



Stand out in your field

MARKETING FOR FARMERS



VIDEO TIPS

Welcome to our Video Tips lesson where we will outline some basic video techniques and present a few shining examples of farmers successfully using the moving image to further their marketing efforts.

It's common to feel some intimidation around the idea of using film to market yourself. It's one of those mediums that has long been shrouded in mystery. Until relatively recently, film has required special equipment and editing knowledge, making it an unlikely addition to the basic marketing toolkit without a substantial investment. Luckily, technology has brought this tool to your fingertips, and you should be taking advantage! Most phones have a video recording function now, and apps to make posting your creation to social media sites incredibly easy. Of course, there are definitely great videographers out there too that can bring a higher level of craft to a short film about your farm.

It's worth noting that you can incorporate video into your marketing strategy even if you aren't interested in creating a specific marketing video. Video content should be treated the same as photo content; it all helps to build your farm's story. Whether you're planning on going at it alone or working with a professional, below are some ideas to help get you started telling your story with video!

Innovations, Tips & Tricks



Do you have a work-flow or tool on your farm that might want to hear about? A video is a way to show off your ingenuity and help out your fellow farmers!

This video produced by Georgia Organics features Tripp Eldridge of White Oak Pastures (CNG certified for produce since 2011) showing off his packing shed design and has tons of tips about how design your own Packing Shed to maximize utility! ([Visit farm website](#))

Georgia Organics is making lots of instructional videos like this one with the help of [Anthony-Masterson](#). Their whole [channel on Vimeo](#) is worth checking out.



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Tell What You Know



You know that farm task that you did wrong the first few times, but now you have it nailed? RJ Kessler of Planted Rock Farm (CNG member since 2010) shows us how to pull plastic over a hoop house. It's clear he's done this before and his experience can help others! It's also fun for customers to see how farmers keep the plants warm during the cold months, and how much work it takes to get that big piece of plastic to fit. ([Visit farm website](#))



Is there something about harvesting or growing your crop that takes special knowledge? Paula Guilbeau of Heirloom Gardens (CNG members since 2010) does a great job showing how she harvests her flowers for market so as to prolong their vase life. Her presence is authoritative and we certainly couldn't ask more from the setting. ([Visit farm on Facebook](#))



Joe Reynolds from Love Is Love Farm shares his technique for growing shiitake Mushrooms - this is such a unique method of farming that it's likely that many viewers will be absorbing completely new information, which is so fun! ([Visit farm website](#))



Eugene Cook of Good Shepherd Agro-Ecology Center (CNG member since 2015) shares the value of creating native planting mounds in this video. His contagious enthusiasm and the useful technique is bound to keep viewers watching till the end, and likely sharing the video with others! We're so impressed by Eugene's authenticity - he doesn't allow the camera to intimidate him, and as a result, the viewer gets to see a really likable guy sharing his valuable knowledge.

([Visit farm on Facebook](#))

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Share Your Struggles



Pests got you down? Stems n Roots (CNG member since 2013) has a great little clip of caterpillars demolishing her fennel - it generated a lot of comments on Facebook and shares the struggles of farming without pesticides. ([Visit farm on Facebook](#))

Show Your Love



Your customers know that you have a relationship with the animals on your farm, but they LOVE it when you show them. Check out this adorable 6 second video from Hartwood Farm with the caption “The hens take a break from scratching in the mud for a vigorous boot attack session.” ([Visit farm website](#))



Here's another cute (and popular!) video from Hartwood Farm captioned “After accidentally throwing the dog's ball in the hens' pasture, we learned they like the chase part of fetch but haven't mastered returning the ball.” Bonus: Hartwood Farm uses the hashtag #chickensofinstagram to add their videos to [the vast collection of chicken videos on the internet](#). ([Visit farm website](#))



Moon Dog Farms has a few videos of their chicken house on Instagram, which happens to be a camper trailer! Clearly, these chickens are well-loved, and comments show that the customers love this ingenious chicken house design. ([Visit farm website](#))

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The Winter Video

Filming in the winter may seem like a strange prospect as the greenery is certainly lacking, but it's actually a great time to make use of some down time, show off how lovely the farm looks under a blanket of snow, and talk about what your customers can look forward to come spring!



Beachview Farms in NJ (CNG member since 2013) had Tony Coon of [Darn Swell Media](#) create a winter video full of snowy winter scenes that uses voice over and contrasting footage of the farmer in a warm high tunnel to describe what it takes to grow food in winter. This is a great way to stay connected with your customers when they aren't visiting the farm regularly or seeing you at the market. ([Visit farm website](#))



Shoving Leopard Farm (CNG member since 2015) has a cute Instagram video sharing their first maple sap check of the season. Not only is it really fun to see their anticipation and excitement for the sap to start flowing, but it tells customers that maple syrup is coming soon! ([Visit farm website](#))

Cooking With Farmers



Guess what; your customers want to know your opinion on how to best cook that turkey you raised for their Thanksgiving table! White Oak Pastures has a two-part video on how to prepare a pasture raised turkey with an Herb Butter Marinade that is very popular on Youtube. Do you have a favorite recipe that you can pass on to your customers? ([Visit farm website](#))



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What's Your Story?

Before you start the process of making a more in-depth marketing video, it's a good idea to spend a significant chunk of time thinking about what you want the video to convey. In some ways, this pre-shooting prep time can be an incubation period for your story. Below are some questions for you to consider answering in your marketing video. Be sure to try to include the question in your answer for easier editing.

What's your name (first, last)?

Where is your farm located?

When did you start farming?

Is there a story behind your farm's name? Why did you name it what you did?

"We named our farm _____ because _____"

Was there a specific incident that led you to the decision to become a farmer?

What do you love most about farming? What gets you out of bed and into the field in the morning?

"I love to farm because _____."

How has running a farm changed your family? How would your family be different if you weren't farming?

Does being a farmer change your relationship to your community?

Do you have specific farming practices? Why? What are they?

Does your farm hold a certification? Which one, and why?

Why did you choose to become CNG certified? *"I chose to be CNG certified because _____"*

What is the biggest challenge you've encountered as a farmer? How did you overcome it?

Is there anything that you would like to change about consumers' perception of small family farms?

How is being a farmer a reflection of who you are?

How do you further your farm learning? (networks, workshops, mentors, etc)

What unexpected customer interactions have been especially rewarding?

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How To Share Your Videos

So where do you PUT all this video content? Social media accounts are the easiest way to share your content with your followers.



INSTAGRAM

Instagram only allows up to 15 seconds of video at a time - it's great for capturing moments and an easy entry point because of the recording restrictions. Instagram has a ton of fun filters that you can apply as well, which can enhance the aesthetic of your video clip or give it a different feel.

Instagram doesn't have a way to separate your videos and your photos yet, so your Instagram videos will just show up like your photos do, in chronological order of when you post them. You can share videos to Facebook through Instagram if you connect your two accounts.



FACEBOOK

Similar to Instagram, you can upload videos that you've shot on your smart phone straight to your Facebook account. Facebook doesn't offer any additional filters, but it will create a collection out of your videos so your Facebook fans can access them all at once.

Tips for Social Media Video Sharing



Hashtags are one of the ways that the internet organizes your content among all the other content out there and is integral to helping your video reach as far as it can. #localfood #knowyourfarmer #farmlife #sustainablefarming #freerange #happychicken are just a few examples of the millions of hashtags that you could use.



Tag people! You can tag your teammates, customers or even yourself when you upload videos to social media. All you need to do is use the @ symbol in front of their social media name. Instagram and Facebook really like it when you help connect your media to other accounts and your video will get more traction.

Keep posting

You can never have enough material on social media, so just keep going! When you encounter a moment that you think "wow, look at that, isn't that amazing?" - just pull out your phone and shoot a few seconds of video!

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DIY vs Pro Video



You definitely don't need to hire someone in make a film about your farm to start including video in your marketing efforts. You can just pick up your smart phone or a low-budget camera (see the recommendations in the Equipment & Editing section) and just start shooting short clips around the farm. As a collection, these visual elements help define your farm's story for your customers. What you decide to share, whether it be your caterpillar battle or playing fetch with your chickens, tells your customers something about your farming practices and your relationship with your land and your animals. These short clips are best shared on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram.

If you think you would like to dive deeper into a short film that more thoroughly tells your story as a farmer, you might benefit from working with an outside videographer who can not only help you refine what it is you want to tell, but also make sure that the finished product is of the highest quality so it can be used as marketing collateral.

Choosing A Videographer

When choosing a videographer keep an eye out for certain things:

- Experience: Do they have a proven track record? Do you like their style? Ask to see a portfolio!
- Testimonials: Talk to people who have worked with this videographer. Were they happy with the experience?
- Price: Video production costs can range greatly. Typically the more experienced a team is, the more they're going to ask for their services. Don't be afraid to explore the option of hiring a recent graduate - they have the experience and they're looking for work to showcase in their portfolio!
- Process & Timeline: Production processes and schedules vary from videographer to videographer. It's useful to understand what the process will be so you aren't surprised along the way. Also, don't be afraid to ask for an outline as to how long the video will take to shoot and edit.



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Storytelling Basics

Stories Are About People

Perhaps the first and most important thing you can learn about storytelling is that people like stories about people. That is to say, when you embark on telling the story of your farm, you really need to focus on telling YOUR story instead. The farm is part of it, but ultimately your customers want to know about YOU and the people working on your farm. If you keep this important storytelling mantra in mind, there's no doubt that you'll create a more compelling story that people are more likely to remember and share.

Audiences Bore Easily

You probably are aware that the average consumer is hit by a barrage of media ever waking moment. This means their attention is harder to capture, they bore quickly, and you're going to have to work hard to create a story that grabs their attention. The easiest way to make them sit up and take notice is telling a story that has some raw honesty in it. Steer away from talking about how you farm and really dig deep into your emotional relationship with the occupation you've chosen. Don't dwell for long on the logistics of your CSA production schedule and instead talk about some surprising relationships that you've built with your community as a farmer.

Stories Need to Be Fixed in Time and Space

Treat your farm as its own universe. Show (don't tell) us where we are. Let us hear the sounds that make this home for you. Viewers want to know where they are when they start to listen to a story so they can stop wondering and allow themselves to get caught up in the story itself.

Stories Stir Up Emotions

The most effective stories, the ones that we remember and share, are those that strike an emotional chord in us. As viewers, we want to be touched by what we're watching. We want to feel connected to our own humanity through someone else. This is not to suggest that your story needs to be overly dramatic; it just needs to have an honest emotional core that your viewers can relate to.

These tips were adapted from Andy Goodman's ["The 10 Immutable Laws of Storytelling"](#)



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When to Use a Hosting Platform



If you're making videos to showcase on your website, you'll probably want to upload them to a platform besides Facebook or Instagram. We suggest looking into either a free [YouTube](#) or [Vimeo](#) account and then embed those videos on your website. This will also allow your videos to be found outside of your website. Be sure to add descriptions, hashtags and your farm name so the internet knows how to categorize the video and can pull it up when someone searches online for you or the topic of your video.

Equipment @ Editing

It's easy to get started making short videos if you simply have a smart phone or an ipad, but if you decide you would like to do more, here are some very basic recommendations.

There are lots of camcorders out there, but we recommend looking into buying a DSLR instead - you'll get much better quality video for less cost because cameras like this have a bigger light-capturing sensor than most camcorders. This means they're better in low-light situations and depending on the lens, you can get a shallower depth of field (when the thing right in front of the camera is in focus and the stuff in the background is out of focus - very cinematic!). Bonus: it takes great pictures as well!

Of course, there are some downsides of shooting on a DSLR:

- You can't shoot long clips - usually you can only shoot about 10 minutes at a time.
- The in-camera audio recorder usually isn't very good. If you're going to shoot interviews with this camera, you might want to invest in a [microphone](#) for it.

You can read more about the best camera for low budget filmmaking by clicking through the links below.

- [PBS: Six Cameras Under \\$300 for Video Activists On A Budget](#)
- [Learn About Film: Equipment for Low Budget Filmmaking](#)
- [Business Insider: THE FLIP IS DEAD: Here Are The 10 Best Alternatives](#)



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Best Practices

Horizontal vs Vertical:

When you're shooting a video on your smart phone, try to remember to hold your phone in the horizontal position, not vertical. Horizontal will produce a video that takes up the whole frame when it's posted on the internet; vertical will create a tall, skinny video that has a bunch of black on both sides!

Interviews:

It's always a good rule of thumb to shoot interview subjects in their natural environment, so take that camera out to the field! White Oak Pastures has some [terrific interview sequences with Will Harris](#) in his jeep as he shows the camera around his farm.

How to Answer:

If you're being interviewed, always try to repeat the question in the answer itself. For example, if the question is "What is your farm's name?" your answer should start with "My farm's name is _____." This is to help with the editing later on, so the film doesn't need the interviewer's question for viewers to make sense of the answer.

Introduce Yourself:

It's incredible how easy it is to forget to introduce yourself to the camera! This is an important step in locating your viewer in a time and place. Sometimes it's useful to do it once when you start and once when you're almost done filming once you've warmed up in front of the camera.

What to Wear:

It's best to avoid wearing tight patterns if you're going to be on camera. Solid light colors are best.

Light:

It's unlikely you'll need any light besides the sun to shoot, but you still should put some thought into your lighting! The sunlight can get really strong mid-day, so aim for doing your filming in the morning or the evening when the light is soft. If you have to film in the middle of the day, choose a shady spot.

Sound:

You wouldn't believe how much windier it sounds in the camera than it does in real life. Try to film on a calm day. If you've got a microphone that you can put a wind screen on, put it on regardless of how windy it seems to you while you're shooting. You'll be glad you did later!

Length:

Short is best! If you're creating a more in-depth video that tells the story of your farm, aim for a video of about 3 minutes in length. If it's much longer than that, it's likely you're attempting to pull off too much with one video. Take a look at the story, edit where possible, and think about making two shorter videos instead!

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