



How to Deal with Agriculture Skeptics

Simple Outline

Overall Goal: Students will understand and demonstrate research-driven methods to effectively communicate with consumers about agriculture.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will memorize and practice the formula for effective values-based consumer conversations.
2. Students will discuss techniques to avoid the major pitfalls of ineffective agriculture conversations with consumers.

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS:

Common Core English Language Standards-LITERACY RST.9-10.2; RST.11-12.2, SLS.9-10.4; SLS.11-12.4

Common Career Technical Core: AG1.2; AG1.5; AG 1.6; AG 2.2; AG 2.3; AG 2.4

Common Career Technical Core Career Ready Practices: 01.IA.04; 01.IA.05; 01.IA. 06; 01.IA.12

CONNECTION:

Haters Are Going to Hate Snowball Fight

1. Introduce students to the workshop/class by emphasizing that they will be learning not just how to talk at consumers about agriculture and FFA, but actually *connect* with them.
2. Split students into three groups. Have students move with their groups to separate parts of the room.

Boots tune in. Everyone else tune out.

Boots, we'll be the agriculture haters. It's our job to write as many common criticisms of modern agriculture and FFA on these slips of paper as we can in tweet form. Feel free to use hashtags.

Staying behind our fort tape line, we'll ball them up, and throw them over to the Cats. It's our goal to overwhelm them with snowballs faster than they can return them. If they throw any snowballs back, we can write a response on the bottom and lob them back over. Remember, we're critical of agriculture and FFA.

Cats, put up a paw! [Pause.] Cats tune in. Everyone else tune out.

Cats, we'll be the agriculture defenders. It's our job to catch as many snowballs as we can and respond to the hater-grams in tweet form. Again, it's OK to use hashtags. If a snowball hits the ground before we can catch it, it stays where it lays. Staying behind our fort tape line, we'll ball up our replies to the snowballs we've actually caught and throw them back over to the Boots. It's our goal to catch, respond and return as many snowballs as possible. Ands, put our hands up! [Pause.] Ands this is all for you. Everyone else, tune out. Ands, we'll be the Twitter spectators! Staying between the two fort lines and seated, it's our job to intercept snowballs from both sides and either retweet them by copying them on another sheet of paper or respond on the bottom with additional questions or comments. Then we'll ball them up and launch the snowballs at either the Boots or the Cats. We can pick up and respond to any snowball, even those that have hit the ground. Our goal is to keep our middle area clear of snowballs.

Everyone, tune back in! To recap, Boots – we're agriculture haters. We tweet ag and FFA criticisms and throw them over to the Cats and respond to any snowballs that make it back to our side.

Cats – we're agriculture defenders. We catch the snowballs, and tweet informed responses back at the Boots.

Ands – we're the Twitter spectators. We intercept the snowballs and either copy them on another sheet of paper to retweet or add or two cents and keep them going. What questions are there? [Long pause.]

Boots, grab your pens and meet on this side of the room. Cats, grab your pens and meet on this side of the room. Ands grab your pens and take a seat on the floor in the middle. [Play music and give everyone time to get into position.]

The group with the least number of snowballs on their side of the fort line at the end of two songs, will be our winner! When the music starts, so will the snowball battle... [Play two songs and assist with in the moment questions, rule policing and encouragement.]

Snowballs down! If you have a snowball in your hand drop it on your side. Facilitators, let's count up the snowballs for each group. [Count snowballs, compare results, declare a winner.] Everyone, let's ditch the snowballs in the trash and head back to our seats. [Play music and get everyone back to their seats.]

Processing Questions:

1. *What were some of the criticisms we wrote or read?*
2. *What about some of the responses?*
3. *Ag defenders – what made this such a hard task?*
4. *How is this like actual conversations about agriculture that happen on social media or in person?*
5. *With so few people involved in agriculture, why are there so many questions? Why do we struggle to answer?*

OBJECTIVE 1: Students will memorize and practice the formula for effective values-based consumer conversations.

Support: Step It Out Go Get It Race – Students will break into five teams, racing around the room collecting hidden notecards with letters on them. The first team to collect and unscramble their notecards wins! Students will memorize the unscrambled steps using a song and motions.

Point: Step It Out – There are five steps to effective consumer conversations based on research from the Center for Food Integrity about trust:

1. Know Your Platform – Know what's important to you and why
2. Listen, Don't Judge – Actively listen to show trust and show you care
3. Ask Some Questions – Identify what's important and why
4. Use Shared Values – Listen and utilize values you have in common
5. Give Next Steps – Include the result of the conversation (follow-up, agree to disagree, resources, etc.)

Application: Consumer Conversation Practice – Students will have an opportunity to role play as a concerned consumer and an opportunity to respond to concerned consumers using the five-step formula.

SUPPORT:

1. Reorganize students into new 5 new groups; assign each group a color [this color can also be previously assigned as students enter the classroom with cards, stickers, etc.!]

2. Once students are settled into their new groups, share with students that scattered and hidden throughout the room there are notecards with letters on them. As a team, they will collect the letters on one color of notecards that corresponds to their group color. They will have to check with the instructor once they are finished to ensure that they have the correct spelling.
3. Review instructions.
 - a. *Find, Unscramble, Check. Questions?*
4. Once the five phrases are unscrambled review them and record them as the five steps to “taking conversations with consumers from blah to wah-la!” on page _____ of our handouts.

POINT:

Green group, what was our phrase? [Audience response – Know Your Platform, reveal poster]

Before even starting a consumer conversation, it's important to understand the values that are most important to us as leaders in agriculture. Maybe that's family, hard work or integrity. Whatever the values, we have to know and cement these in our brains ahead of time.

Pink group, what was our phrase? [Audience response – Listen, Don't Judge]

While it's tempting to butt in and start dropping some facts and figures on our unsuspecting victims, the first real step in a conversation with consumers is to LISTEN with an open mind. We shouldn't be brainstorming our response. We should be listening for key words and concerns.

Yellow group, what was our phrase? [Audience response – Ask Some Questions]

Even though someone on the surface may be asking a question about GMOs or sustainability, they might be concerned with food safety or clean water. Before attempting to respond, ask some questions to drill down to what's eating at the consumer. What do they care about?

Orange group, what was our phrase? [Audience response – Use Shared Values]

Once we have a better idea about what a consumer really cares about we can find common ground. Remember those values we talked about a minute ago in “Know Your Platform” this is where they came to the forefront! What shared values do you and the consumer have? Care for the environment? A passion for taking great care of animals? Whatever it is, leads with this common ground!

Blue group, what was our phrase? [Audience response – Explore Next Steps, reveal poster]

So we know our values, we've listened, asked clarifying questions and built a bridge of shared values. Cap off the conversation with some sort of action. Invite them to your farm or a local Breakfast on the Farm. Share some websites or farmer blogs. Offer to follow-up with additional information. Agree to disagree. The end of this conversation should be positive and result in some sort of action.

Make sense? They seem like easy, common sense steps, but it's amazing how much they can add to our conversations. In the moment, it can be tricky to remember them however... So can I let you in on a little trick we use to keep them fresh?

1. Ask students to get up from their seats and follow/repeat along the steps to better conversations.

First step, “Know Your Platform, Know Your Platform.” [Accompany with hands on heart.] Let's do it together. KNOW YOUR PLATFORM. KNOW YOUR PLATFORM. [Accompany with hands on heart.]

Next up, "Listen, Don't Judge; Listen, Don't Judge." [Accompany with hand behind ear, shaking finger.] Together. LISTEN DON'T JUDGE. LISTEN DON'T JUDGE. [Accompany with hand behind ear, shaking finger.]

So the first two steps together:

- KNOW YOUR PLATFORM, KNOW YOUR PLATFORM [hands on heart]
- LISTEN DON'T JUDGE. LISTEN DON'T JUDGE. [hand behind ear, shaking finger]

Third, "Ask Some Questions, Ask Some Questions." [Model question shrug hand motion.] All Together. ASK SOME QUESTIONS. ASK SOME QUESTIONS. [Model question shrug and hand motion.]

From the top:

- KNOW YOUR PLATFORM, KNOW YOUR PLATFORM [hands on heart]
- LISTEN DON'T JUDGE. LISTEN DON'T JUDGE. [hand behind ear, shaking finger]
- ASK SOME QUESTIONS. ASK SOME QUESTIONS. [question shrug and hand motion]

Next, "Use Shared Values, Use Shared Values." [Model share hand sweep.] Join with me. USE SHARED VALUES. USE SHARED VALUES. [Model share hand sweep.]

So our first four steps are:

- KNOW YOUR PLATFORM. KNOW YOUR PLATFORM. [hands on heart]
- LISTEN DON'T JUDGE. LISTEN DON'T JUDGE. [hand behind ear, shaking finger]
- ASK SOME QUESTIONS. ASK SOME QUESTIONS. [question shrug and hand motion]
- USE SHARED VALUES. USE SHARED VALUES. [share hand sweep]

And last but not least, "Give Next Steps. Give Next Steps." [Model two-step march, booty shake.] Together. GIVE NEXT STEPS. GIVE NEXT STEPS. [Model two-step march, booty shake.]

Let's put it all together:

- KNOW YOUR PLATFORM. KNOW YOUR PLATFORM. [hands on heart]
 - LISTEN DON'T JUDGE. LISTEN DON'T JUDGE. [hand behind ear, shaking finger]
 - ASK SOME QUESTIONS. ASK SOME QUESTIONS. [question shrug and hand motion]
 - USE SHARED VALUES. USE SHARED VALUES. [share hand sweep]
 - GIVE NEXT STEPS. GIVE NEXT STEPS. [two-step march, booty shake]
2. Ask students if they think they're ready to add some music. When ready, play "Yeah" and when the beat drops (about 20 seconds in), repeat the five-step cadence three or four times.]
 3. When students are ready to take it up a notch play "Yeah Fast Version" and when the beat drops (about 34 seconds in), repeat the five-step cadence three times.
 4. After completing the cadence fade out music, congratulate the room, and ask students to head back to their seats.

APPLICATION:

1. Have two volunteers come to the front and read off of their handouts. One student will play the role of the concerned consumer on page [redacted] and the other student will read off of page [redacted] and play the role of the passionate agriculturalist.
2. Have students read through and act out the conversation. Ask students some of the following questions about the conversation:

- a. So what went wrong during that conversation?
 - b. What steps did we miss?
3. Have the two student volunteers reread through another conversation on page [redacted] and maintain their same roles. Ask the rest of the students similar questions to last time and what they thought was different or better about this conversation.
4. Next, have students pair up and practice their own conversations using the five steps for three minutes. When time is up, have students switch roles and give the conversation another go!
5. Give time check and monitor the room as needed.
6. When time is up, have students return to their seat. Ask for at least five volunteers to share something that their partners did well in conversation. Also ask students if they feel like they have anything they would personally like to improve on before trying these steps with actual consumers?
7. Have students review the steps once more and play "Yeah" one more time!

Objective 2: Students will discuss techniques to avoid the major pitfalls of ineffective agriculture conversations with consumers.

Support: Consumer Messaging Obstacle Course – Students will split into two teams and race through an obstacle course. At each of the 10 obstacles, the teams will have to decode a clue (one for each of the 10 tips) and complete a quick challenge as a team.

Point: Jump the Hurdles – Sometimes it's not just what we say, it's how we say it! Connecting with consumers means hurdling the common pitfalls ag-people fall into and focusing on the 10 tips for win-win conversations with consumers.

Application: Tips Billboards – Students will work in 10 mini-groups to dive into one of the 10 tips and create a billboard explaining the tip. The group will take a road trip around the room capturing snapshots of the billboards to use later.

SUPPORT:

In just a second, we'll be competing as teams to decode the 10 tips for acing consumer interactions and competing in an obstacle course testing our brain power and teamwork. There will be two teams and 10 mini-challenges. Teams will earn a point for each challenge they win.

The high score at the end of the 10-part obstacle course will take home a piece of candy!

Tune in for the details. Like I mentioned, each mini-challenge will include a clue to decode. After your team successfully decodes the clue, you'll have to complete an activity. First team to correctly decode and cross the finish line will win. What questions do we have?

Let's split into teams! We'll go around the room counting off as As and Bs. [Letter everyone in the room.] As, follow _____ outside. [Wait for them to leave the room.] Bs, follow me!

[Take everyone outside where the obstacle course and clues and prepared. Two copies of the clues to decode should be on separate papers, one for each team.

Each mini-challenge should run in the following manner: give instructions to first decode the clue, check with a facilitator to get a thumbs up its correct then complete the challenge (include the challenge directions). Declare a winner, give a points update and quickly transition to the next mini-challenge. Clues and possible challenges are included below. The challenges may need to be adapted depending on weather, space and time constraints.]

Clues

1. "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care": (people) (care crossed out) how much you (brain) until they (brain) how much you (heart).
2. Ask for clarification before answering: Ask 4 (fuzzy picture to clear picture) before answering
3. Speak slowly and plainly, no alphabet soup: (person talking) (slow moving vehicle sign) and plainly, (crossed out can of alphabet soup)
4. Shared values are greater than skills, economics and science: (share icon) values > skills, (\$) and (test tubes)
5. Have conversations, not lectures: Have (picture of people talking), not (person at a podium)
6. Make your point and stop: Make your (finger pointing) and (stop sign)
7. Walking the walk is greater than talking about it and builds trust: (Person walking) the cooking wok) > (person talking) about it & (tools) (hands shaking)
8. Stick to what you know and phone a friend: (tape) to what you (brain) and (phone) a(Facebook friend icon)
9. Share your personal passion and relate: (share icon) your personal (person celebrate) & re (person checking watch)
10. 10. What's in it for me is greater than Feeding the World: WIIFM> (filled plate) the (earth)

Activities

1. Whole team must crab walk around an obstacle (nearest tree, light post, etc.)
2. Whole team must build a human pyramid
3. Whole team join hands and thread a hula hoop completely around the circle
4. Whole team spell out FFA using their bodies (must use the whole team)
5. Three legged race to a finish line
6. Whole team limbo under a bar without touching it or falling
7. Whole team must skip around an obstacle (nearest tree, light post, etc.)
8. Whole team must reach the finish line as a chain (link arms, when everyone is on the chain, first person runs to the end, etc. until they cross the finish)
9. Whole team pairs up and transports water balloons pinched between each other's backs
 1. across a finish line, back to back, linking elbows (if balloon drops or breaks start over)
10. Whole team must pass a ball around the circle without dropping it reciting one letter from A to Z per person (can't pass directly to the left or right and everyone must be involved)

POINT: Take a closer look at the 10 tips we decoded outside. Turn to page ____ in their handout and let's fill in these blanks:

1. "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." –Theodore Roosevelt
2. Ask for clarification before answering
3. Speak slowly and plainly, no alphabet soup
4. Shared values are greater than skills, economics and science
5. Have conversations, not lectures
6. Make your point and stop
7. Walking the walk is greater than talking about it and builds trust
8. Stick to what you know and phone a friend
9. Share your personal passion and relate
10. What's in it for me (consumers) is greater than Feeding the World

APPLICATION:

So we have these great tips, but what do they really mean and how do we use them? In just a second, we'll be taking a road trip to dive into each of these tips a little deeper.

In groups, we'll create a billboard showcasing our tip and answering the following questions [refer to questions on a poster in the front of the room]:

- What does this really mean? What's an easy way to describe this tip in greater detail?
- What does this look like? (phrases, pictures, personal examples, etc.)

We'll have two songs to work with our group to answer these questions and create our billboards.

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Questions? [Pause]

Grab two or three people not from your region and gather around one of the tip billboards around the room. Your two songs start now! [Play two upbeat, but little known songs. Do time check ins with two and one minute left.]

Nice work! Let's head back to our seats.

As you can see, we have some pretty awesome billboards around the room. Great resources to help us really take these tips to heart. When the music starts, we'll turn to page ____ in our Learn Book and capture the key points on each billboard. We'll have two songs, so we've got to make this a quick road trip, copying down the high points fairly quickly. Let's grab our books and get this road trip started! [Play two calm songs. Do time check ins with two and one minute left.]

Let's put it into high gear and park it back at our seats.

What were three things we learned from the billboards? [Audience response.]

What were three things we hadn't considered before? [Audience response.]

Where can we use these tips after today? [Audience response, three volunteers.]

We've figured out the five steps to effective consumer conversations. We've decoded the 10 hurdles and tips to connecting with consumers. But how can we use this back at home? How can these five steps and 10 tips add value to our chapters?

1. Have students turn to page ____ of their handout materials. Have them take one song in to brainstorm at least three ways we can use the five-step conversation method and 10 tips and tricks we conquered in the session back at our chapter.
2. Use processing questions to inspire creative ideas and brainstorming:
 - *Think about ways we can relay these five steps to all the students in our chapter so they can better explain what we do in agriculture education and FFA.*
 - *How can we use the 10 tips and tricks to enhance our chapter activities?*
 - *What events or places in our communities could we put these conversation skills to practice to help answer consumer questions?*
 - *Think about things your chapter already does and new ideas you could try.*
3. Wrap up lesson with attention to any final details or questions students may have.