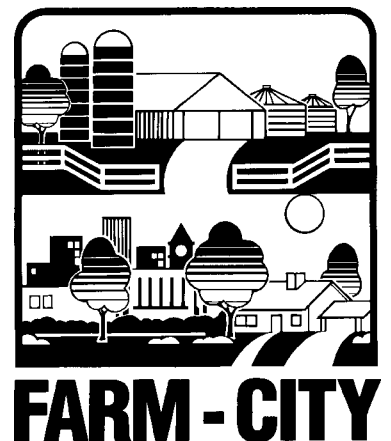


**Tips, tools  
and ideas  
for  
organizing  
a  
successful,  
local  
farm-city  
program**



## 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*