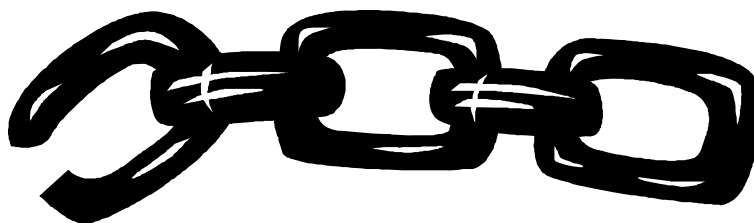


# Young Farmer Chairman Handbook



*Linking Young Farmer Chairs to  
the Members*



## Introduction

Indiana Farm Bureau's Young Farmer Program was created to help young men and women capitalize on the opportunities and overcome the challenges in agriculture to make your farm operation more profitable. Launched in 1969, the Young Farmer Program has made a positive difference in the lives of countless young farmers, helping many of them to achieve career success through agricultural education.

In addition, the program was founded to educate today's young farmers to become tomorrow's leaders. Indiana Farm Bureau looks to the Young Farmer Program for its future leaders, men and women who will work hard to promote policies that are good for society-small business owners and land owners.

As Young Farmer Chair, you provide the local leadership to the young members (18-35) to become involved in the total Farm Bureau Program. Activities can include participation in contests, promoting district/state conferences, hosting meetings, engaging in agriculture promotion activities, and other programs done at a local level.

*So, now what?*

Don't feel you have to do huge activities or even every idea that comes your way. It will not matter if there are three members or 33 members, the opportunities and success is based on your counties resources, needs, and interest.

The purpose of this set of materials is simply to serve as a resource to help you recruit young farmers, set goals for your county group, develop programs, and maintain your member and program base. Keep in mind this is not a know all, end all resource. Think big and always continue to brainstorm and look for new ideas and ways to get your enthusiasm about Farm Bureau and agriculture.

## Recruitment

Getting people to support your cause by giving their time is an on-going challenge for most groups. The main reason people get involved in an organization is because someone ASKED. Each county should have an ongoing goal of identifying new people to introduce to young farmers. For example, if each county involves two new people each year, the long term vitality of the group is assured.

When thinking about your county, try to think past your closest acquaintances. Imagine what your "IDEAL" young farmer group would look like in terms of its members. Don't pigeon hole your group to only be one type of individual. The more varying the individuals in the group the broader base of individuals you will also reach outside of your group. *Look at Activity 1 to start thinking about your "IDEAL" group.*

While you might like your small, intimate group and not want to expand your group, it is very important to grow and expand.

Once you have established what types of people you want to recruit, approach people with enthusiasm and a positive attitude about your young farmer group. Keep in mind the following to help make the recruitment process more successful for you and your members:

1. Look around. Who's missing? Who needs to be here? Go ask them to be a part of Young Farmers.
2. Appeal to individual interests and motivations for those you are recruiting. Not everything your young farmer group will appeal to each person. Pin point those activities which will be hot buttons.
3. Define what it is young farmers is in your county to help them feel you have a purpose and function.
4. Offer the "perks" and rewards for being in young farmers
5. Market young farmers and all of the local, district, and state young farmer activities. Make your group appear to be more than the ice cream booth at the fair.
6. Use a one-on-one, personal approach. Only then can your personal commitment and enthusiasm show through.
7. If each member would take only five minutes to contact one person, using this approach, participation problems could be quickly reversed.
8. Mass appeals are generally less effective. "But I don't have time to contact people personally" is often used as an excuse for relying solely on mail-outs or mass media.
9. The number one reason people give for participating is "a friend (neighbor, family member) asked me."

Many times there are also many barriers in the recruitment process. Try to be proactive in overcoming these barriers:

1. Lack of knowledge or information about Farm Bureau or young farmers
2. Location of activities
3. Childcare
4. Types of extra-curricular activities
5. Un-reimbursed expenses

### **Ways to retain members**

There are two types of members: 1) active and 2) inactive. The active members are typically those who plan and implement most of the meetings, events and programs. By taking on such a heavy load, these members often suffer from burn-out, which causes tension and possibly termination of membership. The best way to describe an inactive member is one who simply uses the group as a resume builder. He or she is not involved with any aspect of the group.

For your group to be more successful you must decrease the number of inactive members and increase the number of active. By having a GREATER number of ACTIVE members within your organization then the members will less likely suffer from burn-out.

**A. MOTIVATION**-People motivate themselves, but the following can be additional incentives for motivation:

1. Recognition
2. Job satisfaction
3. Feeling a part of the team, i.e., assign general members duties and responsibilities
4. Food

**B. RECOGNITION** is an on-going activity through which people express their appreciation for each other's contributions

Four Components of Recognition:

- a) Acknowledgement can be obtained through a glance, an introduction or a handshake; this reaffirms an individual's self-worth and acknowledges that he or she truly contributes to the group.
- b) Attention is giving both time and energy to focus on the members as individuals;
- c) Feedback should be constantly used, but if used in the wrong way can be detrimental to a person
- d) Praise must not only be sincere but specific. Praise can be given formally at a meeting or informally while walking down a sidewalk. Praise is more effective when given immediately after an event.

## 106 Ways to Retain Members

1. Call When Absent
2. Put the Member on the Agenda
3. Recognize Each Member
4. Reward Achievements
5. Fun Meetings
6. Theme Meetings
7. Find out The Individual Needs of the Members
8. Attend FB to DC
9. Have Educational Sessions
10. Have a Strong Mentoring Program
11. Have Guest Speakers
12. Have Multi-County Meetings
13. Have Social Activities
14. Keep It Fun
15. Have Lively Meetings
16. Allow Time for Everyone to Participate
17. Assign Rolls In Advance
18. Call and Reminds All Members
19. Have a Mix of Games
20. Maintain Regular E-Mail or Phone Contact
21. Follow the Agenda
22. Share the Load
23. Annual Member Interest Survey
24. Focus on Supportive Comments and Positive Feedback
25. Promote the State Awards Program
26. Ensure That All Members Are Active To Their Level of Comfort
27. Get Them Involved
28. Praise Them
29. Variety in Meeting Formats
30. Individual Name Tags
31. FB Officers Speak to Members Personally
32. Recognize Progress
33. Make Friendships
34. Senior Members Include New Members
35. Do Icebreakers
36. Serve a Meal at Salvation Army
37. Have a Call-Out Meeting for New and Old Members
38. Be More Open To New Ideas
39. Comfortable Meetings
40. Listen
41. Use Each Members Specific Skills
42. Be Warm and Smile A Lot
43. Get to Know Each Member Individually
44. Use Guilt – “Don’t Quit Or We Will Die!”
45. Learn To Laugh
46. Social yet Learning Atmosphere
47. Chair Delegate to Members
48. Have Well-Organized Meetings
49. Show That You Care
50. Give the Members Responsibility
51. Don’t Pressure New Members
52. Include families
53. Change Of Pace in the Meetings
54. Continuity
55. Re-Invite Inactive Members
56. Make Them Feel Important
57. Get Them Working on a Goal
58. Use Them as Mentors
59. Talk up The Benefits of Young Farmers
60. Be a sounding board
61. Treat Others with Dignity and Respect
62. Encourage Growth
63. Have a Mystery Night
64. Non-Threatening Atmosphere
65. Break up The Routine
66. Encourage Members to Get New People Involved
67. Get Them to Attend Leadership Conference
68. Go on a trip
69. Visit a winery
70. Tour a renewable fuel plant
71. Plan Ahead Four To Six Weeks
72. Have a Backwards Meeting
73. Have a Brainstorming Session
74. Positive and Encouraging Environment
75. Annual Celebration Dinner
76. Send out Postcards
77. Have an Orientation Meeting
78. Partner-Up Members for Progress
79. Encourage Them to Work on a FB committee
80. Ask Their Opinion
81. Have Them Write Down Their Goals
82. Incorporate Activities Outside Of Farm Bureau
83. Have Refreshments
84. Babysitting
85. Timely Meetings
86. Send Lost Members e-cards
87. Celebrate Birthdays
88. Recognize Achievement
89. Have Informal Get Together After the Meeting
90. Periodically Do Training
91. Talk about the Next Meeting and Psyche Them Up
92. Occasionally Change the Meeting Time and Place
93. Get Well Cards
94. Email Each Member before Each Meeting’
95. Do Things as a Team
96. FB Pays Entry Fees and Expenses for Members to FB events
97. Encourage Members to Enter Contests
98. Elect Strong Officers
99. Have A “Terrific Young Farmer” Plaque
100. Tell Them You Miss Them
101. Design the Meetings That the Members Want
102. Encourage Commitment
103. Solve Conflict Promptly and Fairly
104. Motivate and Teach
105. Thank-You Notes for Special Jobs
106. Door Prizes at Meetings

## Programs & Activities

### Getting Started

The key is to start slowly. Don't feel like you have to do something huge right off the bat. Get to know those who are interested. Find out what is on people's minds--their concerns, needs and wants. At first it is most important to do more social activities to help form relationships and share information. Some ideas of things to do if you are just starting or rejuvenating a group may be:

1. Meeting at someone's home for a pitch-in dinner
2. Going out to eat at a pizza place or other family friendly restaurant
3. Picnic/cookout at a park or farm
4. Pool party
5. Canoeing or boating



One thing to keep in mind is to appeal to all types of people. Activities should not make some feel uncomfortable or out of place. Know your group that you are inviting to be sure no one is offended. You don't want to turn someone off at their first meeting.

Keep in mind that some people have a difficult time just having fun. To help these feel they got something out of coming to a young farmer event, be sure to mention upcoming Farm Bureau activities, legislative information that might affect them, or even local events that people may not know about. Everyone is busy this day and age and we want to feel we are getting something for our time besides some free food.

Some other items to consider:

- Availability of heating or air conditioning on evenings and weekends
- Smoke free environment
- Adequate, comfortable seating
- Name tags, if new people will be attending
- Refreshments
- Try to avoid time-consuming and wasteful meetings.
- Make use of communication technologies (email and google groups.)
- Limit conference calls to one hour.
- If you will be meeting in person, poll your volunteers to see what time and location is best for that particular group.

*Remember to always be in contact with your county board and president about funds that can be used for young farmer activities. Money should be budgeted to help expense young farmer activities. Keep expenses in check so the board will want to continue to support the young farmers.*

## Developing Programming

Remember those concerns, needs and wants you should have found out at your first several activities. Now, it is time to use those to plan activities for your group to participate in throughout the year. Be sure to know the resources your group has in terms of finances and people. If your group is only six people you probably aren't going to try to pull off a big ag day event or county fair food booth. However, you could assist another organization or partner with your county Farm Bureau for events such as these.

Your group needs to at some point set some goals; written or unwritten. From this it will become easier for you to see what type of activities or programs to offer to your group and community. To help you through this process, see "Goal Setting Worksheet."

For the purpose of setting goals, be as specific or as broad as your group needs to be in order to get some type of action plan. Examples may be the following:

Issue: Lack of knowledge about ethanol and bio-diesel

Goal #1: Learn more about the renewable fuel industry

Methods to meet goal: Tour local ethanol plant and talk with manager about their operation.

Work with Extension Office to find a speaker from Purdue to talk with the group about the science, benefits, and economics of renewable fuels.

Issue: No empathy from the community regarding agriculture

Goal #2: Educate the community about agriculture

Methods to meet goal: Become certified in Farming the Classroom and go in the classroom to educate students about agriculture.



Hold an Ag Day Breakfast to teach the community about the costs of food and the prices to produce the food.

Host activities at the county fair which showcase farm animals, products, and activities to help fair goers appreciate agriculture.

It is important to learn about your local agriculture issues through your activities as well. This will help instill a cohesive understanding and respect for local issues, concerns, and growth in your community. While many of your members may not feel comfortable attending zoning meetings or meetings regarding a local informational meeting regarding the possibility of a new factory or CAFO, it is important for some YF's to be in attendance. Being visible in the community at events like these will help the public to respect young farmers and Farm Bureau as a knowledgeable and educated group.

Many activities may also depend on your geographical location. If you are in a large animal agriculture area you may tour these facilities. Where as, if you have local wineries you may tour those businesses. Most likely someone in your group will have a personal connection to many of the businesses or organizations you may want to tour or utilize for programming. Be sure to find out if someone does have a personal connection during your planning process.

For ideas of what your group could do through out the year see the "Resource List."

### Community Projects

Another important part of your young farmer program should be activities that help your community. While the state young farmer committee supports Second Harvest activities, you are not limited to just doing a food drive. Your community may have other needs or your group may be interested in doing another project. Examples of community projects you may want to consider could be:

1. Help with 4-H events at the county fair
2. Host a Sunday Dinner at the Salvation Army
3. Adopt families at Christmas
4. Host a livestock preview show
5. Host a basketball, volleyball or softball tournament to raise funds for Second Harvest
6. Sponsor a road side or river clean-up

The great thing about community projects is you can achieve various different objectives; providing a positive image for Farm Bureau, serving as a tool to recruit more members, working as a team to make a difference to those in our community.



## Resource List

### Farm Shows

#### Brownfield Network

[www.brownfieldnetwork.com](http://www.brownfieldnetwork.com)

#### US Farm Show Listing

[www.farmshow.com/farmwww/usshows.asp](http://www.farmshow.com/farmwww/usshows.asp)

### Tours

#### Annual Farm Management Tour

[www.agecon.purdue.edu/extension/programs/farm\\_tour.asp](http://www.agecon.purdue.edu/extension/programs/farm_tour.asp)

#### Farm Festival - Traveling Show

<http://www.ces.purdue.edu/Johnson/FarmFestival.htm>

#### Indiana Wine Trails

<http://www.indianawines.org/winetrail/>

### Ag Programs

#### Midwest Women in Ag Conference

<http://www.ces.purdue.edu/wia/index.html>

#### Agricultural Interdepartmental Extension Program Offerings

<http://www.agecon.purdue.edu/extension/programs/2007prog.asp>

- [Advertising and Publicity for Small Businesses](#)
- [Agricultural Income Tax Workshop](#)
- [Agricultural Outlook, Grain Outlook, Livestock Outlook, Land Values Outlook](#)
- [Auto Steer Opportunities for Crop Management](#)
- [Bankers Agricultural Clinic](#)
- [Beginning Aquaculture Workshops](#)
- [Charting Commodity Prices](#)
- [Combating Risk through Planning](#)
- [Commercial Vegetable and Specialty Crop Production](#)
- [Dealing With Controversial Issues in Agriculture and Natural Resources](#)
- [E-Commerce for Small Businesses](#)
- [Estate and Family Farm Business Transfer Planning](#)

- [Exploring Opportunities in Specialty Markets](#)
- [Farm and Ag Business Law Update: Farmer, Landowner and Individual Legal Affairs](#)
- [Farming on the Fringe: Rural/Urban Conflict](#)
- [Farmland Leases and Rent Arrangements: Are Your Farmland Leases Up to Date?](#)
- [Grain Marketing Workshops](#)
- [Improving Communication in the Family Farm Business](#)
- [Income Tax Management for Farmers](#)
- [Indiana Farm Law Quiz](#)
- [Is My Farm Business Competitive?](#)
- [Is This Business Competitive?](#)
- [Know Your Indiana Grain Price Patterns](#)
- [Leadership: Casting Light or Shadow? The Essence of Ethical Leadership](#)
- [Livestock Marketing Tips](#)
- [Marketing for New Ventures](#)
- [Purdue Income Tax Schools](#)
- [Real Estate Transactions: Basic Economic and Tax Considerations](#)
- [Risk Management for Producers in XXX County in 2007](#)
- [Social Security and Deficits – The Economy and You](#)
- [Succession Planning: How to Bring a Son or Daughter into the Family Business](#)
- [74 th Annual Indiana Farm Management Tour](#)
- [Taking the Bored Out of Boards](#)
- [To Store or Not to Store?](#)
- [Top Farmer Crop Workshop](#)
- [27th Annual Farming Together Workshop](#)
- [Writing a Winning Business Plan](#)

### Purdue Agricultural Centers

<http://www.agriculture.purdue.edu/pac/locations.html#center>

### Progressive Ag Farm Safety

<http://www.progressiveag.org/>

## Activity 1

### The "Ideal" Young Farmer Group

If you could form your "ideal" young farmer group, how would it appear? Identify the characteristics below that would identify your "ideal group." Think **big picture** rather than individual people. This is not about individuals but rather the team as a whole.

1. Age Range: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Gender Ration: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Marital Status: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Educational Backgrounds: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Occupations: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Residence: Farm      Rural, non-farm      Town      City
7. Special Interests: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Special Talents: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Special Skills: \_\_\_\_\_

# Goal Setting Worksheet

Issue #1: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Goal #1: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Methods: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Issue #2: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Goal #2: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Methods: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Issue #3:

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Goal #3:

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Methods:

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Issue #4:

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Goal #4:

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Methods:

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