

WHERE ON THE WEB:

A STUDY EXAMINING SOCIAL MEDIA USE BY FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PRODUCERS

Olivia K. Doyle, Lauri M. Baker, Ricky Telg, University of Florida



Center for Rural
Enterprise Engagement



Center for
Public Issues Education

INTRODUCTION & FRAMEWORK

- While removed from the farm, consumers are interested in where their food comes from
- Consumers are using social media as an information source
- COVID-19 caused supply chain disruptions and raised awareness of:
 - local food
 - direct to consumer marketing
- Producers can use social media to market their products
- Uses and gratifications theory guided this study

- This study considered the uses and gratifications of social media use of fruit and vegetable producers.



METHODS:

- A census sample of fruit and vegetable producers involved in the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Farm to You program was used.
- The list included all farms that had submitted to the Farm to You program between its launch on April 9, 2020, and June 8, 2021.
- The sample included 117 fruit & vegetable farms
- Content analysis of farm's presence on social media

RESULTS & RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The majority of the farms were on Facebook
- Over half did not use Instagram
- Less than 10% used Twitter
- Agricultural communicators should continue to work with farms on how to use social media, particularly during a crisis.
- With the growing interest in local food, fruit and vegetable producers can narrow the gap between agricultural production and consumers through social media marketing.

