

HUSKY Committed To Quality You Can Depend On
50 Years

Round Profile
Domed Heads
All Sizes Available
Hot Dipped Inside and Out

15000 GALVANIZED
4000 U.S. GALLON

Husky Farm Equipment Ltd.
Alma, ON. (519) 846-5329 1-800-349-1122
www.huskyfarm.ca

News

‘Farm Babe’ uses her voice to counter activist message

Michelle Miller says activists take the time to speak out; farmers should too

BY LILIAN SCHAER
Ontario Farmer

Milton – It was a fear-mongering anti-agriculture advocate who first inspired Michelle Miller to create her popular online persona, Farm Babe.

As someone who once worked for Gucci on Beverly Hills’ Rodeo Drive, it wasn’t until Miller moved to a farm in rural Iowa that she started to realize that what she had always believed about food and healthy eating wasn’t exactly true.

“If you had told my college self I’d one day be raising sheep in Iowa, my college self would be laughing at you,” she said during a presentation at the Farm & Food Care Ontario annual conference April 10.

“In L.A., I was surrounded by people who were health conscious and I was learning from people at the gym about healthy eating but when you’re submerged in a city lifestyle and you don’t know a farmer, it can be difficult to decipher fact from fiction,” she added.

It was during a stint as a bartender in Florida that she met sixth generation farmer Doug and ultimately moved to his family farm in Iowa. As she learned about ranching and growing crops, she started to become aware of the misinformation spread online by activists like Vani Hari, better known as the Food Babe.

“She doesn’t speak the truth about agriculture whatsoever and uses a lot of fear-mongering. I left a polite comment on her Facebook page but instead of engaging with me, I was banned from her page in about five seconds of posting,” Miller said.

“She inspired me to start Farm Babe; I didn’t think it would turn into a platform that can reach over two million people a month. Our voices can really make a difference.”

It can be overwhelming to talk to activists, but even though they’re loud, they’re only a very small percentage of the population. Instead, most people are in what Miller



Iowa’s Michelle Miller, popularly known as Farm Babe, encouraged participants at the Farm & Food Care annual conference to speak up for agriculture: “Our voices can really make a difference.”

Market SEED TENDER
MARKET FARM EQUIPMENT LTD.

Clearance Sale
\$7,000

222 Bushel

Optional Auger & Roll Tarp Available

CONTACT US FOR AVAILABILITY

(519) 238-2301

Hwy. 21 North of Grand Bend, R.R.#1, Dashwood, Ont.
www.marketfarmequipment.com

D&W USED EQUIPMENT
Group www.dwgroup.ca

CIH 508B COMBINE \$ 199,000	CIH MAGNUM 190 \$ 142,500
AFS Axial Flow, 2 Speed, Hyd. Stat, Rock Trap, Header Tilt, 600 Monitor	2013, 190HP, 4WD, 4 Hyd. Remotes, Diesel, 1571 Hrs., Great Condition
SUNFLOWER DRILL CALL	CIH FARMALL 115U \$ 84,000
2015, Transport Pull Hitch, Hyd. Row Markers 22 Run, 8" Spacing, V36695	2013, 4WD, Cab, 115HP, 24 Speed, w/L745 Loader, 3-Remotes, 628 Hours, Excellent
IH 4500 CULTIVATOR \$4,600	HARDI NV4000 \$39,995
Vibrashank Cultivator, Triple Tires & Single Roller, 12.5ft w/ Rear Hitch, V36648	1200 US Gallon Sprayer, 90' 6" Sect. Boom, HC5500 Hardi Electric Remote Control

RED TRAC INTERNATIONAL 905.562.4136
2695 Reg.Rd. 245 Vineland, ON sales@redtrac.ca

CASE II AGRICULTURE **JCB** MASSEY FERGUSON

“Everything about farming is interesting to the general public.”

— Michelle Miller

connection with people - hot topics and humour are always good

- Find your passion, whether it’s equipment, animals, or myth-busting, for example

“There is no wrong way to do it - your voice matters,” she said. “Everything (about farming) is interesting to the general public.”

Memes - pictures with words on them - and videos are always popular content, and although it may seem counterintuitive, consider showcasing the good, the bad and the ugly of your farm so followers can understand what it feels like. Videos don’t have to be fancy; short clips shot on a smart phone can get a message across.

What’s important, according to Miller, is being transparent, finding common ground with followers - shared values like love of animals or caring for the environment - and taking the time to listen to what people are saying.

“Use what you know. You are the expert and you have a level of trust if you’ve been doing something all your life,” she said, adding what matters is that agriculture’s voice is heard.

“Activists find the time. If we don’t tell our stories, who will? Find the time.”

called the “moveable middle”, and through social media, those connections are easier to make than ever before.

Key, though, to the online environment is taking a minute to evaluate whether posted information is credible, who the author is and what that person’s background is, and if a study is quoted, whether the study authors and funders are cited. Consider also whether the author is selling something, which might give them an ulterior motive.

Sites like snopes.com can be useful tools in determining whether something is true or not.

For people considering starting their own Facebook page, Miller offered the following tips:

- Choose a memorable name that is catch and use that same name across all social media platforms
- Comment as your page and not as yourself
- Be authentic and build a