



Countryside Veterinary Clinic, LLP

December 2016



Animal Activism

The subject of animal activism has been a center of concern in the agricultural industry. With the ever-increasing gap between consumers and animal agriculture, the misunderstanding and misrepresentation of farming has reached a peak which distresses us all. Beyond that, animal activism has begun to affect legislation and rules farmers are forced to follow, some of which are set by people who have literally zero knowledge of farming or agriculture. While extremist groups have a scarily loud voice in these conversations, there is a new organization that is using media and education to defend agriculture and bridge the communication gap between farm and fork. In early December, Dr. Kelli Hanno, Dr. Eileen Balz and Dr. Jennifer Nightingale attended a conference which included a talk by Hannah Thompson-Weeman, the director of communications for an organization called the Animal Agriculture Alliance. Animal Agriculture Alliance is an industry-united, nonprofit organization that works to promote consumer choices by helping them better understand modern agriculture. In addition, their mission is to expose those who threaten food security with damaging misinformation. (Gary Campany) As dedicated protectors of the industry, they go to great lengths to investigate what is next on the anti-agriculture agenda. Undercover visits to activist conferences and close monitoring of legislation at the state and federal level are just a few ways that they work to stay a step ahead of these groups that want to nationally end farming. They have also created tools for farmers and the general public, such as educational handouts, helpful guides in social media, recommendations in the hiring process (red flags, reference checks, etc), and directions for crisis management when targeted by an activist group. Local promotion of agriculture is still important, but Animal Agriculture Alliance is a group of social media gurus that promote truthful education to the national consumer.

For example, Animal Agriculture Alliance has an app available to its members called the Farm Security mobile app, which helps educate employers in the agricultural industry to make careful hiring decisions. This app includes features such as: Interview questions which are helpful (and legal) to ask, red flags to look for, how to background-check potential employees, crisis management tactics, and text and email alerts about local animal activist activity. They also aim to help farms develop animal care policies which all of their employees are held to, to encourage farmers to be vigilant when hiring, and to anticipate and improve upon potential vulnerabilities. Lastly, they help those of us who work in agriculture to become involved in providing a positive voice for industry, with outreach methods including social media training, community involvement and public events.

Please don't hesitate to ask our doctors for more information on the methods and tactics used by extremist groups, as well as ways to counteract their methods, as we were given a thorough introduction during this conference. In addition, you can explore the vast resources this group has to offer, and become a member which allows access to many more resources, on their website: <http://animalagalliance.org>

End of Year Reminder

To take advantage of early payment discount - payment must be made by December 27th.



Due to our accounting method, it is very important that account balances be paid up by December 31, 2016 by 1:00 p.m. Please make sure your check, cash, or credit card payment is made by December 31, 2016 (We will even hold your check into January if need be - but it must be at the office by the 31st)



Holiday Hours: Saturday December 24 and Saturday December 31 our Lowville office is open from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Carthage is open 7 am to 11 am
Closed Christmas Day and New Year's Day. Regular hours Monday December 26 and Monday January 2 (7 am to 8 pm)

READ OUR NEWSLETTERS: Remember that if you spot your name in our newsletter and call us within 5 days of the billing date, we will give you a \$10.00 credit on your bill.