

# Communicating about food, farming and fairs during COVID-19

By Kelly Daynard, Executive Director,  
Farm & Food Care Ontario  
May, 2020

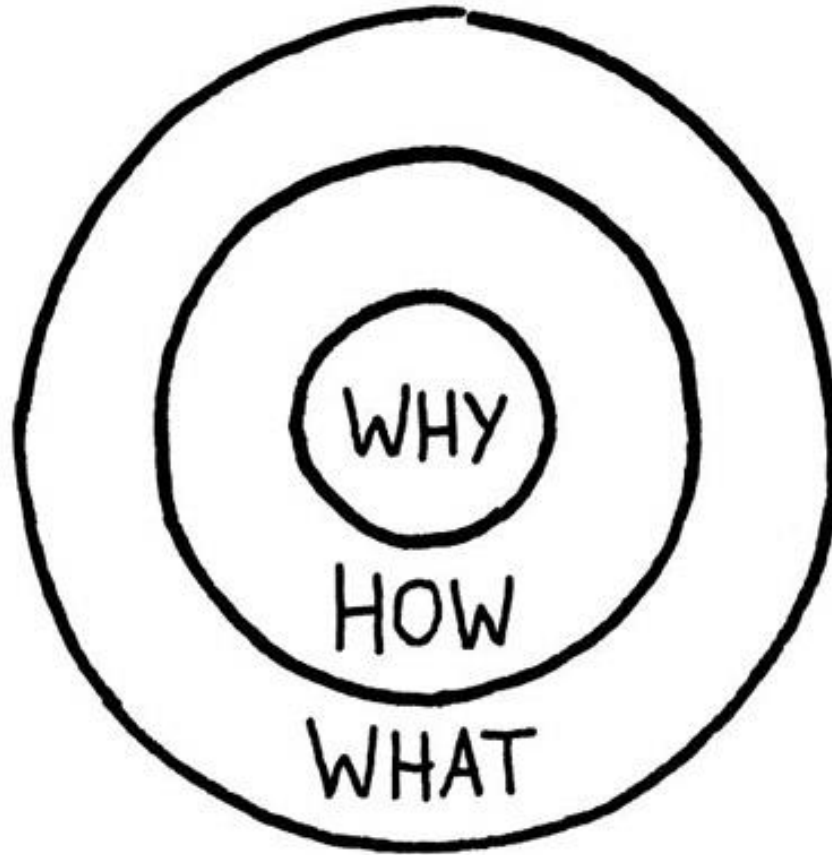


# Who is Farm & Food Care Ontario?

- First coalition of its kind, whole sector approach – all types of farmers and associated businesses working together
- Sister groups in SK and PEI
- Funded by members, sponsors, projects
- Shared vision: building public trust in food and farming
- Mandate: to provide credible information, expertise and coordination



# What's your elevator speech?



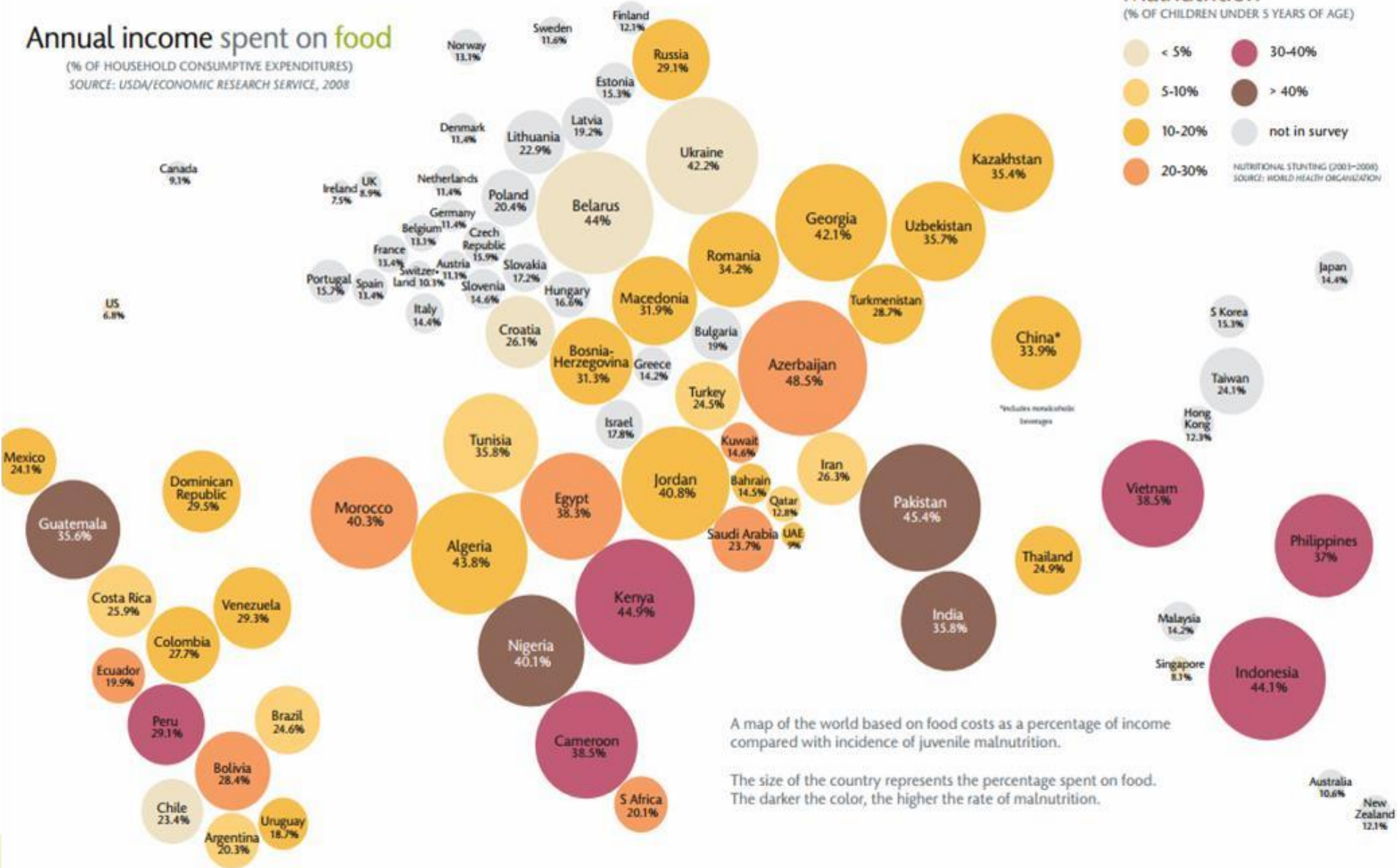
# Annual income spent on food

(% OF HOUSEHOLD CONSUMPTIVE EXPENDITURES)

SOURCE: USDA/ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE, 2008

## Malnutrition

(% OF CHILDREN UNDER 5 YEARS OF AGE)



A map of the world based on food costs as a percentage of income compared with incidence of juvenile malnutrition.

The size of the country represents the percentage spent on food. The darker the color, the higher the rate of malnutrition.



www.FarmFoodCareON.org

@FarmFoodCareON

---

# FOOD FREEDOM DAY

---

**FEBRUARY 8, 2020**

On this day the average Canadian has earned enough money to pay for his or her grocery bills for the year.



# The challenges that come with abundance...



# The fear of scarcity







# Topics of interest to consumers

- Food security/affordability
- Labour issues
- Food system back logs
- Transportation
- Weather
- Imports/exports
- What else? Quota reductions/ lack of markets
- Mental health

# Topics of interest to event goers

- How the decision was made – consultations with public health
- Can you reschedule?
- Economic impact (performers, vendors, student employees)
- Community impact – what does the ag society use the funds for?
- History of the event – has this ever happened before

# Share the good news too!



Rob Hannam and TheNutritionBabe liked



**Christina Crowley-Arklie** @Crowl... · 2h ✓

How do we ask consumers to trust us in [#agriculture](#) & [#food](#) when they're communicated too and only hear the heavy food news stories.... COVID-19 fatalities in processing plants, dumping food, farmers not getting enough \$\$ from gov't, etc, etc.

The narrative has to change.





**OFA** - Ontario Federation of Agriculture - 2d  
 OFA and our 38,000 farm families extend a heartfelt THANK YOU to consumers across the province for continuing to support Ontario farmers during these difficult times....



4 replies 12 likes



**Gay Lea Foods** @GayLea... - 2020-05-11  
 Our #GayLeaFoundation has joined forces with @OntarioDairy & @SyscoCanada to coordinate the donation of more than 62,000 one-litre cartons of Gay Lea milk to @FeedOntario and independent food banks across the province. Learn more at [bit.ly/MilkforON](http://bit.ly/MilkforON). #OntDairy #GivingBack

3 replies 25 retweets 91 likes

**Tonya Haverkamp** @tutz81 · 21h  
 Ongoing commitment to local food banks, grading stations @BurnbraeFarms @GrayRidgeEggs, farmers & @GetCracking continue to donate eggs to those in need.  
 Fresh, hard cooked & pre-scrambled eggs in our cooler today, heading out today & tmrw for delivery!



7 replies 62 likes

So many great stories...



**Grain Farmers of Ontario** - 2020-04-09  
 We love seeing communities come together to support the front line health workers during this time. #thankyou 🙏 #OntAg ❤️

**Andrew Buttigieg** - 2020-04-08  
 Here's something you won't see everywhere. Basically the entire agricultural community in Elgin County came together to say THANK YOU to our front line health workers at @stegh\_cares! Simply amazing! ❤️ (PS The parade lasted over 6 minutes!) #OntarioSpirit #sttont #stthomasproud



**Wallenstein Feed** @WallensteinFe... - 3d  
 When most of us are winding down, our night crew are ramping up for their shift in our mills.  
 Thanks to these nighthawks for ensuring feed continues to be made 24/6 - even when the moon is glowing and most farmers and livestock are tucked in their beds...

#FeedingSuccess #ontag



8 likes



[www.FarmFoodCareON.org](http://www.FarmFoodCareON.org)

# Judging communications

You won't be judged on the fact that COVID-19 happened but on how you responded.

If you communicate with the public, be careful. Anything that deviates away from public safety priorities right now will be worthy of public scorn.

March communications by many farm organizations and events is testament to this on both sides.

Strong, well-planned media interviews will resonate with the viewers



letsgototheex @LetsGoToTheEX · 5d

Thank you for the outpouring of support. Although we were very sad to make yesterday's announcement, we're looking forward to the future. Check out what our Executive Director had to say about looking toward the 2021 Canadian National Exhibition!



Here's why organizers cancelled the CNE in Toronto  
[ctvnews.ca](http://ctvnews.ca)

5 13



# Speak Up!

- Know who you are talking to.
- Be sure you understand their concerns.
- Keep up with the media (rural and urban)
- Talk about what you know...but not too much.
- Use personal and specific examples.
- Avoid or explain industry terms.
- KISS (easy to understand words and explanations, no jargon)

# Speak Up!

- Have a communications plan in place for your ag society.
- Who is the best person to do the interview – and why?
- Refer them to someone more appropriate if necessary.



# Working with the Media



# Meeting the Media's needs

Dailies, weeklies, magazines, radio and TV – all with different deadlines; different requirements

Online – it's an entirely different game. 24/7 365 days per year

# Media Communications 101

TV – think visuals.

Radio – think fast.

Newspaper – think story.

Internet – think immediacy

Social media – think in 280 characters!

What's the angle? The hook?

Local news always wins.

# The phone rings ...

- Be friendly.
- Thank them for calling.
  - “I’m just in the middle of something and would be happy to speak with you, but ...”
- Interview them...
  - always ask ‘why?’
- Be Professional.
- Remember this isn’t about “becoming famous.”
- Do not agree to an interview until you have had time to speak with someone about it.

# Key Interview Techniques: The Interviewee's Bill of Rights

- It is your right to give an interview only after you have prepared
- Ask the right questions (see next slide) to help you prepare
- Determine a mutually agreeable time when you will call the journalist back
- Take the time to prepare
- Call the journalist back

# The Interviewee's Bill of Rights: What to Ask When the Journalist Calls

- Name, phone number?
- Which publication, TV or radio station?
- Which program or column?
- Focus of story?
- Anticipated length of interview?
- Who/will anyone else will be interviewed?
- When and where will the story run?
- What is the journalist's deadline?

Note: *Establish a protocol for screening and directing reporters' calls*

# It's all about active listening

- Paraphrasing
  - “You said.... Have I got that right?”
- Inquiring
  - “You said... Help me understand.”
- Acknowledging
  - “You have concerns about...”

Actively listening will help de-escalate a situation.

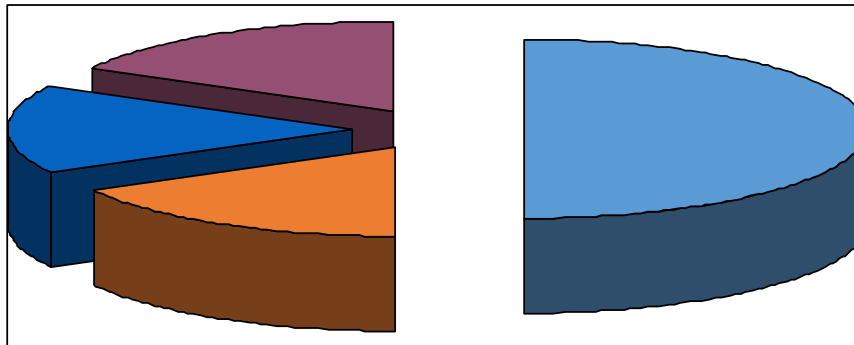
# Answer a ? With a ?

- Make sure you understand the question: “Do you have an example?”
- “What specifically do you mean by...?”
- Respond, don’t react





# I don't care how much you know until I know how much you care



# In a world of Skype interviews remember body language...

- Body language speaks volumes.
  - Looking away
  - Furrowing your brow
  - Crossing your arms or your arms behind your back
  - Chewing gum

# Think of your “resting” face



- If using Skype/Zoom, you need to think about:
- Your background
- The angle of your camera

# Key Interview Techniques: Verbal & Non-Verbal Communication

- Pace
- Inflection
- Pauses
- Confident tone
- Words
- Energy

# Key Interview Techniques: Verbal & Non-Verbal Communication

## Tone and Attitude

Focus on projecting that you are:

- Modest
- Reasonable and open
- Relaxed and friendly
- Positive
- Confident

Stay away from sounding:

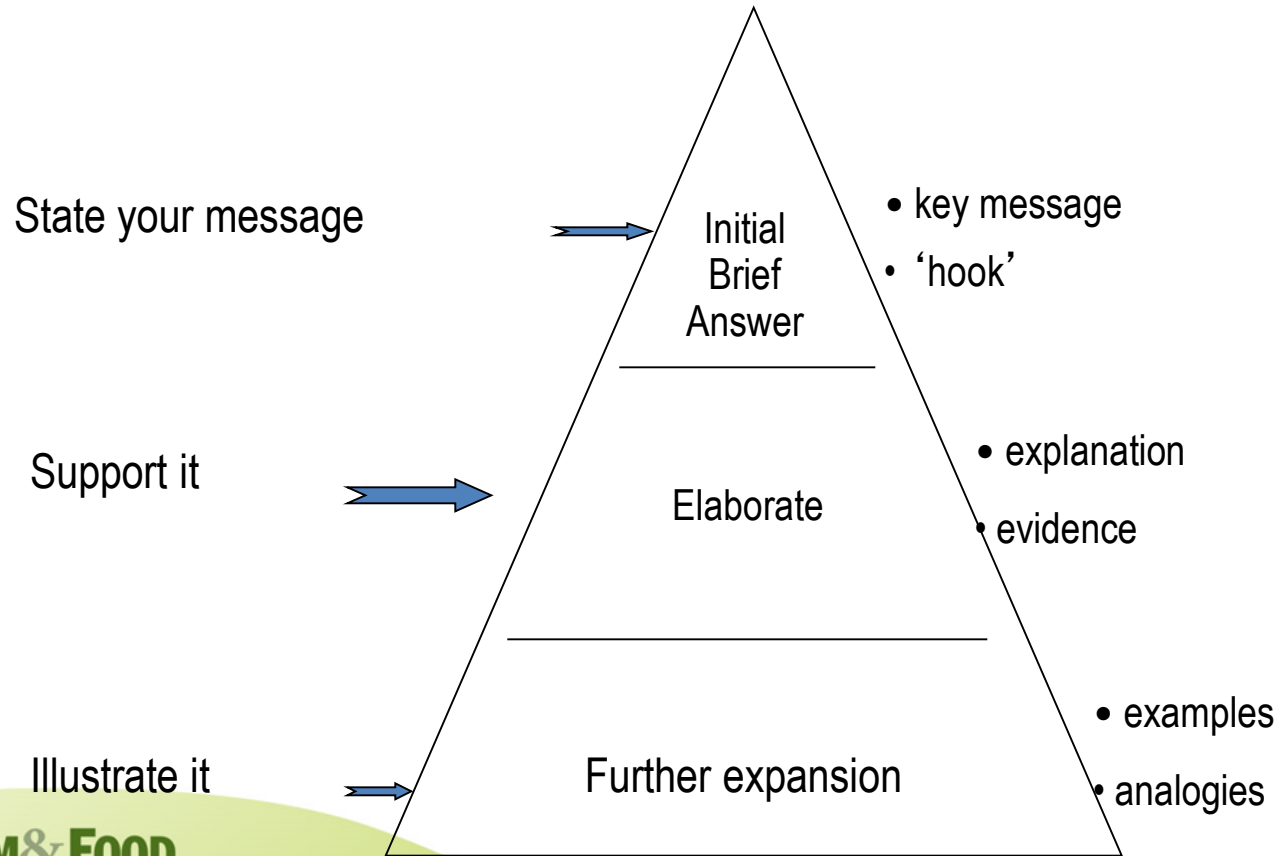
- Smug and arrogant
- Hostile and defensive
- Uptight
- Negative

# KEY MESSAGES

- **NEVER** conduct an interview without them
- Introduce them at every opportunity
- Clear, concise, short
- Everyday language
- The message remains the same
- Say it differently to avoid sounding scripted

# Key Interview Techniques

Source: Barry McLoughlin Associates Inc.



# Key Interview Techniques: Deliver Messages in Quotes & Sound Bites

## What Makes for a Good Quote?

1. **Brevity** – the average radio or TV sound bite is 10 seconds long; the average print quote is 1 to 3 lines long  
e.g. “I have family myself and nothing is more important than the safety of our guests.”
2. **Self-contained (stands on its own)**  
e.g. Is a life work a picnic in the park this weekend? ”



# Key Message – Example

## Message:

- Our agricultural society has made the difficult but necessary decision to cancel the XXX fair

## Support:

- Nothing is more important than the safety of our guests.
- We understand the emotional sentiment that goes along with our fair and the sense of loss that comes with its cancellation. Families look forward to it all year and our volunteers do too.
- We recognize the huge economic impact this has– vendors, performers; impact on community if funds go to support local causes.

## Illustrate (Know your Facts):

- The XXX fair has been taking place annually since XXXX
- Reasons why we can't reschedule into later 2020
- This decision was made in consultation with our municipality, our public health department and in accordance with recommendations from the province.

# Possible Key Messages for fair cancellations

- **A difficult but necessary decision**
- **Recognize that this is a hard hit for so many – performers, vendors, employees, families**
- **Other implications – financial contributions to community; 4-H members unable to show animals; etc.**
- **Looking forward to 2021; the show will go on**

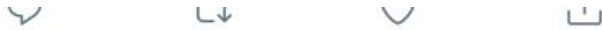
# Ignore the trolls



Whatever decision you make, understand that there will always be people on the other side.

You don't need to engage with them. Be polite and agree to disagree.

# Don't just disappear for a year...



WesternFair District Retweeted



**Vintage London** @VintageLondon... · 4d  
From Jeri Dihle -

'This old family picture shows our 2nd-great-grandfather with other participants at the Western Fair in London'

Late 1800's or early 1900's #ldnont  
[@WesternFair](#)



**letsgototheex** @LetsGoToTheEX · 1d

Over the years the CNE has truly been a place where your summer dreams come true! For the final day of [#MuseumWeek2020](#) the CNE Archives are celebrating [#DreamsMW](#). Reply & tell us what the CNE of your dreams would include! The return of an old ride? Unlimited Tiny Tom donuts? 🤔🍩



MUSEUMWEEK 🏛️



# Online activities

- Virtual fair experiences
- Active social media presence.
- FB live Q and A?
- Creativity contest – what are they going to miss?



**NOW ACCEPTING DIGITAL ENTRIES**

- 1 Download the contest at [FarmFoodCareON.org/resources](http://FarmFoodCareON.org/resources)
- 2 Visit [FarmFood360](http://FarmFood360) or [Agscope.ca/resources](http://Agscope.ca/resources)
- 3 Draw what you've learned about food or farming
- 4 Submit your entry to [contests@farmfoodcare.org](mailto:contests@farmfoodcare.org)

# FARM FOOD 360°

# Ontario Farmer Social media favourites

- **Farmer Tim** on Facebook (58,000 followers)

<https://www.facebook.com/MayhavenFarms/>

- Andrew Campbell (Fresh Air Farmer) on numerous channels @FreshAirFarmer

- Sandi Brock (Sheepishly.me) on Instagram and YouTube – 45,000 followers

<https://www.instagram.com/sheepishly.me/?hl=en>

# SK Farmer Social media favourites

- Saskatchewan farmer Lesley Kelly (Highheelsandcanolafields) on Instagram and other channels 8,000 followers  
<https://www.instagram.com/highheelsandcanolafields/?hl=en>
- Saskatchewan farmer Adrienne Ivey (View from The Ranch Porch) on Facebook
- Search hash tags #ontag or #cdn ag for people communicating about farming in Ontario or Canada.

# Local Food Week – June 1 to 7



**6 live events throughout the week**

**Live Cooking demo using all of those products twice during the week**





# Other Farm & Food Care resources

- Ag Ambassador Resource library (free on web)
- Resource catalogue – available on website
- Specialized media training sessions (member discount)
- Use of VR exhibit (members only)
- Expertise – Protecting your events against special interest groups (members only)
- Membership: \$350 base

[www.FarmFoodCareON.org/join-us](http://www.FarmFoodCareON.org/join-us)



# Thank you



**Farm & Food Care Ontario**  
[www.FarmFoodCareON.org](http://www.FarmFoodCareON.org)  
[info@farmfoodcare.org](mailto:info@farmfoodcare.org)

**Kelly Daynard**

519-837-1326, ext. 224  
[kelly@farmfoodcare.org](mailto:kelly@farmfoodcare.org)

