How to Analyze a Document: “Social Media”

**Background Information:** The Iowa State University Center for Biorenewable Chemicals is currently investigating the production, sustainability, and economics of biorenewables. One aspect of their research is the production of bioplastics. Bioplastics can be derived from common organic materials such as corn.

**Document Description:** This is a social media document found on Dr. John A. Smith’s twitter page. The document gives background information on Dr. Smith’s profession, past education, and his tweets about Bio-plastics. This was used in a performance task comparing cardboard and plastic half pint milk containers. Students had to write a letter to their local dairy company describing which container is the best based on cost and environment.

**Consider the Source:** Looking at this document it is important to look at the credibility of the author. Although Dr. Smith has a long list of degrees, his picture does not match his occupation. It is also worth noting, that anyone can create a fictitious twitter account. Additional research may be needed.

**Recognize Bias:** It is important to note that Dr. Smith has a doctorate in Biorenewables and is an environmental scientist. His strong views in renewable resources and saving the environment may lend it self to bias and a one sided opinion.

**Analyze Data from a Diagram:** Although this diagram shows detailed information on the renewable cycle, this is a distracter to the original problem.

**Analyze Data:** This is a personal opinion twitter page. Dr. John A. Smith posts ideas and initiatives he is interested in. There appears to be a strong disposition towards bioplastics. Students need to be aware that further research may be needed to investigate all options and viewpoints.

**Relevance of Information Presented:** The topic of paper vs. plastic is a relevant topic. In today’s market we have various choices of product as well as various manufacturing processes of the product (ie. bioplastics). Many aspects of the production, processing and life cycle of the product requires research before making an informed decision.