

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT MARKETING

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***Abstract:** The agricultural sector plays a vital role in the global economy, with effective marketing strategies being key to the success of agricultural products. This scientific paper explores the various communication strategies employed in the marketing of agricultural products, focusing on how they influence consumer behavior, enhance brand visibility, and increase market reach.*

***Key words:** communication, marketing, agriculture, communication strategies.*

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture remains one of the most essential sectors in the global economy, providing food, employment, and raw materials that sustain populations and industries [1]. Despite its foundational role, the success of agricultural products in the market increasingly depends not only on production and quality but also on how well they are presented and communicated to consumers. As the marketplace becomes more competitive and consumer expectations evolve, effective communication strategies have become central to marketing agricultural goods.

Marketing in agriculture involves more than showcasing products—it includes building trust, educating consumers, and differentiating products in a crowded and dynamic market [3]. Communication plays a pivotal role in these processes by connecting producers with buyers, informing audiences about product attributes, and influencing consumer decision [6]. Whether addressing retail buyers, wholesalers, or end-consumers, agricultural producers must craft messages that resonate with diverse audiences and align with current trends, such as health consciousness, environmental sustainability, and local sourcing. Traditionally, agricultural marketing has relied on interpersonal communication, face-to-face selling, print media, and participation in local markets or fairs [8,12]. These channels still hold value, especially in rural or less digitally developed regions. However, with the rapid expansion of internet access and the rise of social media, the communication landscape has dramatically changed. Today, agricultural businesses—from smallholder farms to large agribusinesses—are turning to digital platforms to reach broader audiences, build brands, and engage with customers in real time [2,9].

Digital tools such as websites, social media pages, email newsletters, and online marketplaces offer new ways for agricultural producers to share their stories, highlight product benefits, and promote transparency [7,13]. These tools allow marketers to showcase sustainable practices, provide behind-the-scenes views of production, and respond directly to consumer inquiries or concerns. Importantly, they also enable two-way communication, which is vital for building long-term customer relationships.

Still, the transition to digital communication is not without its challenges [2,7]. Many agricultural producers, particularly in rural areas, face barriers such as limited internet access, lack of digital literacy, and resource constraints that hinder effective online engagement [10]. Moreover, with increasing consumer demand for truthful and detailed information, businesses must ensure that their messages are accurate, consistent, and

aligned with ethical marketing practices. Failure to do so can lead to consumer distrust or damage to brand reputation [10,14].

This research paper explores how communication strategies—both traditional and digital—are used in marketing agricultural products. It aims to analyze the effectiveness of various methods in reaching target audiences, increasing market visibility, and shaping consumer preferences. The study also considers the importance of transparency, sustainability, and educational content in building consumer trust and loyalty.

By examining the interplay between communication tools, marketing objectives, and audience behavior, this paper seeks to identify practices that can help agricultural enterprises adapt to the demands of modern consumers while remaining competitive and responsible. The findings aim to support stakeholders in designing more impactful, inclusive, and sustainable marketing strategies tailored to today's diverse and digitally connected world.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research adopts a qualitative, comparative case study methodology to examine the communication strategies used in the marketing of agricultural dairy products across different European contexts. The study focuses on multiple case examples.

RESEARCH RESULTS

In the dynamic landscape of agricultural marketing, theoretical knowledge must be supported by real-world applications to provide a comprehensive understanding of what truly works in practice [5]. While general principles and strategies offer useful frameworks, the most valuable insights often emerge from observing how these strategies unfold on the ground. Communication in agricultural marketing is not a one-size-fits-all endeavor; it varies significantly depending on regional context, farm size, consumer expectations, available technology, and product type [4]. For this reason, case studies are an essential component of research in this field [11].

This section presents a curated set of case studies drawn from various agricultural settings across Europe. These examples provide detailed observations of how farms and cooperatives—ranging from small-scale local producers to multi-region networks—have implemented communication strategies to connect with their consumers, build trust, and strengthen their presence in competitive markets. By exploring these real-life applications, the paper aims to bridge the gap between strategic concepts and their tangible impact on consumer behavior and business outcomes.

The chosen case studies cover both traditional and digital communication methods. Some producers have relied on interpersonal relationships, word-of-mouth, and printed materials, while others have embraced modern digital tools like social media, e-commerce platforms, messaging apps, and data analytics. Regardless of the medium, successful cases share key traits: a clear communication objective, a well-understood audience, authenticity in messaging, and a consistent presence across channels. These shared elements suggest that effectiveness in communication is less about the tool itself and more about how strategically it is used. Moreover, the case studies illustrate that successful agricultural communication is not always about selling more products in the short term. Often, the goal is to educate consumers, promote sustainable practices, or differentiate local and artisanal goods from mass-produced alternatives. In these situations, communication becomes a long-term investment in relationship-building and brand credibility. As consumer preferences increasingly shift toward transparency, ethical sourcing, and local identity, these non-commercial aspects of communication are becoming just as important as pricing and availability.

The diversity of the case studies also reflects the adaptability of communication strategies in agriculture. A large cooperative using WhatsApp to update urban customers about citrus harvests, or a small Romanian farm leveraging Instagram stories to share daily routines—both approaches are valid and effective within their respective contexts. This adaptability is crucial in a sector where producers often face challenges like limited infrastructure, budget constraints, or lack of marketing expertise. By focusing on case-based evidence, this section does not aim to prescribe a singular best method but rather to highlight how a variety of communication techniques—when aligned with the producer’s values and the audience’s expectations—can result in increased engagement, loyalty, and success. These examples offer practical guidance for agricultural businesses seeking to craft or refine their communication strategies in a market that demands both authenticity and innovation.

"De la Ferma cu Omenie" (translated as "From the Farm with Integrity") is a Romanian family-owned dairy farm established in 1994, that has successfully positioned itself through honest, values-based communication. Specializing in traditional dairy products such as cheese, semi-hard cheese, salted white cheese, matured cheese in fir bark and sour cream, the farm has developed a strong brand identity built on trust, simplicity, and rural authenticity, with over 30 years of tradition [18].

Their marketing strategy focuses on direct and transparent communication with customers, primarily through Facebook and Instagram. Rather than using polished advertising campaigns, their posts are natural, personal, and community-oriented. They often showcase the production process—from milking the animals to packaging the final product—accompanied by simple messages that highlight quality, freshness, and traditional preparation methods. This direct approach reinforces their promise: no additives, no compromises, just honest food.

One of their most appreciated communication tactics is consumer education. They explain what makes each cheese different, how it is made, and how to best store or consume it. By giving customers this knowledge, they create a sense of connection not only to the product but to the tradition and labor behind it.

Their brand is built around the Romanian concept of "omenie", which embodies decency, honesty, and kindness. Every interaction—with customers, partners, or followers—reflects this core value. This consistent and authentic voice helps the farm build trust, especially among urban consumers seeking traditional, chemical-free, and ethically made products.

As a result, "Ferma cu Omenie" has built a loyal and growing customer base, that values both the quality of the products and the people who make them. Their story shows how traditional farming, combined with modern, honest communication, can create strong brand identity in today’s competitive food market.

„Azienda Agricola Bacciotti” is a family-run dairy farm located in Mugello, Tuscany, founded in 1999 [20]. With more than 25 years of tradition, the farm has become a local benchmark for sustainable, small-scale sheep and goat farming, focusing on artisanal dairy production. They specialize in high-quality sheep and goat milk products, such as pecorino, robiola, raveggiolo, kefir, and natural yogurt, all crafted using traditional methods.

Their marketing strategy revolves around care, transparency, and education, primarily shared through Facebook and Instagram. Their social media content offers regular insights into everyday life on the farm: animal care routines, milking, cheese production, and seasonal rhythms in the fields. The posts are warm, informative, and highly visual, reflecting the authenticity of a farm that values both animals and people.

One of Bacciotti's most appreciated communication strengths is their emphasis on animal welfare. They showcase how their sheep and goats graze freely on Mugello's green hills, are raised in clean, stress-free conditions, and receive natural feed. This visible commitment to ethical treatment reinforces the message that healthy animals lead to healthy products.

In addition, Bacciotti prioritizes consumer education. Their posts often explain the characteristics of different cheeses, the role of seasonality, and the importance of local production. They also emphasize their "filiera corta" (short supply chain) model, where everything from feed production to product sales is done in-house, ensuring quality, traceability, and minimal environmental impact.

As a result, „Azienda Agricola Bacciotti” has built a loyal and conscious customer base who appreciate not only the flavor and purity of their dairy products but also the care, sustainability, and transparency behind them. Their approach demonstrates how values-driven communication and responsible farming can build a strong brand in today's digital and ethical marketplace.

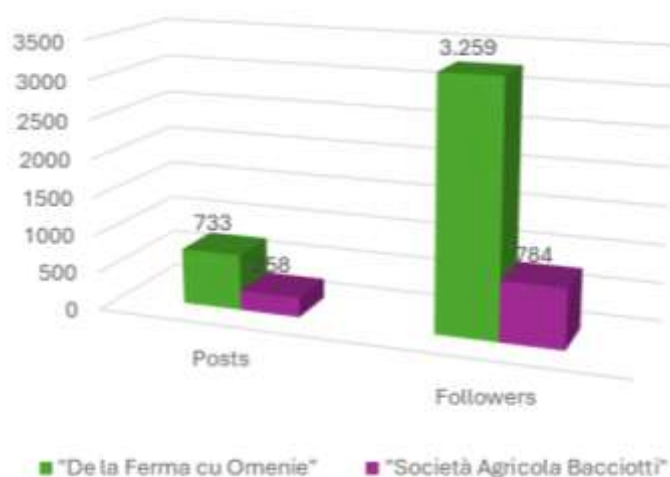


Figure 1. Instagram activity – De la Ferma cu Omenie vs. "Società Agricola Bacciotti"

Source: [18, 20]

"De la Ferma cu Omenie" has a total of 733 posts on Instagram since 2016 (Figure 1), which indicates a sustained and active online presence, focused on visibility, proximity to customers and authentic communication. The content is focused on promoting traditional Romanian products – burduf cheese, telemea, sour cream, cottage cheese – through warm images, personalized messages and transparency on the production process. Their strategy emphasizes trust, emotion and tradition, transforming each product into a visual story easily assimilated by the urban public interested in natural and local.

By comparison, Soc. Agr. Bacciotti, active since 2022, has accumulated 258 posts (Figure 1), a relevant number for the short period of activity on social networks. The posts focus on highlighting the integrated production process and the short supply chain, from their own feed to finished dairy products such as pecorino, kefir or natural yogurts. Their marketing strategy is educational and informative, focused on promoting quality and sustainability, addressing a conscious audience, interested in artisanal products and their provenance. Thus, the two farms use social media not only for sales, but also to build an informed and loyal community.

Table 1.

Social Media Strategy – De la Ferma cu Omenie vs. Azienda Agricola Bacciotti

Category	De la Ferma cu Omenie (Romania)	"Azienda Agricola Bacciotti" (Italy)
Platform	Facebook & Instagram	Facebook & Instagram
Instagram Handle	@fermacuomenie	@azagrbacciotti
Posting Style	Warm, personal tone; farm life; staff faces; traditional values	Transparent, educational tone; step-by-step farm process visuals
Visual Content	Cheese prep, packaging, countryside scenes, family	Grazing animals, cheesemaking, fieldwork, daily rhythm
Language Style	Conversational, local expressions, often bilingual (RO + EN)	Clear, rural Italian; educational wording; community interaction
Product Focus	Traditional Romanian cheeses (cheese, bellows cheese, burduf, sour cream, etc.)	Cow & sheep milk cheeses (pecorino, robiola, kefir, yogurt, etc.)
Brand Identity	"Omenie" – kindness, fairness, rural pride	"Filiere corta" – transparency, quality, full-circle local farming
Main Goal of Communication	Trust-building, authenticity, direct sales	Education, short supply chain awareness, ethical consumer loyalty
Community Engagement	Active comment replies, reposts of user content	Community albums, direct feedback, farm visit promotions
Online Sales Boost	Through local orders & delivery	Through farm shop, local fairs, and customer loyalty via education

Source: [18,20]

The comparison between *De la "Ferma cu Omenie"* and „Azienda Agricola Bacciotti” reveals two distinct yet complementary approaches to digital communication in the context of traditional dairy farming. Both farms prioritize authenticity and transparency but differ in rhythm, tone, and strategic emphasis. Both farms use visuals effectively, but the emphasis differs. "Ferma cu Omenie" focuses on people, traditional preparation, and packaged products, strengthening its identity as a community-based producer. In contrast, *Bacciotti* invests more in behind-the-scenes agricultural visuals—animals, fieldwork, cheesemaking—highlighting their full-circle approach from pasture to product. The Romanian brand builds around the idea of "omenie", which translates into kindness, fairness, and community trust. This value is integrated into every piece of content and helps generate emotional loyalty. *Bacciotti*, on the other hand, bases its identity on "filiere corta" (short supply chain), emphasizing transparency, traceability, and local sourcing, which appeals to ethically aware consumers.

This comparison shows that effective communication in agricultural marketing does not depend solely on volume or technology, but on authenticity, consistency, and alignment with brand values. Whether driven by cultural values (*omenie*) or supply chain transparency (*filiere corta*), both farms demonstrate that strong online presence—tailored to the identity of the business—can build lasting trust and drive sustainable growth.

To better understand how communication strategies influence the marketing of agricultural products, we chose to present in the paper a set of case studies from four different European countries (Tabel 2.). Each case offers a unique approach to how small and medium-sized agricultural producers use communication, both digital and direct, to build visibility, differentiate their products, and create meaningful relationships with their consumers. These case studies do not aim to prescribe a single "best" strategy, but rather to demonstrate how different communication models, aligned with local values and consumer expectations, can all contribute to the effective and sustainable marketing of agricultural products.

Table 2.

Marketing strategies

Case Study	Communication Strategies Used	Tools/Channels	Goals
"La Ruche qui dit Oui!" (France)	Community-focused messaging, producer profiles, personal storytelling	Email newsletters, local meetups, platform messaging	Strengthen producer-consumer bond, promote local food
Spanish Citrus Cooperative (Spain)	Direct messaging, weekly product updates, informal tone	WhatsApp Business	Retain loyal customers, replace supermarket dependency
"Farmdrop" (UK)	Transparency, data-driven content, educational infographics	E-commerce website, email, social media	Educate consumers, highlight ethical sourcing
"Boeren & Buren" (Belgium)	Transparency, community coordination, consumer education	Platform portal, weekly bulletins, video updates	Educate consumers, promote traceable food sourcing
"REKO-Ringen" (Norway)	Peer-to-peer trust networks, Facebook-based distribution, shared visual content	Facebook groups, peer review, farmer-customer messaging	Peer-to-peer trust networks, Facebook-based distribution, shared visual content

Source: [15,16,17,19,21]

"La Ruche qui dit Oui!", is French initiative, which translates to "The Hive That Says Yes!", connects local farmers with urban consumers through an online ordering system and weekly local pick-up events [16].

What sets this project apart is its hyper-localized communication model. Each location (or "hive") has its own community coordinator who handles newsletters, farmer introductions, and product updates. Customers receive personalized messages introducing new producers, detailing where products come from, and how they're grown. Many of these messages contain short written stories or video interviews with farmers.

In the Valencia region of Spain, a citrus grower cooperative faced declining sales to supermarkets and sought to develop a direct-to-consumer model. Lacking large marketing budgets or technical staff, they began using WhatsApp Business to communicate directly with a list of loyal clients in Barcelona and Madrid [21].

"Farmdrop", a now-closed but widely studied British startup, was built around the promise of transparency in food sourcing. The company acted as a digital marketplace for sustainably produced food, allowing farmers to sell directly to consumers in London and other cities [19].

Farmdrop's communication strategy relied on: Interactive infographics showing distances traveled, carbon footprints, and comparisons with supermarket equivalents, Weekly emails educating users on seasonal produce, farming methods, and storage tips.

"Boeren & Buren" (Dutch: "Farmers and Neighbours") operates throughout Belgium as a peer-to-peer short supply chain network, connecting local producers directly with urban consumers. Farmers (including those producing dairy) sell fresh products via an online platform and weekly pick-up hubs managed by volunteer "hosts" [17].

Their communication strategy is deeply community-centred and values-oriented. Farmers and hosts share photos and videos on the Boeren & Buren Facebook page, showcasing dairy production, farm visits, and meet-ups at pick-up points. Updates include seasonal availability, behind-the-scenes clips of cheese-making, and profiles of participating farmers.

”REKO-Ringen”, initiated in Finland and introduced in Norway in 2017, consists of over 140 local groups where farmers and consumers interact directly via Facebook [15]. Each ring uses private Facebook groups and often Instagram accounts to organize weekly pick-ups, share product photos, and communicate orders. ”REKO”’s communication is highly transparent and interactive: producers discuss product availability, delivery schedules, and sustainable practices openly. Consumers comment with orders and appreciation, while farmers share live photos and videos from farms or pick-up sites.

CONCLUSIONS

In today’s competitive and consumer-driven food market, communication is no longer a secondary element of agricultural product marketing, it is a central driver of visibility, trust, and long-term brand value. This paper has explored how different farms and producer networks across Europe leverage communication tools to differentiate their dairy products, connect with their audiences, and promote ethical, sustainable practices. A key takeaway is that effective communication must align with the farm’s values and the expectations of its consumers. Transparency in production, emotional connection to the land and animals, and local identity all contribute to a narrative that modern consumers are increasingly drawn to. Furthermore, the integration of digital tools, social media, online platforms, and direct messaging, has empowered even small-scale producers to build strong relationships with their customers.

Ultimately, successful communication in agricultural marketing is not about selling a product, but about telling a story, building consumer trust, and creating a sense of shared values. As consumer awareness and demand for sustainable, ethically produced food continue to grow, farms that prioritize open, honest, and value-driven communication will be best positioned to thrive in the evolving agri-food landscape.

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