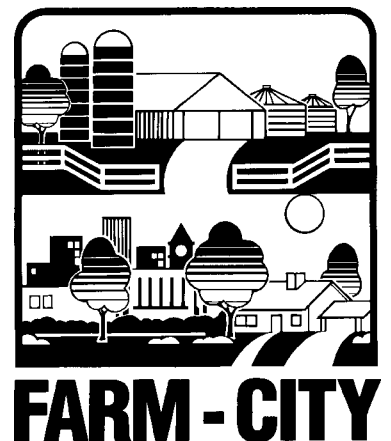


**Tips, tools
and ideas
for
organizing
a
successful,
local
farm-city
program**





Dear Friends:

Agricultural leaders and producers have a responsibility to help others understand the importance of agriculture to our everyday life. As our farm population becomes increasingly smaller this challenge becomes even greater. The following pages contain suggestions for a Farm-City Day — one way to help others learn about agriculture.

Farm-City Day is an event designed to further the belief that “One picture is worth a thousand words”. It takes place “down on the farm” where agriculture begins, where individuals can see, touch, hear, and sometimes taste to gain firsthand knowledge. Your event can be customized for your city, farm or region. This information is offered as a guide or starting point. But I do ask you to please pay particular attention to the safety section.

I was raised on a dairy farm and am married to a dairy farmer. In between I was involved in raising market hogs as well as cash grain. I currently have 32 years with Farm Service Agency and am the County Executive Director in Tioga County, PA. In 2000, our county successfully celebrated it's 10th anniversary of Farm-City Day with approximately 3000 persons in attendance at Sunset Mts. Farm in Wellsboro.

Whether your Farm-City program is just beginning or you already have a successful dinner or school promotion, you might want to consider having an “open house” type event on a farm. If so, I hope you will find this information useful – it has been gleaned from years of experience.

I wish you the very best in your promotions and am more than willing to answer questions or discuss ideas. I can be reached at 570-724-4812 (Ext 109) during the day or at 570-353-6367 in the evenings (EST). My email address is:
Sharon.Butters@pawellsbor.fsc.usda.gov.

Best wishes,

Sherri Butters
Chair, Tioga County (PA)
Farm-City Day
Member,
National Farm-City Council
Board of Directors

Welcome, and thank you for taking an interest in putting together a Farm-City event.

As Sherri points out in her letter, much of the materials in this brochure came from her years of experience in putting on Farm-City Day programs in Tioga County, PA. As such, you should find many ideas and suggestions for putting on a Farm-City event, whether it be large, as Sherri is used to managing, or a smaller, simpler program.

And that is perhaps a key, particularly to anyone who has never organized a program such as this in the past ... know your limitations and get a good handle on how much you can and cannot do getting started. If your Farm-City programs have been smaller, quieter affairs, you perhaps want to walk slowly into a larger event that draws thousands. Start a little smaller and grow into larger activities and events. This will give you experience and background that can be used to grow from one year to the next.

And, if you have questions or would like some clarification on a point or two, give a call to Sherri, or contact the National Farm-City Council at 630-637-0199.

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The National Farm-City Council

The mission of the National Farm-City Council is to strengthen the understanding of these farm-city connections. Currently there are Farm-City organizations in 49 states which sponsor events to promote understanding and increase cooperation between rural and urban residents.

The role of the Council is to provide materials and programs for student and adult consumers focusing on farm-city interdependence. Some of those materials include agriculturally-related educational and informational items targeted to school-aged children. Others include “How-to” information to assist local Farm-City event planners put on successful programs. This includes sample Farm-City proclamations, letters to editors, activity sheets, fact sheets, promotional scripts and general information about Farm-City.

If you are reading this brochure, you are more than likely considering sponsoring some type of Farm-City activity, whether large or small.

If you would like to know more about the National Farm-City Council, or would like to make a financial contribution to help us continue our efforts, we invite you to visit our web site at **www.farmcity.org**. Or, give us a call at 630-637-0199. We'd be glad to visit with you.

**National Farm-City Council, Inc.
225 Touhy Avenue
Park Ridge, IL 60069**

**www.farmcity.org
Telephone: 847-685-8764**

The National Farm-City Council, Inc., is a 501(c)3 charitable educational organization under the Internal Revenue Service code.

Program Ideas

One of the biggest challenges facing many local Farm-City program planners is finding new ideas to use in their programs.

With that in mind, the Council's Participation Development committee polled state Farm-City contacts and asked what kinds of programs have worked for them. Their responses indicate some very creative events and programs are going on across the country.

Open Barns Program

In New Hampshire, our top Farm-City initiative is a series of "Open Barns" held at eight to 10 dairy farms around the state during the summer. Each farm gets itself all spruced up and farmers, conservation groups, 4-H clubs and others join in with exhibits and demonstrations.

The state dairy promotion council has a "dairy kitchen" (a neatly decorated and fitted out trailer) pull in and dispense free ice cream, maple milk (milk sweetened with a little maple syrup) and, in season, strawberry shortcake.

Recent open barns in the rapidly urbanizing southern New Hampshire area have had upward of 5,000 visitors to a single location in one day. Sadly, the foot-and-mouth disease scare caused cancellation of these popular activities for 2001, but we hope things will settle down and allow open barns to return next year.

*Steve Taylor
New Hampshire
Commissioner of Agriculture*

Farm-City Breakfasts

Some of our county Farm Bureaus hold a Farm-City breakfast and invite media, local business leaders and government officials. They try to have locally grown commodities displayed on tables with key facts about the value of each and sample products produced, i.e., cans of tomato sauce or peaches.

There usually is a guest speaker who focuses on the importance of agriculture to the community. On some occasions they label each commodity with the price that the farmer receives.

Other ideas are having farm tours, donating food to a local food closet, delivering baskets of farm commodities to boards of supervisors and adopting resolutions proclaiming Farm-City Week.

Some of these are not too novel, but they seem to work year after year.

*Bob Krauter
California Farm Bureau*

Senior Field Studies

This is one of the Farm-City activities that we have used successfully in Colorado. High-school seniors from a suburban Denver school live and work with farm and ranch host families for 10 days. It's a great learning experience for the students, and the host families also learn about urban life.

We also have a program of participating in water festivals at the state Capitol so legislators, school kids, teachers, etc., can see how important water issues are to agriculture. In conjunction with this, various ag groups provide lunch to legislators and Capitol staff. County Farm Bureaus are becoming more and more involved in water festivals across the state.

*Patty Kenny
Colorado Farm Bureau*

Posters and Calendars

We do a Farm-City poster contest for K-3 and 4-6 on a statewide basis. County Farm-City committees award prizes and handle competition at the local level and then send in the county

winners. These are judged statewide for cash awards to the winning schools and saving bonds to the winning students.

The winning posters are then made into a full-color calendar for distribution to schools across the state. County committees purchase them for the cost of printing.

In a similar way, we have a Farm-City essay contest for two divisions, grades 7-9 and 10-12 with savings bonds and cash prizes at the state level.

The state organization is holding a training session this summer for chairmen of county committees and others who wish to attend. Ideas will be exchanged between counties. Scrap-books will be on display. This is held in connection with another farm meeting to enhance attendance and is well in advance of Farm-City Week so plans can be formulated.

J. Paul Till

Alabama Farmers Federation

Time-Proven Ideas you can use for Farm-City events

- Tours of processing plants or creameries
- Tours of farms and ranches
- Livestock shows and rodeos
- Tractor pulls
- Youth exchange programs
- Health fairs
- Conservation tours
- Career Days at high schools
- Cooperative exchanges between rural and urban families
- County and state fairs
- Job Exchange
- Earth Day celebrations
- Photography contests
- Poster contests
- Urban-Rural Dinners
- Tours at shipping ports or rural grain elevators
- Commemorative days and festivals - July 4th, Labor Day or Arbor Day
- Church bulletin inserts
- Summer day camps
- Distribution of safety literature

International Harvest Luncheon

As one of several members on our state Farm-City committee, I have the special opportunity to hear what activities are planned in several counties in our state. I am involved in my county's activities directly since my father has chaired the committee in the past.

In Montgomery County we have a Farm-City Banquet and an International Harvest Luncheon. Farmers and city businessmen are invited to attend and usually a speaker from each is on the program. It gives them both a chance to see and appreciate what the other does.

The Harvest Luncheon is special because it involves students. One sixth-grade student from each school and his or her teacher is invited to attend.

If you're not familiar with the format, it goes something like this: Everyone is randomly given a number as they enter the room. The number represents what table they will sit at and also what country they will be eating in for the day. For instance if you are at table #1, you will be eating in Russia. Then servers come around and place one potato on the plate of everyone at that table. Same goes for #2, China, where everyone gets one scoop of rice; #3, Kenya, a scoop of corn; and #4, Chile, a scoop of beans. Those at table #5 are seated in North America. They get to go through a buffet line with hamburgers, french fries and all the trimmings.

As you can imagine, the students get quite restless. Once everyone is seated again, the master of ceremonies explains that those in North America are fortunate to have farmers who grow enough food to feed themselves and have leftovers to export to the other countries, so there is enough in the buffet line for everyone. It really gives the students and their teachers an eye-opening experience.

I have a copy of the script used and would be glad to send a copy to those who request it.

As a part of my job at the Department of Agriculture, I am responsible for administering the Century & Heritage Farm program. I'm pretty sure other states have a similar program. This program recognizes farms that have been in the same family for more than 100 years.

We try to make the certificate presentation to the

recipients at their county Farm-City Banquet and, whenever possible, the whole family is invited. It usually is well-received and gives those present a sense of how long agriculture has been and will continue to be a part of our country's history.

Some other ideas I have heard of include farm tours for school children (hayride, petting zoo, etc.) and a "Job Swap." This is where a farmer works in a businessman's office for a day and, in turn, the businessman works on a farm for day. Each then reports on their experience at the Farm-City Banquet.

*Amy Belcher
Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries*

Farm-City Festivals

Here are ideas for Farm-City activities that have been used successfully in South Carolina:

1. Farm-City festival held at a large shopping center featuring farm animals, equipment, displays and demonstrations.
2. A one-day farmer-business person exchange followed by a Farm-City Banquet a few weeks later with the two serving as the guest speakers to describe what they learned from each other.
3. Farm-City ag tours for children at land-grant universities or agricultural experimental stations.

One idea that we have not done in our state is to have a Farm-City scholarship. The student would be a junior or senior in college majoring in some type of agriculture. (Do not give to a freshman or sophomore, as they change majors.)

The contest would be for the most innovative agricultural concept or marketing concept.

They could win a trip to the AFBF conference and/or a scholarship. Plant protection, seed or equipment companies would help with the scholarships.

*Rena Copeland
SC Heritage Corridor, Clemson University Extension Service*

A Story to be Told ...

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture annually sponsors a special Farm-City Day celebration in conjunction with the Keystone International Livestock Exposition, which provides a showcase of many championship farm animals.

Using a perennial theme, "A Story to Be Told ... Lessons to Be Learned," students from local Harrisburg schools are provided up-close exposure to agriculture and a better understanding of how it affects their daily lives. Amusement rides, Ag in the Classroom activities, farm animals, cotton candy, music, sheep shearing and other "hands-on" activities are involved. This fun and educational day has become a popular "go-to" event for many schools.

Because of the tremendous turnout (more than 1,500 students had signed up for this year's event by June 1) limits are set to grades two through five.

This year's event will take place October 5. Because the activities are inside the Farm Show Building, weather is not a problem.



*Mary Bender
Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture*

Potential Sponsors and Partners

Established organizations can become potential financial sponsors and/or partners of events and activities such as dinners, tours, proclamations, etc. With a little explanation everyone can see how they benefit from both agriculture and industry.

Make it a point to become aware of events sponsored by trade associations or individual companies in the food and agribusiness complex. Planning Farm-City activities in conjunction with established events can benefit both groups and can help you enlist new members for your group. Convince the following groups to join in sponsorships:

- **Service Groups:** Kiwanis, Rotary, Lions, Jaycees, Optimists
- **Fraternal Groups:** Fraternities, sororities, Masonic organizations
- **Cooperative Extension Service:** County and 4-H agents, local associations of family and community education
- **Farm Organizations:** Grange, Farm Bureau, co-ops, Farmer's Union, National Farmers, Agri-Women, commodity groups
- **Agribusiness Industries:** Seed companies, fertilizer manufacturers, crop protection companies, farm equipment distributors, warehouses, grain elevators
- **Merchants:** Grocers, hardware, lawn and garden centers, florists, retail stores, appliance dealers, auto and truck dealers, farm equipment dealers, Wal-Marts and Sam's Clubs
- **Youth Groups:** 4-H, FFA, YMCA/YWCA, Key Club, FHA/HERO, Junior Achievement, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts
- **Businesses and Industries:** Food processors, trucking firms, veterinarians, agricultural and industrial equipment manufacturers, commodity brokers, insurance agencies, shopping malls and centers
- **Religious/Educational Groups:** Churches, adult and youth groups, Young Life, PTA
- **Business, Professional and Trade Associations:** Chambers of Commerce, Better Business Bureaus, independent business associations, restaurant associations
- **Media:** Daily and weekly newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, cable systems
- **Health, Safety and Environmental Groups:** Environmental organizations, state safety councils, hospitals, health councils
- **Women's Organizations:** League of Women Voters, American Legion Auxiliary, garden clubs

Getting Started

If you are considering developing a Farm-City event that involves more than just your local service organization, reach out to the local chamber of commerce or any of the other organizations mentioned in this brochure. And don't forget to include the media in your planning. If they become involved early you might benefit from some extra 'free' exposure.

If you want to involve schools, i.e. poster or essay contests, make sure there is someone on your planning committee who represent the schools. The same is true for a Chamber of Commerce or local business organization. The more you can spread out the planning, the less work any one individual may have to do.

Step Number 1 – Start Early!

- Form a small planning committee to map out an agenda and define what it is you want to accomplish. What resources are going to be needed in terms of finances and people to make your program happen? How big does your committee need to be, honestly?
- Schedule your meeting far enough in advance and send reminder notices.
- Make provisions for those who cannot attend by sending a follow-up mailing of the meeting's results and dates for the next meeting.
- Explain the purpose of the Farm-City committee. Quite often Farm-City committees work with other groups, organizations and agencies. Determine if there are issues of concern or where the need is for building greater understanding between urban and rural citizens.
- Discuss project and event ideas and develop objectives to outline the group's direction.
- Develop a theme. This tends to become a unifying statement about why the activity will happen. "Partners in Progress" has been the theme of the National Farm-City Council since 1955. "Together we can make a difference" was the theme of the 2000 Tioga County Farm-City Day. "A Story to be Told...Lessons to be Learned" was the them for the 2000 Farm-City Celebration sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture involving over 2,000 grade school children.



When, Where and What

National Farm-City Week is the 7-day period ending on Thanksgiving. Many Farm-City planners deliberately try to sponsor some type of event during this time frame. Others set their events during fall harvest time, when weather tends to be a little more predictable than late November. Keep in mind, though, that this can be an extremely busy time for the “Farm” side of Farm-City.

Other groups have found midsummer to be ideal. Many agricultural producers are not quite as busy as during spring planting or fall harvest time. Many gardens have begun offering up their rewards and farmers markets around the country are in full swing. Plus, there typically are not school conflicts.

You will have to keep an eye out for possible conflicts such as local or even state fair activities that could drain away some of your participants, particularly from the farm side. And watch for schedules of firemen’s and church picnics. In most communities, such activities tend to happen at the same basic time, year after year, so you should be able to plan around them for your Farm-City program

The **Where** side of hosting a Farm-City events tends to depend entirely on what type of program you want to do. If it is just a poster or essay contest at local schools, no special site is required. If it’s a luncheon or dinner bringing together rural and urban residents, then you may need to find out about a banquet hall or church or school community room.

If you are considering a larger event with more community involvement, you may want to touch base with City Hall and get their inputs. Can you block off a couple streets on a Sunday afternoon? What about using a city or county park?

Want to take it to the country for a real, hands-on farm experience? This can become more involved for a couple of reasons. First, you will have to find a farmer who will work with you and doesn’t mind the idea of a couple hundred people dropping by for an afternoon or all-day event.

You also will need to think about where you will park the cars of everyone showing up. And porta-potties. And food tents. Traffic control. Maps and signs. Dust.

And no matter what type of event you are planning, if it’s going to be outdoors, you have to think about weather and have some kind of plan in place in case it rains all day.

What involves the program itself. If your program is going to be a lunch or dinner program, ask the local county agent to make a presentation on agriculture in your area with some statistics on the role farm producers play locally in terms of benefit to the local economy. Or are their agricultural companies in your area which could provide program materials?

If you’re going a little larger, like a half-day program in a local park, how about starting out the morning with a local farmers market. Then ask a senior citizens group to provide some singing entertainment. Any barber-shoppers in your area? A high school jazz band? Square dancers?

As far as speakers are involved, get officials from both the city and county governments involved for a “few remarks.” Here again, the county agent could be on the program.

An outdoor program also opens opportunities for larger exhibits and displays. Police and fire departments are always looking for ways to reach out to their communities to talk safety and many have ready-made displays. The local farm machinery dealer would probably be happy to

bring in a couple tractors or a combine or two as well.

For the younger folks, you can probably find someone who can offer pony rides. There are also farmers in the area who may be able to arrange some type of petting zoo, or can bring in some exotic animals such as llamas or giant draft horses.

As far as food is concerned, you could be overwhelmed by people and organizations who will want to provide everything from barbecues to sweet corn to desserts.

In any case, you will need to determine up front what will be donated and what will be purchased. You may also need to check with local officials about allowing things to be sold other than food. You will want to proceed cautiously when it comes to opening up a display area to general vendors. Remember, this is supposed to be a Farm-City event, not a community rummage sale.

In General

- Establishing a certain date for your event each year helps establish your creditability. We have set the 2nd Saturday in July for Tioga County. This was done after carefully checking calendars of other community summer activities so as to avoid conflicts and overlapping activities.
- Our location varies throughout the county but the date stays the same unless there would be a major conflict with the host family.
- We draw a family-oriented crowd. In over 20 years of Farm-City events, I've never noticed kids running wild or unsupervised. We do not draw the carnival crowd such as those sometimes seen at county fairs.
- Be sure to have bales of hay or straw placed under shade trees throughout farm as places for people to rest.
- Designated parking for persons with disabilities is greatly appreciated. A local course loans us two golf carts to use to help persons get from the parking area to our display areas.
- We use FFA students and advisors for parking attendants. Be sure to remember them with food, beverages and breaks since it will be harder for them to get back for something to eat.
- Portable toilets should be accessible. Locating these in level areas against buildings works very well in most cases. We have since added hand-washing stands here as well.
- For wagon tours we suggest a tour guide on each wagon for a number of reasons:
 - to tell the visitors about the host family farm
 - to give brief history of the area
 - to answer questions relating to agriculture,
 - to be our Farm-City personal contact with visitors since they are a captive audience.
- A scripts for tour guides is prepared and given out in advance. This is not a manual to be read on the tours but a reference to be used by the guide.



Site Committee

In planning a Farm-City event, there are several factors to consider involving location. You might have a perfect farm in mind but if you lose visitors on the way because it is too hard to find or the roads are impassable, your event will not be successful. It is important to consider weather. If it rains, will your site still be good? For example, parking — can the area designated for parking still be used if it rains?

This event **MUST** be held, rain or shine. The reason is obvious — it might rain at the Farm-City site but nowhere else (and vice versa). If you cancel, how are you going to let everyone know? If you've done a good advertising job people will come from multiple counties. Rain will not likely spoil a well-planned event, although it will affect your attendance to some degree. In 1996, our event was attended by the smallest crowd ever (about 1,100 persons) because the majority of Tioga County was dumped on by a hurricane coming up the coast. However, we had beautiful weather at the farm.

We have used a group of three or four individuals for our site committee. They then drive by the proposed site farms as a group. Using some preestablished criteria (location and accessibility, condition of the buildings, type of operation, adaptability, etc) we then rank the farms in preferred order. Each of the committee members completes the evaluation on their own as each site is observed. At the end of the tour, points are totalled from all sheets and the first, second and third choices are noted.

We do not discuss our visit with any of the farm families. This becomes important in case our first choice farm turns down our invitation to be host family.

It is then the responsibility of the group or chairman of the event to approach the farm family to invite them to host the Farm-City Day event. I have done this for many years and find the easiest way to approach them is with praise about the beauty of their farm and knowledge of how the event can be successful. We let them know we have a committee and plan to take care of insurance, trash disposal, tents (if needed), advertising, and other items necessary for a successful event. Make sure they realize you want to include them in the planning from the beginning. It is critical to invite the host family to attend your planning meetings — schedule a time when someone from the family can attend.

Several farms can be lumped together in a tour effect, but be careful as insurance can get sticky. We have chosen to stick to one farm and trying to keep wagon tours on the farm rather than on roads due to traffic, etc. Dairy, crop, beef, fruit, and vegetable farms all work out well.

Safety Precautions/Insurance

- Tent ropes and stakes should be clearly marked with reflective tape and cut tennis balls placed over the tops of the stakes to prevent injuries.
 - Tarps are placed over **all** wagons to offer shade from sun or protection from rain during wagon tours.
 - Use metal-sided wagons as wagons with wooden sides increase chances of splinters. **All** riders must be seated and hands and feet must be kept inside the wagons at all times.
 - Steps for loading and unloading wagons can typically be obtained from a mobile home dealer. Bales of hay are unsafe to use for this purpose. Furthermore, have one or two persons available to help visitors get on and off the wagons.
 - Insurance for the day is perhaps your biggest concern. Tioga County has obtained insurance coverage from Nationwide Insurance Company. Each year we notify the agent well in advance of the new location. Check with local agents as to the availability and extent of insurance recommended.
 - Clotheslines should be taken down whenever possible or roped off.
 - Fences should be clearly marked "DANGER - DO NOT TOUCH".
 - NO SMOKING signs should be placed on and in all buildings.
 - Manure pits, ponds, and other danger areas should be surrounded by signs and orange construction fence.
 - Unless they are used specifically for your activities, all tool sheds, shops, and other areas should be securely locked for safety reasons.
 - When hay mows are in view, you might try to locate displays in front of the entrance to them so as to discourage people from entering them. Otherwise, doors to mows should be secured and locked.
 - Place signs on machinery requesting PLEASE KEEP OFF. You might consider having a speaker at the machinery display who serves to answer questions but also to discourage kids from climbing on machinery. Ignition keys should be removed from all machinery that is not being used for Farm-City purposes.
14. Check locally at a farm supply or general hardware store for fans that can be used in tents and other "close" areas. Be sure to locate them where little children cannot get into them.
 15. Having a fire truck and ambulance on site is strongly suggested. You can ask your local fire and emergency care providers to take part as exhibitors and provide demonstrations throughout the day.

Things You May Need

Depending on the size and scope of what you plan to do, your needs for making it all happen will vary widely. The following list is a suggested list for any type of outdoor event, whether downtown, in a park, or on a farm. Insurance

- **A Plan** – Assign at least one person to design the layout of where everything is going to go. Remember, the scope of your event will determine the area you need.
 - Will there be a general area where speeches and presentations will be made?
 - Will you be serving a sit-down type of food?
 - What about entertainment?
 - Parking?
 - Existing buildings?
 - Location of electricity outlets for exhibitors and display?
 - Portable toilets?
- **Ambulance/Medical Assistance** – One of the first groups you should contact as an exhibitor is your local emergency response group, i.e. paramedics, fire department, etc. If you are going to have a large crowd in an outdoor setting, you will want to give serious thought about having some type of emergency response team on site.
- **Porta-Potty Patrol** – If you need to provide portable toilets, your local supplier can usually tell you how many you will need based upon the anticipated attendance. And appoint someone on staff as the Potty Patrol such that all the facilities are checked throughout the day for adequate supplies.



- **Tables and chairs** – Find a source for tables and chairs – local churches, a school, county Extension office.
- **Tents** – Unless there is a large machine shed or other covered shelter at the site, you will need to find tents or other types of canopies. These will be used for shade as well as protection in case the weather does not cooperate fully. Possible sources include local funeral homes, schools, the Extension office, farm equipment dealers, and possibly a local rental store that will donate their use. In any event, location of tents should be determined well in advance. Then, on the day

before the event, they should be set up and tethered. Keep in mind any needs for electricity such that those tents are near power sources.

- **Trash barrels and liners** – Check with the local park system for trash barrels. Large liners can usually be purchased at a Sam's Club, hardware store or other discount outlets. Minimum size should be no less than 33 gallon.

- **Orange construction fence** – Check with the county highway department to see if some of this is available. It will be helpful in marking off where you do not want people to go as well as managing flow.
- **Ropes and/or baling twine** – You may want some on hand to secure tents and tarps on wagons. A local farm machinery dealership should be able to provide this.
- **Tarps** – if you are going to be using wagons to move people around, you may want to consider arranging some type of tarp cover for shade and weather purposes.
- **Portable microphones** – You will need bull horns for tour guides to use and for general announcements. Check with the athletic department at a local high school.
- **Main sound system** – If you are having guest speakers, any kind of general program, or need to make announcements, you will need some type of primary sound system. Determine early where this will be needed as you will probably need access to electricity.
- **Reflective tape** – This should be used on electric fences, on clothes poles, on tent ropes, and wherever we want the public to use caution and be aware of potential danger.
- **Signs** – Determine early what types of signs you are going to need and if they will have to be waterproof. Also determine if you can create generic signs that can be used year after year. Signs to consider are: No Smoking, Danger, Registration, and possibly even something that says certain areas are not open to the public.
- **Cleanup** – Trimming, weeding, and washing equipment, windows and animals are all part of the F-C committee's responsibilities. Organize your work bees every evening of the week prior to the event. These worker bees can involve neighbors and friends of the host family and should involve many of your committee members.
- **A dry run** – A rehearsal for tour guides and tractor drivers should be held the day before. And do it as early in the day as is practical, or the evening before, so you have time to make changes, add signs, fences, whatever. Do not wait until the morning of the event.



Publicity

The overall success of your Farm-City program can be directly related to how well it is publicized. Here are some ideas to serve as a guideline:

Rule Number 1

Make sure date, times and location are prominent in all news releases.

- Try to include a local media person as part of your basic planning committee. They will have the expertise in writing effective news releases and typically are familiar with their counterparts, both in print and broadcast.
- Make a list of all media you want to use with a contact person's name, telephone number and e-mail address. It is very common to send news releases by e-mail and editors are used to it.
- Check with your local county Extension agent to see if he/she has newspaper column or radio broadcast that is done on a weekly or regular basis. See if you can use that space and time to help promote the event.
- If your event is going to be farm-based, develop a news release about the host family. Include names and photos of family members, some statistics about the farm operation, and other relevant information.



- Develop scripts for tour guides and share those with the media.
- Send letters to local service organizations offering to provide speakers about your event at their regularly scheduled meetings.
- Send news releases every time a new element is added to the program.
- Contact City Hall and the County Clerk's office about getting official Farm-City procla-

mations declared at both levels of government. Sample proclamations are available through the National Farm-City Council.

- If you are going to do an auction with a major top item, develop a news release about this. Include a partial list of other attractive auction items.

- Whether your event is large or small, send invitations to dignitaries as soon as a date is known: governor, commissioners, Secretary of Agriculture, senators, representatives, mayors, etc. Be sure to include directions.
- Print posters and brochures that can be left with local business, particularly those who are contributing, either monetarily, in-kind, or through auction contributions
- Expect that you may have to spend some money on advertising, whether it is for local or regional newspapers, radio, television or cable.
- If you are going to have an on-farm program, set up a press day at the farm a week or two before the event. Provide each reporter with a copy of the wagon tour script, a complete program of scheduled activities, lists of contributors and committee members and volunteers. Do all of this on one day so the host family does not get overwhelmed with media inquiries.
- Depending on when you are holding your event, check with the local school system about distributing information for your program. Encourage participation.
- Consider printing placemats that you can distribute in restaurant and other businesses in the area. Use the placemat to promote the event, including maps to the location. You can sell advertising on the placemats and use that to recover your printing costs as well as possibly make some extra money.



Exhibits/Displays

Determine up front if you will have exhibits and what types are, or are not, acceptable. Will you allow sales on premises? Many organizations have opted to not allow selling at their Farm-City events. Their reasoning is that this is to be an educational activity involving families and they don't want people thinking they should have to come prepared to spend a lot of money. Allowing sales also opens the door to possible problems in policing what is and is not in keeping with the theme of the day, Farm-City relationships.

- Are you going to charge exhibitors?
- Where you will put them? If they will all be outdoors, make sure the exhibitors know this so they can bring their own canopies and cover. If you are going to have exhibits indoors, determine if there is any building space that can be used: a shelter, barn, machine shed, garage, etc. Where is this area in relationship to where other events are going to be held?
- If tents are needed, how many? What size? Where will they be located? Is the ground level enough for tents? What is the plan if there is rain?
- If you are going to offer indoor or outdoor areas, make sure the exhibitors know this. Also let exhibitors know how many indoor and outdoor areas are available. Then determine how you will prioritize who gets put where.



- What provisions are there for providing electricity? If there are limitations on this, make sure exhibitors know this up front.
 - Animal exhibit areas (petting zoo, pony rides, etc.) need to be setup away from the food areas.
 - Be sure to place reflective tape on ropes/cords used to help hold tents. Also be sure to cover spikes with tennis balls or spongy material.
- Send a letter to all potential exhibitors telling them the date, time, and location of the event. Also tell them they need to bring their own table and chairs. It is important to tell them to have their display set up no later than 1 hour prior to the start of the events and have their vehicle moved to parking area to prevent accidents when crowd gets heavy. Exhibits should remain until end of event.

- Be sure to get the business name, address, and telephone number for the exhibitor and an individual's name as a contact person. Then use this information for future invitations to exhibitors as well as for follow-ups should there be questions prior to or after the event.
- If exhibitors wish to donate items to the auction, ask them to provide them in advance. If brought that day, it would be helpful if the contributor's name and address are attached to the item so they can be recognized when the donation is displayed prior to the auction.
- **DON'T FORGET** to invite the local police or sheriff's department, fire department and emergency response groups to put up displays. The rewards to your efforts will be many fold in that you will automatically have emergency personnel on site, they can be extremely helpful if traffic control becomes a problem, and they are always looking for outlets where they can promote their services to the community.



Food

Important Note

You may need to purchase a license for the on-site preparation and sale of food. Check with your local public health authorities and then follow their guidelines concerning cleanliness and food service. Make sure these guidelines are distributed among all food vendors and that the vendors understand they will have to comply with the regulations..

Some tips:

- Keep the menu simple. If possible, find a single group or sponsor who will handle all the food. Some counties have beef or pork producer organizations which will put on a barbecue meal for large crowds. There are also churches which may be available that will do a “turn-key” meal. Typically in these cases a full meal is provided, i.e. barbecued pork chop, cole slaw, biscuit, baked beans, ice cream and a beverage.

However, if you are considering this type of arrangement, you will need to have adequate seating and tables to feed everyone.

Another option is to go to local 4-H or other youth groups. Here, again, keep the menu very simple and have predetermined prices. A sample menu and pricing from a recent Tioga County event was thus:

Plain hot dog	\$1.00	Blue ticket*
Speciality hot dog	\$1.25	Gray ticket
Sloppy Joe barbecue	\$1.50	Brown ticket
Chocolate or vanilla milk shake	\$1.25	White ticket
Iced tea or lemonade	\$.50	Yellow ticket
White or chocolate milk	\$.50	Green ticket
Bottled Water	\$1.00	Red ticket
Coffee	\$.50	Black ticket

* Note: Tickets can be printed up in advance on colored paper stock and reused throughout the day.

As a rule of thumb, set your pricing at 150 percent of the vendors' costs. This provides them with a fair profit while keeping prices low.

Remember, this is to be a family affair. Prices should be such that young families can enjoy a nice meal at a very reasonable price.

- If food is to be purchased by tickets or coupons, be sure to have sufficient coupons for each food or drink item being sold. If one ticket buys a complete meal, this is greatly simplified. Also, don't forget to have a ready supply of change broken down into \$1, \$5, \$10 as well as rolls of quarters. Price items at even dollars or in 25-cent increments. This does away with the need to have pennies, dimes and nickels.
- Depending on the size of your crowd, It may best to have at least two pairs of people at each ticket sales table; two people to handle the coupons (tickets) and two to take money and make change. Make sure there are reference sheets explaining the different coupons and prices.

NOTE: Require that all individuals handling food wear disposable gloves.

You will also need at least one portable calculator for each table. A backup calculator might be handy in case of battery failure or insufficient light. We also suggest having pencils and paper on hand. All money transactions must take place at these tables.

Vendors are not allowed to exchange money. They only deal with paper tickets. This becomes a safety item such that young people are not being expected to handle sums of money and making correct change.

Review this entire procedure in advance of the event so the vendors' staff will become familiar with the color of coupons and will understand the transaction process.

If you have more than one vendor, make sure there is no duplication, i.e. they can't both sell hot dogs or ice cream. Also, keep adequate distance between where tickets are sold and where people will need to stand in line to get their food. This will facilitate the entire food purchase–order–eating sequence.

At the end of day, have all the vendors turn in the coupons they collected. Then you can figure dollar amounts due for each vendor according to the number of coupons they return. Keep a record of how many of each item was sold and what was paid to each group. This will be very helpful in your planning for next year.

NOTE: If, half way through the day you find the ticket sales tables are running out of tickets, “buy back” tickets from the respective vendors so you can keep recycling them. Keep a good record of what payments were made to which vendor so you can come up with clean accounting at the end of the day.

- Have at least two large posters listing items for sale and prices hanging in front of the food tickets sales area. And make sure the signs are posted high enough such that people standing in line can read them.
- Tables should be covered with plastic to protect them from damage. Trash barrels need to have at least three to 5 liners in the bottom of each barrel so that when barrels are emptied, the next liner can be put in place without having to run and find replacement liners. Use large rubberbands to secure the liners to barrels.

Suggestion – Chocolate milk tends to be very popular. Bottled water is a good seller. Coffee should at least be available even though it might not sell well on a hot day. Since this is a Farm-City event, promote dairy products and discourage the sale of soft drinks.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Food vendors should be allowed to retain the profits from the sale of food items. In that same vein, the Farm-City organization sponsoring the event should not be held liable for surplus food items purchased by the vendor.

Registration

A registration area is very important because it helps in estimating how many persons attended.

Volunteers who work this booth should not be afraid to speak out and welcome families to the event and to remind them to register for free ice cream or prizes, if applicable.

At the Tioga County Farm-City Day, visitors to the registration booth are given numbered tickets that has a place for visitors to write in their name, city and telephone number. At the end of the day one ticket is drawn and the winner is awarded a year's worth of ice cream. The group works with a local ice cream distributor who annually contributes 52 certificates for one free half gallon each week.

Another option that also has wide acceptance is \$10 worth of gasoline a week from a local service station. This becomes the "city" gift.

By using numbered tickets and keeping track of beginning and ending numbers, the organizers have a good idea of how many people attended, even though not everyone will complete a ticket.

What you'll need:

- Rolls of tickets that can be given out in the parking lot area or at the registration desk.
- Pencils or pens that can be used to fill out the tickets.
- A box to collect the tickets at the registration area as well as signs that promote "Free Ice Cream" and "Register Here."

As people register, give them a printed program for the event. This way they will know what is happening when and can plan their time accordingly.



Parking

Parking needs are different depending on the type of event you are sponsoring. If your program is going to be held in the city, there is probably adequate street or lot parking available. The same is probably true in a city or county park. Once you take your event to the farm, parking becomes a serious concern.

- Coordinate your event with your host farm family such that a newly harvested hay field is available near the main Farm-City activity site and can be used for parking. An ideal is to have this parking area downwind so as not to have dust from cars blowing into the activity center.
- You will need clearly marked and highly visible signs indicating the location for parking. Here you might draw upon a 4-H or other youth group to coordinate parking, actually directing drivers where they should park their vehicles. For safety reasons, make sure there adult supervision.
- If the parking area is located some distance from the main event, you may need tractors and wagons to transport individuals to and from the farm. Steps will be needed in the parking lot for loading/unloading as well as at the farm for loading/unloading. In addition to individuals assisting with parking, two people should help with the steps. Be sure to caution people about remaining seated on the wagons and to watch their heads when getting on and off.

If the parking is located at the main event, people will be able to walk back and forth on their own.

Suggestion: Use orange construction fence wherever needed along ditches or as a border for the parking lot to funnel visitors towards the registration booth and welcoming area.

- An area for handicapped individuals is appreciated by those folks with special needs. You might arrange to have a "Gator" or golf cart on hand to transport senior citizens, persons with young children, or anyone needing help to and from the parking area. Walkie-talkies greatly help in this area if the parking lot representative has one and person running the gator has one.
- Road control is needed only if special conditions exist. You should not be anxious to have volunteers on the road, but if needed, check with the local or county police for thoughts on traffic control and see if they will help control or direct traffic.

Rules for Wagonmasters, Tour Guides and Tractor Drivers

If you find yourself in an on-farm situation where you will need tractors and wagons to move people to and from parking areas, consider the following rules established by Tioga County.

- No riders on the tractor – even if it is a cab tractor. Everyone is to remain seated while wagon is in motion – this includes tour guides.
- Ask everyone to keep their legs and arms facing into the center of the wagon. Do not let them have their arms and legs dangling outside the wagon – especially while it is in motion.
- Tractor drivers must to be sure everyone on a wagon is seated before the tractor moves. Persons who are in charge of steps in field and at farm should also ask persons to remain seated.
- Don't just sit there while wagon is on the tour. If you are a tour guide, remember this is an excellent opportunity to tell these people the agriculture story, and specifically some information about the host farm. Encourage questions. If someone has a question you can't answer concerning the day's events, please direct them the registration booth.
- Make sure wagons have appropriate flooring. H & S metal wagons work best. Floors should not have wide gaps that can result in persons stumbling or in small children having their legs fall through. If a wagon appears inappropriate – PULL IT OUT!! Don't take chances whether it is with the floor, or one of the metal racks being lower which could result in someone hurting their head when getting on or off. Do not use wooden wagons – people can get slivers.



- Make sure tractor and wagon are completely stopped before loading or unloading. The wagonmaster will need to have help moving steps up to and away from wagons. Also these persons should assist people getting on and off the wagons. The tour guide should also assist – welcoming people to the wagon and then thanking them for visiting Farm-City Day as they get off.
- Breaks for tractor drivers, tour guides and wagonmasters – it is helpful if someone has been designated to take food and drink to guides and drivers. If someone needs a break, they should let the wagonmaster know that following the next tour they want a break – this can give the wagonmaster time to get a replacement. If that doesn't work, pull the wagon out on the next turn and take your break. In any case, though, do not let groups of people begin backing up while you take your break.
- If an accident happens, be sure to follow up by taking (or have the wagonmaster or designee) the person to the ambulance as soon as possible. Be sure to have someone from Farm-City get name, address, and telephone number of injured person and parents, if applicable.
- Stops on the tour should be limited to approximately 3-5 minutes. Kids have a hard time sitting still when the wagons stop which makes it difficult for everyone to concentrate on the speaker. If people are allowed to get off the wagon at any particular stop, be sure steps are there and that the tour guide announces beforehand that the wagon will continue on the tour so that persons getting off at the stop should plan to ride back at their convenience on the next available wagon with room.

It is also important that if the stop has a demonstration area such as involving chain saws or horses — orange construction fence is placed around the danger area or at a minimum, reflective tape to indicate the area visitors are not allowed to enter. Construction fence works better due to the fact children cannot duck under it.

- Make sure wagons continue on if leaving persons for a stop. They are not to wait for the same passengers.
- Tractor drivers should have experience and feel comfortable with the tractor they are driving to avoid problems when pulling a load of passengers.
- If it rains during the day but stops so tours can continue, please make sure field or road conditions are safe for the tours. If mud accumulates on the tractor tires, be careful about it flying back onto the wagon once it begins moving.

Fund-Raising Auction

Auctions are great ways to raise funds at your event for future programs as well as get your audience involved. Properly planned, an auction can be lots of fun!

- First of all you will need to get auction items. Letters should be sent to possible contributors — businesses in the area and around the county. Any items can be accepted although new, antique, and nonperishable items are preferred. Try to get a mix, though, so you don't spend the entire day auctioning off gift certificates.
- Personal contact works the best to obtain items for the auction. If you have a group of retirees who would be willing to donate the time visiting potential donors, great! Set values up front such that nothing is worth less than \$10, for example. If you stock these volunteers with pamphlets and posters about the event, you can take care of two tasks at once. And you only have to “bug” the potential donor one time.
- See if you can get a real auctioneer. Their “singsong” will add a great deal of flavor.
- The person(s) in charge of the auction should keep track of the business name and address for each item donated so thank-you letters can be mailed. These letters can be sent as the items are donated or after the event, just as long as one is sent. Keeping a list and checking when thank-yous are sent helps avoid duplication.
- A tent (or cover) is needed for this event. You will want to have chairs because people will not be willing to stand for a long period of time.
- Donations should be displayed on tables prior to the actual auction. Plan to have at least two tables, number the items with a small piece of masking tape, and lay them out for viewing. Keep a list of the items in numerical order. This allows the auctioneer to recognize the donor of each item as it is auctioned. This will also act as a list for the bookkeeper to record price paid and name of buyer as each item is sold.
- Items need to be mixed up. Mix larger, more expensive items with the small items. This will keep your audience interested.
- Your auctioneer needs to be reminded to “work the crowd”. This is not a typical auction. People need to be reminded that this is a main fund raising event and that all contributions are sincerely appreciated.
- The bookkeeper and/or auction chairperson should be responsible for collecting the money from each buyer and turning funds into the Farm-City treasurer or chairperson. Let people know how they should make out their checks.
- If you can, print a list of items to be auctioned and who donated them and then distribute this among those attending. This will be helpful for people determining what they want to bid on as well as recognition to the donors.

Pedal Tractor Contest

A children's activity that has been very successful at the Tioga County Farm-City event has been a pedal tractor contest. You might give it some consideration for your event. If so, coordinate with the site planner as to where this might best be held. Also make this contest part of the published schedule of events. That way parents can have their children at the site and ready when their age group is called. This could prevent a lot of disappointed kids later.

What you'll need:

- Pedal tractors (these may need to be modified for this event)
 - Two bullhorns
 - Registration table and at least four chairs
 - Clipboards, tablets, and pencils for registration and keeping track of scoring.
 - Certificates for each participant as well as a coupon for a free ice cream from the food booth. These should be made up in advance.
 - Winner certificates are needed for one boy and one girl in each age group - 4 years though 12 years. You might also get 18 silver dollar coins to give as prizes to winners in each category.
- Lists (if possible) of prize winners should be given to the Farm-City chairperson who can pass it on to media. Blank lists could be made up ahead so only names need to be written on each list to save time. One list should be kept in Farm-City records.
 - Registration is preferred ahead of time. Once the age group is started, it is up to the registrars to determine if additional persons will be added. Once that age group is finished, do not go back to it. It is suggested that all children be given a chance to participate if their group is not finished because of delays that can be caused by wagon rides, food lines, etc.



These pedal tractors were specially built to withstand the stress put on them by "drivers" of different ages and sizes.

Petting Zoo/Farm Animal Display

This exhibit operates primarily by itself but is always very, very popular, particularly among younger visitors. It is an event that can be put on at a city or rural site.

- Make sure a tent or shaded area is provided.
- Whomever brings in the animals should make arrangements for wood shavings, straw or other type of bedding on the ground area. They should also be responsible for “cleaning up” after the event. Also suggest that they bring water from home for their animals as many will not drink water that is strange to them.
- Make sure there are always adults present, particularly the animal handlers.
- The orange construction fencing makes an excellent fence to keep animals in and kids out,
- The Petting Zoo is usually located away from the host farm’s animals. This way the activities of the children are away from an area where they could scare or excite the regular farm animals.

Suggestion: Have baby wipes or some other type of wet ones available for kids and adults to wipe their hands after leaving the petting zoo since they might want food or whatever. Be

sure to have trash barrels nearby for disposal of the wipes. Portable hand-washing stands are also recommended.



- Ask a local 4-H club to coordinate with whomever is bringing in the animals so signs can be prepared telling about the animals, i.e. age, breed and other relevant information. This way visitors will leave the area having learned about the animals.
- Make sure there is pre-event communication between the host family and the persons bringing in animals for the petting zoo. This way both parties will feel comfortable about having strange animals on the host farm. You might ask the host family to recommend someone they would like to see handling the petting zoo.

Wool Spinning/Sheep Shearing

Sheep shearing and wool spinning are favorite attractions of visitors and can be an activity in both rural and urban settings. Check with your local Extension office to see if there are sheep farmers in the area who could put a shearing demonstration. Then contact your local historical societies to see if there is someone who does wool spinning.

- Plan on at least one tent for the shearing demonstration and wool spinners. Two may be used if it appears the tents are smaller or there will be a large turnout from the spinning guild.
- Find out from the individual who will be bringing and shearing the sheep what type of enclosure will work best.
- Beyond that, this activity can pretty well run on its own.



Signs

You will need a variety of signs for your on-farm event. The biggest mistake is making the major signs too small and not of material that is weather resistant. Your primary signs should be those within close proximity to the actual site. These should be large, possibly as big as 8' by 4' and should draw attention to the location, dates and times of your event. These can be put up approximately 1 week ahead of F-C day. Be sure to check with the person who owns the land about placing signs and make sure they are not blocking sight for traffic coming or going.

- You will need “next left” and “next right” signs. They do not actually say left and right but are arrows pointing to the left or right. These should be put up the day before F-C in an effort to caution drivers that vehicles will be turning left or right plus will help to slow traffic down. They need to be placed strategically in order to give advance notice.

- If there are several other turns necessary off the main road, be sure to indicate F-C straight ahead, F-C turn here, etc from each direction that would involve a lot of traffic. If it appears only locals would use a particular road, it isn't as important as direction signs from the main roads.



- Make sure you have signs with prominent lettering that says “Parking” along with directional arrows.
- The individuals who put the signs up should plan to take them down after F-C day is over. This is extremely helpful because these persons know where they put the signs and you will need to use them next year.
- You may need laminated signs for the registration booth, no smoking, danger, parking, keep out, caution ditch, auction, and other signs to be used where applicable. These signs can be put up the evening before your event or early that morning.
- If grass needs to be trimmed around the signs so they can be read, please do so, or pick another spot. The signs won't do any good if people can't see or read them.

After It's Over

Thank you notes are always appreciated.

- We have an appreciation banquet each fall to pay tribute to the host family and countless individuals who helped make our Farm-City Day event a success. At the end of that banquet, we introduce the next year's host family and have them give a brief history of their farm.

We each bring a dish to pass along with our own table service. Sometimes we have purchased the meat, other times several committee members furnish meat dishes. Beverage (milk) is provided courtesy of our local dairy cooperatives along with butter and cheese. Coffee and tea are also served. We do not charge for attending the banquet - which is helpful in encouraging entire families to attend. However, a hat is passed for donations to help defray costs of the hall rental.

A plaque is presented to the current year's Farm-City family expressing the committee's appreciation for hosting the event. This serves as a lasting reminder of our gratitude and publicly acknowledges their contribution. The new host family coming on board for the following year has an opportunity to meet a lot of the people behind the scenes and learns how successful the event is in the county. We often have found our new host family has never attended a Farm-City Day in the past - therefore it is helpful if they can meet the committee and hear what has taken place before their involvement.

Don't Forget – The National Farm-City Council has recognition certificates available to present to Farm-City award-winning programs on a state-by-state basis. Recognition plaques are also available to those events judged worthy of national recognition. There are no charges associated with receiving these plaques. All an organization has to do is complete the appropriate recognition forms that are part of the annual Farm-City Program kits. Presentation of these certificates and/or plaques is a great way to provide additional and very special recognition to your volunteers.