

ONLINE MARKETING FOR AGRITOURISM BUSINESSES: INSTAGRAM

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Why use Instagram?

Having an Instagram account for your agritourism operation can help reach a broader audience and tap into a huge potential customer base. Over 1 billion people use Instagram every month, reaching 140 million U.S. users as of January 2021. It is the second-ranked social network for active users behind Facebook. Instagram posts are largely based on images and videos. This gives farm and ranch businesses an excellent opportunity to share content that showcases their unique products, the natural beauty of their farm, and the rural lifestyle. 90% of Instagram users already follow a business, so you might as well make one of those your business.

Creating a business page/account on Instagram allows you more options and features than a personal page does. A business page allows you to identify your location, your category of business and add your website or weblinks into the bio section of your Instagram page. It also give you access to content analytics. As of January 2021, 200 million Instagram users visit at least one business profile daily (source). Those visitors can then be directed to places like your beside or newsletter signups, which then could lead to more visitors to your physical location. 81% of people also use Instagram to help research products and services, so having what you offer showcased can also lead to future sales.

“But I already have a Facebook page for the business, isn’t that enough?” Adding an Instagram business account has the potential to reach new and different audiences. Not all Facebook users have an Instagram and visa versa. While the platforms are similar (they are owned by the same company) each has a different set of algorithms when it comes to making content visible.



Photo: Audrey Comerford, OSU Extension Agritourism

Feed vs Stories vs Reels

Instagram has a few different ways to post content and keeping all of them straight can be challenging. Below are three different ways to post content, ranked loosely from more beginner to advanced:

Posting to your feed: The most widely recognized option is to post a picture or video to your Instagram feed. This is where you select your visual content, add a caption and tags if desired and post it. The feed posts show up in user’s feed as they are scrolling through the pages and tags they follow. This type of content will remain on your profile forever until it is physically deleted by you. Content for this type of post should represent your business and your brand and be good quality since it can always be seen and accessed.

Stories: Instagram Stories can be an image, video, reels, or something shared from another post. It is only available for 24 hours (unless saved to a Highlight Reel) and is a great option for authentic, spur of the moment content. Examples of this might be feeding the animals, a quick show of new products, something fun to share like a relevant meme to your brand, announcements, or wild weather that is affecting your operation. Fun extras can be added to your Story, on top of the visual content, that can make it more fun and interactive for your followers. Example of these are tags, polls, GIFs, web links, questions, sliders, countdowns, music, and more. Stories are also a good way to show off your products. 58% of people say they have become more interested in a brand or product after seeing it on Instagram Stories.

Reels: Reels are different than normal uploaded videos, and they live in a different location on your Instagram profile. A reel can be a single video, multiple short videos put together, a picture slideshow, or a combination of pictures and videos. They can be any length but shorter videos are better. You can add audio tracks (very recommended) to enhance the visual content. A lot of agritourism business accounts use reels to show the process of their work, what they are creating, different aspects of farming or ranching life, and funny day-to-day happenings. Basically, the goal of using reels as a business is to have viewer get to know you, your business and your product better in a more casual way. Like a lot of aspects of social media, Instagram Reels are a way to make an authentic connection between you, your business and current or future customers. Instagram algorithms are placing a high priority on reels, meaning they are getting in front of more users and therefore gaining more views than traditional posts. So, reels may be something to try and play around with.

Tags and hashtags

Use tags and hashtags in your Instagram posts to increase engagement. Tagging other Instagram accounts by using the “@” symbol in front of their account name sends that business a notification and viewers can easily access their account from that post. It is a great tool for cross-promotion. An example of when you would want to use this is you are having a farm to table dinner on your produce farm and a winery will be serving the drinks for it. When making a post advertising the event, you can tag the winery that will also be at the event. If the winery then shares that post, your farm business will get in front of their followers and could potentially be a new audience for you.

Hashtags are a bit different than tagging another account. a hashtag groups your content with other content that has also been tagged with that same hashtag. To create a hashtag on your post, use the “#” sign followed by the word that describes your business and/or content. Example: #oregonfarming or #agritourism. You will notice Instagram will show you how many posts have previously been tagged with that same hashtag. You can use as many hashtags in a post as you want. Content on Instagram is also followable and searchable by hashtags. You can follow tags such as #oregonproduce and see all posts in your feed from different accounts tagged with that hashtag.

Tip: Consider having a hashtag for your business you use on all your posts. This way your content will always be tagged with the same thing and can be searched/ followed by that hashtag. You can decide what you want that to be, but you want it close to your farm name and something that isn't already used a lot or at all (so your posts don't get mixed in with others). Example: farm name is John Doe's Produce Farm, you could use #johndoesproduce.



Photo: Audrey Comerford, OSU Extension Agritourism



Goals, analytics, and ads

Using Instagram analytics can help you track how your posts are working and to measure progress toward your marketing goals. You can access analytics for your business account on your smartphone or mobile device (there is an additional app called Business Suite you may download that houses analytics for your Facebook and Instagram business accounts all in one spot). Analytics include: people reached on individual posts and the account, Stories viewed, audience demographics, and interactions with posts. These data can help you determine which type of posts receive the most interaction and views.

Instagram Ads can help you reach more Instagram users. Ads have a wide range of costs and cost rates change based on if it's per click, engagement, or impression. Because of this, it is important to do research on Instagram Ads before placing one. Whether you should use ads on Instagram depends on your individual business, goals, and budget.

How often to post

How often you put posts on Instagram depends on your goals and how much time you want to commit. Posting frequency can range anywhere from multiple times per day to a few times a month. Decide what you think will work best for you and then try to be consistent. For example, you could make sure to post every Friday as a rule and in addition when new content, such as events, come up.



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Content Tips

Coming up with new picture and video content can seem daunting. However, not all content has to be professionally shot and planned out. Remember that some Instagram content, like Stories, only lasts for 24 hours. Picking where and how you post content depends on if you want it available to future followers or if it is just for current ones. Here are some possible content ideas to help you get started:

- Beautiful shots of the farm or ranch, maybe at sunrise or set
- New products
- Day in a life post, what it's like being a farmer or rancher
- Events
- Your retail space, what can visitors expect
- Updates, anything from crop availability to new things happening on-farm
- How-To videos
- Shots of harvesting (maybe there is a funny carrot or a bumper crop of plums you can show off)
- Feeding the animals, livestock
- Share customer's photos they tag you in
- Introduce the owners and staff, maybe even the animals
- A walkthrough video tour

Sources

[35 Instagram Stats That Matter to Marketers in 2022](#)

Additional Resources

[Facebook and Instagram Tips & Tricks for Farms Selling Direct-to-Consumer](#) webinar recoding

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