

# Everyone has a Role in Cybersecurity

Within the last 18 months, there has been a dramatic increase in cyberattacks in agriculture, food supply, and farming. This is just the beginning as targeting the agriculture sector has been at the forefront of attackers' minds.

Attackers are becoming more creative and targeting sectors that are critical to human life, and farming is a large part of that.

With 50 billion devices connected to the Internet today, there are several **vulnerabilities** of people, organizations, and even those who don't use the Internet every day.

A common area where farmers can fall victim to cyberattacks is through **email**. Although email seems harmless, attackers are extremely creative and can bait and catch their next victim with one keyboard stroke.

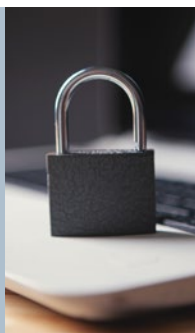
Attackers use a method called **phishing**, which is the act of coercing a user into giving someone—an attacker—credentials, information, or data. Phishing emails can be generic or extremely targeted.

Generic phishing emails are vague and ambiguous. The attacker writing the email may not know who you are, so they may keep the message unclear in hopes of you clicking an attachment or link in the email.

Phishing emails can be extremely targeted and, therefore, difficult to identify as phishing. An attacker may know where your farmstead is, what your name is, where you shop, and what supplies you need. So, a targeted phishing email may look like an invoice for fertilizer or other supplies. Business-to-business transactions happen everywhere, making **business email compromise** a large risk.

## Pro tip: Think an email is phishing?

Do not click attachments or links. Instead type the organization's website directly in the browser in a separate tab. Any alert from a service provider will show up on their website or your account, not only in an email.



An important part of cybersecurity is **cyber defense**. In other words, the best way to prepare for a cyberattack is with preventative **mitigation** tactics. **Separation of users and technology** is one preventative measure. For example, your eight-year-old grandchild should not have access to the same device that has sensitive farm data. You never know what accidents users—no matter how old—get themselves into. Instead, use different devices for work and personal uses.

Despite the idea that cyberattacks are a computer issue, it is a **human issue**. Attackers use **social engineering** to target specific industries and people. Farmers are no exclusion to that.

Get ahead of the inevitable curve and prepare, because when you become a victim to a cyberattack, there is little that can be done in the moment.

Your Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Farm Management specialist can help you prepare your farmstead for a cyberattack. Including the mitigation tactics above, there are several ways to prepare for and prevent a cyberattack. Get educated on cybersecurity for agriculture and your farm before it is too late.

Contact your [ISU Extension Management specialist today](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/ag/farm-business-management-0), [www.extension.iastate.edu/ag/farm-business-management-0](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/ag/farm-business-management-0).

## Resources:

- [Center for Cybersecurity Innovation and Outreach, Iowa State University](http://www.cyio.iastate.edu/), [www.cyio.iastate.edu/](http://www.cyio.iastate.edu/)
- [Ag Decision Maker Cybersecurity Resources](http://go.iastate.edu/AGDMCYBERSECURITY), [go.iastate.edu/AGDMCYBERSECURITY](http://go.iastate.edu/AGDMCYBERSECURITY)
- [Security Literacy](http://security-literacy.org/), [security-literacy.org/](http://security-literacy.org/)
- [Iowa Cyber Hub](http://www.iowacyberhub.org/), [www.iowacyberhub.org/](http://www.iowacyberhub.org/)
- [Iowa Cyber Hub Blog](http://www.iowacyberhub.org/blog/), [www.iowacyberhub.org/blog/](http://www.iowacyberhub.org/blog/)
- [Stop Think Connect](http://www.stopthinkconnect.org/), [www.stopthinkconnect.org/](http://www.stopthinkconnect.org/)

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