## Introduction and Background

The lack of communication between the farmer and consumer creates problems in the media, with marketing, and as a result, misguided buying choices.

How was this communication lost and why is there a lack of agricultural education?

1. A physical gap between farmers and consumers. In 1900, 41% of the U.S. workforce was agriculture related. In 2004, less than 2% of the workforce were farmers and ranchers (Woolpert, 2017).

2. The shift from many small farms to few large-scale production facilities. “Since 1900, the number of farms has fallen by 63 percent, while the average farm size has risen by 67 percent” (Dimitri, 2005). This shift is due to technological advances and economical beneficiaries.

The purpose of this project is to analyze and understand the communication gap between the farmer and consumer in order to create a dialogue about misconceptions in the media.

In order for consumers to understand what they are buying, and critically analyze media information, it is necessary to teach agricultural education at the high school level health classes. This project will showcase how to start this education in order to bridge the communication gap starting with five crucial and common food-packaging labels.

These labels include USDA organic, GMO, FDA approval, “All natural” and gluten free.

This terminology will be taught with a visual aid poster that defines and summarizes necessary, factual information. The posters can be handed out to each student as an informational tool to reference in the future or be displayed on classroom walls.

## Research

### Methodology

1. Choose a user friendly, infographic design website (Ex: Piktochart)
2. Choose a template from the infographics section
3. Choose a background
4. Add a title
5. Make font and sizing adjustments
6. Create sections for each term (5)
7. Use reliable sources such as the USDA and FDA websites
8. Add pictures relating to each section for a visual aid of each label

How to make a teaching aid poster:

- Choose a user friendly, infographic design website (Ex: Piktochart)
- Choose a template from the infographics section
- Choose a background
- Add a title
- Make font and sizing adjustments
- Create sections for each term (5)
- Use reliable sources such as the USDA and FDA websites
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## Results

### Agricultural employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Agricultural Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The 20th Century Transformation of U.S. Agriculture and Farm Policy, Economic Research Service/USDA

### Number of farms vs. farm size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Farms</th>
<th>Average Farm Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>100 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>16,000</td>
<td>6,250 acres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The 20th Century Transformation of U.S. Agriculture and Farm Policy, Economic Research Service/USDA

## Conclusion

Although these posters teach five terms used in the industry, they are common labels seen in grocery stores and frequently misinterpreted.

This teaching aid poster is an example of how the agriculture industry can partner with high school’s to start teaching an overview of consumer education.

It is essential for the agriculture industry to bridge the communication gap so the future consumers have appropriate knowledge about what they are buying. Adding posters and information like this project provided can close the gap between producers and consumers.

### Recommendations:

1. Creating homework assignments that challenge students to speak with their friends, family, and community members would be a great way to expand this dialogue beyond the classroom.
2. Encourage and promote guest speakers in the classroom such as farmers, ranchers, and representatives from the USDA would be a great addition to improving this communication and education.

### Resources

5. Woolpert, M. The greatest challenge facing agriculture over the next 5 years. The University of Vermont. USDA. 2017.