

Reenvisioning Farm Tours: Expanding Agricultural Literacy Through Social Media Content Creators

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Situation

The 2017–2022 USDA Census of Agriculture documented major changes in agriculture in Seminole County, FL, reflecting similar trends across Central Florida in recent years.

Seminole County, FL Farmland



Seminole County, FL Number of Farms



A 2024 farmer needs assessment identified improving **agricultural literacy as a top regional priority**. For more than two decades, the Seminole County Farm



connected residents with local farms, but shrinking acreage, and limited farm capacity made the traditional large-scale tour unsustainable.

Meanwhile, the public increasingly learns through digital platforms, where individuals sometimes labeled as ‘influencers’, but better described as social media content creators, work in spaces where attention-driven content often overshadows science-based information.

UF/IFAS Extension partnered with Orlando North to reimagine the farm tour by engaging content creators as learners, partners, and communicators, aligning agricultural education with modern information pathways.

Objectives

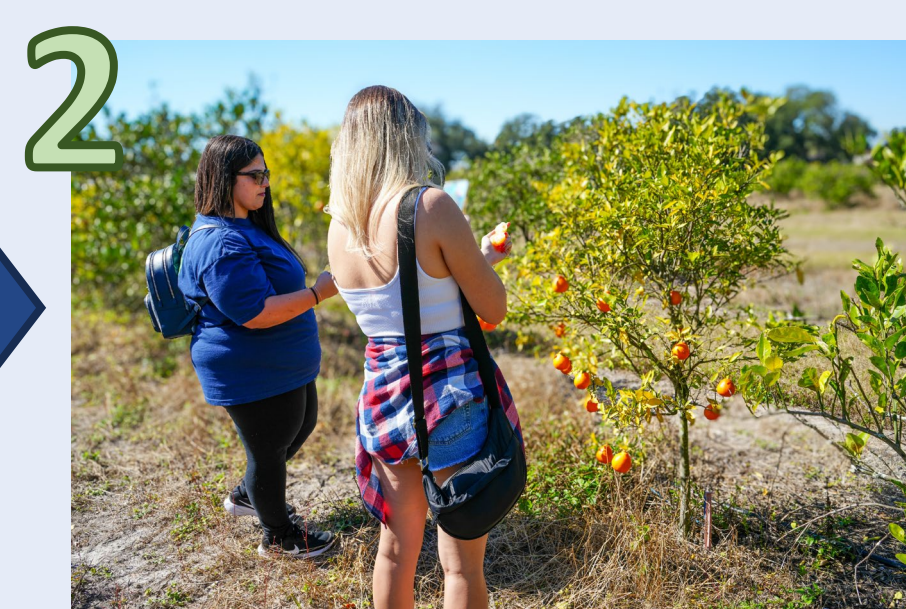
1. Increase public awareness of how Central Florida farms manage soils, water, and pests to produce food in a rapidly urbanizing region.
2. Equip content creators with science-based information and first-hand farmer perspectives to support digital storytelling.
3. Reach broader and more diverse audiences through creator-driven communication.
4. Highlight the relationships among agriculture, food culture, tourism, and local community identity.
5. Strengthen content creators’ awareness of Extension and opportunities for ongoing collaboration.

Educational Methods

The two-day tour featured a diversity of farms, food businesses, and cultural sites across Seminole and Orange counties. Teaching methods emphasized hands-on demonstrations, farmer Q&A, and structured reflection on water protection, soil management, IPM, pollinator health, urban encroachment, and related topics. Content creators were intentionally selected to represent diverse audiences, communication styles, and platforms.



Dutch Mill Nursery & Farmer Rob's Vegetable Farm
Hands-on propagation activities and nursery demonstrations introduced creators to foundational plant growing skills at a multigeneration farm.



White's Red Hill Groves
A citrus-heritage tour, packing-line demonstration, and locally sourced lunch showcased the history, techniques, and evolving landscape of Florida citrus farming.



Black Hammock Bee Farm
A hands-on hive tour where creators suited up and interacted with live bees at this first-generation farm showcased pollinator ecology and sustainable beekeeping practices.



Cultural & Culinary Experiences Downtown Sanford
A regional history talk, brewery tour, and seven-course Florida-grown chef dinner illustrated the deep ties between local agriculture, culinary traditions, regional tourism, and community identity.



Everoak Farm & Market
A tour of this first-generation regenerative farm and its community market highlighted diverse production, from livestock to tropical fruits, and showcased on-farm strawberry hydroponic research trials.



UF/IFAS Extension Office
A final stop at the Orange County Extension office deepened creators’ connection to Extension and included a structured needs-assessment that will guide future digital-engagement efforts and collaborations.

Meet the Social Media Content Creators



Andre Baptiste
@andrethefarmer
>2.39M FOLLOWERS



Dominique Kinsler
@pharmunique
>663K FOLLOWERS



Samantha Longton
@samanthalongton
>157K FOLLOWERS



Orlando North
@doorlandnorth
>422K FOLLOWERS



Danielle Hume
@mastropiecesproductions
>12.6K FOLLOWERS



Crystal Candy
@candygirlinfl
>2K FOLLOWERS

3.7M+ combined followers across TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, & blogs. Creators received a detailed farm guide and dedicated time at each stop for content capture and creativity.

Results

>240,000 Views
12.3% Engagement Rate

Within eight months of the tour, creator posts generated 240,000+ views and an engagement rate of 12.3% far exceeded typical industry benchmarks (~2.5%). Creator-led storytelling effectively captured attention, sparked conversations, and elevated agricultural topics within diverse online communities

In a facilitated discussion, 100% of creators reported higher confidence in sharing science-based agricultural content and 100% intended to continue doing so.

\$15,000 in Sponsorships & In-Kind Support

The program leveraged over \$15,000 in sponsorships and in-kind support, reflecting strong community investment in innovative agricultural outreach. Support from farms and partners broadened the tour’s reach, supported high-quality educational experiences, and sparked new business-to-business connections that continue to strengthen the regional food system.

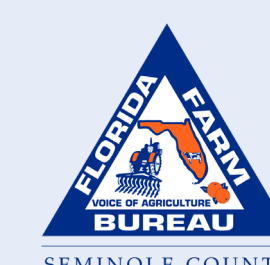
Needs Assessment

In the end-of-tour needs assessment, creators reported limited prior familiarity with Extension, but 100% left with increased understanding and excitement for future collaboration. **Key takeaways:**

- Authenticity drives audience engagement more than polish and professional quality.
- Educational impact often surfaces in individual viewer stories, not just analytics.
- Extension should strengthen its digital presence to counter misinformation on agriculture topics.

Conclusions

- Strengthened relationships across the local food system, sparking new collaborations like farmer-to-chef and farm-to-farm connections.
- Expanded Extension’s visibility among digitally connected audiences.
- Demonstrated that trusted social media content creators are effective channels for science-based agricultural messaging.
- Reinforced the role of agriculture within local food culture, tourism, and community identity through integrated farm, history, and culinary experiences.
- Offers a replicable model for agricultural literacy via digital spaces urbanizing regions



A big thank you to all our sponsors and partners!