

The background of the slide features a large, faint watermark of the Rutgers University seal. The seal is circular and contains the text 'RUTGERS UNIVERSITY' around the perimeter and '1773' at the bottom. The seal is centered and overlaps the main title text.

**RUTGERS**

New Jersey Agricultural  
Experiment Station

# Tips for Positive Communication with the Media

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# My Experiences

- Agricultural Agent NJAES for 32 Years
- Farming with family entire life
- Developed television programs with NJ Public TV and local stations
- Provided guidance to farmers over the years preparing for interviews



- “If Plants Could Talk” TV series- 22 shows produced for NJN PBS
- Cable Access Programs
- Newspaper articles
- Radio
- Numerous interviews
- Helped prepare growers for interviews – mock interviews on difficult subjects



## Why do you need to be involved with the media?

- Promotes your expertise, web site, can impact farm profits
- Educate the media about agricultural practices
- Enhance support for the agricultural community
- Provide a positive educated voice for agriculture
- Challenge negative press about agriculture



- It's all about relationships
- Passion for subject
- Knowledge
- Trust
- Dependable



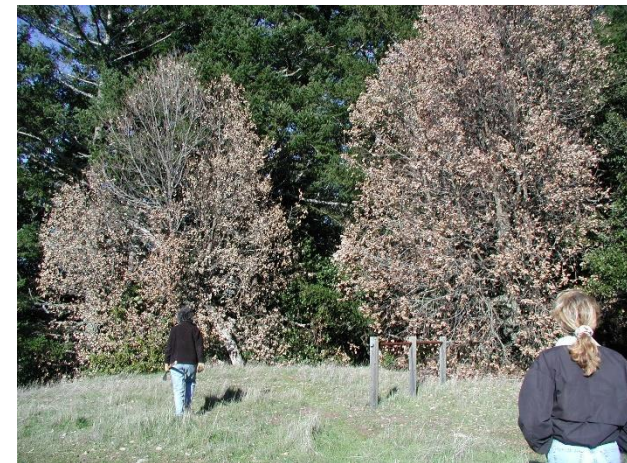
# Interaction with the Media Links You with Larger Community and Customers

- Social media
- Websites
- Church bulletins, flyers
- Newsletters- partner w other organizations
- Local & Regional TV
- Radio
- Newspaper – local, regional



# Getting Media Attention

- Creative and interesting topics and titles
- Timely issues
- Response to community needs and issues





# The Story

- Give reporters what they need. Make the reporters job easy with short catchy statements.
- Importance of topic, activity to the community.
- Develop key concepts, outlines for discussion.





# Professional, & Timely Response to Reporters

- Tight deadlines for reporters
- Always be professional in all communications
- Be respectful, even when it is difficult



# “Get to the Point” - Stay Focused

- Prepare 2 or 3 key points
- Prepare one or two concise sentences for a very short story or example to make your points
- Keep it simple – do not use jargon without explaining



- Listen
- Speak Clearly
- Correct Mistakes
- Relaxed confidence





- Put a positive spin on all questions to your advantage
  - Avoid complaining about challenges you face – ‘Drought, Heat, Rains, Pests,
  - ‘ Dry weather helps us to control disease and can concentrate the flavors’
- Customers will shop somewhere else if you are having problems at your farm –Sympathy does not attract Customers





# Educate Journalists

- Politely provide information that will help journalist to understand your farm practices
- Educate journalists with accurate information of best management practices
  - Pesticide use – discuss IPM
  - Animal rights – proper management of animals on the farm



## If in Doubt, Leave it Out

- Don't fake it
- Don't discuss an area where you do not feel comfortable
- Refocus interview to a comfortable topic or what you do know
- Add interesting facts to make it into the edits



## Everything is on the record!

- Subtle questions off the record could be the major focus of the story.
- Assume the microphone is always on!





# Some reporters seek a specific response to sell their story

- Aggressive journalist may keep asking the same or similar questions until they get the answer they want—Don't go there!
- Stay focused on a positive response





# Establish Working Relationship & Contact with Reporters

- Gather contact and personal information on reporters, review their stories and approach, likes, dislikes.
- Help reporters find the experts they need. Be a go to person. They will then turn to you for help.



- Cooperative events can attract diverse media. Help each other with promotion.
- Share the limelight for the benefit of the cause.
- County fairs, environmental orgs, garden clubs, school and church projects.





# Enjoy Working with the Media

- Select the right person to represent the story
- Be prepared with a consistent message
- Don't get trapped with questions, expect the unexpected
- Be ready to provide emotional content to a story
- Have fun !



# Questions?

