



# Meat Messenger

by Kindra Gordon, field editor

Social media maven Kita Roberts strives to build bridges between livestock producers and consumers.



*“I’m not a producer or a butcher.*

*I don’t have a dog in the fight,” admits Kita Roberts of her efforts to use social media to share information with consumers about livestock production and meat products.*

*The founder of the popular Girl Carnivore website and social media platforms believes her “neutral grounding” makes her the perfect conduit to facilitate information flow from producers to everyday consumers.*



Kita Roberts



*“I aim to have a discussion with consumers. I host happy-hour chats online on Fridays [on Instagram] ... I feel like we’re having a conversation and building bridges — for those who are willing to listen,” says Roberts.*

*She adds, “It’s one doorway. If consumers can shake the hand of the rancher I met [through these online conversations], then I’ve done my job today.”*

## Questions of her own

Roberts, a Delaware native, says her own questions about food production led her to her current position. She describes herself as growing up in a beef-deficit state with a family from a lower economic status and no connection to agriculture.

“My family never even had a tomato plant,” she says. Her father did hunt and fish, and Roberts says she never had any negative thoughts toward farmers.

Instead, she says, “I wanted to find out who they (farmers) were, and what do farms or slaughter plants look like?”

Trained as a photojournalist, she began to look into agriculture.

“I noticed a giant missing link,” she says. “People are not seeing the relationship with food producers. In less than 75 years, we consumers have very rapidly removed ourselves from food production. When you don’t have a relationship with the food producer, ignorance leads to fear, and privilege allows for judgments.”

In 2013, Roberts launched Girl Carnivore as a side project to an already successful blog focused on food and travel writing that she initiated in 2010. She explains that Girl Carnivore evolved from her desire to up the ante in the food-blogging world.

Says Roberts: “There were a lot of cupcake blogs

out there, and I felt a need for content that could be different.”

As someone who loves meat — and has a personality that embraces being rebellious — Roberts says she came up with the idea for Girl Carnivore as a “smart-aleck thing people hadn’t seen in the blogging world.”

Today, she is billed as a “meat maven, brand ambassador and butcher BBQ junkie.” Her website

features recipes for beef, pork, lamb, poultry and fish. Recipe categories include breakfast, dinner, starters, epic burgers, twisted tacos, carnivorous sides, etc. Her blog digs into each dish and expounds on the flavors, cooking techniques, and other tips and tricks. Her social media outlets include Facebook with 28,000 followers, and Instagram with 16,000 followers, as



well as content on Pinterest, Twitter, and options to subscribe to a Common Feed List by topic at point of publication. In total, her site has traffic from 20,000-40,000 viewers monthly.

Roberts’ services also include professional recipe development, professional photography and food styling, sponsored posts and product reviews, and other media outreach.

As she has built her consumer audience and celebrity status, opportunities to showcase the

agricultural industry and protein products have followed. Specific to the beef industry, she has worked with several state beef councils to attend various events to learn about and promote beef — from the New York State Fair to visiting South Dakota producers and attending the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally.

While in South Dakota, Roberts visited ranches, a feedlot, a sale barn, and an embryo transfer facility. The goal of her beef-council-sponsored visit was for her to share photos and information from her tour to inspire conversations with urban consumers who follow her online.

## What she's observed

From her livestock industry experiences, Roberts says one of the biggest impacts she's recognized is "the sheer volume of production and what it takes to feed this country" — and then quantifying that to what it takes to feed the growing population globally.

Roberts also says she is emotionally affected by the people in agriculture.

"Every single time I'm on a farm or ranch, it's the people. It's their heart, soul, eyes," she explains. "I fall in love every single time."

She continues: "To know these guys show up every single day and do a job that's challenging — it's the people, the community, the relationships. ... Farmers and ranchers are amazing stewards of more than just the land."

Those are the experiences Roberts wants to share with consumers. She notes: "If they

[consumers] stop and think and realize that producers are working to raise food in a respectful and sustainable manner. ... The bottom line is having respect for choice [in food production]. Your way doesn't have to be everyone's way as long as we are getting healthy, wholesome food on the center of the plate."

That said, Roberts acknowledges she gets a lot of hate mail because she eats meat.

"You can't talk to hate," she says, "but we can continue to try to build relationships."

Continue striving to communicate with consumers, she advises producers. "Let's learn how to tell stories."

As a former manager of a brick-and-mortar business, Roberts says she knows it sounds trite to tell busy farmers to add one more job — like posting on social media

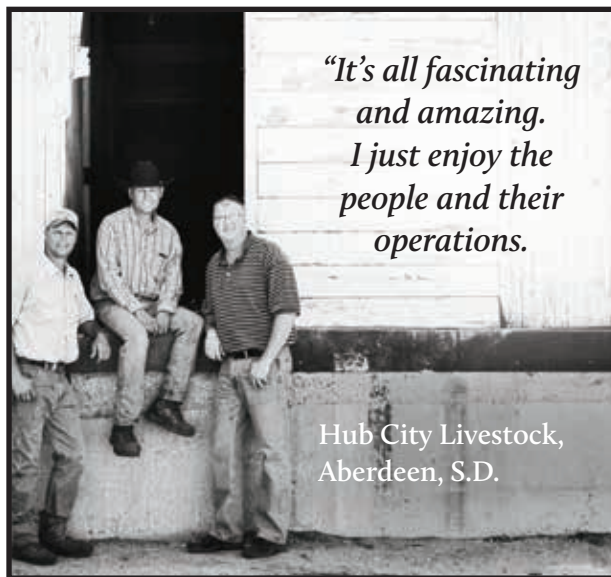
— to their "to-do" lists, but she emphasizes that it is important and can make a difference.

Along with that, she encourages something as simple as wearing a "Go Team Beef" logo t-shirt at events.

"That kind of subconscious marketing shows that we are faces," says Roberts.

From her own experience she tells of wearing such t-shirts at state fairs and getting high-fives, shout-outs and having conversations with consumers who may not otherwise have approached her.

Learn more about Roberts and connect with her via social media at [girlcarnivore.com](http://girlcarnivore.com). 



*"It's all fascinating and amazing. I just enjoy the people and their operations."*

Hub City Livestock,  
Aberdeen, S.D.

*Roberts, who facilitates a monthlong celebration of burgers on her blog and website (#BurgerMonth), says she is technically obligated to say a cheeseburger is her favorite beef meal. She adds, "A simple steak is always awesome, and I'm a sucker for tacos."*

