



HOW BEST TO Communicate with a Farmer

Ever wish you could talk to a farmer, like the one who lives down the road or is in your community, but just don't know how? Here are some tips on how to connect with a farmer, get your questions answered and perhaps even establish a relationship with the farmer next door.

Preferred Modes of Communication

- **Phone.** This is probably the best option as all farmers carry a cell phone on them nearly all the time. Recognize they may not always have a free hand or a quiet moment to talk. Be sure to ask if this is a good time to chat, or if no answer, leave a brief voicemail with the best time to reach you.
- **Texts.** Most farmers text and appreciate the brevity and efficiency of a text. Texts are best used to determine availability or for short answers.
- **Email.** Most farmers have email, but they aren't always in front of a computer, so don't expect an immediate response. But email does allow them to respond at a time that is convenient for them.
- **Facebook.** Many farms have social media accounts and sending a private message is acceptable. Best used for an initial contact, and to inquire about a farm's preferred mode of communication and the best contact person.
- **Letter.** Most farmers are not writers, however this is an effective means of communication. Be sure to offer a time and the best way to contact you.

In-Person Meetings & Conversations

- **Appointments are best.** Farmers are busy and having an assigned time and location to meet up will help alleviate frustration for both parties.
- **Dress appropriately.** Farms, depending on the time of year can be muddy, so wear attire that reflects the environment and weather that day.
- **Ask where to park.** Never a good idea to just drive around a farm. Know where to park to ensure your safety and to avoid obstructing farm traffic.
- **Notify of your arrival.** Let them know you're there so they can meet you.
- **Don't underestimate others.** Most farms today are multi-generation and/or have several partners. Don't assume the patriarch is the only person on the farm who can handle your concern or has the authority to make decisions.
- **Respect their time.** It's valuable as there's only so many hours in the day for a farm to operate, especially during cropping season when it's busiest.
- **Plans change.** Be flexible and go with the flow. Some of the best conversations are had in the cab of a tractor or on the tailgate of a truck.
- **Show kindness.** Appreciate their willingness to share with you their passion and livelihood, and you'll receive kindness and respect in return.

REMEMBER

- **Be patient.** Farmers are busy people, no matter what time of year it is.
- **Don't hesitate to ask questions.** Farmers enjoy talking about their farm.
- **Be forgiving.** Life isn't perfect on a farm.
- **Keep an open mind.** Before criticizing, seek first to understand their rationale.
- **Farmers are people too.** The farm is more than just a business, it's personal.

Farmers are a wealth of information and they'd much rather you reach out for answers than to google your question. If you have trouble getting connecting with a farmer in your area, please feel free to contact NYAAC.



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