

HOW TO HOST AN **AG DAY** EVENT



Getting Started

Hosting an Ag Day event can be easy and fun if you plan ahead. Here are some simple steps that will help make your efforts a success.

Determine Your Primary Message

What is the single, most important point that you'd like to be able to communicate with your event? The importance of quality ingredients (to a successful recipe or article of clothing)? The value of sound nutrition? The financial impact of agriculture in your community? The contribution of agriculture to renewable fuel resources?

The more specifically you can focus on—and demonstrate—your message, the more likely it is to be remembered!

Identify Your Audience

Decide who you want to reach most with your message. Consider individuals who are least aware of the benefits of agriculture or have the ability to influence others. Some possibilities include:

- Consumers (general public)
- Children and Teachers
- Business Leaders
- Parents
- Media Contacts
- Government Leaders
- Religious and Educational Groups
- Health, Safety and Environmental Groups
- Government
- Media
- Women's Organizations
- Merchants

Form a Strong Committee

Once you have a general idea of whom you'd like to reach, begin enlisting support from others who share your enthusiasm for agriculture. By joining together, you can expand creativity, lend credibility to your celebration and cut down on costs. Potential committee members may include:

- Farmers and Ranchers
- Business and Trade Associations
- Service, Fraternal and Youth Groups

Learn more about putting together an effective committee on page 2!

Select an Event

One of the first steps in choosing your event may be to find out what other groups in your community, state or industry are doing to celebrate Ag Day. This is a good opportunity to enlist their support, thus enhancing each other's efforts. Work with your committee to host an event that keeps to the mission of Ag Day, but also brings exposure to involved members and organizations.

Check out the great ideas for Ag Day events on page 2!

Plan and Host Your Event

After you've selected an event, it's time to develop a detailed plan of execution. Some considerations in your planning include:

Research—What will need to be done to ensure you can host your event?

Logistics—What has to be done in preparation for—as well as the day of—your event?

Fundraising—What costs are involved? Who will underwrite those costs? Can several groups share in the expense?

Communications/Publicity—What is your strategy for getting exposure for your efforts?

Be sure to check out the detailed planning checklist on page 3!

Evaluate Your Efforts

Once you've wrapped up your event, take time to reflect on its success. Did you meet your goals? Did you get the media coverage you desired? What would you do differently next year?



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Ag Day Event Ideas

Looking for an easy way to get started? Here are some “tried-and-true” ideas that have worked well for celebrating Ag Day!

Farmer’s Markets

Local Farmer’s Markets are usually starting up around this time of the year. What better place to emphasize the importance of agriculture? Arrange to have music, samples, fun games for kids and make a day of it.

Ag Day Breakfast

Host an Ag Day breakfast for local government and business leaders. Identify a keynote speaker to talk about agriculture and plan your menu around locally grown and raised agriculture products.

Mall Exhibit

Organize an exhibit at your local mall or shopping center. Include goods produced in your area, as well as information on local methods and technologies. Contact local businesses for display items and information.

Fair

Host a farm or health and nutrition fair with examples of new ag uses, ag technology exhibits, food stands, live animals or entertainment.

Petting Zoo

Organize a petting zoo where children and their parents can see farm and ranch animals and learn more about them. Ask local farmers and ranchers to provide the animals.

Adopt-A-Legislator

Invite one or more state legislators to visit local farms and ranches or set up a visit to their state office. Leave them with Ag Day materials and local agriculture products.

Adopt-a-Classroom

Host a classroom field trip to a local farm or ranch or to a university’s agricultural

research farm. Or, bring the farm to the classroom. This provides a great opportunity for children to learn about career opportunities in agriculture.

Pizza Party

Organize a pizza party on a farm, in a classroom or at a mall. Explain how ingredients from kids’ favorite food come from farms and ranches and how each is processed and delivered to the grocery store or restaurant.

School Lunches

Encourage elementary schools to designate a day during Ag Week to distribute quizzes and puzzles with school lunches. This might also serve as an opportunity to explain the connection between farm and mealtime. Contact your state’s School Food Service Association for assistance. Or, with cooperation of the school, ask various producers or grocers to donate items (milk, ice cream, bread, burgers, etc.).

Library Display

Approach your local public or school libraries about organizing an exhibit during Ag Week. You might offer to arrange for a speaker or a lecture series about agriculture. Books about rural communities, animals, farms, etc., could be part of a special Ag Day section that encourages children to learn more about agriculture.

Point-of-Purchase

Distribute information about agriculture or other information through local stores. Ask your grocer to feature the Ag Day logo or other positive messages about agriculture on grocery bags or signs used during Ag Week. You might also set up a farm-to-your-table display in your local grocery store.

Enlisting Support

Your committee is the heart of hosting a successful event. Here are 10 tips for building and keeping your Ag Day committee on track.

Find a diverse group of participants—Variety is the spice of life, the old adage goes. So make sure your committee is comprised of individuals from different backgrounds and different skill areas. Contact different associations and organizations with interests in agriculture and ask for their participation.

Start early—Don’t wait until the last minute to form your committee. Begin at least 2-3 months in advance so members can get to know each other and have time to prepare.

Identify responsibilities early—It’s helpful for every member of your committee to know their specific role. If you have time, jot down key responsibilities and expectations of each member to avoid confusion or duplication of efforts. Talk one-on-one with each member about what you expect from them.

Begin meetings with a fresh perspective—Keep committee members enthused about Ag Day celebrations by starting each meeting with a memorable thought or quote that underscores the overall mission of the effort.

Keep meetings on track—Meetings that are too long or go off subject can be draining to committee members. To prevent this, prepare an agenda in advance with a start and stop time and make a commitment to keep to it.



Other Ag Day Activities

- Cook-offs, recipe contests, chef demonstrations, bake sales, cooking and bread-making classes
- Radio call-ins and trivia contests with prizes donated by local stores and restaurants
- Poster, essay, photography and poetry contests
- Brown bag lunches of ag products at speakers’ forums, legislative meetings or other public events
- Shopping sprees and scavenger hunts for locally grown products
- Spring planting ceremonies and student gardens (both indoor and out)
- Seminars for teachers and other educators regarding available agriculture resources
- Museum displays featuring old and new ag tools and methods

