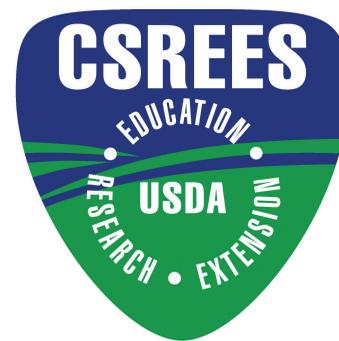


# Telling Our Agricultural Story

Resources to help our students, customers and the non-farm public learn more about agriculture, food and the farmers who grow it.



National   
Agriculture in the Classroom

*Telling Our Agricultural Story* is a project coordinated by the Wisconsin Farm Bureau's Ag in the Classroom Program. The project was funded with a Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) Agriculture in the Classroom Excellence Grants Program (ACE). You may download the student handouts, lesson plans and activities at [www.wisagclassroom.org](http://www.wisagclassroom.org).

# Telling Our Agricultural Story

Food and agriculture are topics not just for the agricultural community to discuss. With a renewed interest by the public in understanding where their food comes from, farmers can offer valuable insights to the non-farm public and customers about how food gets from the farm to their table.

There is a great deal of information available about food and agriculture. To help students, teachers, and the public process this information, make educated decisions and form opinions based on fact, "Telling Our Agricultural Story" offers information, sources to contact, and other resources relating to our food and fiber industry.

Wisconsin Farm Bureau's Ag in the Classroom program has developed a set of lesson plans for middle and high school students. It offers a number of lessons and activities for classroom settings, to use with youth groups such as 4-H and FFA, and for educational displays. The resources it offers include this resource booklet about modern production agriculture and some key topics, student handouts, a tri-fold brochure, bookmarks and lesson plans. The lessons can be downloaded from the Wisconsin Ag in the Classroom website ([www.wisagclassroom.org](http://www.wisagclassroom.org)) by clicking on Lesson Plans.



## But I heard it on the news!

Just because you heard something on the news, radio, television, saw it in a movie or on YouTube, doesn't mean it's true. As you evaluate information to make your own conclusions, consider this:

- Recognize the differences between published and unpublished information. Just because it is published doesn't make it credible. Be careful when evaluating internet sources.
- Consider the date of the publication. Are the facts presented still relevant?
- Check out the authors and their credentials. Look at other publications by the same authors to determine any biases and consider the organizations they represent. Is there a conflict of interest?
- Determine if cited facts in a publication are derived from credible, published, peer reviewed and objective sources.
- Look for concurrence of facts between credible sources.
- Evaluate the organizations or the author's use of a particular media choice and tone. Is he or she trying to incite, market to, or manipulate a particular audience? What stake does the author have in getting the reader to agree with him or her?
- Is the source of information selling a product or service?

Source: National Ag in the Classroom Program, Deb Spielmaker



# Making the Connection

## How do you learn more about farming and where our food comes from?

The best way to learn about today's farms, how food gets from the farm to our tables, and about agri-business is to connect directly with farmers themselves. Some people live in areas where it is easy to meet with farmers, but that's not true for everyone! Here are some ways that you can connect with farmers and others involved in agriculture and food production.

**Visit their farms** - Many farms host tours or welcome visitors. There are farms that offer school tours, group tours for adults, and host field days.

You can find farmers who host tours by:

- Asking local **Chamber of Commerce, UW Extension office, or agriculture education instructors** to find farms in your immediate area.
- The **Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection** ([www.datcp.wi.gov](http://www.datcp.wi.gov)) has a directory for Something Special from Wisconsin, listing local farmers and vendors.
- The **Wisconsin Agricultural Tourism Association** ([www.visitdairyland.com](http://www.visitdairyland.com)) lists venues that conduct farm tours, special events, ag-ventures and tasting events.

**Farmer's Markets, Roadside Markets and Direct Sales** - Some farmers will sell products directly through a variety of direct sales to customers. Visiting with them at farmer's markets, roadside stands or on-farm stores gives customers an opportunity to ask questions and learn more about that farm.

**Attend Farm Shows and Events** - Farmers and related businesses hold many annual events for educating farmers as well as the non-farm public. These events often have workshops, tours, interactive displays, and trade shows that give information about their methods, equipment and technology. Some annual events include:

- **Farm Technology Days** ([www.wifarmtechnologydays.com](http://www.wifarmtechnologydays.com)) - This annual three-day show rotates around the state. The host farm(s) allow tours and field demonstrations. Tent city hosts many vendors, displays, workshops, and inter-active exchanges.
- **World Dairy Expo** ([www.worlddairyexpo.com](http://www.worlddairyexpo.com)) - While at the world's largest dairy show, visitors can tour the huge commercial exhibit display area or watch virtual farm tours. The event is held in Madison, Wisconsin each fall.
- **County and state fairs** ([www.wifairs.com](http://www.wifairs.com)) - The state and county fairs offer many opportunities to meet exhibitors, learn about their animals, crops and experiences in agriculture.

**Getting involved in 4-H or FFA** - These youth organizations offer many opportunities for students to connect with farmers through projects, tours and other learning experiences.

- **4-H** ([www.uwex.edu/ces/4h](http://www.uwex.edu/ces/4h)) - 4-H is for youth from third grade to one year past high school graduation. Younger children can join 4-H as Cloverbuds. Cloverbuds are in first or second grade. Your county Extension 4-H youth development staff member can answer your specific questions and help you find a club in your area or help you start a new one.

- **FFA** ([www.wisconsinffa.org](http://www.wisconsinffa.org)) - The FFA operates on local, state and national levels. Student members belong to chapters organized at the local school district. In order for a school district to charter and maintain an FFA chapter, there must be a certified licensed agricultural educator hired by the school district who then also serves as the chapter advisor. FFA members are part of a total program in agricultural education, consisting of classroom instruction in agriculture, supervised agricultural experiences where students gain career skills and on the job training and leadership development through the FFA organization.



# Websites

This website list offers many educational resources and links to farmers and the agricultural industry. There are many others available. Please contact Wisconsin Ag in the Classroom if you need assistance finding information or a contact.

- [www.agfoundation.org](http://www.agfoundation.org)
- [www.americasheartland.org](http://www.americasheartland.org)
- [www.animalagalliance.org](http://www.animalagalliance.org)
- [www.biodiesel.org](http://www.biodiesel.org)
- [www.cornfarmerscoalition.org](http://www.cornfarmerscoalition.org)
- [www.DairyDoingMore.org](http://www.DairyDoingMore.org)
- [www.Dairyfarmingtoday.org](http://www.Dairyfarmingtoday.org)
- [eatwisconsinpotatoes.com](http://eatwisconsinpotatoes.com)
- [www.farmersfeedus.org/wi](http://www.farmersfeedus.org/wi)
- [www.factsaboutbeef.com](http://www.factsaboutbeef.com)
- [www.fb.org](http://www.fb.org)
- [www.findourcommonground.com](http://www.findourcommonground.com)
- [www.FoodDialogues.com](http://www.FoodDialogues.com)
- [www.Foodinsight.org](http://www.Foodinsight.org)
- [www.healthygrown.com](http://www.healthygrown.com)
- [www.Humanewatch.org](http://www.Humanewatch.org)
- [kidsdigwipotatoes.com](http://kidsdigwipotatoes.com)
- [www.meatmattersinfo.org](http://www.meatmattersinfo.org)
- [www.meatmythcrushers.com](http://www.meatmythcrushers.com)
- [www.ncga.com](http://www.ncga.com)
- [www.porkbeinspired.com](http://www.porkbeinspired.com)
- [www.porkcares.org](http://www.porkcares.org)
- [www.realfarmersrealfood.com](http://www.realfarmersrealfood.com)
- [www.Truthabouttrade.org](http://www.Truthabouttrade.org)
- [www.vealfarm.com](http://www.vealfarm.com)
- [www.whybiotech.com](http://www.whybiotech.com)
- [www.datcp.state.wi.us](http://www.datcp.state.wi.us)
- [www.wfbf.com](http://www.wfbf.com)
- [wisconsinfarmers.org](http://wisconsinfarmers.org)
- [wisconsinpotatoes.com](http://wisconsinpotatoes.com)
- [www.wppa.org](http://www.wppa.org)
- [www.wmmb.com/wdc/overview.aspx](http://www.wmmb.com/wdc/overview.aspx)

# Social Media

Social media offers agriculture groups and farms a direct connection with their customers. Here is a list of some social media sites. There are many more blogs and Facebook pages being started every day.

- [www.facebook.com/WIFarmBureau](http://www.facebook.com/WIFarmBureau)
- [www.facebook.com/WIAGintheClassroom](http://www.facebook.com/WIAGintheClassroom)
- [www.facebook.com/USFarmersandRanchers](http://www.facebook.com/USFarmersandRanchers)
- [www.facebook.com/PorkBeInspired](http://www.facebook.com/PorkBeInspired)
- [www.facebook.com/WIPork](http://www.facebook.com/WIPork)
- [www.facebook.com/ThePorkCheckoff](http://www.facebook.com/ThePorkCheckoff)
- [www.facebook.com/pages/Wisconsin-Potato-and-Vegetable-Growers-Association-WPVGA/179976569437?ref=hl](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Wisconsin-Potato-and-Vegetable-Growers-Association-WPVGA/179976569437?ref=hl)
- [www.facebook.com/pages/Wisconsin-Farmers-Environmental-Stewards](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Wisconsin-Farmers-Environmental-Stewards)
- [www.facebook.com/EatWisconsinPotatoes](http://www.facebook.com/EatWisconsinPotatoes)
- [www.porkbeinspired.com/PorkSocial.aspx](http://www.porkbeinspired.com/PorkSocial.aspx)  
National Pork Board - Offers a variety of social media and YouTube videos

[wfbf.com/newspublications/blogs](http://wfbf.com/newspublications/blogs)  
Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation members' blogs

[thenewfamilyfarm.wordpress.com](http://thenewfamilyfarm.wordpress.com)  
If you'd like to learn more about Wisconsin farmers and the opportunities and challenges of agribusiness, please visit The New Family Farm. This blog not only explores how farming in Wisconsin affects the state's water and environment, but also how it impacts the mother who feeds her kids with vegetables grown locally and the hundreds of thousands of Wisconsin residents employed in agriculture.

[feedingyourfamily.wordpress.com](http://feedingyourfamily.wordpress.com)  
Feeding Your Family Blog - How food gets to you and the process it takes to get there is all looked at in this blog.

