



Stand out in your field

MARKETING FOR FARMERS



Press Release

Welcome to our Press Release Lesson. Here you will learn a bit about what it means to tell a story, and be provided with a few tools to help you tell YOUR story in the medium of the press release.

Let's pause for a moment and re-visit the definition of a story before we identify a few motivations we have when we read a news story.

sto·ryl

`stôrē/

noun

1. an account of imaginary or real people and events told for entertainment.
“an adventure story”

2. an account of past events in someone's life or in the evolution of something.
“the story of modern farming”

EMPATHY @ IDENTIFICATION

First, assuming the good nature of the reader, he or she is interested in reading the story because it's about people, and presumably, the reader feels some level of empathy and/or interest in other people's experience of the world. Stories that touch us do so in great part because they were written in a manner that allows for a deep, empathic connection.



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DRAMA @ STRUGGLE

The second reason we might admit being drawn to a news story is because of its drama. Most news stories focus on a crisis or struggle in the world. You probably know instinctively that the most satisfying stories have a climax. It's just in our nature to listen to or read a story and expect there to be a struggle of some kind, and then yearn for its resolution.

What does this have to do with a farmer writing a press release? Well, given the current under-funded state of journalism, it's likely that your press release will be published as you write it - it WILL be the story. Local newspapers are generally eager for content, especially stories about the local food movement. If you haven't noticed yet, you, as a farmer or beekeeper, are actually a hero in the collective American consciousness at this moment. This gives you tremendous power to write exactly what you would want to see written. Therefore, it's useful for you to have an idea of the story you would like to write and the elements you'll need to make it as compelling as possible!

DON'T BE SHY, BE PROUD!

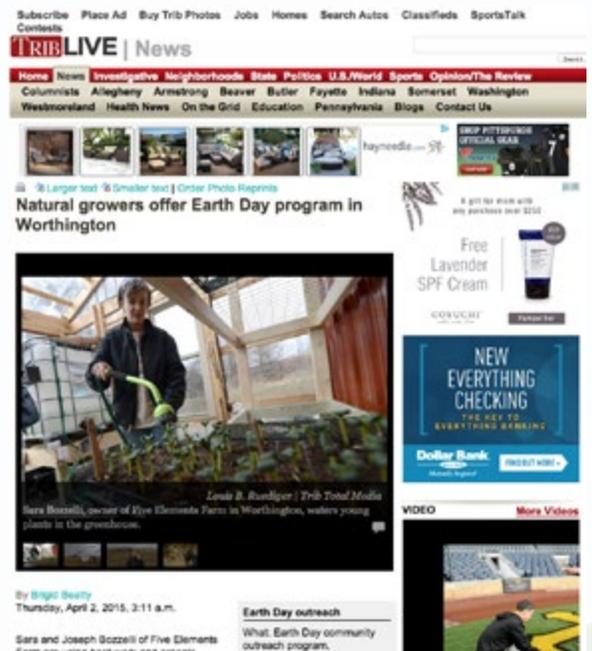
Ask the local newspaper to feature your farm or apiary! Don't be shy. It's likely they are hungry for content and will jump at the chance to feature you, especially in the spring!

Each farm or apiary is unique and articles are most effective when you let that difference shine. That makes it hard to take a cookie-cutter approach, so we've developed a loose guide to the important elements you might consider when creating your own article to send to your local paper. We've also included a few (purely fictional) examples to help get your creative juices flowing.

TIP #1 EVENTS ARE GREAT NEWS STORIES

Want to get in the news? Think about hosting an event! Events are great news stories because they've got a sense of urgency to them. This is happening NEXT WEEK. Take a look at this story written about [Five Elements Farm](#) and their second annual earth day event.

[Click here to read the story.](#)





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TIP #2 START AT THE BEGINNING @ KEEP IT PERSONAL

Your story before becoming a farmer is so important!

The USDA posted an article about Ivory Smith, of [Smith-Ponics](#) in Poplarville, Miss. which featured the fact that he served in the Infantry in the Army National Guard before he became a farmer. What did YOU do before you became a farmer? What is the story that led you to this place?

A quote from the article: "Ivory has been able to make the transition from fighter to farmer, starting with a couple buckets and some seeds this spring to his newly-completed insulated planting shed. With year-round operation now possible for his microgreens customers, he can watch his business grow much like his microgreens (and his little boy, too.)"

[Click here to read the story.](#)

The screenshot shows a USDA blog post. The title is "Armed to Farm: Bridging Veterans to Agriculture". The author is "Lillian Salerno, Business & Cooperative Program Administrator, Rural Development". The article features a photo of Ivory Smith holding a baby. The text discusses how Ivory Smith, a veteran of the Army National Guard, transitioned to farming microgreens. It mentions that he participated in a workshop sponsored by USDA Rural Development. The article also includes a calendar for November 2014 and a tag cloud.

State Rule Change Challenges Protection of Some Residential Farmers

Apr 30, 2014 10:30am | Liz Kinnas
299 SHARES

- Michigan's Department of Agriculture and Rural Development approved a rule change Monday that some say will impact small farmers who were once protected by the Right to Farm Act.
 - The change requires all farmers with livestock, even if it's just one animal, in areas zoned residential to adhere to community requirements.
 - Before this, the Right to Farm Act, which still requires farmers to comply with Generally Accepted Agriculture Management Practices, trumped any community ordinances or guidelines.
 - As a result, some farmers say they might "reconsider our business plans and may sell the farm and buy a farm in a more rural area."
- At Shady Grove Farm in Okemos, Michigan, 150 egg-laying hens supply 75 dozen eggs per week to a local co-op and restaurant. A flock of sheep provide wool that is turned into clothing and other woven goods. There are also a few turkeys and meat chickens available for those interested in local poultry.



TIP #3 TALK ABOUT YOUR LAND!

Another way to interest the reader is to talk about what is special about the farm itself. Perhaps it is the history of the land, the view, the products that your farm specializes in, the innovative projects you've started, or something else entirely. Take [Shady Grove Farm UP](#) in Michigan for example. They recently had to fight a local zoning ordinance that would ban farming by deploying the Michigan right to farm statute.

[Click here to read the story.](#)



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TIP #4

POINT TO YOUR STRUGGLES @ TRIUMPHS

Is your farm in some way connected to a personal struggle or triumph that you've experienced? [180 Degree Farm](#) is the perfect example of how a difficult family struggle laid the foundation for the farm's existence.

[Click here to read the story.](#)

Close Up

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FOOD & DINING

180 Degree Farm Provides Organic Food For Coweta

by BRADLEY HARTSELL

Thursday, November 07, 2013 Facebook Twitter Comments

The 180 Degree Farm in Sharpsburg, which is growing autumn favorites like broccoli and cabbage.

When Mason Tyson was diagnosed with Stage 4 Neuroblastoma in 2006 at just four years old - on his birthday, no less - his parents, Scott and Nicole, were simply devastated and left asking a lot of questions.

For one, how could such a young child develop this advanced stage of cancer? All parents ask this type of question when their child gets sick, but remarkably, Scott and Nicole Tyson were ones that actually sought out answers.

After Mason's initial surgery, doctors began outlining his future. Chemotherapy, naturally, was the next option. Chemo, doctors told the family, was going to weaken

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ALL ABOUT BEES

Local beekeepers talk about their trade

By Vicki Hock

They have bees, but not during the winter. Each hive has one queen, 40,000 to 50,000 workers (infertile female bees) and 300 to 300 drones (males).

"Our honey is certified naturally grown, there is nothing that I wouldn't eat or put on myself," Sanner said. "We sell raw honey, meaning it is not strained, filtered or heated. We've sold out 90 percent of our honey in CSA immediately after the harvest." Sanner is a beekeeper at Summer Smiles Honey Farm, Sharpsburg.

They have bees because we were interested in helping the environment," Wash said.

Summer Smiles Honey Farm also offers bee venom therapy, called apitherapy, which people use for autoimmune diseases.

Bees travel up to three miles for pollen. Dandelions are a crucial because nothing else blooms that early.

Some chemists talk on plastic don't kill the bees but affect their navigation.

Click Watch video online.

Darcy Sanner with a panel from a beehive at Summer Smiles Honey Farm, Sharpsburg. A photo gallery and a video appear online at [www.cng.org](#).

Best photos by Vicki Hock

TIP #5 YOUR PRACTICES ARE UNIQUE!

Don't forget to talk about how you manage your farm or apriary using natural practices and why you've chosen to do so. Check out this article about [Summer Smiles Honey Farm](#) in which they talk about their bee-keeping practices.



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TIP #6 YOUR CNG CERTIFICATION IS NEWS!

CNG is growing more every year and gaining a lot of great press. Use this publicity to your advantage and describe what being #cngproud means and why you decided to join.

Take a look at this piece about [Russell Sprouts](#) as a great example.

A quote from the article: “We are passionate about growing healthy food for our community,” says Russell, “and we are proud to have our efforts recognized by Certified Naturally Grown.” She continues to explain that the grassroots certification aligns with her mission to grow food the community can trust, and it supports her commitment in helping to create a sustainable community.”

[Click here to read the story.](#)

The screenshot shows a news article on the website 'thedailyreview.com'. The article title is 'Russell Sprouts becomes Certified Naturally Grown' and is dated 'Published: November 19, 2014'. The article text includes a quote from farm manager Sheila Russell: "We are passionate about growing healthy food for our community," says Russell, "and we are proud to have our efforts recognized by Certified Naturally Grown." The article also mentions that Russell Sprouts Farm is located just north of Rome on Route 187 and offers naturally grown vegetables and local goods. There are also social media sharing options and a 'SIGN UP NEWSLETTER' button visible on the page.



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RECAP @ A FEW MORE TIPS...

- **EVENTS ARE GREAT NEWS STORIES**

It's incredibly easy to get a news story written about you when you have an event on your farm. There are event calendars in most local papers - just call them up and let them know what you're planning!

- **START AT THE BEGINNING & KEEP IT PERSONAL**

It's at the core of why we love stories; we want to empathize and identify with our protagonist! Share YOUR story - why did you get into farming? What was your life like before?

- **TALK ABOUT YOUR LAND**

Regardless of whether or not you have a political battle to fight over the right to use your land, it's important to give your land the credit it's due. What was your land before it was a farm? Does that history play a part in your story?

- **POINT TO YOUR STRUGGLES & TRIUMPHS**

Guess what: we all struggle, and because of this, we like to read about other people's struggles and hear how they overcame their obstacles! You may balk at sharing events that feel devastating to you, but if you can look at them in a positive light, and share how you're planning on getting back up on your feet, we guarantee someone will not only want to listen, but be your champion as well.

- **YOUR PRACTICES ARE A UNIQUE PART OF YOUR STORY**

Your customers want to know just how much you care about how you farm. Tell them what goes into your decisions and why you do things the way you do them! How does your approach to farming support customers' health, or heal the earth?

- **YOUR CNG CERTIFICATION IS NEWS!**

CNG is in the news often; your certification is news too! Writing to your local paper about your new certification not only helps CNG but it is a great way to introduce yourself to the community and feature your farming practices at the same time. We've included some tips on how to talk about CNG on the next page.

- **HIGHLIGHT AN ACTION**

Are you doing things differently on your farm suddenly? Why?

- **DON'T FORGET TO TELL THEM WHERE!**

This may seem obvious, but don't forget to mention where your farm is located and how people can purchase your produce!

Follow us @CNGfarming

Sign up for more tips: www.standoutinyourfield.org



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CNG TALKING POINTS

We're stepping up our efforts to raise awareness about CNG, but you, our members, still play the most important role in representing Certified Naturally Grown in your communities.

This tipsheet will help you explain what Certified Naturally Grown means in just a few words. The trick is to balance a short and clear message with making it personal and something the customer can connect with.

Here are some ideas to get you started.

The CNG tagline: The grassroots alternative to certified organic.

CNG means...

- No synthetic pesticides, herbicides, fungicides or GMO seeds; and for livestock producers, no antibiotics or hormones.
- Annual inspections done by farmers or customers
- Designed for family-sized farms, not corporate conglomerates

Comparing Certified Naturally Grown to Certified Organic

Most folks have heard of the organic label, so it can be a useful starting point.

- CNG standards are largely the same as those of the National Organic Program.
- CNG has a different inspection process: CNG inspections are typically conducted by a local farmer. Farmer inspectors are best suited to ask specific questions based on their knowledge of the local pest pressures and farming challenges, and to make helpful suggestions to improve the farm's sustainability. This participatory model a) ensures that the standards are being upheld and b) strengthens the local farming community by connecting farmers to one another.
- CNG helps build the organic movement by including small farms.

Make it Personal

Tell your own story – why did you choose to become Certified Naturally Grown?

More Information

CNG is unique in its degree of transparency; all members are listed on our website and all certification documents are available to the public online. Encourage customers to visit our website: www.naturallygrown.org and view your farm's profile.

Follow us @CNGfarming

Sign up for more tips: www.standoutinyourfield.org



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ANATOMY OF A PRESS RELEASE

Russell Sprouts becomes Certified Naturally Grown
Published: November 19, 2014

Concise & Informative Title

ROME, Pa. - Russell Sprouts Farm has announced its recent distinction of becoming one of two produce growers in Bradford County to be recognized as a Certified Naturally Grown producer.

One Sentence Summary

Farm manager Sheila Russell sought out the national certification to help distinguish her produce from others grown by conventional methods and to give her customers the assurance of buying naturally grown vegetables free of synthetic chemicals and genetic modification.

Action Highlighted &
Explanation Given
(boosting consumer confidence!)

Certified Naturally Grown (CNG) is a certification program for direct market farms using natural practices and selling in their local communities. The CNG program is the grassroots alternative to certified organic with site visits and inspections by peer farmers. The certification assures that food is grown without GMO seeds or synthetic chemical fertilizers or pesticides.

CNG's Credibility is
YOUR Credibility

"We are passionate about growing healthy food for our community," says Russell, "and we are proud to have our efforts recognized by Certified Naturally Grown." She continues to explain that the grassroots certification aligns with her mission to grow food the community can trust, and it supports her commitment in helping to create a sustainable community.

Russell Sprouts Farm, located just north of Rome on Route 187, offers Certified Naturally Grown vegetables and local goods at its on-site farm store, supports a growing CSA membership (community supported agriculture) and delivers to local restaurants.

Location &
How To Purchase

Russell submitted the CNG application in the fall, and received word of acceptance on Oct. 28. The final step in the certification process is an on-site inspection. Currently there are more than 750 CNG farms nationwide, and two locally in Bradford County (the other is Running Bear Farm in Troy).

Submitted by Sheila Russell, Russell Sprouts Farm.

Submitted by a farmer like
you!

**Modified slightly from the original*



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NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

First, decide what your angle is. Here are some questions to get you started; any of these prompts could turn into an article! Remember to write the press release as if it IS the article; it's likely the newspaper will publish it with minimal edits.

- **HIGHLIGHT AN ACTION**
Have you changed anything about the farm recently (like getting certified, or changing a process or technique)? Why did you make that change? Does the change reflect positively on your image?
- **GET PERSONAL**
Is your passion for farming rooted in a personal struggle? Can you trace the decision to become a farmer back to a moment in your own life?
- **EVENTS & PROGRAMS**
Is there an upcoming farm event or program (like a CSA)? Did you just join a new farmers market? Why?

PRESS RELEASE

Contact Person: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Headline

Date

One sentence summary of the content.

Two or three paragraph explanation behind your summary. Try to describe why, when, and how this action/event/program affects your farming practices. How does it make you unique?

Location & business details - where can customers find you and how can they purchase what you're selling?

Close with a personal note if you can! Bring it home with a quote or an anecdote—something to chew on, something to feel good about, or something inspiring.

Submitted by _____

For more information visit (website)

Visit the farm at (address)

Follow us @CNGfarming

Sign up for more tips: www.standoutinyourfield.org