

COUNTY ANNUAL MEETINGS

Best practices for excellent events

In addition to focusing on early planning and providing a fun and informative event for the community, included below are additional top tips and ideas to help county volunteer leaders host the best meeting with the least amount of labor possible.

- **PLAN AHEAD**

Leaders should discuss ideas and begin to plan for the annual meeting several months before the agreed-upon date. This ensures everyone can share in the division of labor, and members and guests can plan to attend.

- **GET THE WORD OUT**

Communicate the time, date, and location of the meeting early and often. Send a postcard (twice), put an ad in the local paper, put flyers up at the sale barn, etc. Also, post multiple times to Facebook and other social media. Make sure to host the meeting at a location that's both inviting and easy to find.

- **GET THE AGENDA RIGHT**

The emcee should think about how to introduce guests quickly and professionally and keep the proceedings moving. Let guest speakers go first on the agenda and keep presentations quick and informative. If you invite non-members and guests (you should), conduct your business meeting before they arrive.

- **INVITE NON-MEMBERS**

The best way to grow attendance and opportunities for engagement is to make the meeting a FUN community event. Focus on guest speakers, mealtime, and entertainment first to attract non-members to hear about what Farm Bureau does. Then make sure to allow them to become members at the meeting.

- **PROVIDE VALUE**

In addition to making the meeting fun, try to provide value. Guest speakers should focus on a topic with broad appeal and interest to the members and guests. The agenda should provide an opportunity for attendees to meet new people. Ensure you explain Farm Bureau's most significant achievements of the year and why the organization is worth supporting.

QUICK HITS

- Appoint a greeter to welcome everyone with a smile and handshake as they arrive.
- Capture guest's contact information and follow up with a thank you and invitation to become a member.
- Make the meeting free, or have a "suggested donation" box when people arrive.
- Keep the door prize drawings short and make sure the emcee makes the process fun and lighthearted.
- Honor someone with an award. If you don't have one, make one up.