

Ask your local newspaper to feature your farm or apiary

Newspapers are often eager for content to print, and readers are always eager hear more about the heroes of the local food movement, the farmers! Each farm and farmer is so different and articles are most effective when you let that difference shine. This makes it hard to take a cookie cutter approach, so we've developed a loose guide to the important elements you might use to construct your own article to send to your local paper. We've also included a few (purely fictional) examples to help get your creative juices flowing.

A. Headline

Ideally short, catchy, and to the point.

B. About you, the farmer or beekeeper

Stories are always the most engaging when they are personal. Start with something interesting about you. Questions you might answer include: how long have you been farming or keeping bees? Why did you decide to? What do you love about it? What do you find challenging?

C. About the land

Another way to interest the reader is talk about what is special about the farm itself. Perhaps it is the particular location, the history of the land, the view, the products that your farm specializes in, the innovative projects you've started, or something else.

D. About your practices

There might be some overlap with the first two categories, but if there isn't, don't forget to talk about how manage your farm or apiary using natural practices and why you've chosen to do so.

E. About Certified Naturally Grown

Take this opportunity to educate the audience about Certified Naturally Grown, what it means and why you decided to join. If you have trouble with how to word it, [click here](#) for ideas.

F. Personal closing

Bring it home with a quote or a short story. Something to chew on, something feel good about or something inspiring.

Remember – it doesn't have to be perfect! The idea is to get this great material into the hands of a reporter and they can help shape it.

A **Green Acres is first in the county to be Certified Naturally Grown**

B It's been three years since Josh Ellis traded in his ties and loafers for denim and work boots. It was a decision that surprised everyone, perhaps himself most of all. "If you'd have told me ten years ago that I would be farming today, I would've thought you were nuts. I couldn't keep a houseplant alive!" says Ellis.

B Nonetheless, a growing concern about his own health and the serious problems in the food system started him on the path towards farming and he hasn't looked back. He started with a small garden at first and in 2008 he decided to leave his day job as a computer consultant to focus on farming.

C He now farms 5 acres of vegetables and berries, supplying a stand at the farmers market as well as a handful of local restaurants. In 2011, Ellis became Certified Naturally Grown (CNG) as a way to tell his customers about his sustainable growing practices.

E CNG is a certification program for direct-market farms using natural practices and selling in their local communities. The main difference between CNG and the National Organic Program is the inspection process; CNG inspections are conducted by other farmers.

E Ellis faced a steep learning curve when he first made the leap to farming fulltime, so CNG's farmer-to-farmer inspection process is part of what appealed to him. "It's a good chance to meet other farmers that farm the way I do. And while they ask you the tough questions, it's invaluable having a second pair of eyes looking at the challenges I've been struggling with, and to help me think about how I can do it better."

D Ellis says that advice from other farmers has helped him with things like finding heirloom varieties, setting up a rain water collection system, and improving the soil.

F Ellis concludes "I've still got plenty to learn though. If farming teaches you one thing, it's humility."

For more information on CNG visit www.naturallygrown.org

**Froggy Bottom gets Certified...
...Naturally Grown!**

C Froggy Bottom Farm's hand-painted signs catch your eye as you drive west on Route 44 from Oakgrove. From May through November, the rough-hewn farmstand is brimming with veggies, flowers, eggs, and honey. And recently farm manager Amy Baker added something new to the display – the farm's Certified Naturally Grown credentials.

E Certified Naturally Grown is a certification program for farmers who use natural practices and sell direct to local customers. All certification documents are available to the public online, and inspections are carried out by other farmers. Baker says "These days, customers are asking about our practices more and more. I've used sustainable and natural practices for over a decade, so it's nice to have a way to demonstrate my commitment to those principles."

B Baker grew up wanting to be a farmer. She says "while my classmates envisioned becoming teachers or doctors, I was always certain I wanted to work outside with my hands in the dirt." In fact, Baker spent summers in high school and college working as a field hand on the very same land she now farms.

C When the farmers decided to retire and the land became available, Baker jumped at the chance to put her experience to work in her own enterprise. A conservation easement whereby the town purchased the development rights of the land made the deal possible for Baker financially. The easement lays out specific use-restrictions to protect the soil and water quality which fit nicely with Baker's ecological approach to farming.

D/F She says "I've really tried to integrate the different aspects of production on the farm. The chickens keep the bugs down and provide good compost material. The flowers attract the bees, which in turn pollinate the crops. I plant clover as a cover crop, that improves the soil and provides extra forage for the bees. The cycles don't always work perfectly, but the more I can close these loops, the better it is for the land."

For more information visit Froggy Bottom Farm www.exampleurl.com, Certified Naturally Grown www.naturallygrown.org