

# Real Maine Media Toolbox: Tips for busy farmers

This is an introductory guide to help Maine farmers implement basic tools to promote their farm and products. It reviews a variety of resources to help you build your business marketing and promotions.

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## Telling your story

There are a lot of ways to tell your story to your audience—customers, business partners, community members, etc. The messaging will be different for each audience, but primary information—especially who you are, and your contact info—should be consistent, and accurate across all your promotional efforts.

When telling your story, answer the “Five Ws”:

- ✓ Who: ...are you? Can people contact you—where and how?
- ✓ What: ..describe what “it” is... answer what can people expect to...learn, see, do?
- ✓ Where: ... will the event happen?
- ✓ When: ... will the event happen?
- ✓ Why: ... does it matter to your audience? Is it important?

Helpful check list for telling your story...

- Place the most important information at the beginning.
- Allow plenty of time to write, proofread and rewrite as needed:
  - Public Service Announcement (PSA), social media, webpages, blogs, etc.
- Take a break. Write, then come back later to proofread.
- Delete words, sentences, paragraphs that do not add meaning.
- Be concise, and meaningful—find a lot of good tidbits? Save them for the future.
- Read from the audience perspective.
  - What are their questions? Level of understanding? Readability?
- Read the draft out loud from end to beginning.
- Ask for a second opinion from a different reader.
- Did spellcheck autocorrect a word? Punctuation?
- Correct information?
  - Dates, names, times, location.

### Elements of a media kit

A media kit has the most important information to promote your farm business in a convenient location. It can be digital, or print. A digital copy should be added to a webpage, social media, and your email signature.

Use this guide to help you DIY a media kit

Your business purpose: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Your contact info:

Web: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Social: \_\_\_\_\_

- ✓ Selected images—a variety
- ✓ Fact sheet/infographics
- ✓ PSA or Press Release

### Public Service Announcement (PSA)

A PSA is a very brief description of an event with all key information. A PSA may be included in promoted via social media or read aloud on the radio. They typically introduce an informational event, campaign or activity, to alert the public. Farmers and producers may send these to newspapers, and service providers, as well as the Real Maine program to request a courtesy release for further distribution.

Tailor your release to the audience—for example, an ag audience versus a consumer audience. A good announcement should be 35–70 words and include:

- What (title of event):
- Where:
- When:
- Why (briefly, what will happen at event):
- Who (who's hosting, who should attend):
- Information on \*how\* to learn more

## Press Releases

A press release is directed to members of the news media (print, radio, TV) with the goal of a story to be created prior to the event. They are part of an overall marketing and public relations effort that can help you pitch a story idea, or promote a product. They are also useful to share important news and accolades.

Tailor your release to the audience—for example, an ag audience versus a consumer audience. To write a good press release:

Write a brief, clear and to-the-point headline that has the key points.

Place the most important information is in the first paragraph:

- What (title of event)
- Where
- When
- Why (briefly, what will happen at event)
- Who (who's hosting, who should attend)?

The lead sentence should be concise, but interesting and share the key message—it references the why of the event.

- ✓ No jargon or industry slang—not very helpful to many readers or the press. If you need to use a term, explain it so that readers can understand it (they don't know what you know)
- ✓ Include one to two quotes that add value about the newsworthy event
- ✓ Keep it simple, limit word count—under 300 words.
- ✓ Include contact name and information at the top

## Media Planning, and Content Calendars

A calendar is a simple tool to guide you as you plan and prepare timely promotional efforts. They may be called editorial calendars, content calendars or media calendars—and they may be robust and distinct, or simple.

Why use one?

- ✓ Stay focused
- ✓ Plan your time
- ✓ Brainstorm content
- ✓ Track progress—goals, successes, failures

Conveniently access content to share your story:

- ✓ Organize messages
- ✓ Save drafts and review drafts
- ✓ Review and schedule print, web, and advertising deadlines—self-imposed or the deadlines of others (i.e., a newspaper, print shop, etc.).

The most important parts of an editorial calendar are:

- ✓ You have one
- ✓ Time-specific goals
- ✓ You use it—it's part of your overall farm business efforts

It does not need to be elaborate.

There are more detailed options available than the examples provided in this guide, including to third-party applications that synch with social media platforms, blog posts and e-commerce.

**TIP:** In addition to your own editorial calendar, you need to know about deadlines of others who help you promote your farm.

**TIP:** Typically, it's more useful to have a digital calendar (e.g. using Word or a spreadsheet) which makes it easier for you to copy and paste the message into the medium you plan to use.

If you're new to an editorial calendar, you can try it for a single event (as the example shows). Once you're more comfortable, consider a more detailed plan, or templates.

What	When	Where (print, web, social, other)	Date completed
<b>Publication Month(s):</b>			
<i>Message, graphics, images, video, blog post...</i>	<i># of days, months weeks on the timeline,</i>	<i>print, web, social, other</i>	

Useful dates and deadlines to know


Real Maine Publications:

Item	Primary Content	Due
Spring in Maine Publication	Maine Maple Sunday®, Flower show	February 1
Open Farm Day Passport Publication	Open Farm Day Listings	May 1
Harvest Time Publication	Apple Sunday, Creamery, Cheese Festival, Winery day, PYO, 'maizes'	July 1
Maine's Year in Agriculture Publication	Ag Trades Show Preview Highlights about past and upcoming successes in Maine agriculture	October 1

Other recurring content for most of these publications

- ✓ Recipes
- ✓ Feature stories
- ✓ Agricultural awareness, literacy and trivia

Maine Tourism Association Publications:



ANNUAL DEADLINES	PRINT MEDIA & DIGITAL	PRINT DATE
SPACE RESERVATION DEADLINE - OCTOBER	MAINE INVITES YOU TRAVEL PLANNER	JANUARY
SPACE RESERVATION DEADLINE - OCTOBER	OFFICIAL STATE HIGHWAY MAP	JANUARY
SPACE RESERVATION DEADLINE - APRIL	ATTRACTIONS & SERVICE MAP	MEMORIAL - COLUMBUS DAY
SPACE RESERVATION DEADLINE - APRIL	GUIDE TO INNS, B&B'S - GUIDE TO CAMPS & COTTAGES	MEMORIAL - COLUMBUS DAY
NO DEADLINE <u>SIGN-UP YEAR-ROUND</u>	BOOK DIRECT KIOSK LISTINGS BROCHURE/GUIDEBOOK DISTRIBUTION VISITOR CENTER VIDEO BOARD VISITOR CENTER EXHIBITS WEBSITE ADVERTISING ONCETHERE ONLINE BOOKING (TICKET SALES)	



## Media Planning Calendar Example

Example media planning calendar to promote Open Farm Day

Note: this is an example for an event supported by the Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry.

After the event is complete, review what worked for you, and determine future changes.

What (Message, graphics, images)	When	Where (print, web, social, other)	Date completed
<b>Publication Month(s):</b> April-July			
Graphic 1—Save the date!	2 months before event	Social media	
Graphic 2 or image—Special events and activities planned	3-6 weeks before event	Social media	
Create personalized talking points to share with attendees, add to PSAs, before and during event	2-3 months before event	Word of mouth; newspapers, social,	
Event page: time, date, location and invitation with image	2-3 months before event (can be earlier)	Web, Social, EventBrite,	
Blog post: Farm stories...		Web	
Op-Ed Article or video about the value of...  Learning where your food comes from...and supporting Maine agriculture year-round.  ...That's why I invite you to explore, learn and meet Maine farmers firsthand on Sunday, July XX. Visitors welcome!	3-14 days before event (may need to place an ask 3-6 months before)	Local papers, magazines, blog post, etc.	

... Example continues on next page...

What (Message, graphics, images)	When	Where (print, web, social, other)	Date completed
Radio script	Airs 3-5 days before event, script sent 2-3 months before	Radio advertisement	
Advertisement or interview with local weekly newspaper or community bulletin	5-10 days before event		
Publish PSA: Who, what, when, where	3-7 days before the event	Local news pitch	
Voicemail greeting: Join us Sunday July XX for Open Farm Day!	3-7 days before event	Business phone	
Post message w/ image We're excited to see you at our farm, {A Wicked Good Farm} from 10 to 3 at	Fourth Sunday in July— during the event	Social—FB, IG	
Thanks to everyone who came to our farm!  ...We heard {tidbits about what people learned}  We're doing ... tomorrow, and we hope to stay connected. Remember, you can find our products {year-round/seasonally... } at....	Day after event	Social—FB, IG, maybe print in the weekly paper or community bulletin?	
	After the event	News	



### DIY Farm photography and video tips

It's not always convenient or recommended to have a camera with you while you're working. Yet, often it's more common that mobile devices have a built-in camera. These basic tips are simple to use and aim to help you make the most of a workday, or time that you set aside to compile images that help you tell our story.

#### General:

- ✓ Patience—it takes time to develop a library of photos and images that showcase your best farm products and tell the story of your farm. You will take more mediocre than magnificent images—a few will be frame-worthy. The more you practice the better chance you have to curate a variety of images and video.
- ✓ Practice – experiment with different lighting, subject matter, filters, etc.
- ✓ Variety:
  - Close ups
  - Wide shots
  - Portrait (images—do not use this for video)
  - Landscape (images and video—use this for video)
  - Seasonal changes
  - Events that tell a story from start to finish
  - Take more images than you need

#### Elements of design:

The elements of design help viewers pay attention to content that is interesting and eye catching. They are common themes that resonate with many people. Knowing how to use them and how they work together helps you curate a consistent story however, and wherever you share it.

If you are not a professional videographer or photographer, there are some helpful DIY tips that can help you use the elements of design to build your library of photos and videos.

Elements include: color, contrast, light, line, texture and shape.

How might these combinations work in agriculture? They may be unique, but they often are used together. Here are some examples:

- ✓ Color—complementary colors, or color combinations. Many of these occur in nature, for example, violas (complementary purple and yellow) and apples (complementary greens and reds), maple leaves in fall have warm colors of yellows, orange and red. Pastures and greenhouses glistening in winter snow have cooler

colors—depicting the season on the farm. A black and white photo may communicate a journalistic feel, yet still evoke curiosity.

- ✓ Contrast, light and line—animals in the morning, fields sunsets with silhouettes against the horizon create a familiar, inviting combination.
- ✓ Texture and shape—this is especially useful to display products that you would like to sell. Can you provide a close up of food, flowers, fiber and other farm products to evoke an experience for a customer? An image of soft wool socks, combined with a video of you carding fleece can help customers virtually experience the care and detail of products.
- ✓ Shape and line—Look for the ways you can focus a product, a farm scene, equipment or animals in an appealing way. One way to do this is to identify implied lines and shape. Examples: a triangle frames the eyes nose and mouth of animals and people, create a focal point using an imaginary line to connect the dots.
- ✓ Color and light—natural light is ideal, and it can help you reduce future editing. But, it's not always consistent. You can address this before editing by changing a backdrop—maybe your portrait of you and a prized animal is clearer if you add artificial light, or a different backdrop.

#### Technical aspects:

- ✓ High resolution images are important
- ✓ Tripods and remote shutter release will help reduce blur—they provide more stability than hands
- ✓ Is it charged? Battery backup? Is there enough memory, film or card?
- ✓ Save and backup
- ✓ Use your legs, not your lens to zoom—unless an appropriate **camera** lens (less likely on a phone)
- ✓ Aperture—focus. Manual and automatic, with ranges. “F-Stop”.
  - Typically, more adjustable manually with a camera.
  - Humans and animal photographs: mid-range aperture such as f/5.6
- ✓ ISO—sensor for light sensitivity: adjust exposure to light.
  - Typically, more adjustable manually with a camera.
- ✓ Shutter speed—amount of time a camera shutter opens to expose light. Range
  - Typically, more adjustable manually with a camera.
  - More motion blur: use slower shutter speed—keeps shutter open for longer
  - Less blur: use a faster shutter speed

**Video-specific:**

- ✓ Don't have to move the camera, let the event/scene unfold
- ✓ Film for more than you need, easier to trim. Publish/display shorter bursts
- ✓ Using a phone? Horizontal/landscape
- ✓ Microphone—Consider mini boom and/or audio microphone—connects to phones

**Equipment Positioning:**

- ✓ Cameras
  - Focal points—review elements of design.
  - Rule of thirds—imaginary grid of three rows by three columns to help you focus within one of the nine squares
- ✓ Portrait lighting— Three-point lighting (key light, fill light).
  - Key light is the main light source illuminating a subject.
- ✓ Fill light is the light source on the opposite side, it softens shadows. East-facing fill light in the morning and a west-facing in the evening.

**Suggestions for image lists and story topics****Catalog:**

- ✓ Business sign
- ✓ Beginning product (seeds, seedling, orchard tree, produce, fiber, meat, grains, etc.)
- ✓ Final product (mature plant or produce, finished recipe, sock, hat, etc.)
- ✓ Instructional in 3-5 images: on how to use product

**Educational tour:**

- ✓ Information about each season
- ✓ Step-by-step processes: how land is cultivated, how animals are cared for, etc.
- ✓ Consider a 360-degree camera
  - Media tags—inform within the viewing pane points of interest and information

**Website:**

- ✓ Farm sign
- ✓ Staff/family
- ✓ Location
- ✓ Products
- ✓ Page background
- ✓ Blog posts



## Virtual Storytelling Topics and Video Ideas

- ✓ How did you get started in the business?
- ✓ A day in your life?
- ✓ Animal closeups—grooming, animal husbandry
- ✓ Product closeups—seasonal or featured items
- ✓ Time-lapse of seedlings growing
- ✓ Time-lapse of planting, chores, harvesting

### Sample outline: DIY video with narrator

Review the sections on interviews and preparing a PSA

1. Introduce yourself
  - a. Business name, your role, what is the main message you're sharing
2. Present the main message
  - a. Store is open
  - b. New products
  - c. A special event or activity
3. Conclude with a call to action
  - a. Learn more at....website, social media, shopping cart or directions link
  - b. Thank you!

### Photography tips for livestock sales

In addition to editorial style images that promote and market your farm and brand, if you're marketing seedstock animals, or selling a market animal, there are some specific techniques to help you get the best setup to help your potential customer factually evaluate the animals.

- ✓ Lighting—Face the animal with the sun to your back—at a bit of an angle. Avoid casting a shadow onto the animal. Overcast days provide a nice balance of light.
- ✓ Timing—Avoid times of day when the sun is directly overhead. Avoid times when livestock are resting, or too excited. Pay attention to their calm moments in the mornings and afternoons when they are active and a bit curious.
- ✓ Positioning—The animal should have at least one image on a side profile. They should be on level ground, to ground that slightly slopes upward near their front feet. Avoid positioning the animal with its front legs on a downward slope/hill. Front feet should be spaced squarely beneath the animal, and rear feet should be

distanced just enough to show some space. There may be specific preferences for species.

As the photographer, you will likely need to shoot with your camera at approximately the same height as the animal's shoulder. Most often, this means bending on one knee and stabilizing the camera using your arm as a tripod. Keep the camera level. Avoid angling the camera too far up or down, which distorts the perception of the animal.

To provide even more evaluation, you can take images from the front and rear of the animal. Feet should be placed squarely beneath the animal during these images, showcasing their natural skeletal confirmation.

In most instances, animals' heads should be upright, and ears alert if displaying for catalogs and seedstock promotions. There's more leniency with group images (i.e., animals grazing, eating, nursing, etc.) and certain animals, such as hogs, which may need a distraction to pose for a seedstock catalog or sale image.

- ✓ Support—Photographing the best images may require up to three people, and a designated picture area. All should have familiarity with moving livestock with best animal handling. Work with the calmest animals first. Don't force an image—sometimes an animal might get too excited and it takes time to get back to a calm demeanor. A calm animal can make a good picture and is important for quality animal handling.
- ✓ Backgrounds—avoid a cluttered background. Select a backdrop—an open field, blank barn wall with a neutral color for most animals. Avoid non-contrasting backdrops—don't place an animal with white hair against a white wall, or black hair against black or dark colors, etc.
- ✓ Natural—Avoid filters, digital enhancements and other digital modifications. Limit editing to adding your logo or contact info on the image, or pedigree information. The animal should be presented in a natural, clean way, and does not need to be overly prepared as it would for a show but should be presentable and well-cared for to meet your quality efforts and customer satisfaction.



- ✓ Group shots—Group shots can be beneficial to help customers evaluate animals for sale. Videos of animals moving from a starting point to an end point of a short distance displays their structural correctness on the move. This answers the question: can they walk correctly and are they healthy doing so for their age and condition? For animals that are not on halters or leads, this can also be setup in a designated photo area—which could be a pen outside in familiar place for the animals. In these instances, a tripod can be useful. When videoed from a distance in natural surroundings, it can give the buyer an impression of other factors that go into a quality product. Mothers and offspring, yearling groups that have successfully transitioned—these provide insight into the environment and the genetics that are part of what you and your customer can see.

**TIP:** Keep in mind, that the purpose of a market animal is to provide quality products for you, and your customers. should work to present your business in the best light—enhancing your chance for a satisfied, repeat customer.

A good photograph will not sell inferior livestock or finished products. What you see, and what your customer receives is a combination of genetics and environment, and attention to quality at every step of a good product.

*Poor genetics + poor environment= poorly performing animal, poor results for you and customers*

What does this mean? If you're taking a picture of animals that are underweight for their age, lack the proper conditioning, and are not healthy, a photograph will depict that.

To combine a quality final product that matches what you showcase in a photo or video for market animals, use resources that instruct you about proper feeding, veterinary care, animal husbandry and genetic selection to guide your business goals. Additionally, seek feedback from your customers about the product. What did they like? Dislike? How can you improve? Were you both realistic in understanding each other's expectations?

If you make this a practice, and set goals for improvements, you'll find consistent results, and repeat customers. The images you show will simply tell the story of your business efforts.

Resources instructing you about market animal evaluation can help you understand what is beneficial in a picture that is worth 1,000 words to your customer. Many are available, typically from Cooperative Extension, and purebred livestock registries. Here are some from Cooperative Extension:

Evaluating livestock:

<https://counties.agrilife.org/trinity/files/2011/06/LivestockJudgingMan.pdf>

Evaluating market animals:

<https://meat.tamu.edu/an-sc-307-honors/appraisal/>



A diagram is available with the pointers. It uses a bovine, but the parameters are applicable to most livestock:

- ✓ Partly sunny, sun is shining on the photographed side of animal
- ✓ Photographer is level with on the animal point of shoulder \*Note: kneel or use a tripod to adjust according to animal frame and/or species
- ✓ Adequate distance to frame the whole animal
- ✓ Animal is slightly standing up hill (10-15-degrees)
- ✓ Animal is alert—ears forward, head forward
- ✓ Front legs are squarely placed beneath in a natural position that follows animal's skeletal structure; rear legs slightly spaced—but not too much to create a dip in the back and loin
- ✓ No distracting backdrop (equipment, animals, buildings, etc.)





## Internet and technology

Using technology to promote your farm is a way to stay connected with customers year-round. In addition to social media, there are other simple, usable approaches for DIY comfort levels. You may learn that a more robust internet presence is a priority for you—there are DIY options for that, and there are many professionals who can help you.

**Basics**—Using common, familiar business and office technology, you can stay connected with customers. These are a foundation to build upon more sophisticated tools such as websites and e-commerce.

- ✓ Computer or mobile device with Internet
- ✓ Telephone number (mobile, landline, VOIP) with a welcome message
- ✓ Farm or business email address—not a personal one
- ✓ Product list and prices—make digital or hardcopy available to customers
- ✓ Customer contact sheets—make digital and/or hardcopy to collect information:
  - Name
  - Email
  - Product interests
  - How did they find out about you?

**TIP:** Use a web-based contact form to collect pre-orders into a spreadsheet and collect customer contact info (such as email subscriptions). These are often available at lower-costs via cloud computing applications, including those that also provide an email address, file creation and sharing.

**TIP:** Looking to update or create a website? Do your research—what features do you like in a website? How do you want it to look for your customers? What simple does it need to accomplish? Different website layouts work for different reasons. Determine your goals to manage resources—including your time.

**Dot Com**—If you're considering a website, and the many ways to use it, here are some important reminders:

- ✓ Domain name—available for a purchase and annual fee to host your website
- ✓ Website –the place where you can tell your story, collect customer contact info, and even sell

- ✓ Email service provider—third-party tools that help you send email templates
  - Targeted messaging, and data management of your customer contact list
- ✓ Professional and appropriate images scaled to web viewability are a must.
  - If you cannot DIY images on your farm, consider photo libraries or professionals
- ✓ Website integrations can be added to your site. This may be e-commerce (shopping cart), and contact forms or email subscriptions, photo carousels—determine what’s best for you
  - Some integrations can connect with other business software (budgets, sales cycle, accounting, inventory management) and automatically update these applications in a streamlined process
  - Internet sales planning (SEO, ads) may be worth considering as an integration
- ✓ Mobile friendly, responsive design is important
- ✓ Excellent search and filter functions to quickly get product are preferred by users/customers
- ✓ More robust risk management and cyber security is likely a need
  - How will you protect customer data? What needs to be encrypted?
  - Secure payment is a must
- ✓ While E-commerce shopping offers familiar experience to a wider variety of customers—it might not be necessary for you.
  - Consider pros, cons and costs as part of overall budgeting
  - May need business relationships with marketing, technology experts and professionals

**TIP:** No matter how you use technology to share your message—social media, text messages, word of mouth, email newsletters, your website, brochures, catalogues, etc.—it should be part of a thoughtful, consistent media campaign.

## Social Media

### Planning tips

**Define your target audience(s):** (e.g., farmers, visitors, shoppers)

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

**Which platform(s) make the most sense for you and your business?** (e.g. Facebook, Youtube, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, etc.)

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

**Develop a social media policy; key takeaways of policy:** (codes of conduct, how to address inquiries, spam, etc.)

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

**How will you measure your success?** (e.g., number of sales, referrals, visits to venue, etc.)

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

### Sharing Tips

Increasing shares of social media content can help you spread your messages. Here are basic tips:

- ✓ Have an attractive, eye-catching image or video.
- ✓ Keep posts succinct—less than 10-20 words.
- ✓ Use Hashtags (no more than 3-5)
  - Common hashtags to reach a curious audience:  
#207 #RealMaine #VisitMaine #MaineFarms
  - Create your own unique hashtag and encourage use by others to spread the word—your farm or business name, a unique event or activity name
- ✓ Share links from your webpages, news stories about your farm, or local agriculture, and your blog posts or e-newsletters.

- ✓ Consider using catalog and purchase links in shared images for e-commerce (products, tickets, etc.)
- ✓ Engage the reader, ask questions: where will you shop? What's your favorite farm product?
- ✓ Engage the reader, create online activities, such as selfie contests with farm products, recipe sharing, DIY tips, etc.
- ✓ Follow @RealMaine (<https://www.facebook.com/GetRealMaine/>). Share posts for events and activities that matter to you—type a personalized message for your farm when you share the content.
- ✓ Tag @RealMaine with your own content.
- ✓ Consider using an aggregator (e.g., Hoot Suite, Sprout Social) to schedule posts across different social media channels, and track the metrics—what posts and which types of social media help you meet your planning goals?

#### Video Specifications on Social Media Channels:

Note: specifications can and do change. Account users should check with the application to stay updated. This list features Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. Current as of April 2020:

#### Facebook Video Guidelines Page Posts:

- Recommended video dimensions are 1280 x 720 for Landscape and Portrait.
- Minimum width is 600 pixels (length depends on aspect ratio) for Landscape and Portrait.
- Landscape aspect ratio is 16:9.
- Portrait aspect ratio is 9:16 (if video includes link, aspect ratio is 16:9).
- Mobile renders both video types to aspect ratio 2:3.
- Max file size is 4GB
- Recommended video formats are .MP4 and .MOV.
- Video max frames 30fps.

#### Character Limits

- Maximum count: 2,200 characters.
- Recommended: 90 characters (if link is used).
- Headline max: 25 characters.
- Link description max: 30 characters.

#### Facebook 360 Videos:

- Video Guidelines



- Maximum dimensions are 4096 x 2048.
- Minimum width is 600 pixels (length depends on aspect ratio).
- 360 aspect ratio is 2:1.
- Max file size is 1.75GB.
- Recommended video formats are .MP4.
- Video length must be less than 40 minutes.
- Video max frames 60fps.

Facebook Carousels—useful for call to actions, appears in feeds:

- Recommended video dimensions are 1080 x 1080 for Landscape and Square.
- Minimum dimensions 600 x 315 (1.9:1 landscape) or 600 x 600 (square).
- Square aspect ratio is 1:1.
- Max video file size is 2.3GB.
- Recommended video formats are .MP4 and .MOV.
- Video length max is 30 seconds or less (continuous looping is up to 90 seconds).
- Video max frames 30fps.
- Character Limits
- Maximum count: 2,200 characters.
- Recommended: 90 characters.
- Headline max: 40 characters.
- Link description max: is 20 characters.

Instagram:

- Video Guidelines
- Minimum resolution for landscape video is 600 x 315.
- Minimum resolution for square video is 600 x 600.
- Minimum resolution for vertical video is 600 x 750.
- Landscape aspect ratio is 16:9.
- Square aspect ratio is 1:1.
- Vertical aspect ratio is 4:5.
- Max file size for all formats is 4GB
- Recommended video formats are .MP4 and .MOV.
- Video length max is 60 seconds.
- Video max frames 30fps.

## Character Limits

- Maximum caption: 2,200 characters.
- Caption recommendation: 125 characters.

Instagram Carousel Video Ad:

With Instagram, your carousel video ads can have 2-10 cards with a full-width call to action below the ad.

- Video Guidelines
- Minimum resolution is 600 x 600.
- Max resolution is 1080 x 1080.
- Aspect ratio is 1:1.
- Max file size is 4GB.
- Recommended video formats are .MP4 and .MOV.
- Video length max is 60 seconds.
- Video max frames 30fps.

## Character Limits

- Maximum caption: 2,200 characters.
- Caption recommendation: 125 characters.



## Instagram Stories (Ads & Organic Posts):

### Video Guidelines

- Recommended resolution is 1080 x 1920.
- Minimum resolution is 600 x 1067.
- Aspect ratio is 9:16.
- Max file size is 4GB.
- Recommended video formats are .MP4 and .MOV.
- Video length max is 15 seconds.

## Instagram TV:

Like stories, but longer time frame for delivery and published content.

### Video Guidelines

- Recommended resolution is 1080 x 1920.
- Minimum resolution is 720.
- Aspect ratio is 9:16 (recommended), or 16:9 is also supported. In-feed previews show at 4:5.
- Videos are minimum 1 minute and maximum 10 minutes long. Some accounts can upload a video up to 1 hour using desktop.
- Max file size for videos less than 10 minutes is 650MB. For videos up to 60 minutes, it's 3.6 GB
- The required file format is MP4

## YouTube

Video Uploads      Minimum HD 1280 x 720, ratio of 16:9

### Interview Tips

What happens when you're interviewed about your farm or event? Are you confident you'll present your message in a way the listener will retain the information?

### **Helpful tips for interviews:**

- ✓ Prepare. Practice. Be concise.
  - Explain jargon and acronyms. Example CSA—community supported agriculture, farm share, side of beef, bushel of beans... These are terms that are most familiar to you and your most supportive customers. But you want to be inclusive so that any viewer or listener can connect and understand.
- ✓ Who is the audience?



- Nobody knows what you know—and they don't need to know everything you know. Communicate what's most important in the eyes of your audience (e.g., reporter, potential customer, another business, etc.)
- ✓ Ask writers if they need you to explain concepts.
- ✓ Summarize key points—provide data sheet in advance (or place on your webpage).
- ✓ Talk slowly and clearly when giving an interview—at the pace of the hand writer's note taking, or a conversational pace.
- ✓ Pause before answering. (Give yourself a chance to think.)
- ✓ Do not exaggerate, lie or belittle—use facts and objective reasons to explain information about *your* farm. Build up agriculture, don't belittle a competitor.
- ✓ If you do not know the answer to an interview question, simply admit to it. Do not try to guess. *"That's a good question; I don't know the answer to it, but I can look it up and get back to you or connect you to someone more familiar with that topic."*
- ✓ If you don't want to wake up and read or see it in the headlines, don't say it.
- ✓ When interviewer asks if there's anything else to share, use this as a chance to summarize and add the important information. Typically, this is the last question, and you'll be most comfortable and recall important points to reiterate (dates, contact info, etc.)
- ✓ Confirm when the piece will run. Ask if it's appropriate to share the piece in your press and promotions on social media or your webpage.
- ✓ Prepare suggestions for the interview location—Examples farm sign background, healthy crops and animals in production. Avoid restrooms, etc. Every day is inspection day—processing facilities should be prepared in advance for guests and visitors.
- ✓ Say thank you! 😊

### Radio, TV, DIY

- ✓ Bring your notes/talking points.
- ✓ Smile when you're talking.
- ✓ Share your enthusiasm and maintain clarity of voice.
- ✓ Stop when the answer is complete—don't fill the airwaves just to fill the airwaves.
- ✓ At farm--good backdrop, appropriate displays.
- ✓ At studio: BYO props and appropriate displays (e.g., produce, wool, preserves, and farm products for bountiful displays, farm images).
- ✓ Attire: comfortable, and clean. Logowear if available.
- ✓ DIY—re-take and edit as necessary.



## Crisis Communications

What are crisis communications? This is a concept that businesses should prepare responses to address emergency issues. These issues may range from delivery delays, to technological glitches, and community-wide events. They supplement your active effort to share your story, and consistent facts and information with your customer and the public in a safe, but prompt manner.

They are also part of business and risk management planning that are important for any size farm producer.

Examples:

- Emergency—first responders on the scene
- Weather event
- Product contamination or recall

Important tips:

- ✓ Prepare a template of a written statement—review it with staff and trusted advisors. Update it as you would a PSA, and an interview
- ✓ Address safety: Are you okay? Are staff okay? Are customers okay?
- ✓ Address solutions: Share what you know—use facts. Share the next step—follow through on those next steps. It's okay to admit you do not know some information.
- ✓ Address timelines: If necessary, will there be updates or more information? When, where and how will you share it?
- ✓ Be consistent with your message—images and video
- ✓ If a follow up is warranted, always follow up and follow through.
- ✓ Say thank-you
- ✓ Be sensitive of timing—is the information relevant and topical?
- ✓ Be proactive: avoid allowing a crisis to be the first contact your customers have with you about your business. Crisis communications are one part of a coordinated media and communications plan for your business.
- ✓ Seek professional expertise if necessary.

## Getting into the newspaper

### 1. Develop a “Most Wanted Media List:”

Exclusively target the top media outlets that you believe have the greatest potential to influence your target audiences to act. Determine if it's local, regional, national or international press (or a mix of all four) that you're after. Consider newspapers,



magazines, television and radio shows, as well as online media. Don't forget wire services (the Associated Press, Reuters) and freelance writers!

**2. Know thy media:** Scrutinize your target publications and the work of key journalists faithfully. Get to know the content of regular sections and columns. Be aware of the kinds of stories individual writers do. Pay attention to bylines. Keep notes and clip articles of interest.

**3. Find a good angle:** Regularly brainstorm about all the different niche angles that could generate exposure for you. If you oversee promoting a tourism attraction, think history, design, food, gardens, antiques, holiday-inspired packages or even remarkable employees with an intriguing story to tell. Try to tie story ideas to hard news, trends in the travel industry, or upcoming holidays and milestones. Nothing works better than a well-timed pitch.

**4. Think quirky:** Be creative in your pitching. Journalists love offbeat stories, anecdotes, one-of-a-kind offerings, and unique human-interest stories.

**5. Make it short and sweet:** Here's where your sales skills will come into play. Make it appealing, get to your point quickly and be as specific as possible. One-page pitch letters are long enough. Releases should be one to two pages maximum. If delivering a phone pitch, know what you are going to say before you pick up the phone and work to keep it to 30 seconds or less.

**6. Follow up. Follow up. Follow up:** As PR practitioners, how many times have we heard that a press release wasn't received or that an e-mail was accidentally relegated to a journalist's "Junk Email" box? Or, how many times have we been told by reporters that they loved our pitch but hadn't had time to pick up the phone themselves to get more information? In all these cases, a simple phone call or follow-up e-mail was all it took to fully engage the journalist's interest. Here's another hint: Journalists will really appreciate your follow up if you have new, newsworthy information to offer them when you call.

**7. Co-operate:** If you represent a single entity like a restaurant or tourism attraction, think about partnering with other businesses or organizations in your industry to attract media coverage. You could arrange a familiarization tour for targeted media; host a lunch event for key outlets in big media centers like Boston or New York; or work together to create themed vacation packages that could be pitched to the travel press.

**8. Treat journalists with TLC:** If you capture a journalist's interest, do whatever it takes to make things work. This may mean additional research, fact checking, securing



photography, or arranging a media visit. Make sure all communications are prompt and accurate. Finally, once a relationship is established, strengthen the connection by forwarding exclusive story ideas you know that journalists will appreciate – even if the ideas don't always include your business or organization.

### **9. Be familiar with the specific needs of the**

**different types of media:** TV reporters are looking for good visuals and snappy sound bytes to tell a story. With radio, you may have a little more time to tell your story but remarks still have to be brief and very clear as listeners have only voices to help them understand the story. Print journalists need multiple sources as well as facts and figures to back up anecdotal information. As explained further down in this section, it's also helpful to have professional-quality images on hand that are relevant to the print journalist's story.

**10. Be mindful of deadlines:** Daily newspapers and radio stations have relatively short lead times, whereas magazines can work up to six months ahead on editorial. Television news assignment editors, on the other hand, usually don't make final decisions regarding event coverage until the morning of the event. The best course of action is to contact the media outlet you are targeting, ask for deadline information, and record it in your media list.



## Important Contacts

DACF, Bureau of Agriculture, Food & Rural Resources:

### Agricultural Resources Development Division

<https://www.maine.gov/dacf/ard/contacts.shtml>

### Real Maine

[www.getrealmaine.com](http://www.getrealmaine.com)

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

DECD

### Maine Office of Tourism

<https://visitmaine.com/>

<https://motpartners.com/programs-services/>

### Customer Service Training:

<http://www.mainetourismtraining.com/>

## Regional Tourism Websites:

[Aroostook County](#)

[DownEast & Acadia](#)

[Greater Portland & Casco Bay](#)

[Kennebec Valley](#)

[Maine's Lakes & Mountains](#)

[Maine's MidCoast & Islands](#)

[The Maine Beaches](#)

[The Maine Highlands](#)

[Maine Tourism Association](#)

[Maine Innkeepers Association](#)

[Maine Restaurant Association](#)

[Maine Campground Owners Association](#)

[Ski Maine](#)

[Retail Association of Maine](#)

[Maine Woods Consortium](#)



### Supplemental Resources

News—locating contact information for daily and weekly papers

- <http://www.gebbieinc.com/statemedialists.htm>

### Real Maine Style Guide

The Real Maine logo means a product was grown or produced in the State of Maine. Branded marketing tools are available to farmers who want to clearly identify their products as produced in Maine.

Order stickers, hang tags, managers' signs, and more by mail using this form:

<http://maine.gov/dacf/orderrealmaine>

