

# Farmers Fight

*Students take part in telling the beef story.*

by **KASEY MILLER**,  
associate editor

At Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas, “Farmers Fight” can be heard being yelled by 86,000 people on a college football gameday. It is also the name of an agricultural advocacy movement begun by Texas A&M University students with the goal of “making agriculture an Aggie tradition.”

Mason Parish, Jasmine Dillon and Victoria Pilger are all students at Texas A&M and are the founders of the Farmers Fight group. The group was started because agricultural students were tired

of hearing negative coverage in the local media and because many of their fellow students knew nothing about agriculture. Through the Farmers Fight effort, 220 Texas A&M students have been trained in agricultural advocacy to tell agriculture’s story by engaging in conversations about all sectors of agriculture.

At the International Livestock Congress (ILC) hosted Jan. 15 in Denver, the trio explained that the group has three primary pillars, the first being training. At an advocate conference, three industry leaders were brought in to teach students how to best share their stories.

The second is community outreach,

for which the group passed out 700 agricultural coloring books and crayons to 40 classes within area elementary schools. Using the coloring books, they explained agriculture to the students, who would take some information or questions home.

The third is campus connection. On April 12, 2012, the Farmers Fight group stormed the campus of Texas A&M, and its many members answered questions, listened to concerns and connected with fellow students. Parish explained that conversations were about organic compared to conventional agriculture, dairy and poultry, and even fashion and how agriculture is a part of clothing.

With the disconnect between consumers and agricultural producers, Parish, Dillon and Pilger said there are many tools to help bridge the gap. They suggested advocacy means such as the Masters of Beef Advocacy program or using social media, like the Peterson Brothers with their videos or Ryan Goodman with his blogs. The Petersons’ video “I’m Farming and I Grow It” has had more than 8 million views on YouTube, while their “Farmer Style” video has had more than 11 million views. Goodman hosts both his own personal blogs (*AgricultureProud.com* and *www.arranchband.blogspot.com*) and

contributes to CNN’s food blog “Eatocracy,” which is available at <http://eatocracy.cnn.com/>.

“Social media is not the future. It’s a tool for today,” asserted Dillon.

The three students explained that their vision of the future of agriculture included all industry actions being justifiable to the public, conversations being held and all in the industry taking action.

The Farmers Fight group created a spoken word video entitled Farmers Fight – Stand Up to reach more urban audiences. It can viewed at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=yFoGib8AfZo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yFoGib8AfZo).

The Farmers Fight group plans to continue its efforts with another advocate conference in March, passing out more coloring books in April, another campus connection event April 11 (themed 4-1-1) and a national conference to share ideas with other student advocacy groups nationwide.



**Editor’s Note:** Links to the websites and YouTube videos mentioned in this article are easily accessed through the Angus Journal’s online coverage of ILC 2013, which is available in the Virtual Library ([www.api-virtuallibrary.com](http://www.api-virtuallibrary.com)). Select “Other Industry Meetings” option in the Meeting Sites pull-down menu, then choose the “News Coverage” submenu option.

From left, Jasmine Dillon, Victoria Pilger and Mason Parish are the founders of the Farmers Fight effort, through which 220 Texas A&M University students have been trained to tell agriculture’s story by engaging in conversations about all sectors of agriculture.



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