



Writing About Agribusiness

I. General Purpose and Audience

Effective written communication is essential in agribusiness. Agribusiness writers may convey information about business products or services, about a proposed plan of action, or about results of formal or informal research in order to inform, persuade, or teach. Agribusiness writing tends to be clear, concise, and tailored to suit its audience and purpose. **Audiences** can include individuals or business clients, coworkers, executives, investors, and potential customers.

II. Types of Writing

- **Informal or formal reports** conveying factual information:
 - Activity reports describe the processes and results of an activity.
 - Research or investigative reports explain the results of a line of research.
 - Project reports, including progress updates, outline the goals, needs, processes, and the outcomes of a complex project.
- **Proposed plans of action** for internal or external audiences:
 - Solicited or unsolicited business proposals inform existing clients or attract potential customers.
 - Business plans detail a holistic proposal for one enterprise or for the business as a whole.
 - Marketing plans present a holistic proposal to market and sell a product or service line.
 - Operations plans define a holistic proposal for the management of a farm or other agribusiness.
- **Financial statements**, which may include analyses and explanations:
 - Balance sheets report a business's assets, equity, and liabilities at a specific date.
 - Cashflow statements illustrate the flow of cash in and out of a business over time.
 - Equity statements demonstrate the change in owner's equity over

- time.
 - Income statements outline business' expenses and revenues over time.
- **Budgets**, which may include analyses and explanations:
 - Enterprise budgets project costs and returns for a specific segment of the business.
 - Partial budgets analyze the financial implications of a minor operational change.
 - Project budgets report the estimated or final funding required for a project.
 - Whole-farm budgets estimate the financial implications of a major operational change on a farm.
- **Presentations**, which are often spoken and include visuals such as PowerPoint or Prezi
- **Marketing materials** to promote products and services:
 - Advertisements
 - Brochures
 - Webpages

III. Types of Evidence

- The products and services offered by agribusinesses are based in evidence, specifically regarding their efficacy, profitability, safety, and technical specifications.
- When writing about these products and services, independent and “in-house” research, industry standards, laboratory results, safety data sheets (SDS), and testimonials are used.

IV. Writing Conventions

- Avoid passive voice and unnecessary words.
- Present information in easy-to-read formats, which can include charts, graphs, and tables.
- Project a credible image by relying on credible research and verified observations.
- Write in a clear, concise, focused manner.

V. Documentation Style

- Styles vary based on setting but can include those published by the American Chemical Society (ACS), American Psychological Association (APA), American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE), and Council of Science Editors (CSE).
- When a style is not suggested, use a common style consistently.

Sources consulted

Brian Campbell, Agribusiness Technology Program, South Piedmont Community College (2016). Edited by Calvin Jones, English Instructor, South Piedmont Community College.



This work is licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 United States License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/us/).