

**P**erhaps you already have access to some acres, equipment, education, and experience. But you hope to establish and grow your operation over the years. How can you tell your story, spread the word, and expand your farming operation?

**First – be a good farmer.** Be everything that makes others look at you and say, “There’s somebody I would like to know, somebody I would like to do business with.” Think specifically about those traits – honesty, dependability, flexibility, good communicator – and many more. Check yourself in the mirror each day, and honestly decide if you see those characteristics reflected in your behavior. If not – take action to improve yourself at every opportunity.

**Develop your 30-second elevator pitch.** You should be able to answer the question, “Why should I hire you to farm my ground?” in the time it would take to ride an elevator from the top to the bottom floor – getting your point across in a timely, succinct manner.

**Follow up with your farm resume.** This is a one-page piece that adds information to your elevator pitch, and continues to answer that question – “Why should I hire you to farm my ground.” Answer some key questions:

1. **Who are you?** Provide a little information on family background and history in farming.
2. **Education** – formal and continuing. Tell about ag-related coursework and school activities (high school, college, and beyond) as well as seminars and workshops you attend through ISU Extension and Outreach (such as Crop Advantage, Farmland Leasing, farm and field tours).

3. **Leadership** – 4-H, FFA, and other community leadership experiences.
4. **Skills** – What equipment can you operate? Include not just farm equipment knowledge, but high-tech computer, software, programs and apps that are useful in agriculture.
5. **Experience** – What have you done, at home or for a neighbor or employer? List any custom farming operations, crops, field, or livestock work.
6. **References** – Who could vouch for you? Who could talk about what they have seen you do? Make a list of any employers, teachers, 4-H/FFA leaders, bankers, neighbors. Then pick the top three, let them know, and include their contact info on your resume.

**Prepare your resume.** Put your information together in an attractive, easy-to-read format. This could be a traditional one-page resume, or you could try an eye-catching tri-fold brochure. Print a business card that you can carry with you and always have ready to hand out.

**Share your story.** Hand out your resume and business card to anyone who might know somebody who could offer more farming opportunities and experiences. The list is long – local co-op managers, ag professionals, ag suppliers, bankers; real estate, insurance and investment professionals; neighbors and any farmer you meet. Use social media of all kinds to share your story . . . *Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat* . . . but remember your audience and people that you want to reach – use the formats that they are likely to see.

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