



OUR FOOD LINK

FARM BUREAU®

EVENT PLANNING TOOLKIT

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About

Our Food Link is a year-round program that county and state Farm Bureau volunteers can use to effectively reach consumers of all ages and backgrounds with information about today's agriculture. This planning toolkit is designed to help you get started thinking about projects that will engage people in your community. Included are sample activity ideas, media outreach sample text, program graphics and plenty of room to customize Our Food Link to your area.



How to Use this Toolkit

-  Our Food Link activities are divided into three categories: Farm to Fork, Farm to School, Farm to Community.
-  Browse through the suggested events/activities (beginning on page 3), making note of those that are appealing and might be a good fit with your Farm Bureau volunteers.
-  Be sure to consider available resources (volunteer time, funds, etc.) when evaluating events and activities.
-  Organize a meeting of decision-makers who will be involved in your Our Food Link project(s). Provide copies for everyone of the feasible events/activities for discussion.
-  Adapt and customize the suggestions (or develop your own) to fit the needs and resources of your community and to meet your volunteers' goals.
-  Consider using the micro-volunteering opportunities to entice new or time-strapped volunteers to participate.
-  Each page includes volunteer engagement ideas, key messages and possible connections to Ronald McDonald House Charities (the non-profit partner with American Farm Bureau Women's Leadership Committee).

Publicity Value?

Early in the planning process for Our Food Link events or activities, consider the news and publicity value and how you might promote information to reporters at local media outlets or on social media platforms.






Consider the following:

-  Have you established relationships with local media outlets? If not, contact the local reporter/broadcaster to introduce yourself as a source of information about agriculture and Farm Bureau.
-  Visits with local reporters can help you build rapport and generate interest in your program and Farm Bureau.
-  Social media event invitations are free and easy to spread your message quickly.
-  A variety of publicity tools are available that can assist you in obtaining coverage of your event, including:
 - **MEDIA ALERT**
 - **PRE-EVENT SOCIAL MEDIA PUSH**
 - **REALTIME SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS**
 - **POST-EVENT NEWS RELEASE**
 - **POST-EVENT FOLLOW-UP**

Farmers' Market

Farmers' markets are an opportunity to build the link between urban and farm living. Consumers have a growing interest in buying products directly from growers and in building relationships with farmers and ranchers.





Volunteer Projects

-  Organize, host and/or sponsor a local market for a month or a season
-  Host an interactive booth (prize wheel, etc.), to engage attendees
-  Plan a concession stand featuring local products
-  Provide a welcome packet, water or an item for all vendors with Our Food Link graphic, information and/or QR code
-  Organize farm visits from customer sign-up lists

Micro-Volunteering Opportunities

-  Make calls to recruit volunteers
-  Provide tent, table, chairs, etc.
-  Deliver printed materials, posters, etc., from the county Farm Bureau office
-  Post photos, promotions, etc., on social media
-  Assist the market director in finding local farmers

Key Messages/Themes

-  Food choices
-  Farmers and ranchers care for the local community and rural development
-  Farm Bureau membership
-  Nutrition

YOUR IDEA

Grocery Store Event

Connecting with consumers in local grocery stores and their point-of-purchase location is one way to engage them and answer questions about the entire food chain, from farm to fork.

Volunteer Projects

- 🌱 Set up sample stations to help facilitate conversations about food, including how it's grown/raised and nutrition
- 🌱 Organize cart races and/or a scavenger hunt around the grocery store to have shoppers find the most nutritious, affordable food in the shortest amount of time and provide food prizes for winners.

Consider inviting local media personalities to participate and/or publicize your event

- 🌱 Work with a grocery store to organize a marketing campaign to share "local faces" of agriculture and feature local products

Micro-Volunteering Opportunities

- 🌱 Provide information to consumers before/during event
- 🌱 Serve food samples
- 🌱 Help customers bag groceries and deliver bags to their vehicles
- 🌱 Deliver donations to RMHC

Key Messages/Themes





- 🌱 Establish common ground/shared values between farmers consumers
- 🌱 Food choices
- 🌱 Nutrition
- 🌱 Farmers and ranchers care for their local community and rural development

YOUR IDEAS





Family Health & Fitness

Hosting seminars for Farm Bureau members and neighbors can motivate individuals to talk about food, nutrition and a balanced lifestyle.




Volunteer Projects

-  Focus a seminar on cooking home meals on a budget
-  Identify home healthcare needs and provide answers to attendees' question
-  Openly discuss stress analysis during a session
-  Provide youth and adult yoga classes, dance lessons, etc.

Key Messages/Themes

-  Risk management plans available from Farm Bureau affiliates/partners
-  Health and nutrition
-  Food choices
-  MyPlate connections (choosemyplate.gov)

Micro-Volunteering Opportunities

-  Provide games (board games, video game systems, cards, etc.) for entertainment at a local Ronald McDonald House
-  Recommend experts in areas of seminar interests
-  Plan fundraising details of community event

YOUR IDEAS

“Zest ‘n Zing” or Other Foodie Event

Foodie events for the “at-home chef” engage attendees in learning about local food and beverages in a fun, relaxed environment.

Volunteer Projects

- 🌿 Set up a “Grow and Know” table for your event
- 🌿 Host a reception featuring local foods and beverages
- 🌿 Plan a cooking challenge between two teams with preparation of local products for multiple courses (team could be made up of a chef, farmer or rancher and local media personality)
- 🌿 Look into options for a “Breakfast on the Farm” (or similar) event
- 🌿 Consider hosting a “Taste of (your state)” event

Micro-Volunteering Opportunities

- 🍇 Contact potential sponsors and other key people to involve in the event
- 🍇 Set up before or clean up after the event
- 🍇 Serve food samples
- 🍇 Staff the registration table
- 🍇 Take photos at the event for use on social media and/or to distribute to local media
- 🍇 Announce door prize information
- 🍇 Provide giveaways for swag bags

Key Messages/Themes

- 🍌 Address misconceptions
- 🍌 Food systems
- 🍌 Nutrition
- 🍌 Healthy choices
- 🍌 Food safety

YOUR IDEAS

“Adopt-a-Farmer” Program

Building a partnership between classrooms and farmers and ranchers to connect through letters, online chatting and/or personal visits helps students, teachers and parents understand more about agricultural lifestyles and technical details.

Volunteer Projects

- 🌱 Make a “day in the life” video of a local farmer or rancher or a virtual tour of their business
- 🌱 Visit classrooms to help students understand the responsibilities of growing food, clothing, shelter and energy
- 🌱 Host a classroom visit to a local farm or ranch
- 🌱 Use Skype/Google Hangout/Tango once a month to “bring” the classroom to a local farm or ranch

Key Messages/Themes

- 🍂 Core learning standards
- 🍂 Animal care
- 🍂 Careers/practical learning
- 🍂 Address misconceptions

Micro-Volunteering Opportunities

- 🍂 Send AgMags or informational brochures to classes relating to your sector of agriculture
- 🍂 Send one letter or email per trimester/semester to the class
- 🍂 Set aside 20 minutes to video chat with the class per semester

YOUR IDEAS

Agricultural Literacy Activity

Building awareness and understanding of agriculture is becoming more important as the average American is at least three generations removed from the farm. Visit agfoundation.org for more information and resources.

Volunteer Projects

- 🌱 Conduct a teacher in-service training
- 🌱 Offer a “make and take” lesson to help teachers communicate messages that correlate to agriculture (and help with testing scores)
- 🌱 Coordinate ag-focused classroom projects with students (parts of the plant we eat, Ag Mag, Accurate Ag books, Food and Farm Facts, land and water use, etc.)
- 🌱 Collaborate with a local FFA chapter or group of youth to read books and/or do hands-on activities that relate to agriculture
- 🌱 Contribute to a local library program (donate books, read to students and speak about agriculture)
- 🌱 Plan outdoor activities that help students visualize farming, ranching and agriculture connections

Micro-Volunteering Opportunities

- 🍃 Order American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture materials to distribute
- 🍃 Compose letters to principals, teachers, students and parents about agriculture
- 🍃 Deliver a book barn with Accurate Ag books

Key Messages/Themes

- 🍃 Address misconceptions
- 🍃 Agricultural careers
- 🍃 Community mentoring
- 🍃 Food systems from farm gate to MyPlate
- 🍃 Farmers/ranchers grow food we eat





YOUR IDEAS

Backpack Program

Providing a backpack of healthy food selections for youth to take home from school on Fridays helps young people have nutritious, easy-to-prepare food on weekends. (It is estimated that more than 18 million children qualify for free or reduced price meals through the National School Lunch Program.*)

*Source: Feeding America





Volunteer Projects

-  Work with schools and food banks to supplement children's diets
-  Work with USDA-certified butchers to offer tax deductible donation and processing
-  Pick up and deliver donated or processed meat for the program
-  Fill backpacks with food and other donated resources

Key Messages/Themes

-  Nutrition
-  Food choices
-  Partner with YF&R Harvest for All program

Micro-Volunteering Opportunities

-  Provide money for your committee to shop for food and/or school supplies
-  Determine facts and coordinate agricultural education materials to send home with students
-  Deliver supplies to schools
-  Donate livestock to provide protein to youth involved in the program

YOUR IDEAS

County/State Fair

County and state fairs provide a platform where diverse audiences will engage farmers and ranchers in brief conversations to have their questions answered about agricultural practices and food production.

Volunteer Projects

- 🌱 Host an animal birthing tent or theater with video
- 🌱 Create an interactive information booth (in business section, livestock barns, etc.)
- 🌱 Engage youth at a table “digging for dimes” (toys or prizes) in hay, corn, soybeans, straw or wheat and searching for worms in soil
- 🌱 Plan a community dinner to celebrate state/county commodity diversity
- 🌱 Arrange a fundraiser through food concessions
- 🌱 Plan a scavenger hunt for children and adults
- 🌱 Sponsor a “still exhibit” or photography display featuring rural life, farm families, animal care, healthy food, etc.

Micro-Volunteering Opportunities

- 🌱 Provide educational materials about agriculture for give aways and/or provide feedback to organizers
- 🌱 Provide animals for a live animal tent, or donate meat for or produce for a meal fundraiser
- 🌱 Promote activities by delivering posters, ads, etc., to local businesses

Key Messages/Themes

- 🌱 Animal care
- 🌱 Address misconceptions
- 🌱 Establish common ground/shared values between farmers and consumers
- 🌱 Food, farm and rural living safety information
- 🌱 Nutrition

YOUR IDEAS

Food Collection for Community Event

Promoting an “entrance fee” of food donations at local community events bonds neighbors in the mission to reduce food insecurity.

Volunteer Projects

- Plan a flower and garden show
- Encourage bragging rights of rival teams at high school events to bring food donations
- Encourage members to bring donations to county annual meetings and state convention
- Attend a Farm Bureau affiliate/insurance company awards program to increase awareness of program and planned outcomes
- Gather items as part of a Farm Bureau membership kick-off in your county or state

Micro-Volunteering Opportunities

- 🍇 Post flyers at area businesses prior to the event
- 🍇 Communicate with others about the event on social media, radio, TV, etc.
- 🍇 Set up donation drop-off sites at entrances
- 🍇 Gather donations for delivery after the event

Key Messages/Themes

- Nutrition
- Farmers and ranchers care for their communities
- Food insecurity

YOUR IDEAS

Fun Run

Planning a community fun run, road race or similar event uses the organizing skills of Farm Bureau members, strengthens the community ties and builds awareness of agriculture.

Volunteer Projects

- 🌿 Organize a community 5K, 10K, half marathon and/or marathon
- 🌿 Work with local farmers to host part of the race through farmland
- 🌿 Secure donations that provide healthy snacks and beverages for runners
- 🌿 Work with local businesses to have “goodie bags” of local products and services
- 🌿 Support winners of age divisions, time, etc., with a gift basket of local ag products
 - *Related: Host a bicycle, motorcycle or “cruise in” car tour, scavenger hunt, or fundraiser to share agricultural (food) information and build understanding of farms, local economic contributions and impact, etc.*

Micro-Volunteering Opportunities

- 🌿 Work with people and other community groups to organize water/snack stations, timers, directional leaders, parking crew, other community groups, announcers, etc.
- 🌿 Sign people up to spread advertisements at businesses, on the radio, in the newspaper, etc.
- 🌿 Provide healthy snacks and beverages at stops along route
- 🌿 Organize “fun fact” signs at route stops

Key Messages/Themes

- 🌿 Healthy, nutritious food
- 🌿 Community involvement and the commitment of farmers/ranchers
- 🌿 Family farms
- 🌿 Land use

YOUR IDEAS

Golf Outing

Golf scrambles offer a great chance to promote a cause or build awareness about how farmers and ranchers contribute to economic development and building strong, prosperous communities.

Volunteer Projects

- Build a connection between farmers and ranchers and local business leaders
- Offer competitions throughout the day/evening for best skills (longest drive, closest to the hole, etc.)
- Promote opportunities for sponsorship at all holes with contributions for a partnering charity or program

Micro-Volunteering Opportunities

- Provide prizes and/or credits for winners at local restaurants, farmers' market/stand

Key Messages/Themes

- Health, nutrition and exercise
- Rural community growth
- Farm Bureau membership

YOUR IDEAS

“Hunting for Hunger” Program

Hunting is a way for land-owning families to provide meat donations to those in need while maintaining a healthy balance between wildlife, livestock and crop life.

Volunteer Projects

- Promote the chance to maintain a healthy wildlife/livestock/crop balance and support local communities at the same time
- Make a video showing wildlife roaming, feeding on farms or ranches
- Visit the Sportsmen Against Hunger website for a listing of state licensed meat processors and distribute information to hunters

Micro-Volunteering Opportunities

- Offer property agreements for interested hunters
- Transport processed animals to donation drop-off locations

Key Messages/Themes

- Commitment farmers and ranchers have for providing habitat for wildlife
- Ties to history, health and nutrition

YOUR IDEAS

Volunteer Projects

- Work with a local restaurant to have “staff” for one night be Farm Bureau volunteers and pool tips or percent of profits received for charity
- Have a local band or musician collect tips for a charity or program one night/week
- Promote and sell raffle tickets with the proceeds going to a local program or charity

Micro-Volunteering Opportunities

- Develop a message for table tents communicating the purpose of the event
- Research local raffle rules or laws
- Pre-sell raffle tickets to maximize proceeds going to the charity

Key Messages/Themes

- Community involvement
- Food choices
- Farm Bureau membership

YOUR IDEAS

Legislative Events

To help find solutions to agriculture's key issues, sharing your agricultural story with decision-makers can make all the difference. Visit fbactinsider.org for Action Alerts and sample messages.

Volunteer Projects

- 🌱 Schedule time to talk with a local civic group or your legislator about agriculture's role in local or regional economic or policy issues
- 🌱 Organize a showcase and sampling of foods from and/or processed in the area
- 🌱 Coordinate agricultural tours on farms or ranches or at a local food processor
- 🌱 Host a "Meet the Candidates" night
- 🌱 Host a Town Hall meeting or forum
- 🌱 Organize a visit to the Capitol with state Farm Bureau staff
- 🌱 Provide local commodity or baked goods to offices
- 🌱 Sponsor a buffet or "grab-n-go" breakfast to connect with lawmakers

Micro-Volunteering Opportunities

- 🍃 Write a letter to your national lawmakers as part of FB Advocacy or a similar state program
- 🍃 Make a phone call to your representative about an important issue
- 🍃 Count votes after an election
- 🍃 Donate time or contribute money to a candidate's campaign

Key Messages/Themes

- 🍂 Strategic initiatives/policy issues approved by board of directors
- 🍂 Farm Bureau's policy development process



YOUR IDEAS

Working with students and/or adults to grow trees, plants, flowers, fruits and vegetables can create consumer-farmer relationships with a common interest and goal.

Volunteer Projects

- Support/help begin a classroom charity garden program
- Plant a community garden for collaborated efforts between foodies, agriculture stakeholders and community leaders
- Start a volunteer garden where Ag in the Classroom is hosted once a month

Micro-Volunteering Opportunities

-  Pull weeds on an evening or weekend
-  Make informational signs for plant beds

Connection/Fundraising for Ronald McDonald House Charities, Inc.

- Share abundance with a local House
- Host days for families to harvest fruits and vegetables
- Plant a garden at a local House for year-round availability

Key Messages/Themes

- Local products
- In-season fruits and vegetables
- Sustainability and environmental commitments

YOUR IDEAS

Off-Season Food Drive

Working with others to meet the needs of Ronald McDonald Houses, food banks and other charities strengthens communities year-round.

Volunteer Projects

- Work with schools and community groups to organize and promote competitive drives (food, clothing, funds, etc.)
- Build awareness of the benefits of RMHCs and how one person makes a difference
- Solicit local grocery stores to increase interest in tackling food insecurity in America and the local community

Key Messages/Themes

- Nutrition
- Abundance of American agriculture
- Farmers' and ranchers' shared values with the community
- Food systems and the time from farm gates to consumer plates

Micro-Volunteering Opportunities




- Hang signs in school or around the community to spread the importance of the message
- Pick up and deliver donations to a local Ronald McDonald House

YOUR IDEAS





Rural Community Safety Event

Sharing the importance of being aware and safe around farm animals, buildings, equipment and machinery is an important message for farmers and ranchers to communicate with children and adults.





Volunteer Projects

-  Plan agriculture-related activities in rotating stations for classrooms and schools
-  Organize a “Project Rural Education Day (RED)” with educational stations attendees rotate through
-  Rent a driving/texting simulator to help people understand the importance of eliminating distractions

Key Messages/Themes

-  Road and farm safety
-  Emergency response and preparedness
-  Food and biosecurity
-  Understanding and preparing for the risks of hosting visitors at farms and ranches

Micro-Volunteering Opportunities

-  Organize a safety break with coffee and cookies at the local elevator during harvest
-  Help create an event rotation schedule
-  Seek volunteers and industry experts
-  Sponsor or plan meals for event attendees and volunteers

YOUR IDEAS

Volunteer Projects

- ## Micro-Volunteering Opportunities

- ## Key Messages/Themes

- ## YOUR IDEAS

Engagement Opportunities

January

Be Kind to Food Servers Month
National Blood Donor Month
National Oatmeal Month
National Soup Month

February

American Heart Month
Canned Food Month
Library Lover's Month
National Cherry Month
National FFA Week

March

Ag Safety Awareness Week
National Ag Day
National Frozen Food Month
National Nutrition Month
National Peanut Month
Read Across America Day

April

Arbor Day
Earth Day
National Food Month
National Garden Month
National Pecan Month
National Soy Foods Month

May

Armed Forces Day
National Barbecue Month
National Beef Month
National Salad Month
National Strawberry Month
National Women's Health Week
Teacher Appreciation Week

June

National Dairy Month
National Egg Day
National Fruit & Vegetable Month
National Turkey Month

July

Independence Day
National Berry Month
National Grilling Month
National Ice Cream Month
National Park and Recreation Month
National Picnic Month

August

International Youth Day
National Family Meals Month
National Farmers' Market Month
National Peach Month
National Sandwich Month

September

Food Safety Education Month
National Breakfast Month

National Farm Safety & Health Week
National Honey Month
National Mushroom Month
National Potato Month
National Rice Month
National Whole Grains Month

October

Eat Better Eat Together Month
Farm to School Month
National 4-H Week
National Apple Month
National Cranberry Month
National Forest Products Week
National Hunger Awareness Month
National Pork Month
National School Lunch Week
Spinach Lovers Month

November

Election Day
National Peanut Butter Lovers Month
Native American Heritage Month
Thanksgiving Day
Veterans Day

December

"Hi Neighbor" Month
National Pear Month
Read a New Book Month

Social Media Campaign

Social media can be an important tool to help generate media interest and community participation in Our Food Link activities. Consider using social media before, during and after your event, and using one or more platforms (Facebook, Twitter, blogs, YouTube, Flickr, Instagram, etc.):

Pre-event Push—

Promote the event in advance and entice people to attend. Let people know the basics: who, what, when, where and why.

Realtime Sharing—

Post photos, live-tweets, commentary, etc., as the event unfolds. This works especially well for competitive events or contests.

Post-event Follow-up—

Provide information about the event, number of participants, why people attended (quote) and what was unique or educational.



FACEBOOK.COM/FBWOMEN



FACEBOOK.COM/FARMBUREAU



TWITTER.COM/FARMBUREAU



INSTAGRAM.COM/AMERICANFARMBUREAU

To find
information on
state programs, visit
fb.org/statefbs/



Sample Collateral



TEMPLATE SUGGESTIONS

- **BUTTONS**
– Avery Label 5278
- **STICKERS**
– Avery Label 5163

- **TABLE FRONT BANNER**

Contact AFBF's Creative Services team at CreativeServices@fb.org to get Our Food Link logo files for your projects.

YOUR IDEAS

FARM BUREAU[®]

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP



Farm Bureau[®]

600 Maryland Ave., SW, Suite 1000W, Washington, DC 20024