

EXPLORING THE MEDIA USES OF FARMERS WHEN ESTABLISHING THEIR
BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS: A CASE STUDY OF TYSON FOODS LOCAL GRAIN
SERVICES (LGS)

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ABSTRACT

Understanding how farmers use media channels is crucial for businesses to make strategic communications decisions and effectively communicate with farmers. It is even more crucial for smaller businesses with a limited budget as it could help save money and time. The purpose of this comparative single-case study was to explore and understand how and why corn farmers are using media channels to make business decisions. By purposive sampling, 20 corn farmers currently working with Tyson Foods Local Grain Services were selected to participate in four focus group discussions over a three month period. Two types of farmers were selected: those active with the business and those who were less active. Findings indicated farmers are multi-channel users but are using each of the channels for different reasons including for knowledge and decision reasons. Participants identified word-of-mouth as the most salient method to learn about new innovation followed by a combination of new and traditional media channels. Facebook reviews and Facebook business pages were widely used as a way to make innovation decisions. Previous studies indicated farmers were using more traditional media channels for business purposes, such as magazines, and were not using very many social media channels. This current study finds that farmers are, however, using more social media channels to seek information and make business decisions. It is suggested that farmers have already adopted and/or rejected new media channels. Further quantitative research based on this study is recommended before implementing the media channels in this study to a strategic communications plan.