

PODCASTS - A NEW FORM OF STORYTELLING IN AGRICULTURE

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***Abstract:** In a world saturated with images, listening has become a challenging skill. This is why podcasts about agriculture have gained immense popularity in recent times. People are beginning to recognize that the on-demand aspect of this medium, its primary method of consumption through listening, and the depth of the stories it can convey could potentially represent the new branch of media content. Additionally, engaging with this medium can serve as a beneficial mental workout to keep our brains sharp. Before modern technology, audio storytelling existed, but the rise of podcasts has transformed the accessibility and appeal of this form of storytelling.*

Key words: communication, agriculture, podcasts, advertising

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture has evolved significantly over the years, transitioning from traditional methods to modern and efficient systems [2,6,9]. Technology has played a crucial role in this transformation, introducing advanced agricultural machinery, automated irrigation systems, and satellite monitoring solutions [5,7]. These innovations have not only improved productivity but also reduced the negative impact on the environment, allowing farmers to manage resources in a more sustainable way [1,10].

In the digital age, agriculture is no longer just an isolated rural activity but a vibrant topic of discussion on social networks. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have become places where farmers, agricultural experts, and consumers meet to exchange ideas, share best practices, and promote local products. For example, hashtags such as #sustainableagriculture and #greenfarm are used to raise awareness about environmentally friendly farming practices and to connect communities from around the world.

Discussions about agriculture on social networks bring numerous benefits. They help educate the general public about the importance of agriculture and its impact on daily life. Additionally, farmers can learn from each other, adopting new technologies and innovative practices that can improve their businesses [8]. Social networks also facilitate access to new markets, allowing farmers to promote their products directly to consumers. Thus, the integration of agriculture into the digital sphere has opened up new opportunities and created a dynamic space for the exchange of knowledge and resources.

Podcasts have emerged as a powerful medium for storytelling across various sectors, including agriculture [11]. This innovative platform offers an intimate and accessible way to share knowledge, stories, and experiences related to farming, sustainability, and rural life. Through the unique blend of personal narratives, expert interviews, and educational content, podcasts in the agriculture sector are not only informing listeners but also fostering a sense of community among those interested in or involved with agriculture [9,11].

The beauty of podcasts lies in their versatility and reach [15,24]. They can cater to a wide range of interests within the agricultural sector, from organic farming practices and agroecology to agricultural technology and policy. This allows listeners to dive deep into niche topics or enjoy a broader perspective on what's happening in the world of agriculture. Moreover, the oral storytelling format makes complex information more digestible and

engaging, thereby making knowledge about sustainable practices and innovations in agriculture more accessible to a global audience [14].

In addition to educating and informing, agriculture podcasts play a crucial role in connecting people. They bridge the gap between rural and urban, between farmers and consumers, and between traditional practices and modern technologies [15, 23]. By sharing stories of success, challenges, and perseverance, these podcasts are not only highlighting the importance of agriculture in our daily lives but are also celebrating the diverse voices and experiences within this sector. As this form of storytelling continues to evolve, it promises to be a vital tool in promoting understanding, innovation, and sustainability in agriculture [3].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this paper, we employed a range of research methods to ensure a comprehensive analysis of the subject matter. First and foremost, a literature review was conducted to gather existing knowledge and theoretical frameworks related to our topic. This involved analyzing a variety of academic sources, including books, peer-reviewed journals, and reputable online publications. The literature review provided a solid foundation for understanding the current state of research, identifying gaps, and formulating research questions. Also we utilized a SWOT analysis to provide a comprehensive evaluation of our subject.. By leveraging this analysis, we aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the current situation and to develop strategic plans that capitalize on strengths and opportunities while addressing weaknesses and mitigating threats.

Furthermore, we utilized content analysis as a method to systematically examine the textual data collected.

By employing a mixed-methods approach, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how podcasts function as a new form of storytelling in agriculture, their impact on audiences, and their potential future developments.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Podcasts have rapidly become one of the most popular forms of media consumption in recent years, offering a unique blend of entertainment, education, and community. These audio programs can be about virtually any topic, from true crime and history to comedy and personal development. One of the key appeals of podcasts is their accessibility; they can be easily downloaded or streamed from various platforms like Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and Google Podcasts, making it possible to listen while commuting, exercising, or even doing household chores.

The rise of podcasts can be attributed to several factors. First, they are relatively easy and inexpensive to produce compared to other forms of media. Anyone with a microphone and a computer can create a podcast, which democratizes content creation and allows for a diverse range of voices and perspectives to be heard. Second, podcasts often create a sense of intimacy and connection between the host and the listener. The conversational tone and the ability to dive deep into subjects create an engaging and personal experience that is hard to replicate in other media formats.

Furthermore, podcasts serve as an excellent tool for continuous learning and personal growth. Many podcasts feature experts in various fields who share their knowledge and insights, providing listeners with opportunities to expand their understanding of different subjects. For instance, business podcasts might offer tips on entrepreneurship, while science podcasts can explore the latest research and discoveries. This makes podcasts not only a source of entertainment but also a valuable resource for self-improvement and staying informed about the world. [3].

The 10 most listened podcasts in Romania at the moment are diversified in several fields (Table 1.) [15], such as business, music, arts, society and culture, news and politics, health and fitness and comedy. This reflects both the diversity of Romanian listeners' interests and the quality and variety of content available on podcasting platforms.

Business podcasts are popular because listeners want to improve their business knowledge and skills. They feature interviews with successful entrepreneurs, discussions of market trends and practical advice for professional development. In terms of music, podcasts offer not only interviews with artists, but also album reviews and discussions of the evolution of musical genres.

Arts and culture podcasts also attract an audience interested in theater, literature, and other cultural events, while society and culture podcasts address current issues and social issues. News and politics are current topics, especially in a tumultuous global context. Health and fitness podcasts are sought after for wellness and healthy lifestyle tips, and comedy podcasts bring a touch of humor and relaxation to listeners' everyday lives. Thus, these varied domains contribute to a rich and diverse audio landscape that meets the needs and preferences of a wide audience [4].

Table 1.

The 10 most listened podcasts in Romania

| Podcast name | Host name | Content categories | Average no. of monthly Episodes | Average unique Listeners per episod | Social media/ community |
|---------------------------|---|--|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Antreprenori care inspiră | Florin Roșoga | business | 6 | 15.600 | 41.000 |
| Urban Sunsets | Bogdan Stratulă, Marius Chivu, Mihai Dinu | music, arts | 30 | 15.000 | 29.300 |
| Fain&Simplu | Mihai Morar | society & culture, health & wellness, education, entertainment | 4 | 12.000 | 1.450.000 |
| Starea Nației | Dragos Patraru | news & politics | 16 | 5.000 | 620.000 |
| Vocea Natiei | Dragos Patraru | news & politics | 4 | 5.000 | 620.000 |
| The Gratitude Podcast | Georgian Benta | health & fitness | 10 | 4.500 | 1.800 |
| Intre showuri | Teo, Vio si Costel | comedy | 4 | 3.500 | 130.000 |
| Vorbitorincii | Radu Paraschivescu și Cătălin Ștriblea | news, society & culture | 4 | 3.500 | 110.000 |
| Cine Stie Ce | Teo și Victor Băra | comedy; society & culture | 5 | 3.000 | 140.000 |
| Andi Moiescu Podcast | Andi Moiescu | society&culture, news, divertisment, arts | 4 | 3.000 | 1.600.000 |

Source: <https://www.thinkdigital.net/podcasts/>, [15]

AgroStory, one of the most popular agricultural podcast in Romania (Table 2), has garnered significant attention and a loyal following under the adept management of Nicoleta Dragomir and the FermaMedia Group. This podcast stands out in the agricultural community for its insightful and comprehensive coverage of the industry, providing listeners with both current news and in-depth discussions on various aspects of agriculture. Whether you are a farmer, an agricultural entrepreneur, or simply someone interested in the

agricultural sector, AgroStory offers valuable content that keeps you informed about the latest trends, innovations, and challenges in the field.

One of the key strengths of AgroStory is its diverse content categories, which primarily focus on news and agriculture. This combination ensures that listeners receive timely updates on important events and developments, as well as detailed explorations of agricultural practices, technologies, and policies. The podcast covers a wide array of topics, from crop management and livestock care to sustainable farming practices and market trends. By addressing both the macro and micro aspects of agriculture, AgroStory equips its audience with the knowledge needed to make informed decisions and adopt best practices in their own agricultural endeavors.

They have successfully created a platform that not only educates but also fosters a sense of community among its listeners. Through interviews with experts, farmers, and industry leaders, the podcast brings a variety of perspectives to the forefront, encouraging dialogue and collaboration within the agricultural sector. The success of AgroStory underscores the importance of accessible, quality information in empowering individuals and driving progress in agriculture, making it an indispensable resource for anyone involved in or passionate about this vital industry.

Table 2.

The 10 most listened agricultural podcasts

| Podcast name | Host name | Content categories | Average no. of monthly Episodes | Average unique Listeners per episod | Social media/ community | Total Youtube Channel Views | Country |
|---------------------|--|--|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|---------|
| Agricultura Modernă | AgroMedia | agriculture | 6 | 1.100 | 4.900 | 251.268 | Romania |
| Câmp deschis | Petronela Cotea Mihai | agriculture | 4 | 800 | 141 | 730.402 | Romania |
| AgroStory | Nicoleta Dragomir/ FermaMedia Group | news&agric ulture | 3 | 1.600 | 28.000 | 13.448.671 | Romania |
| FarmForum | Alina Crețu/ Cristina Cionga | news&agric ulture | 3 | 450 | 219 | 44.377 | Romania |
| Millennial Farmer | Zach Johnson | agricultural events&agri culture | 6 | 350K | 1.07M | 347.978.036 | SUA |
| The Modern Acre | Tim și Tyler Nuss | agritech | 4 | 260 | 3.800 | 2.471 | SUA |
| Ag State of Mind | Jason Medows | psihology in agriculture | 1 | 500 | 4.300 | 945 | SUA |

Source: own elaboration after: [16,17,18,19,20,21,22]

In the realm of agricultural content creation, one of the most popular figures is Zach Johnson, also known as the "Millennial Farmer." Through his engaging and informative YouTube channel, Johnson brings viewers into the daily life and operations of a modern farming enterprise. His channel, "Millennial Farmer," offers a unique and authentic glimpse into the challenges and triumphs faced by today's agricultural community, making complex farming concepts accessible and relatable to a broad audience.

Zach Johnson's content covers a wide range of agricultural topics, from planting and harvesting crops to equipment maintenance and the latest farming technologies. His videos often feature real-time updates on farm activities, providing educational value while also highlighting the realities of farming. Johnson's approachable and down-to-earth personality has garnered a large following, making him a trusted voice in the agricultural

sector. He also uses his platform to discuss important issues such as sustainability, environmental stewardship, and the economic realities of farming.

Beyond his educational videos, Johnson frequently participates in agricultural events, both online and in-person, further solidifying his influence within the farming community. His presence at these events helps bridge the gap between farmers and the general public, fostering a better understanding of where our food comes from and the hard work involved in producing it. Overall, the "Millennial Farmer" channel serves as a valuable resource for anyone interested in agriculture, whether they are seasoned farmers, aspiring agriculturists, or simply curious viewers.

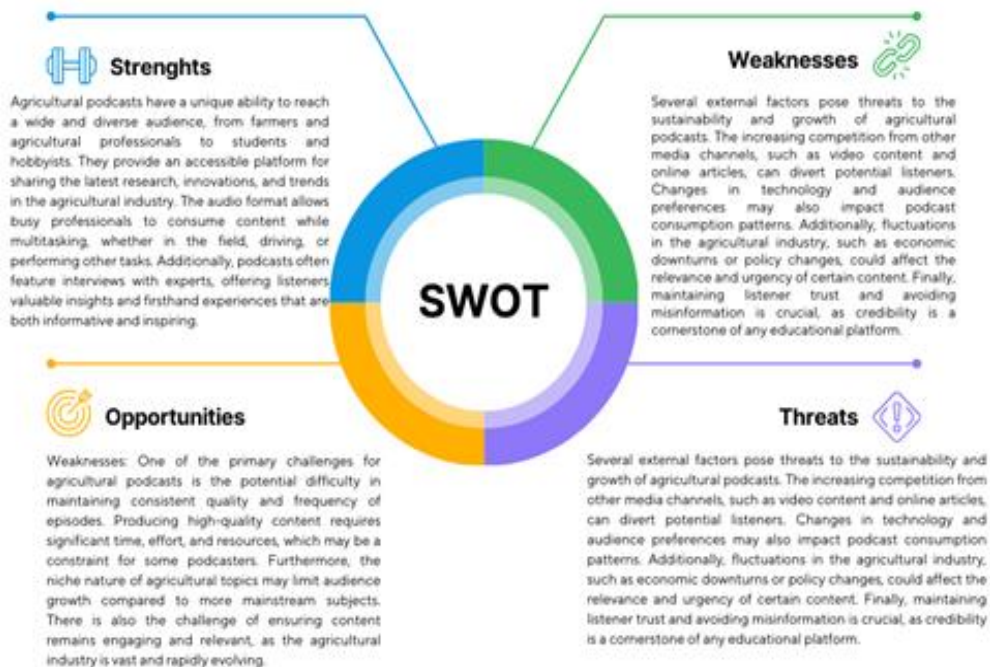


Figure 1. SWOT analysis of agricultural podcasts

Source: Mchugh S., 2020 [13]

SWOT analysis of agricultural podcasts is essential to understand the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of this specific communication medium. Agricultural podcasts have gained popularity due to their ability to provide relevant and up-to-date information to farmers and other agricultural professionals.

Agricultural podcasts provide access to specialist information, often directly from experts in the field, giving them a high level of credibility and authority. Flexibility and accessibility are other significant advantages, as farmers and other listeners can access content while doing other activities, such as working in the fields or driving agricultural vehicles. Podcasts also make it possible to reach a wide and diverse audience, including young farmers who are more open to technology and new ways of learning.

One of the main disadvantages of agricultural podcasts is the dependence on technology. In rural areas, where access to high-quality Internet may be limited, listening to podcasts can be difficult. Also, producing quality content requires audio and editing resources and expertise, which can be a hurdle for many content creators. On top of that, keeping content up-to-date and interesting can be an ongoing challenge.

The growing interest in sustainable agriculture and innovative farming practices provides a great opportunity for podcasts to address topical and high-interest topics. Collaborations with experts, agricultural organizations and universities can add value to content and appeal to a wider audience. Podcasts can also become a platform for

promoting agricultural products and services, thus generating additional income for producers.

Competition from other forms of media and information sources such as blogs, magazines and YouTube videos can pose a threat to podcasts. Rapid changes in technology and media consumption preferences can make it difficult for podcasts to stay relevant. Additionally, fluctuating agricultural regulations and policies can affect the content and direction of podcasts, requiring constant adjustments to remain relevant and informative.

CONCLUSIONS

Podcasts have become an innovative and accessible form of storytelling in various fields, and agriculture is no exception. They provide a unique platform for farmers, researchers and experts to share knowledge, stories and experiences directly to a wide audience. Through podcasts, information about modern farming techniques, innovations in the field and challenges faced by farmers can reach a global audience, overcoming geographical and cultural barriers.

A key advantage of podcasts in agriculture is their accessibility. Farmers and other interested people can listen to the episodes while working in the fields, driving or performing other daily tasks. This flexibility allows the accumulation of useful knowledge and information without interrupting daily activities. Moreover, the audio format allows for a more personal and authentic connection with listeners through the tone of voice and the emotions conveyed, which can make the information more memorable and impactful.

Agriculture podcasts can also help create a community of support and exchange of ideas. By featuring interviews with successful farmers, discussions of technological innovations or solutions to common problems, these podcasts can inspire and motivate listeners to adopt new practices and improve the sustainability and productivity of their farms. In conclusion, podcasts are a valuable resource for the agricultural sector, facilitating the dissemination of knowledge and promoting collaboration and innovation among the agricultural community, with considerable potential to educate and inform the agricultural community, but their success depends on the ability to overcome challenges and to capitalize on emerging opportunities.

In conclusion, integrating agriculture with online platforms presents numerous benefits for the industry. In today's digital age, almost everyone is connected to the internet, making it easier for farmers, suppliers, and consumers to communicate and exchange information. Online tools and resources can help farmers access real-time data on weather conditions, market prices, and best farming practices, leading to more efficient and sustainable agricultural practices.

Moreover, the rise of podcasts dedicated to agriculture is a fantastic development. These podcasts provide a convenient way for farmers and enthusiasts to stay informed about the latest trends, technologies, and innovations in the field. They offer expert insights, interviews with industry leaders, and practical tips that can be easily accessed anytime, anywhere. This makes it easier for agricultural professionals to continue their education and adapt to new challenges and opportunities.

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