

Alberta Conservation Association
2021/22 Project Summary Report

Project Name: Harvest Your Own

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Project Leader: Todd Zimmerling

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Partnerships

Not applicable

Key Findings

- Harvest Your Own provides new or aspiring hunters in Alberta with timely and relevant resources and content so they can work toward success in the field and in the kitchen.
- The target audience skews younger (under 45), including Alberta men and women who are new to or interested in hunting. The secondary audience is existing hunters looking to expand and share their knowledge and experience with other Alberta hunters.
- Harvest Your Own is a multi-platform media property. This year's focus was to expand our digital audiences by adding more valuable content to the website and increasing post frequency and engagement on Facebook and Instagram. Introducing a Harvest Your Own podcast has become a useful platform to share knowledge by featuring a wide range of guests on varying subject matters.

Abstract

Alberta is one of the few jurisdictions in North American seeing a growth in the number of hunters. This increase is often attributed to an interest in organic and local food, and hunting as an empowering way to actively and ethically source your own protein. The gap is that new hunters, in particular men, women, and youth from urban areas, may not have a network of family and friends to help them learn to hunt. Harvest Your Own aims to provide new hunters

with timely and relevant content that will help them get started and have success in the field and kitchen.

In 2021/22, Harvest Your Own increased its social media audience to 3,461 (+476) Facebook followers and 1,235 (+539) Instagram followers (Twitter is no longer an active platform for Harvest Your Own). In this timeframe, we have also seen growth in the Harvest Your Own podcast hosted by Brad Fenson, which currently has all-time downloads of 7,027.

Introduction

Alberta is one of the few jurisdictions in North American seeing a growth in the number of hunters. This increase is often attributed to an interest in organic and local food, and hunting as an empowering way to actively and ethically source your own protein. But the gap is that new hunters, in particular men, women, and youth from urban areas, may not have a network of family and friends to help them learn to hunt. Harvest Your Own aims to provide new hunters with timely and relevant content that will help them get started and have success in the field and kitchen. This ultimately will help make harvesting, preparing, and enjoying wild game more socially acceptable amongst Albertans—particularly in the urban population under the age of 45—and contribute to a steady increase of the number of hunters in our province.

Methods

Harvest Your Own is managed and delivered by the Information, Education and Communications Program. Project staff develop content for multiple platforms, and subject matter experts and writers are contracted to contribute content. Content is guided by a high-level content calendar that identifies seasonal subject areas and general timing of content by month and week (e.g., article, video, contest, experience). The content calendar is used to create the web and social media schedule, which outlines weekly and daily posts for Facebook and Instagram, as well as a monthly schedule for the podcast.

Results

Harvest Your Own increased its online and social media presence and audience in 2021/22 as follows:

- 34,565 website visits in Q4 2021
- 3,461 Facebook followers
- 1,235 Instagram followers
- 7,027 podcast downloads
- 2,311 e-newsletter subscribers

The increase in overall audience is gradual and sustainable year by year. We are pleased to see engagement and inquiring messages from new hunters, and comments from experienced hunters sharing their expertise. In Q4 2021, the processes and goals were reviewed and the approach “rebooted.” Moving forward, more resources will be spent on capturing and sharing video content (both cooking and how-to) for advertising performance and website attraction purposes, the website will be improved for user experience, and contests will continue to expand by way of product partnerships and increased prize value.

Conclusions

Proactive advertising and consistent messaging are key to increasing Harvest Your Own brand recognition, promoting hunting as part of contemporary and healthy lifestyle, and supporting member groups and stakeholders in a province with growing and shifting demographics.

Communications

- We reached new hunters and “hunting adjacent” users with unique contests on Facebook and Instagram.
- We reached new audiences with print and digital ads in culinary magazines.
- We sent the Harvest Your Own e-newsletter to subscribers every 4 – 6 weeks.
- We reached out to multiple outdoor retailers and manufacturers to support Harvest Your Own with contest donations and advertising opportunities.

- We have been planning improvements for the user experience (faster loading time, easier content sourcing, better searchability, etc.) with a redesigned website coming in March/April 2022.
- We have launched and continue to grow our subscriber list and downloads to the Harvest Your Own Podcast.

Literature Cited

Not applicable

Photos



HUNT | HARVEST | COOK
harvestyourown.ca

Photo 1. Harvest Your Own logo. Photo: ACA