

## Featured Guest Interviews

Luke Groce (@grocefamilyfarm, grocefamilyfarm.com)

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[00:00:00] **Luke Groce:** My name's Luke Groce from Groce Family Farm. I've shared some in a different video about how we structure our meat CSA on our farm, and today I'm going to share some about how we market it, some of the principles behind how we think about marketing, as well as a little bit about how we pitch our products the way we do on our farm.

[00:00:26] First, when it comes to the way we market our CSA, we want to identify who we're marketing it to. With us, we find that it's about 80 to 90% women. And within that, most of them are probably in that 30-to-45-year age range. Typically, we find it's the women in the household who are making the food buying decisions and who are actually buying our CSA program.

[00:00:47] And then within this set of the world of women, we find that the people who are buying our indoor meat CSA, they're—these things are mostly true about them. They are having some confusion around how to procure integrity food. I think people more and more are learning about fake or factory organic or other kinds of food that are just low integrity.

[00:01:10] Or the other ways in which so much of what is deemed to be authentically healthier conscious is just confined in agriculture with fancy marketing and packaging. We do have customers who understand the food buying landscape better than we do, but we also have a lot of customers who just know that it's messed up, and they want food that isn't messed up.

[00:01:28] We try to offer our CSA to people who see this, even if they don't know the steps that they can take practically themselves. We try to keep it positive with our marketing, but when there's a chance to highlight the differences in integrity between our business and the ones who obviously obfuscate, we try to do so ourselves.

[00:01:45] We also find that these women are oftentimes just a little bit too busy to go shopping at the farmer's market every week. Some people have stuff going on Saturdays. They're off work, the husband's off work. There's a cookout, gymnastic thing, whatever. They don't want to spend half their day buying food. I've spoken with some people who think that farmer's markets are in general decline from new markets coming in to water down the customer base to people just becoming more convenience-minded.

[00:02:10] It's a trend to keep up with. Farmer's markets have their advantages, but they're also an inefficient and poorly scaling market stream. So, if they're going to get worse over time, you'll at least want a backup plan or a next step for marketing to those who want your food. But the people who want your food but don't want to meet you on a parking lot on a Saturday morning rain or shine, week in and week out.

[00:02:31] We also find these people are somewhat annoyed with the hassle of meal planning. If you don't meal plan for your household, then just think about your customer's experience for a minute. We didn't even see this at first, but we soon realized that people are experiencing decision fatigue around their meal planning.

[00:02:48] We woke up to the reality that our CSA customers actually get value from not having to choose what they purchase. Before joining our CSA, they used to think about what they wanted to cook this week or this month, put it on a calendar, make a shopping list, go out and buy all the ingredients for all the dinners and then bring them home and prepare them.

[00:03:07] Now they can shop for dinner from their freezer out of what we provide for them, and then just buy the ingredients they need to go with the protein for the week. A smaller set of options means they don't have to just sit there overwhelmed, not knowing what to cook for their families. These people also might have family members with autoimmune disorders or restricted diets.

[00:03:28] There's a growing number of people who have gotten sick, and they're looking for clean meat. Many of them are more motivated than other folks because if you don't have your health, then—or your child's health, then you'll do anything, even change the way you procure food and meat when nobody else is doing it.

[00:03:44] We also find that these people are sometimes a little overwhelmed by how to cook things. We generally get a wide range of cooking experience in our CSA from professional chefs and food writers, to people who are below average. They all seem to appreciate hearing advice on how to handle some of the more challenging cuts and most seem to appreciate that we're trying to offer them a challenging item each month to push their boundaries, but not more than one.

[00:04:07] Most people don't need two cooking challenges at a time. And lastly, we find that the people in our meat CSA, they want to match their ideals with their practices, and they care about the environment and animal welfare and their own health. We get a lot of customers who share about our program or say to us that they appreciate that we're doing things right, and that we're a family making a living off the land that we steward.

[00:04:29] Even our most ardent fans may or may not know or even be able to handle hearing us go on and on about the minute details of grassland stewardship. I don't think it's exactly why they're buying, but I think that they understand that it is a good thing that we're doing, and they appreciate it.

[00:04:44] I should say this at least. I don't think that our environmentalist customers will stick with a product that isn't working for them just because it lines up with our ideals. It has to also work for them. I do think that it matters that they feel good when they're connecting themselves to what we're doing and that we operate with integrity.

[00:05:02] But when it comes to marketing, we don't look this—look at this as the primary problem we solve for people who are our customers. We look at this as a feature that we want

to make sure we communicate. I know this is a really hard pill for some of you farmers to swallow, but the thing that I'm so passionate about, namely regenerating land, is not the main thing my customers are paying me for.

[00:05:22] They're paying me for a nourishing meal that they can feel good about in every way. My land and animal stewardship are just one small piece of the value they see. But for my customers, I don't think it's the main piece. And even if it was, no one wants to be pitched in a way that “should's” all over them.

[00:05:41] **Diego Footer:** All right. I'd say something to close out this slide and just go off the top of your head. Don't repeat exactly what I'm saying, but something along the lines of, there's a lot of attributes here. And what we've tried to do is figure out what our customers are seeking and provide solutions to what they're seeking in our marketing message.

[00:06:04] And we echo that in a different way, or however you want to say it, but something that kind of sums that whole thing up.

[00:06:09] **Luke Groce:** Yep, that's good. Say it one more time. I'm going to...

[00:06:14] **Diego Footer:** So something along the lines of, as you heard, there's a lot of different attributes, or as you heard, there's a lot of different things customers are looking for when they purchase meat from us. We try and identify—we've tried to really hone in and identify what customers are seeking and provide solutions to what they're looking for.

[00:06:38] **Luke Groce:** Okay. As you've heard, there's a lot of things our customers are looking for when they're approaching us about buying meat. We try, to the extent we can, to consider all those things and make sure we're expressing the value that we can bring to them when we're pitching our customers.

[00:06:55] **Diego Footer:** Yeah.

[00:06:56] **Luke Groce:** All right.

[00:07:05] Good deal. All right. I'm going to move into this StoryBrand marketing stuff.

[00:07:09] **Diego Footer:** Okay.

[00:07:10] **Luke Groce:** Next.

[00:07:11] **Diego Footer:** Could you get into some examples of like, how you would go through some of those attributes anywhere here?

[00:07:15] **Luke Groce:** I... I guess in identifying the person and the problem, I succinctly describe some of the main problems we're solving and the attributes of concern that they have.

[00:07:28] **Diego Footer:** Okay.

[00:07:29] **Luke Groce:** And yeah.

[00:07:30] **Diego Footer:** If somebody is looking for just time savings, do you have an example of Hey, here's...?

[00:07:34] **Luke Groce:** Yeah, I—when I... The first two lines of the pitch that I pulled out as my example are a busy mom on a budget with boring dinner that probably has scary chemicals in it. It's like our... That's not the pitch, but that's the plot line.

[00:07:47] **Diego Footer:** Okay.

[00:07:48] **Luke Groce:** Or how we, as succinctly as possible, describe the person and the problems that they are coming to the table with.

[00:07:55] **Diego Footer:** Okay, so this is the attributes part?

[00:07:58] **Luke Groce:** So that—this is the attributes.

[00:08:02] **Diego Footer:** Okay. Why don't you do this, just run off a couple of lines. Maybe pick two of those are like, for example, somebody who's annoyed with the hassle of meal planning, we try and provide a solution to that by blank.

[00:08:15] Someone who is overwhelmed with how to cook, we solve that problem by blank, and then I can stitch those in. And it doesn't have to be that long thing, but like, it can be just as simple as, Hey, we provide recipes, we talk to people. Whatever they are, but just give some examples to a few of those attributes.

[00:08:34] **Luke Groce:** Yeah.

[00:08:36] **Diego Footer:** And if you want to look down to do it, that's fine. You don't have to look at the camera cause I can put texts over it.

[00:08:40] **Luke Groce:** Yeah. So for example, when we're encountering the problem of someone who is confused about how to procure integrity food, and they're too busy to go shopping at the farmer's market, we highlight that our meat CSA is convenient and can fit into their schedule, and we'll provide them all the integrity meat that they need.

[00:08:58] If somebody is annoyed with meal planning and doesn't know how to cook a steak,

we make sure that they know that this is going to make their life more simple and not more complicated to work with us.

[00:09:12] For somebody who is worried that their meat might contain scary ingredients or be producing bad effects them the land, we make sure to highlight that we're offering meat that can provide solutions to those problems.

[00:09:29] Okay.

[00:09:35] All right. You feel good about what we got?

[00:09:39] **Diego Footer:** yeah, yeah, I thinks... I'll ask some questions at the end just to bring in some more color.

[00:09:41] **Luke Groce:** Okay. I think that's good.

[00:09:47] There's a new marketing book out there called StoryBrand by Donald Miller. We've gotten a lot of our marketing ideas and especially how we think about and craft our pitches from his book and from some of the other things he's done.

[00:10:01] He has a podcast that's been out for quite a few years that you can listen to. You can also go to one of his \$3,000 in-person trainings. I have not done this, but you're welcome to. Turned onto his work by one of my—one of my CSA customers who owns a successful business.

[00:10:15] And since I've discussed this with other folks who have been to the trainings, and I've tried to learn more about just how to think about how to craft a pitch in a way that will work with our customers. This hinges on the one being marketed to as the hero of their own story.

[00:10:31] And we're trying to help them to tell their own story in a way that includes us as the guide who helps them solve their problems. In short, there are seven parts to this framework of how a story should look.

[00:10:47] **Diego Footer:** When you go through these parts, I think do a part, and then make sure there's a clear pause in between each one.

[00:10:53] **Luke Groce:** Put a number in front of each one?

[00:10:54] **Diego Footer:** I would, I'd say, you know, "number one."

[00:10:56] **Luke Groce:** Yeah. Alright. You make sure I hit everything in the introduction.

[00:11:05] **Diego Footer:** Just as you say it, I'll roll it on screen.

[00:11:08] **Luke Groce:** Yeah.

[00:11:09] So this pitch—you start that again and after I scroll this down.

[00:11:17] So this pitch includes one, the person, that's the customer. Two, with a problem, three, who meets a guide—that's me. Four, who gives them a plan, five, and calls them to act to a specific action and six, that action will result in success or seven, it will result in failure. Of course, if the plan is not carried out.

[00:11:43] We'll go back over in this minute, and I'll try to put some flesh on it, but just remember that this is a plot of a story that you're trying to tell, the customer story.

[00:11:56] So I've already introduced you some to the customer in the previous slide. Here is the plot of our pitch. It's very basic, and we're trying to—let me back that up.

[00:12:13] So I've told you something about our customer, and I've introduced you to the framework of how we build the plot of our pitch. Here is the plot of our pitch, essentially. This is not the pitch itself, but more like the plot lines that the pitch will follow.

[00:12:25] We have a busy mom on a budget—that's number one, the customer—with a boring dinner that she thinks probably has scary chemicals in it. That's number two, the problem.

[00:12:35] Who meets a farmer who is trustworthy and straightforward—that's the guide. Number four, who introduces her to a more convenient and cost-effective way to get worry-free meat. That's the solution.

[00:12:53] Sorry, it's actually the plan, not the solution.

[00:13:02] Who introduces her to a more convenient, cost-effective way to get worry-free meat—that's the plan. And he invites her to sign up for a one-month trial on his website, that's the call to action. If she signs up, meal planning will be easier, and she'll be confident knowing where her meal came from. That's what success looks like.

[00:13:22] And if she doesn't, dinner will be boring, and she will not be confident in the integrity and safety of the food that she's feeding her own children. And that is what failure looks like.

[00:13:31] These are the elements that we will try to make sure that we're including in our pitch. We might try to highlight the mediocre dinner problem more sometimes with the low integrity food from industrial agriculture problems sometimes.

[00:13:43] But in short, the more accurately our story portrays our customer's experience and the more of these points we hit, the more effective we're going to be with our pitch. This isn't our pitch. It's just the plot lines, but we're helping the customer to tell their story by hitting

them all. We aren't the hero's here, we're the Mick to their Rocky or the Doc Hudson into their lightning McQueen, if you have kids.

[00:14:06] We can't really solve their problem, we can guide them towards an action they can take to solve their own problem. This framework can be used in things that I like to include it in a flyer, farmer's market conversation, social media post, et cetera.

[00:14:23] **Diego Footer:** Okay, got it. Add a line in here like this. Something like, you know, this framework isn't about selling to the customer. It's providing solutions to the customer's problems and enabling them to solve those problems.

[00:14:39] **Luke Groce:** Yeah. This framework is not about selling to the customer. It's about providing them a way that they can solve their own problems, showing them a path that they can choose to take to solve their own problem as they become the hero of their own story.

[00:14:55] **Diego Footer:** And maybe say something like, that's very different than trying to convince someone to buy a product because it's tastes great or is ultra-premium, something like that.

[00:15:07] **Luke Groce:** And that's very different than trying to convince them that buying a product and taking the action you want them to is going to solve the problem for them.

[00:15:18] Does that makes sense? Okay.

[00:15:26] So now, we get into the actual pitch. This is a pitch that I wrote down that Diego highlighted in some of his teaching that I've seen before. It's something we worked really hard on. It explicitly includes almost everything listed in the seven-part framework. You can even read this without the bold titles on the page, and you'll see exactly what's on the front page of my website.

[00:15:47] You might say that number seven is implied in the presentation of the problem, but either way, we're looking at a story where the customer is the hero, and she solves her problem by choosing to work with us, to follow the path that we have illuminated.

[00:16:00] So number one and two, a person with a problem. Do you ever worry that the item at the center of your family's dinner plate could be full of toxins that could be hurting your family?

[00:16:11] Number three and four. She meets a guy with a plan. Over the years, we've learned how to raise meat in a way that harnesses the vitality of healthy land, bringing it right to your plate. Meats raised on pasture can be both nutrient-dense and clean and can taste way better than we thought possible. We offer an easy and affordable way to make farm-to-table eating a part of every meal you eat at home.

[00:16:34] Number five, the call to action. Click below to learn about our—how our meat CSA. And number six, will lead them to success. Can provide your family with convenient access to healthy, ethical, and delicious meat.

[00:16:51] It's very simple and reads really easily when you pull out those bold headlines. We've tried to hit the pitch—we have the pitch hit each of those points in a way that we think this pro—sorry, let me back that up.

[00:17:06] It's very simple and reads easily. We've tried to hit each of those points in a way—in the way we pitch this product to this group of people. Hitting all the parts of the framework is like a checklist that helps us to make sure that we can help them visualize their success in their terms, through partnering with us.

[00:17:26] What do you think?

[00:17:26] **Diego Footer:** Okay. Can you do this, too? Say, if you're a customer reading this on our website, here's what you'd see, and then read that whole pitch straight through, no additional commentary. You can just read it in like a sing-songy, happy, like it's an ad.

[00:17:41] **Luke Groce:** Yeah, sure. Okay.

[00:17:47] So if you're customer who stumbles across our website and reads this paragraph, this is what you'll see. Do you ever worry that the item at the center of your dinner plate could be full of toxins that could be hurting your family? Over the years, we've learned how to raise meat in a way that harnesses the vitality of healthy land and brings it right to your plate.

[00:18:05] Meats raised on pasture can be nutrient-dense and clean and can taste way better than we thought possible. We offer an easy and affordable way to make farm-to-table eating a part of every meal you eat at home. Click below to learn about how our meat CSA can provide your family with convenient and healthy—convenient access to healthy, ethical, and delicious meat.

[00:18:26] **Diego Footer:** Good. Good.

[00:18:30] **Luke Groce:** That's probably better than me doing it with the bold points.

[00:18:33] **Diego Footer:** I think both, I think it helps to break it down and show the parts. So I'm thinking like when I edit it, maybe I could just highlight different parts, you know?

[00:18:44] **Luke Groce:** Yeah. All right. And everything else I have is about how we think about images and Instagram and pictures and stuff like that.

[00:18:51] **Diego Footer:** Sure. Okay. So at that point, then maybe as a transition and say that given that we've defined our customer, and we know what they're looking for, now that... Now



we're using different tools to highlight how we can provide solutions to their problems. And here are some of those tools.

[00:19:17] **Luke Groce:** Okay.

[00:19:30] So now we've talked about how we think about the way we're framing our discussion with our customers, and we've talked about the way we use words to do that. The other major tool that we use is of course, pictures. We live on farms. We work on farms. We have access to a lot of beautiful images that can really resonate with people.

[00:19:51] And it's a great way to tell stories, our story and our customers' stories. And so, when we think about farming landscapes and feeding families delicious food, we've got a lot of great images to draw from. In our marketing journey, we started sharing photos of family and our farm in about 2014, mostly on Instagram.

[00:20:11] We gathered a decent little following of mostly local folks as we tried to share a picture a day of what life is like on our farm. What we're doing, what we're thinking about, what we're producing, and what our process looks like. It was telling our story to people that wanted to hear it and wanted to see a good story.

[00:20:27] We definitely saw benefits from a group of followers that eventually included thousands of local people seeing our posts week in and week out. But after measuring the tangible results and changing our paradigm with marketing a little bit, we'd come to view those "Our Farm Story" kinds of images and posts as being more or less like the jabs and the jab-hook or give-ask approach to marketing.

[00:20:50] The pictures of cows and kids holding chickens and me telling my story, in some ways, honestly, it's a distraction. It's a possible connection point for someone to make to us as humans. It's a give that we're offering. It's what people are looking forward to help them transport them—transport out of their cubicle. It's part of why they follow us on Instagram.

[00:21:10] But here's the hard fact: it's not really telling them their whole story. Most importantly, we've come to realize that it's not getting people to buy. And that's what we're trying to do with our social media account is to market our farm products. It's not at least getting—it's at least not getting them to buy at the rate that we would have hoped.

[00:21:29] If you think about it, do you ever follow someone who sells something on Instagram and like their stories and posts? Are you even like rooting for them, but you've never really considered buying something from them ever? If you're looking to get entertainment and education from them and even a connection, but it's not necessarily enough to get you to purchase something from them.

[00:21:49] Even if they do entertainment and education very well, a customer needs to be asked, and they need to be asked in a compelling way that shows the value—the value that

can be realized in their life. For instance, this picture is great. It gives everyone happy thoughts and connects those thoughts to our brand.

[00:22:09] I think you can even say that infusing these images helps to establish that we're the credible guide that we say we are in the pitch. But my point is that it's not the whole pitch. I think that the thing that most farmers are missing with their marketing is that unless you're including stories that highlight the value you can bring into their story, they're not very likely to click through to your purchasing page on your website because they saw a cow picture.

[00:22:32] They will like it, but the likes do not really have anything to do with dollars.

[00:22:39] Think we're okay here?

[00:22:43] **Diego Footer:** Yeah. Yeah. So maybe add some more, a little color to that and say something like, so be careful not—if you believe this... Be careful not getting caught in the trap of thinking that statistics, like likes, are the value you're getting out of marketing. It really comes down to sales, and this is just one way to sell your story. Something like that. That basically says like...that.

[00:23:15] **Luke Groce:** So we still take pictures of our landscapes, our animals, and our process, and we still share them far and wide, but we see the value just a little bit differently than we used to. If you think about it, the likes are maybe gonna make you feel better, but they're not going to do anything else for you.

[00:23:31] Think about the metrics that are important to you, are you selling your farm products enough to provide for your family? The likes are not really the thing that you're looking for in your marketing. Look for other metrics and work on improving those.

[00:23:50] **Diego Footer:** Yeah, maybe even say other metrics might be something like email list signups, one-month trials, inquiries of directly asking about programs. Those types of things.

[00:24:04] **Luke Groce:** Yeah. Those other... Let me start that again.

[00:24:11] Some metrics that might be more helpful to consider are, is your email list growing? How many people are clicking onto your website? How many people are clicking onto the page of your website where your products are listed? How many people are emailing you and trying to inquire about the products you offer?

[00:24:28] These would be indications that people are actually considering buying your products because of the message you're communicating, not just that they like your picture, and they appreciate the distraction.

[00:24:38] **Diego Footer:** Yeah. Yeah.

[00:24:46] **Luke Groce:** So with this in mind, we started it to share pictures like this one, from our last time we had photographers out to the farm. It shows our product, which is a step in the right direction, for sure. That gets closer and closer to their story and what the finish line can look like.

[00:24:58] But it also says to me, my kids are gonna eat this healthy meal, and it's going to be delicious and wonderful, and we'll have a great time around the table. I think we're getting closer to helping them to see what success looks like in their own lives.

[00:25:15] So with that, I ask, are the pictures on your website all photos of grazing animals, or you at your farmer's market booth? What's the finish line for your customers? Unless you're selling contract grazing services or farmer's market display materials, I contend that those are not your customers' finish line.

[00:25:31] Some of this can be helpful to convey some of what people are looking for. An authentic farmer doing things the right way may be part of the story that they want to hear. But it's not at the core of our customers' story. If you really want to go deep to that core, I would contend, maybe you're not even selling meat.

[00:25:50] You're selling an enjoyable family dinner. You're selling confidence in the end result, happy and healthy family that is sharing wholesome, nutrient-dense, delicious proteins that they can feel good about in every single way possible.

[00:26:04] They can buy meat at Walmart. It's cheap, and they're open 24 hours a day. Why are they going out of their way to pay you three times the price Walmart charges? Show them that finish line. We're selling confidence and peace of mind, that every part of the meal and what's behind it is great.

[00:26:20] The process is visually interesting and helpful. In some ways, they also need to see what that finish line looks like.

[00:26:31] I hope this was helpful.

[00:26:35] **Diego Footer:** Sorry. Maybe say like...

[00:26:38] **Luke Groce:** But—So that was this—that was what I showed with while I talked that last three paragraphs.

[00:26:48] **Diego Footer:** Okay, then maybe reference that, as you can see this photo...

[00:26:53] **Luke Groce:** Yeah.

[00:27:00] And I think the picture here, for instance, shows just that the finish line: a family sitting and enjoying a pastured chicken that's been roasted and cut up and served to kids

who are hungry and all enjoying, sharing this meal that is wholesome, and the whole family's together enjoying it.

[00:27:18] It's a sweet and lovely picture, and that's what we want to bring in front of our customers: a sweet and lovely picture that they can imagine themselves in.

[00:27:29] So in conclusion, just think about whose story is it that you're telling, is it your story? Is it your customer's story? And don't stop telling your story, but include your story inside of their story as someone who can help to find a path towards success in their—in what they're trying to accomplish.

[00:27:49] Just start telling your customer's story, too, in addition to yours in a way that will really resonate with them. We're trying to do that every way we can with flyers and signage, conversations at farmer's markets, times I talk on a radio show. Any time I have a chance, I'm trying to make sure I'm communicating the customer story in the best way possible and as many parts of it so we can help them get to that what finish—what the finish line looks like. Thanks.

[00:28:25] **Diego Footer:** If you're somebody who's new and just starting out, how do you figure out what your customer wants, what their story is, whether they're looking for?

[00:28:35] **Luke Groce:** I think you've got to do some trial and error. Get out there and start meeting customers, find some way whether it's online or in-person to get your message in front of them.

[00:28:44] You got to start guessing. If you're going to put a flyer at a chiropractor's office, you want to think about who you think might be picking that up at the chiropractor's office. If you're going to go to a farmer's market and hand out a flyer, you've got to think of who you might be handing that flyer over to.

[00:29:00] If you're going to try to appear in a Google search and someone will stumble across your website when they put, city in America, comma, pastured meat for whatever, then you're going to you're going to want to make sure that you're doing your best to identify who that customer is and what they might be looking for.

[00:29:19] It might be something like what I described in this talk, and it might be something a little bit different, I don't know exactly for you.

[00:29:27] **Diego Footer:** Do you think there's some value in just asking customers at the farmer's market? What are you looking for?

[00:29:32] **Luke Groce:** I think that'd be good. If there's time, and you find some people who would be willing to share with you.

[00:29:37] I think it'd be really great to have that conversation and really try to pick their brains. People really like being heard. So, if you ask them those questions, you might be surprised that you'll get some really good, honest answers.

[00:29:50] **Diego Footer:** If you've identified that 80 to 90% of your market is women within a certain age group, what do you do for the other customers that aren't in that demographic, since they're a lower portion of your business? Do you just...you don't put as much emphasis on them or do you highlight the same points?

[00:30:09] **Luke Groce:** Yeah. Like we do have some people who were like young male foodies who just really want to grill some stuff, and are...they really like being a part of our CSA. But the kinds of pitches I talk about here are not really geared towards them, but they might care about many of those things. It's just not the exact perfect pitch for them.

[00:30:32] But when I—when they come pick up their CSA share at the farmer's market, I'll talk about brisket rubs with them or things like that that might pique their interest, but I still want to talk to my audience, but when I'm communicating in the broadest way possible, I'm understanding that these are the concerns that are—that we're trying to help people address in their own lives.

[00:30:55] And the vast majority of people getting the message who would be interested, these are their concerns, and we can't... Brisket smoking guy is not our primary or secondary group. He's still a guy I want to help get good meat, but in the end, we can't put out a flyer that talks about, you know, those things exactly for every person who's who doesn't fit in that main group, I guess.

[00:31:21] **Diego Footer:** Choose your target market, focus on them, deal with the others case by case.

[00:31:24] **Luke Groce:** Yeah, and the others going to find you, and if you can provide good customer service to them, that's great, too. Do that.

[00:31:32] **Diego Footer:** You have your key demographic. Do you try and highlight the products that are most appealing to that demographic and ignore the others? So they might not—they might be interested in the whole chicken, but they're not interested in the one interesting pork chops, so make sure the products that you highlight match the message and match what the customer's looking for?

[00:31:55] **Luke Groce:** We do. We try to turn bugs into features, too. When it comes to our meat CSA, we're including a lot of different things in that. And so, in order to eliminate the reasons not to buy, we'll say, we'll talk about roasting a chicken and we'll say, here's this great recipe for how to roast chicken.

[00:32:11] We think it turns out perfect every time, it's foolproof. And it's the core of a whole week's worth of food for your family. You've got roast chicken one night, chicken tacos the

next night, and chicken soup the next night, all from roasting this one bird that we're going to show you how to do it.

[00:32:27] But then we'll also say like, we'll point out that if there's any processes in there that confuses you, we'll walk you through it, but also like, it can make your life easier, and you'll love the end result, which is delicious dinner three nights in a row.

[00:32:42] And we'll try to make sure that we're helping along anybody who might feel a little daunted by that, but also just pointing out that it's a really great way to eat and live. We might also share a picture of our pork chop with a link to...or to—with instructions that they can go and find out our Instagram page of a series of stories about how they can perfectly see your pork chop.

[00:33:05] We say, this is in our CSA share. We're trying to help people who are a little daunted by this to know how to perfectly pan sear your pork chop. We try to point to things that are maybe not ideal for people in a way that we can help them see that it's not so bad, but also, we're predominantly pointing to the things that we think just really make it work for people, too.

[00:33:27] **Diego Footer:** So really, as a farmer, you have to go beyond just knowledge of how the product's raised. You really have to be a culinary expert for that product as well.

[00:33:38] **Luke Groce:** I... If you're going to sell somebody like a really good dinner, and you're going to market it to them that they're going to have a good end result, which is good—a good experience around the dinner table.

[00:33:50] Like, you might need to be someone who can provide culinary advice. If you don't want to be a retail meat marketer, that's fine, you can find someone else to do that. But if you do, I think you need to be prepared to provide culinary advice. We wear a lot of hats as farmers.

[00:34:07] I'm fortunate that I'm really into food, and it's not a hard hat for me to wear quite the way that accounting is. But...but in the end, you're going to have to... You're going to have to figure out how to help people and guide them towards making dinner good.

[00:34:23] **Diego Footer:** A female in your demographic walks up to your farmers' booth. You don't recognize her, you don't think you've ever done business with her. She says she's new to the area. What do you—and says, oh, Groce family farm. You guys sell meat. What's going on here? What's your response and kind of initial pitch to get that conversation going?

[00:34:43] **Luke Groce:** Yeah. I'm gonna make sure she goes home with one of our flyers, which really does walk her through the framework we mentioned here. It's got really pretty pictures, she might want to put it on her new empty fridge front. And then, she'll see the back eventually that has the bullet points of how we're solving her problems.

[00:34:57] But aside from that, I just mentioned that everything we raise is non-genetically modified and out on open pasture with as much access to forage as possible. We try to give them a chance to just hopefully buy something and try it.

[00:35:13] And usually, between the sale of a one or two packages of meat that are going to taste great, and the flyer that can point them back to our website. It's a pretty good lead, especially when someone's new to town, they don't already have their person that is their go-to person for integrity meats, so it's a really warm opportunity.

[00:35:31] Also people who move. A lot of times they have more money, and if they moved for a new job, they just—we've found that's a pretty warm lead because—not just 'cause they don't have a farmer yet, but they might be someone who has the resources and wherewithal and the ability to procure high-quality foods.

[00:35:50] It's always—it's oftentimes been a really good person to focus in on as a potential.

[00:36:02] **Diego Footer:** How do you view farm photography, enlisting a photographer versus doing it yourself?

[00:36:10] **Luke Groce:** Yeah. I think that hiring a photographer is a really good move, and we've been fortunate to have photographers in our CSA, like really good, high-valued wedding photographers, two or three of them over the years.

[00:36:23] And they've traded meat for photography, and it's been a really big benefit to us, I think. And every time we've traded meat for photography, we're getting so much value out of the deal where we're really glad for it.

[00:36:37] But in the end, I think the kind of photography that I can do with the skills and even with the equipment that I have is just—it's not getting... It's not getting the job done. For pictures I want on my website or even I—even the better Instagram posts that I would like to put out there.

[00:36:53] So we—we probably should get photographers to come out more and more. The thing we did this last time when we had a photographer out, we got some family pictures and stuff like that. We got pictures of all the animals in set—late September when the light was beautiful, the grass was still green.

[00:37:08] But also when, like, we had pretty much turkeys and every single species we could had on the farm, we're going to have all of them in their peak. And the land was in its peak. And in addition, we made three dinners that night and took pictures of us cooking the dinners, the finished product, the raw meat itself.

[00:37:26] We took pictures of us sitting around eating the meat and the meals and people just sharing and enjoying the food. We have pictures of our process all the way to that kind of

end point where there's a picture of a kid snitching a piece of chorizo off of a plate and a plate of tacos and a plate of finished chicken that's ready to get served.

[00:37:47] And people slicing up a pork chop and we took a bunch of meat and just plated it up, and it looked great, especially with the photographer's eye being there.

[00:37:57] **Diego Footer:** So big difference between good photography and great, professional photography.

[00:38:01] **Luke Groce:** There's a huge difference. And I don't even—I'm not even a good photographer, that's an even bigger difference. But yeah, the difference is huge, and if you go to our website, then you can see—you can see that it really does make a huge, difference.

[00:38:23] **Diego Footer:** Do you consider using Instagram a must for farmers?

[00:38:29] **Luke Groce:** I wouldn't say that it's a must. If you're a direct market farmer, I think it's a pretty easy, low-hanging fruit that that you very well should consider. I can't think of any reasons not to, but I wouldn't say that having a website and having a plan for how you're going to market your food is something like, those are the things that I would put before an Instagram account.

[00:38:48] But the nice thing about an Instagram account is, not to be crass, but I've—when we were gathering our Instagram following, more or less every morning or every day, it would be bright and shiny out. I couldn't see what I took on my phone, I just go around and snap pictures of different things that looked interesting to me.

[00:39:05] And in the morning when I was waking up and drinking my morning cup of coffee, I would just put one of the previous day's pictures up while I was starting my day, even in the bathroom. Like just, you need to snap some pictures throughout your day.

[00:39:19] And then when it's not so bright that you can't see what's on your screen, just put one on Instagram each day, and there's other tips and tricks, but just being consistent and finding a little smidge of time where you can put something up there is...it's not very hard.

[00:39:38] And I think it's a good way to get started with kind of giving your customers a little bit of something that they can connect to so you can come back to them with a pitch.

[00:39:51] **Diego Footer:** How do you view...or, what do you think are realistic expectations for Instagram? I think a lot of people maybe start with Instagram and think it's gonna turn into sales and it doesn't and they say, oh, this doesn't work.

[00:40:05] **Luke Groce:** Yeah. That's a good question. I have looked at the metrics some, I think if we have, so I think we have almost 4,000 followers on Instagram. And that's after, I guess about five years of trying to consistently grow that through just organically sharing on there.



[00:40:22] But with that kind of following, if we put a selling post that we don't—like, that is carefully articulated, but one that we didn't pay extra money to put, to buy extra eyeballs to see that post, if we just share that out to our followers, we might get somewhere in the range of 15 to 50 clicks on our website.

[00:40:45] Own Instagram following, 50 would be pretty—on the pretty high end, for sure. So it's not a ton. Out of those, maybe one would end up buying, maybe five. It really varies a lot. Are those the kinds of metrics you're asking about more or less, or...?

[00:41:00] **Diego Footer:** Yeah. How somebody should view Instagram as a part of the marketing toolkit?

[00:41:06] **Luke Groce:** Yeah. If I can definably tell that somebody saw something on Instagram and clicked all the way through to the purchasing page for our meat CSA, that's an obvious, clear win, and we think that's great.

[00:41:19] But we also see that in the end, like, someone will come by the farmer's market, even not buying something, but they'll just walk by and say, oh, I saw that thing that you put on Instagram about the lamb being born. That was really cute.

[00:41:35] I see the fact that people, the fact that one person remembered that and mentioned it to me indicates there probably 20 times as many people who felt the same way and feel like that was a great thing, and I appreciated the connection, the distraction, the story, that I feel warm, fuzzy feeling about you.

[00:41:55] I think that's good, and that's—that can't be anything but good for our farm. At the same time, it's not...like, it's not even necessarily a sale but that person they're—they're maybe taking one step down a very long road towards becoming a customer.

[00:42:09] And we—the more people start taking those steps, the more customers we do end up getting. But you don't—but at the same time, they're not—you could have thousands of people who take that first step and zero who take the second, so you definitely have to be able to give them the opportunity and make that path as clear and easy as possible to go further than what the picture of the baby lamb will do for you.

[00:42:33] **Diego Footer:** When you think about that path, going from say, Instagram to your website. How do you design that path? Are you just sending them to your homepage? Are you sending them to a very specific page that has a very specific and clear message and direction that you want them to go on?

[00:42:50] **Luke Groce:** So I think the way it's set up right now, our Instagram page has got a link, and that one link goes to the front page of our website. The front page of a website is designed to funnel people towards our meat CSA.

[00:43:03] If it's turkey buying time, which is about two months out of the year, there might be two things they could click to, but more or less, I think there's a shop now button with a picture of people enjoying food.

[00:43:16] And then they can scroll down and read a pitch, or they can just click the shop now button. So we've designed it for that to be the first thing they hit when they hit our website., but we don't have a separate landing page for the Instagram click versus any other click.

[00:43:31] **Diego Footer:** Anything that sticks out or comes to mind—if there's no answer to this, then that's fine, don't try to force it—that just hasn't worked for you when it comes to marketing, either technique, message, the vehicle?

[00:43:45] **Luke Groce:** Yeah. We've had mixed success with paying for Instagram or Facebook post ads, but when we have really hit our pitch really honed in and included everything in it, we have had some good success with it, but we've had a lot of times where we have thrown something up there...

[00:44:02] That may have gotten a response, but after spending like, 30 bucks buying access to more people seeing it, and a few thousand people see it, we haven't seen any sales come from that. So that's been somewhat hit or miss, but in terms of other things that have more or less not worked...

[00:44:23] Yeah, nothing else comes to mind. Even if something is—as long as you're not doing harm, then I guess there's no harm, but the one thing I would say that I see some farmers doing that we try really hard to steer clear of is like, just overly negative things.

[00:44:39] Very rarely do we articulate the negative things that others are doing with their farming or with the meat that they're doing or anything like that. We just—we try to keep it overwhelmingly positive to the extent we can.

[00:44:53] And if we're highlighting the concerns people have about what's wrong with their meat, we still try to do that in a way that's respectful, in a way that we aren't going to be—they're just more negative than is necessary to get the message across about what we're trying to do and why we're doing it the way we do it.

[00:45:11] **Diego Footer:** Advice for somebody who's a bit introverted and not super outgoing, but they do retail sales, direct sales?

[00:45:19] **Luke Groce:** If you're going to be at a farmer's market, get some good sleep the night before and wake up. You don't want to be introverted and tired and moping around. You really got to figure out how to smile.

[00:45:29] And in that personal interaction, you want to just try to use eye contact and mirror the person's demeanor to the extent possible. But yeah, I think retail sales, which is what we

do one day a week at the farmer's market, it's something that takes more or energy out of me than working in the hayfield, it seems like.

[00:45:50] At the end of it, it's just mentally and emotionally exhausting to be in that connection with other people, environment, fast-paced kind of thing. So yeah, give yourself what you need to do that the best you can, and then take a nap when it's over.

[00:46:05] If it's—if people exhaust you but if you want to direct market food to people, you need to realize that you have, you're like—you're a part-time retail clerk, and you can do that poorly or well. You're pretty much working on commission because, 'cause it's your sales of your products.

[00:46:25] **Diego Footer:** Do you agree with the statement that marketing is really a game of try a hundred things, a few are going to work, and you're never going to know in advance which ones work?

[00:46:34] **Luke Groce:** I think there's probably some professionals who can try five things, and one of them will work, but a hundred to one or, you know, a hundred to two is probably about what I've seen from trying things. We're trying to hone that pitch down to where we feel more and more confident that it's going to land.

[00:46:52] But in the end, exactly who you're putting it out to and where and how and what medium you're using, I think there's a lot of trial and error for sure.

[00:47:02] **Diego Footer:** How do you judge if something's not working? A message, say you're dead set on, 'this is who my customer is, female. She wants integrity, me.' When do you decide that's wrong? You made wrong assumptions?

[00:47:17] **Luke Groce:** I'm—I think I'm always just trying to think about what's the customer seeing, what's their experience of this message, who is she? Who is he? Who are they? There's... I haven't had too many *aha* moments where I've thrown the whole thing in the trash and said, let's start over again, we need to uproot our foundations and build this house over here differently or whatever, metaphorically speaking.

[00:47:43] But I—but I think that we're constantly tweaking and trying to pay attention to who's the customer, what do they want? How was my message appropriate to that or not? I think like anything, you're like, we're observing and interacting in the environment we're in. And marketing is absolutely no exception to that whatsoever.

[00:48:04] **Diego Footer:** That evolves over time. It's not static, and it's at least suddenly changing.

[00:48:08] **Luke Groce:** Yeah. I think it has to. We think about the marketing within farmer's markets, and I think in the talk we just did here, I talked about how farmer's markets in the

last five years, I got concerned that they're in general decline or that the entrance of new markets is watering down the more established markets.

[00:48:26] And this is a trend we're trying to pay attention to. And there's also new opportunities. Like the people who are...who are wanting convenience and not finding it with integrity meat. They're going to go to Amazon Fresh or ButcherBox or somebody else, or they can find a farmer who is going to meet them with their integrity needs.

[00:48:47] And their—and the other set of needs they have, so... We're...I think if you're paying attention, there's opportunities. Opportunities to avoid being left behind and opportunities to being the first one to move into a new niche or what have you.

[00:49:04] **Diego Footer:** So don't have all your eggs in one basket, sales basket.

[00:49:06] **Luke Groce:** I think that's a good strategy for sure. And even if you do have a lot of eggs in one basket, pay attention to what opportunities are out there and just try to make sure you're keeping your head on a swivel, like my football coach would've said, so you don't get smacked really hard in the back.

[00:49:24] **Diego Footer:** All right. Yeah.

[00:49:25] **Luke Groce:** There's a lot of metaphor in that, sorry. Mangled metaphors. I don't know if that's the thing people have heard before.

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