

Ambassador Basics

The most effective and memorable exhibits include enthusiastic, informative volunteers. Agriculture has a lot of good things to tell the public, and local fairs and farm tours provide a great opportunity to do that. In the past our industry has reacted to negative publicity and misinformation. It is important to counter misinformation, but it is more effective to become pro-active and address the questions the public has before they become negative concerns and beliefs.

If we don't tell the story of modern agriculture to the public, who will? This section will provide you with some approaches for being an effective ambassador for agriculture.

- Learn all you can about your sector of the industry and the criticisms against it. Keeping up with issues affecting your interests and other sectors of the industry is an ongoing process.
- Think critically, and encourage critical thinking in all those you speak to. The key concept is to provide factual information to allow the individual to form their own opinions. Encourage questions such as: What is the source of your information? Is it a credible source of information on that topic? What is the agenda/goals of the source?
- By asking the right questions, you can get the visitor thinking critically about things they have seen or "read somewhere". This approach is far more effective than lecturing a person on the importance of animal agriculture. The learning process dictates that allowing someone to reach their own conclusions is always the most effective.
- Everyone is entitled to their own opinion. Be open minded and objective when encountering ideas that differ from yours. Try to remain positive and provide that individual with the facts about your industry. Your objective as an Agricultural Ambassador is to build understanding and appreciation.
- Remember, you cannot change a belief, and you cannot reach everyone. Don't preach to the converted. Learn to recognize people with preformed ideas and don't waste your time trying to change their mind.

