



Utilizing Social Media and Digital Technologies to Market Virgin Islands Farmers Products

In a region known for its beauty and tourist attractions, the art of agriculture is often overlooked in the U.S. Virgin Islands. While farmers in mainland America mastered the use of advanced technology and social media to improve their farming operations, farmer’s native to the Virgin Islands lagged behind successful implementation of new technologies. In 2015, the University of the Virgin Islands introduced a project to help local farmers use internet technology and social media to improve farm marketing and engagement activities.

This project improved farmers ability to manage risk by providing current information to customers as a means of effectively marketing their produce. Two basic computer classes and two social media classes were conducted in both the St. Croix and St. Thomas

districts of the Virgin Islands. Participants were taught essential computer functions and how to utilize social media platforms as a method of enhancing their marketing strategy. In addition to these classes, a Ready Farmer’s Marketing class was conducted. This allowed producers to network with business owners and the owners of local supermarkets and restaurants. The event resulted in improved understanding of the demands and interests of local Virgin Island businesses.

As a result of this project, participants gained the ability to utilize digital technologies to diversify their farms and appeal to consumers. Farmers of the Virgin Islands can now use technology and social media to reduce their marketing risk, increase sales, and reduce post-harvest losses while improving communication with customers.

In June 2016, the website, www.vifarmers.com, was created to advertise every farm in both St. Croix and St. Thomas. This website allows consumers to find contact information for all farmers and the specific commodities grown on each farm.

The Southern Extension Risk Manage Education Center ([SRMEC](#)) seeks to empower the strengths and skills of farmers and ranchers across the Southern region to more effectively manage risks of operating in the diverse agricultural sector. To learn more about this SRMEC funded project visit this link: [Utilizing Social Media & Technologies in the Virgin Islands](#)



“The program is still helping me, and it was a wonderful program.”

-Virgin Islands Farmer



Empowering Producers to Manage Risks



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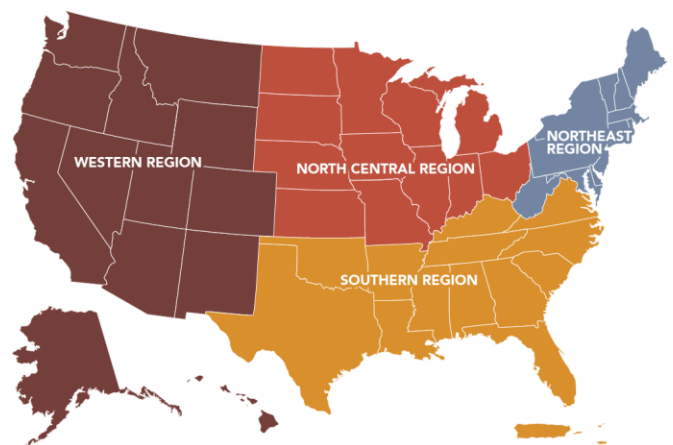
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“Educating America’s farmers and ranchers to manage the unique risks of producing food for the world’s table.”

Extension Risk Management Education (ERME) is delivered through four regional centers that provide grant funding and leadership within their regions.

Projects are producer-focused, results-based and encourage public-private partnerships. Funded projects must identify targeted results that will help producers manage risk and then describe how the project will measure those results.

Extension Risk Management Education has funded innovative programs that have generated tangible results for producers in every state. ERME is committed to funding results, providing transparent accountability, and encouraging collaboration. View the accomplishments of all funded projects on our website.
<http://ExtensionRME.org>



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