



# OUR FOOD LINK

FARM BUREAU®

## EVENT PLANNING TOOLKIT

  
Farm Bureau®

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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

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# 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

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# 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](http://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

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# “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

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# “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

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# 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](http://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

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# 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

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# 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

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## Volunteer Projects

- ## Micro-Volunteering Opportunities

- ## Key Messages/Themes

- ## YOUR IDEAS

# FARM TO COMMUNITY

# 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

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## Volunteer Projects

- ## Micro-Volunteering Opportunities

- ## Key Messages/Themes

- ## YOUR IDEAS

# FARM TO COMMUNITY

## 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

- ## Micro-Volunteering Opportunities

- ## Key Messages/Themes

- ## 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](http://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

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## Volunteer Projects

- Connection/Fundraising  
for Ronald McDonald House  
Charities, Inc.**

- ## Micro-Volunteering Opportunities

- ## 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

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# 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

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# Local Food Access Committee

Sharing a farmer or rancher perspective on a local food access committee or food policy council ensures a balanced approach to meeting the economic, social and environmental health needs of a community through legislative or other innovative solutions.

## Volunteer Projects

- Connect local farms and ranches to all parts of the community
- Create awareness of agriculture's local impact by working with schools, hospitals, health professionals, legislators and other community leaders

## Micro-Volunteering Opportunities

- Recommend leaders with expertise in the community for the local food access committee

## Key Messages/Themes

- Food insecurity
- Food choices
- Nutrition and health

## 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