

The Impact of Social Media Marketing Campaigns on Consumer Perceptions of the Food Animal Industry.

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In today's society, most consumers are generations removed from agriculture. Many Americans are uninformed in the areas of animal husbandry and production, food safety, and animal welfare. The media and marketing companies, especially with the advent of the internet and social media, have the ability to rapidly spread information about their campaigns. With the ultimate goal of generating a profit, marketing campaigns look to target consumer emotions. Uneducated consumers may be persuaded to buy a product based on marketing claims that are not supported by scientific evidence. Research is needed to determine the impact a marketing campaign can have on an audience's perceptions of animal production and welfare. The purpose of this study is to assess the impact of social media marketing campaigns on undergraduate students. An online survey diagnostic tool was used to electronically survey students enrolled in Animal Sciences 2200.01 (n=161) and Animal Sciences 4597 (n=129) at The Ohio State University. The survey consists of a demographic analysis and an assessment of a social media campaign produced by Chipotle Mexican Grill Inc. This campaign, which is distributed solely through social media, attempts to address consumer concerns about the current state of animal production and welfare. While data collection is concluding currently, the results from this study can be used to examine how demographics effect student consumer perceptions of the food animal industry, and additionally understand how to develop effective marketing techniques.