



Connect Inspire Achieve

February 2019 Enhance Webinar: For the Love of Dairy, presented by Jessica Peters and Katy Dotterer-Pyle

On February 15th, 2019, the Dairy Girl Network welcomed two dairy girls, Katie Dotterer-Pyle and Jessica Peters, to share their experiences on social media. The webinar was hosted by Zoetis and Cargill. Katie is a 3rd generation turned 1st generation dairy farmer in Maryland and is known on social media as “Cow Comfort Inn”. Jessica is a 5th generation farmer in Pennsylvania. Her farm is Spruce Row Farms and she is found on social media as “See Jess Farm”.

Jessica and Katie started discussing how many people share information about dairy on their personal page. Often, personal pages are full of friends and family who already trust us and are already on our side. A business page will help you reach out farther and get to the moveable middle, which is a large group of people that can be influenced. We need to reach out to the other 98% of people who do not have any connection to agriculture.

When reaching out to the moveable middle, Jessica said the more vulnerable you are the more relatable you are. That means the more you share, you will get more followers and make a larger impact. Another part of that is being less conservative and not being so formal. We aren't formal in our conversations day-to-day and people don't want to see us being formal on videos or in written posts. Katie brought up being natural, not staged and not perfect. This again makes us more relatable.

Jessica recommended not being positive all the time. We all know farms are not perfect and things don't always go well. Part of being relatable is talking about the bad things too. Jessica said she thinks a lot harder about her wording of the difficult subjects, but she still finds it important to talk about the tough stuff.

As a farmer, what you think is trivial and silly your followers will likely love. Both Jessica and Katie said they have had great reactions to videos showing really basic stuff around the farm. What you share doesn't need to be agriculture and farming all the time. That brings in a huge diversity of followers.

Both Jessica and Katie said if you are doing things right the animal right activists will come in, but they don't need to be a big deal. Your first attack is the most difficult. After that, you learn how to deal with it and it becomes simple to handle. There are tools on social media platforms to help you manage a coordinated attack. Dairy Management Inc (DMI) is essential to learn how to manage the issues that arise on social media. Ultimately both ladies said banning and deleting tends to be the most effective way to deal with animal rights activists. They usually aren't willing to have a conversation. If someone asks for help on their page don't engage with the individuals making negative comments, just make your own positive comment.

Jessica and Katie said even with the attacks, sharing their stories are completely worth it. There are so many people that are just watching without saying or sharing anything. Often, those are people we can make a real difference with. Katie and Jessica both shared examples of how they have influenced people to start drinking milk or made them feel confident in their choice to eat dairy products.

One final thought Jessica had was that dairy farmers are seriously missing out on YouTube. The things dairy related on YouTube are not great and there just aren't a lot of dairy farmers on YouTube.

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Technical Information Tips from Katie and Jess:

- Thursdays and Sundays are when people are most active on social media. They are the best days to post if you can.
- Videos shouldn't be any longer than 2 minutes.
- Use hashtags and be creative with your hashtags.
- Tag companies, they often will interact with you.
- Set up banned words provided by DMI to help clean up comments and attacks.
- In general, Millennials and older are on Facebook and the younger generations are on Instagram.

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