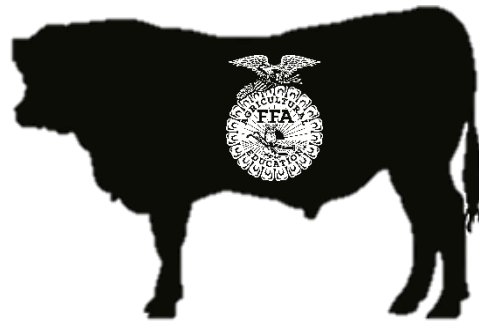


# *“Case in Point”*



**2017**

**Agricultural Communications CDE**

**Florida FFA Association**

**Cottdondale FFA**

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## Executive Summary

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The Cottondale High School FFA Chapter contacted the Cottondale FFA Agricultural Communications Committee to promote the story of a member of the National FFA Organization through agricultural advocacy. The team selected Case Birge, a senior at Cottondale High School, because of his distinguished supervised agricultural experience (SAE) project and superior scholastic record. Birge, being a co-owner of his family's cattle operation, Birge Farms, exemplifies leadership, responsibility, and determination for his fellow FFA members and community. The purpose of promoting Birge is to reach various audiences, such as his school and community, through various media outlets to share a message about the FFA and agriculture. Many of these audience members are uninformed on the business aspect of a cattle operation and the effort required for its success. This media campaign was developed to meet the desires of the Cottondale FFA Chapter, which are a greater understanding of the agricultural industry and the positive influence it and the FFA has on the lives of young individuals. The team of communication consultants has compiled the "Case in Point" media plan, which includes several tactics designed to meet the needs of the Cottondale FFA Chapter. These tactics include the use of writing, design, and electronic media to accomplish the committee's and the chapter's goals of sharing an optimistic message about the FFA and the agriculture industry. The "Case in Point" media campaign will explain the media to be used in the promotion, the targeted audience, the timeline, and the methods of evaluation.

# Introduction and Overview

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## *Introduction*

The Cottondale FFA Chapter contacted the Cottondale FFA Agricultural Communication Committee concerning the need to publicize a member, while also promoting agricultural advocacy. This need became apparent as the agriculture industry has become a target of negative publicity, and the community surrounding the Cottondale FFA Chapter is generally less informed about the agriculture industry. To combat this and publicize the constructive impact that the FFA has on the lives of students, the Cottondale FFA Chapter requested that the agricultural communication committee select an FFA member who epitomizes the difference the FFA makes in students. Case Birge, the selected member, will graduate with honors from Cottondale High School in May. He has an entrepreneurial supervised agricultural experience (SAE) that is his cattle operation, Birge Farms. Case Birge is the face of this operation, as he cares for the livestock and attends numerous shows. He works with his family to raise show calves for customers, while also showing his own calves throughout Florida and the nation. Birge has been a member of the National FFA Organization for six years, and he is very involved in his FFA Chapter as he serves as the chapter Secretary and recently placed second in the Florida FFA Agricultural Sales and Service Career Development Event. His success in both the show ring and in the FFA can be credited to the lessons he has learned through both experiences and the significant impact that both have had on his life. During his time as a member of the Cottondale FFA Chapter, Birge was an active member of his community, devoted much of his time to his church, balanced several extracurricular activities, and maintained excellent grades. These attributes, in addition to his demonstration of leadership, have led to the decision for Case Birge

to represent the Cottondale FFA Chapter as a local success of the agricultural education program. To spread awareness of this FFA member's story, the Cottondale FFA Communications Team has developed this media plan entitled "Case in Point."

## *Overview*

The Cottondale FFA Agricultural Communications Committee will meet the needs of the Cottondale High School FFA Chapter by employing various media. The communication consultants have chosen to utilize design, writing, and electronic media to promote the FFA member's story.

As expressed by the Cottondale FFA Chapter, the following objectives will focus the communication committee's campaign to meet the chapter's needs:

1. To increase membership in the Cottondale FFA Chapter by 10 students;
2. To increase the number of supporters of the FFA within the community by 100, whether it be through financial sponsorship or joining the Cottondale FFA Alumni;
3. To gain a minimum of 25 "followers" or "likers" on each social media platform (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram).

The media plan will better enable the Cottondale FFA Chapter to accomplish its goals of garnering respect and support for the FFA and agriculture industry by gaining a better understanding of the audience, the specific media to use, the budget item allocation, the timeline to publish the media, and the best-suited forms of evaluation of the objectives.

## Audience Analysis

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There are two specific audiences that the Cottondale FFA Agricultural Communications Committee has directed the media plan toward: Cottondale students and community members.

### *Cottondale Students*

The primary target audience is students at Cottondale Middle and High School. These students range from ages 12 to 18 and mostly live in rural areas. This is the primary group of the audience because these students would potentially join the FFA chapter where they would receive the benefits that the FFA offers students. The secondary target of this audience is students at Cottondale Elementary School. These students are targeted because they would potentially join the FFA when they attend Cottondale Middle School. This overall audience is targeted because of the common misconception among this age group that the FFA and the agriculture industry only include farming, but Birge is a much better representation as he is involved with both cattle raising and the business and leadership aspect of agriculture.

### *Community Members*

This audience includes people who live in Jackson County, Florida, and who are over the age of 18. Birge's hometown of Graceville and the town in which he attends school, Cottondale, are located in Jackson County. This area is primarily rural; however, there is a large sector of the public that lacks a general understanding of the agriculture industry and the FFA. Thus, the communication committee has chosen to focus on this audience for the agricultural advocacy campaign.

# Strategic Plan

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The Cottondale FFA Chapter presented its needs to the Cottondale FFA Agricultural Communication Committee who in turn created three main objectives for this campaign:

1. To increase membership in the Cottondale FFA Chapter by 10 students;
2. To increase the number of supporters of the FFA within the community by 100, whether it be through financial sponsorship or joining the Cottondale FFA Alumni;
3. To gain a minimum of 25 “followers” or “likers” on each social media platform (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram).

The theme of the Cottondale FFA Communications Committee’s campaign is “Case in Point.” This title was chosen because “case in point” is a phrase that means an example that illustrates what is being discussed. This not only plays on the member’s name, Case Birge, but it also reflects the student’s success in many areas and his representation of the agricultural industry and the FFA.

## *SWOT Analysis*

The SWOT analysis allows the committee to compare the positive and negative aspects of the campaign by listing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This form of analysis was selected because of its ability to compare the strengths and opportunities to the weaknesses and threats. This will allow the communication committee to create a plan to use the strengths and opportunities to overcome the weaknesses and threats, resulting in a more effective and successful media plan.

### *Strengths:*

- Target audience is primarily rural-based, so should be open to key message
- Campaign includes several print media tactics, increasing possibility of reaching digital immigrants, or those not born into the digital world and who are more likely to print a document to read it (Telg & Irani, 2012, p. 229)

### *Weaknesses:*

- Communications committee does not have access to the highest quality design programs
- The media promotion period is comparatively short

### *Opportunities:*

- Fed Cattle Show, a popular event in the community, is held during time of promotion
- National FFA Week occurs during campaign, providing more publicity for Birge

### *Threats:*

- Negative publicity of livestock raising and the FFA

Using the above information, the communications committee developed several media to meet the needs of the Cottondale FFA Chapter.

## *Design*

The team will represent design media by creating a website for Birge Farms to discuss the everyday tasks Birge performs in his cattle operation and how the FFA developed the necessary skills for him to be successful. In addition to the website, the Cottondale FFA



Communications Team will design a magazine page that will include a summary of Birge's achievements and current FFA activities in a section entitled "Follow the Leaders." This is a section of the *AgVocator Magazine* published by Farm Credit of Northwest Florida, which honors future leaders in agriculture. The committee will be provided with a template to use for the design of this magazine page. The committee also chose to design a flier to be displayed throughout Cottondale High School and the community. Locations in the community that this flier will be posted include the local Piggly Wiggly and the Jackson County Extension Office.

## *Writing*

The writing portion of the "Case in Point" media plan will include a press release and blog post. The press release will be sent to the following local newspapers: *The Jackson County Floridan*, *Jackson County Times*, and *Graceville News*. These newspapers were chosen because of their ability to reach community members, a large sector of the target audience. Also, a blog page will be created, which will be on the website. This blog page will be used to keep students and community members updated on Birge's cattle project and accomplishments in the FFA. The blog will keep constant and personal communication between Birge and audience members.

## *Electronic Media*

The communications committee found it necessary to include electronic media in the campaign due to the prominence of agricultural advocacy on social media. A video showing footage of Birge's cattle development will share Birge's story and allow viewers to connect with his experiences. The video will also express how the FFA helped shape Birge into the person he is today. Birge will also be highlighted in the Cottondale FFA Chapter's Instagram. In addition,

the team of consultants will create a Twitter and Facebook page for Birge Farms to promote the member's supervised agricultural experience.

### *Social Media Tactic*

In an article about the importance of social media in agriculture, Samantha Gibson (2013) of the University of Missouri Science and Agricultural Journalism Program said, "American agriculturists can't rely on face-to-face communication anymore to tell their story. More and more farmers are becoming technology savvy and getting involved with social media to connect with consumers on a personal level" (para. 4). The communication committee chose to use social media because of its use by all ages and its ability to share important messages. The team has chosen to use the Cottondale FFA Chapter's Instagram because this page already has approximately 150 followers, which includes most chapter members and some community members. The committee has also chosen to create a Facebook page and Twitter account for the social media tactic. Each of these social media will contain an "about" section that will describe Birge's FFA and extracurricular activities, as well as his work at Birge Farms. The posts on these social media accounts will depict Birge at events of the Cottondale FFA Chapter or working with and showing his cattle. To gain followers on each account, the committee members will include the usernames of each account on all media used in the campaign. To keep the audience engaged, the communication committee will enter each person who shares one of the posts or follows one of the accounts into a drawing for a tablet. This will be used to gain followers and maintain audience engagement. The posts will also request that followers who desire more information to contact any of the committee members on the social media accounts.

# Timeline

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The dates below were chosen due to the timeliness with the end of Birge's show season.

## **December**

- December 5 – Meet with Cottondale FFA to discuss the needs and goals of the project
- December 15 – Begin production of the video and begin design of the magazine layout

## **January**

- January 9 – Submit magazine page and article about Birge to the “AgVocator Magazine”
- January 10 – Begin website and blog production and begin writing press release
- January 16 – Complete video production and post the video on YouTube
- January 23 – Submit press release and complete website and blog production
- January 26 – Begin flier design

## **February**

- February 1 – “AgVocator Magazine” is published and distributed
- February 8 – Print and distribute fliers and begin posts on the chapter's Instagram
- February 13 – Create Facebook and Twitter to begin weekly updates

## **March**

- March 1 – Begin process of evaluation for media campaign
- March 18 – The media plan evaluation will be completed and assessed by the Cottondale FFA Agricultural Communications Committee

## Evaluation

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Upon completion of this media plan, the communications committee will perform an analysis to evaluate the success of the “Case in Point” media campaign in accomplishing the set objectives and, therefore, meeting the needs of the Cottondale FFA Chapter.

The first objective is to increase membership in the Cottondale FFA Chapter by 10 students. This will be measured by the committee as the number of FFA membership applications turned in during the media promotion period. To validate that the members joined because of the media campaign, they will be asked on the application how they heard about the FFA and their purpose for joining.

The second objective is to increase the number of supporters of the FFA within the community by 100, whether it be through financial sponsorship or joining the Cottondale FFA Alumni. This goal will be evaluated by comparing the number of donations received by Cottondale FFA in previous years with the number for the current year. A substantial increase in sponsors from previous years would indicate success in this area of the objective. The committee will also compare the number of alumni members from previous years with the membership of the current year. Again, an increase in alumni membership should be evident. The total number of growth in each should exceed 100 for the objective to be achieved.

The third objective is to gain a minimum of 25 “followers” or “likers” on each social media platform (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram). This objective will be analyzed by recording the number of followers on each account before and after the media campaign and comparing this data.

## Budget

The agricultural communications committee has been given a maximum budget of \$5,000 by the Cottondale FFA Chapter; however, the team chose to develop two options for the chapter to choose from based upon which option fully meets their needs. Both options include the use of social media, which have no cost for use.

Grand Champion Option: \$4,121.26

Media	Detail	Cost Per Item	Impressions (Number Reached)	Total Projected
Website and Blog	WordPress Business Usage – Three months	\$24.92 per month	4,500 views	\$74.76
Magazine	“AgVocator” Magazine Submission Fee	\$50	2,550 views	\$50
Flier	Printed Flier	\$0.57	5,000 prints	\$2,850
Press Release	Jackson County Times Jackson County Floridan Graceville News	No cost for print publication	31, 300 subscriptions	\$0
Video Production	Professional Editing (Five Hours)	\$49.50 per hour	No views	\$247.50
Video Publication	Copyright	\$100	11,550 views	\$100
Tablet	Raffle Item – Apple iPad Pro	\$799	No views (Incentive)	\$799

Reserve Champion Option: \$2,364

Media	Detail	Cost Per Item	Impressions	Total Projected
Magazine	“AgVocator” Magazine Submission Fee	\$50	2,550 views	\$0
Flier	Printed Flier	\$0.57	2,500 prints	\$1,425
Press Release	Jackson County Times Jackson County Floridan Graceville News	No cost for print publication	31, 300 subscriptions	\$0
Video Production	Personal Editing Program	\$40	No views	\$40
Video Publication	Copyright	\$100	11,550 views	\$100
Tablet	Raffle Item – Apple iPad Pro	\$799	No views (Incentive)	\$799

## Conclusion

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The Cottondale FFA Agricultural Communications Committee recognizes the communication issue that the Cottondale FFA Chapter proposed and has developed the “Case in Point” media plan with this issue in mind. The committee compiled this media plan with consideration of the importance of agricultural advocacy and Birge’s story in respect to the target audience of Cottondale students and community members. This campaign meets the need of the FFA chapter, which is the promotion of a FFA member and agricultural advocacy, by including specifically designed forms of media that are appropriate for each sector of the audience. The Cottondale FFA Agricultural Communications Committee has addressed the lack of awareness of the FFA within the community and accumulated the “Case in Point” media campaign to accomplish the goals of the Cottondale FFA Chapter.

## References

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# Appendices

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The appendices are included as separate files as follows:

**Appendix A:** Web Design

**Appendix B:** Magazine Article

**Appendix C:** Flier

**Appendix D:** Press Release

**Appendix E:** Blog Post

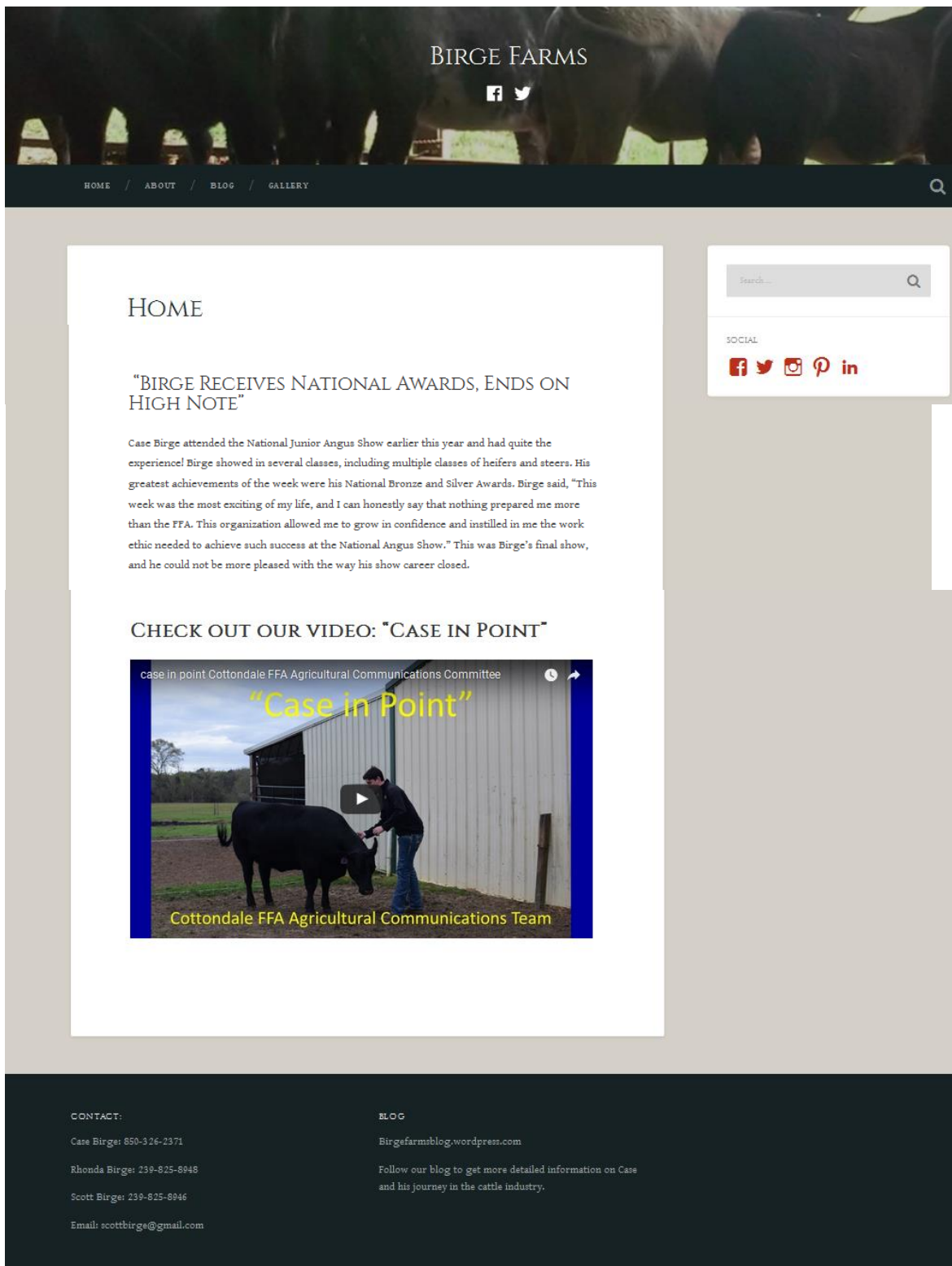
**Appendix F:** Video Production

**Appendix G:** Social Media Tactic

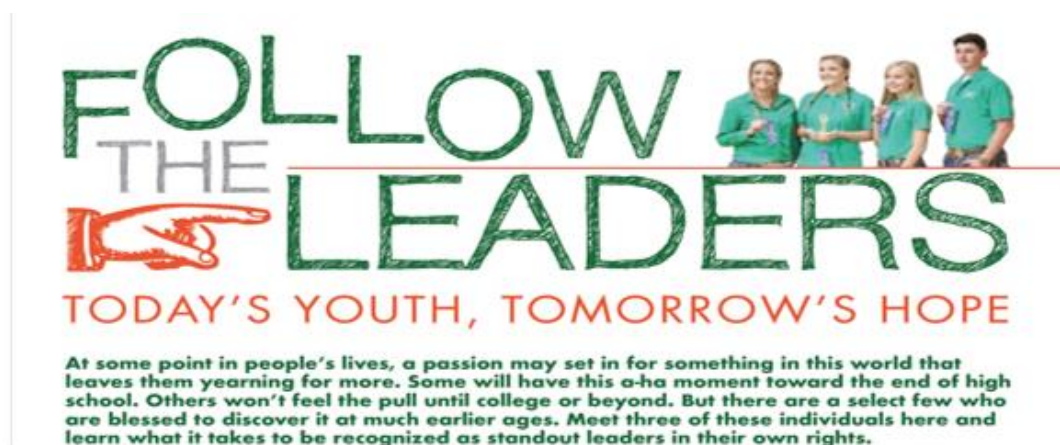


# Appendix A: Web Design

The below image represents the home page of the Birge Farms website. To view the full website, visit <https://birgefarmsite.wordpress.com/>.



## Appendix B: Magazine Article



### OUTSTANDING IN HIS FIELD

Despite only being a senior in high school, Case Birge mapped out his future some time ago. The son of Scott and Rhonda Birge in Graceville, Florida, insists that cattle raising is in his blood. His family began the show business when they moved to north Florida and have grown with success ever since. Birge was first introduced to the FFA when his sister joined while at Chipley and developed a passion for the FFA and agriculture industry during their beginnings.

Upon joining his local FFA chapter, Birge recognized the importance of agriculture and immediately decided to choose a career that would allow him to stay involved with the industry. Birge's experiences working with cattle have led him to pursue a career in genetic engineering, particularly in beef production. His academic success, FFA achievements, and showing awards have allowed Birge to receive a full-ride scholarship to Mississippi State University. He has also received many other scholarships from his experiences and hard work.

Birge currently serves as the secretary of the Cottondale FFA Chapter and actively participates in community activities and career development event teams. Through the FFA, Birge has attended numerous leadership conferences and judging contests, all of which have offered valuable lessons for him. Among these activities, college classes, church involvement and his cattle operation, Birge stays busy year-round. "Although I rarely have free-time, I am appreciative of the work ethic I have developed and the life lessons I have learned," said Birge. "I wouldn't trade these experiences for anything."



Birge attends many different local and national shows, including the Tri-State Junior Beef Expo where he received Grand Champion Showmanship.

For more information about Birge, visit the following sites:

[www.birgefarmsite.com](http://www.birgefarmsite.com)

Facebook/Birge Farms

Twitter/Birge Farms

Instagram/Cottondale FFA

## Appendix C: Flier

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### *“Case’s Cattle Care Clinic”*



**What:** A clinic for FFA members and other students who are interested in learning about caring for livestock, specifically cattle. The clinic will include lessons on clipping, trimming, and washing.

**When:** Saturday, February 24, 2018

**Where:** Birge Farms in Graceville, FL

For more information, contact the Cottondale FFA Agricultural Communications Committee at 850-482-9821, ext. 269 or [cdaleffa@gmail.com](mailto:cdaleffa@gmail.com).

*Case in Point*

## Appendix D: Press Release

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# Birge Farms



### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact:** Caleb Reed, Chair  
Cottdale FFA Agricultural Communications Committee  
Cottdale FFA Chapter  
850-482-9821, ext. 269  
cdaleffa@gmail.com  
2680 Levy St.  
Cottdale, FL 32431

### **Birge Announces New Cattle Care Clinic**

Case Birge, primary caretaker at Birge Farms, is holding a clinic on Saturday, February 24, 2018. "Case's Cattle Care Clinic" will be held at Birge Farms in Graceville, Florida.

Birge's clinic will be held for FFA members and other students who are interested in learning about how to care for livestock, specifically cattle. The clinic will include lessons on clipping, trimming, and washing.

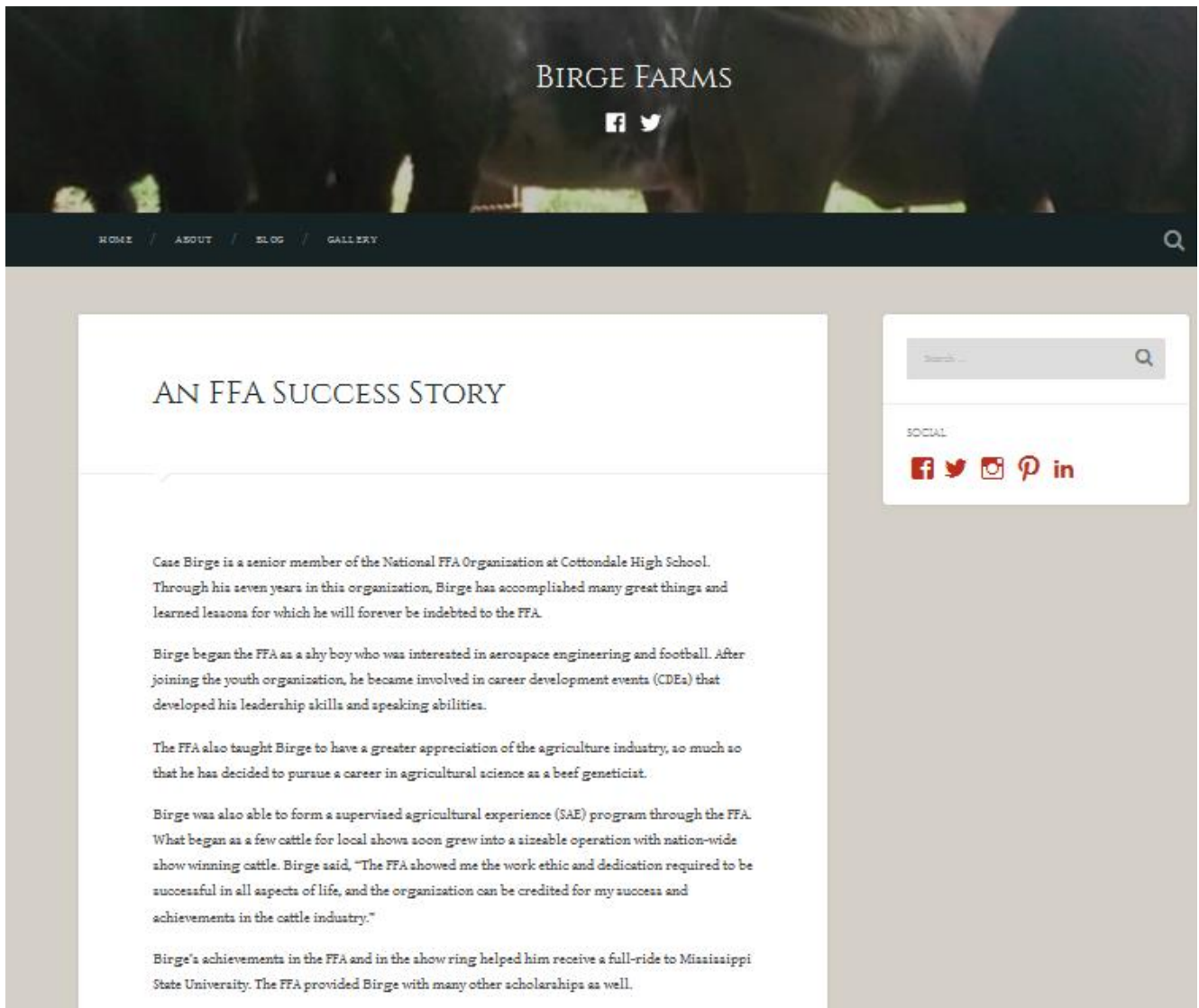
Birge said, "The FFA instilled in me so many impactful life lessons and skills. It is now my duty to pass these skills on to future agriculturists."

For more information about "Case's Cattle Care Clinic" or Birge Farms, contact the Cottdale FFA Agricultural Communications Committee at 850-482-9821, ext. 269 or Birge at 850-326-2371. Those who are interested may also visit [www.birgefarmsite.com](http://www.birgefarmsite.com) for more information.

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## Appendix E: Blog Post

Below is an example of a blog posts. To view the entire blog page, visit <https://birgefarmsite.wordpress.com/blog/>.





## Appendix F: Video Production

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The video was posted on YouTube for viewing purposes. The link to the video was also posted on the website.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWD4lahyx24>



## Appendix G: Social Media Tactic



**cottondaleffa** Cottondale FFA member, Case Birge, spends hours every week working with his cattle to prepare them for shows. He credits his success to hard work and dedication as he works tirelessly to ensure his cattle are in the best condition for the show.

