

SUCCESS STORIES

Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center

Increased social media presence gets the word out on Matanuska Experiment Farm outreach work

Issue

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center closed its doors to the public but its education and outreach activities continue by distance delivery. The closure makes it a challenge to publicize activities.

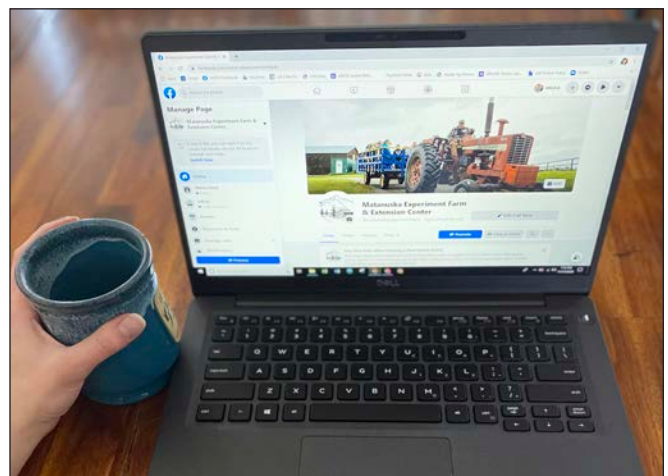
Response

The farm had Facebook and Instagram accounts prior to the pandemic, however, the average activity was two to three posts per week. Two staff members, Jessica Bird and Theresa Isaac, accepted the challenge of increasing the social media presence to better facilitate public outreach while the office was closed. During the pandemic, many people transitioned to working from home, and with this transition came an increase in the number of people reached through social media. Modifications, such as daily posting, online registration and converting classes to an online format, were made.

Through social media, the farm promoted classes, offered live tours and classes, shared educational research information, answered questions and shared information about the community. In the last 90 days alone, its Facebook page has reached upwards of 16,000 people and had about 760 event responses. Currently, the farm has 3,723 active followers on Facebook and 961 followers on Instagram. Before the pandemic, five to 40 people attended classes. This number has significantly increased since the change to online teaching platforms.

Results

Social media helped the Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center continue its public outreach and



An increased focus on social media at the Matanuska Experiment Farm and Extension Center has helped the public find out about its outreach.

education during the pandemic. A broad audience was reached through social media due to people sharing events and spreading the word across the platforms. Instructors faced many challenges with teaching online, but it allowed more people to participate because of previous travel and class size limitations. Overall, these changes helped strengthen the farm's social media presence, and many of these modifications will continue to be used even after the farm opens to the public.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Agriculture,
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