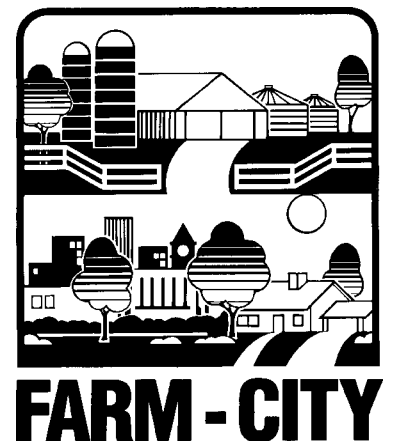


**Tips, tools
and ideas
for
organizing
a
successful,
local
farm-city
program**



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.