TIP: a logo can be great way to tell farm story*** (Ex: Colfax Creek, acorn with pig tail on it, established in 1901)
 - Why do you want to do this?
 - Was there a “moment of change” or something that happened to make you want to do this thing?

- WHAT: Challenge/barrier - engage your audience
 - What is the obstacle or barrier for the main character?
 - Ex: A Way of Life Farm: compost had lots of herbicides in it, knocked out lots of products, customers stood by & supported
- HOW: Action/resolution - connects your audience emotionally
 - What did you have to do/overcome to be able to farm/own land/support yourself/make this decision?
 - What was the resolution?
 - Ex: Former berry farm - now grows ginger & turmeric
 - How did you overcome your barrier?
 - Ex: Tomato disease - grafted plants and can now grow tomatoes again
 - How did your vision emerge?
 - Ex: we switched to flower production during a period of burnout
- WHY IT MATTERS: Meaning/upshot/takehome
 - Why does it matter?
 - What is the moral of the story?
 - What makes you different?
 - Why does what you do matter?
- Examples:
 - Example 1 - Moreno Family Farm (Clay county)
 - Who? Multigenerational family farm, Alyssa and Salvador Jr
 - Why? Agricultural legacy, support, family, change in production practices, smaller scale, direct relationships: “we’re gonna do this on our own”
 - What? Finding land is hard! Struggle for land
 - How? Had just about given up, when a customer came to their farm stand and said, “we have land we’re trying to sell”
 - Why it matters? Continued legacy + new chapter
 - Example 2 - Lott Farm & Apiary (Haywood county)
 - Who? Paul Lott, former rockstar, owner of Lott Farm & Apiary
 - What? Health issues
 - Why? Back home, family health issues, realized he needed to change his course
 - How? Market garden - lots of mushroom production - with health focus
 - Why it matters? He’s healthy, and he can share his knowledge and products with his community
- Rules to remember:
 - Stories must be about the impact your farming experience has in the community
 - Personal connection
 - Know why you are telling story

- Connect with audience first
- Main character should be hero
- Use barriers/struggles to drive the story - good entry point
- Include only details that move story along
- Practice telling story
- Tell your story with passion
- Activity: crafting your farm story - anyone willing to share?

Questions & Answers

- Question: How often do you tell your story?
 - David: If it is your foundational story - have it readily available on your website. Don't tell it all too much. Great for a big event. It's a good one to have, but also work in other (related but different) stories.
 - Karyn: Idea - tell the story through individual posts. Post examples: Why did I choose to raise KuneKune pigs? About my horse. Different things about farm life. Break your story up. Also, regularly do a quick introduction online for newer folks (every 6 months or so - remind people who you are & where you're coming from)
- Question: Why KuneKune pigs?
 - Karyn: KuneKune pigs are very easy to manage; lowest maintenance of all animals; they are pasture pigs. Versus chickens & horses highest maintenance
- Question: Happy number of times per quarter for SMS texts?
 - Karyn: Depends on the farm/what you're doing. Food Hub would be a great outlet to do SMS for. Maybe sending things once or twice a month. Could use SMS text to remind people to place orders. Can also add in photos now! The "opening rates" for text messages are great - even if people don't click through - people will still open the message (much better rates compared to posts online where people might not see it due to algorithms). SMS can be a really great tool!
 - People have to opt-in to get SMS - also restrictions on when you can send - federal law about timing.
- Question: Does anyone have a marketing goal you're coming away with?
 - Answers from audience: Write a story; get on instagram; make an introduction post; make a circular logo
- Question: Do you have a logo? Who/how?
 - Answers from audience: Etsy - found some artists, worked well; have a friend who does graphic design - 5 rounds of edits, 120\$ total; Karyn will pass along contact info too for her designer; used UpWork platform - also few rounds of edits; logo designed by a friend who is now a tattoo artist (:
 - **TIP: get your logo made as temporary tattoos - kids and adults love this**

