

Social Media Helps Inform Beginning Farmers

COLUMBIA, MO.

A blog for beginning farmers has reached a milestone with more than 100,000 visits. The Beginning Farmers and Ranchers development program through University of Missouri Extension was started three years ago with a grant from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Debi Kelly, an MU Extension associate, says they wanted to reach out to beginning farmers through social media, so in addition to a website they also created a Facebook page and a blog.

"Those things can be pretty interactive and are updated on a regular, daily basis," Kelly says. "So beginning farmers can get the information immediately instead of going to a site that is just stagnant."

Whether it is upcoming events taking place across the state, general information about agricultural topics, or breaking news, Kelly says updating the blog is what allows them to reach that number of people visiting the site.

"The key is making sure you have something to put out there every single day," Kelly said. "That is what will keep farmers going back to it on a regular basis."

Kelly says there is a lot of good information provided and she welcomes feedback and suggestions for additional topics for the blog. She also says that the interactive nature of Facebook allows farmers to discuss topics.

"People are posting questions that they haven't been able to find answers for and other farmers that are on the Facebook group will respond with their ideas and suggestions," Kelly says. "It is a great networking opportunity for those farmers as well."

The Missouri Beginning Farmer blog can be found at missouribeginningfarming.blogspot.com. On Facebook search for Missouri Beginning Farmer Program or check the Missouri Beginning Farmer website at beginningfarmers.missouri.edu. Δ

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