

# Building & Maintaining



## Effective YF&R Committees

**Presented by**

*Dan Durheim  
Director Program Development  
American Farm Bureau*

# Clarify the Goals of the Committee

1

The first step to implementing a plan of action is to clarify the work that is to be done. Your yearly calendars specify the end goal, but you need to communicate that, along with other details, to the people doing the work. It is the board's responsibility to delegate the work to a committee or task force, but the board must first clarify the scope of the project.

- What is the goal of the project?
- What is the budget, if any?
- When does the board want a progress report?
- To whom should they go with questions?

Too open:

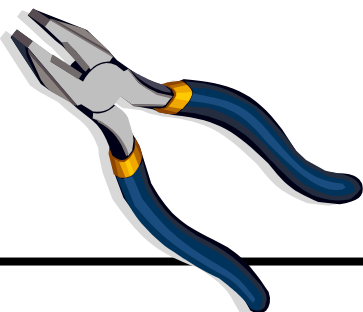
- Plan the county annual meeting.

Too limited:

- Plan the county annual meeting. We want to hold it at the community center on Main Street. It should start at 7:00 p.m. and we want to eat fried chicken, mashed potatoes, peas and chocolate cake. Tickets should cost \$10 per person. Use the same ice breaker we used last year. Bill Hoffman will handle the policy development portion of the program.

Just right:

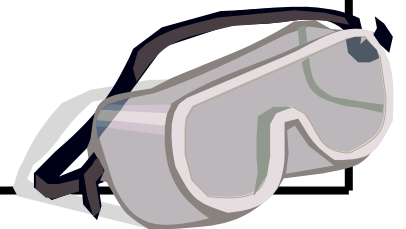
- The charge of this task force is to plan a county annual meeting not longer than three hours. You have a budget of \$200 and you may sell tickets, but members should not pay more than \$15 each. The meeting should be held at a central location on November 5. Bill Hoffman will be responsible for the policy development component of the evening (about 60 minutes) but the task force should plan the rest of the evening including an ice breaker or other social interaction. Please present your plan to the board of directors for approval at the September 5 meeting. If you have any questions, please contact Steve Snyder at 202-555-1212.



## Use the Experience of the Group

To set the record, the team building the “4 Hour House” first practiced building two houses. It took them more than six hours, but the experience they gained was invaluable. We can apply that same method to forming committees if we ask ourselves, “What is the best mix of people we can assemble in order to benefit from both experienced and new builders?”

<i>Contributions of Experienced Committee Members</i>	<i>Contributions of New Committee Members</i>



## Plan Your Time

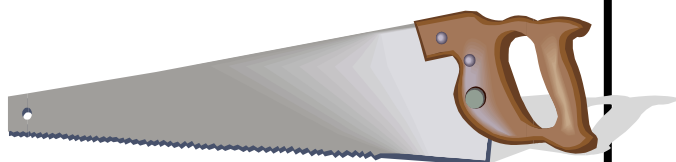
---

Planning the time it will take to accomplish the committee's goals means planning start times and deadlines for important parts of the project. However, it also means looking at how long each task will take to complete.

### **FARM VISIT**

Your YF&R committee would like to plan a farm visit for 2 elementary school classes they have been working with through their Ag in the Classroom efforts. Since the school is in your area, they have asked you to chair the committee that will plan the event. You don't have to host the farm visit but your committee needs to identify a host for this group of 40 kids and 10 adults and coordinate all aspects of the visit. The committee would like to hold the event three months from now.

*Identify the key tasks that need to be done and how long you think each task will take:*



## Find Volunteers

### Successful Ways to Ask

- Know what the job is
- Make an appointment to visit personally
- Keep the appointment
- Give a complete explanation of the job
- Tell them why you are asking them
- Tell them the time required
- Tell them what has been done before
- ASK THEM TO HELP!



### Ways that are Sure to Fail

- Tell them you are desperate
- Tell them that they owe you
- Lie a little to make the task more appealing
- Make them feel guilty

### Organization Climate

*Imagine that you just started growing rutabagas. This is a new crop for you, and you don't know anyone else who grows them. You decide to join the California Rutabaga Growers Association. You hear that the association is holding an orientation session for prospective volunteers. You are considering becoming active in the association, so you decide to attend.*

- What are some of your thoughts and feelings as you enter the building?
- What would you like to have happen when you arrive?
- What steps could the organization take that would help you succeed, enjoy the job and stay a long time?

## Customize the Committee's Work

---

In order to build an effective committee you need committee members who will work together and make a commitment to getting the job done. Often this means people must work independently on small projects that will contribute to the overall success of the committee. One way to ensure that the work gets done is to find tasks that fit with the talents and the interests of committee members.

*What are the advantages to this tool?*

*What are some ways we can ensure that volunteers complete the survey AND return it?*

*What are some other ideas for customizing tasks in a committee?*



# Farm Bureau Gifts and Talents Survey

The Farm Bureau depends on your service, skills and knowledge to build our organization.  
We appreciate your gift of talent, time and service!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Best time of day to contact me is: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
It's OK to contact me at work: \_\_\_\_\_  
Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Work E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mark the activities in which you have current or past **participation** with a 'P.'  
Mark those in which you have an **interest** with an 'I.'

## Public Policy

- \_\_\_ Legislative farm tour
- \_\_\_ Writing letters to officials
- \_\_\_ Writing letters to the editor
- \_\_\_ Developing FB policy
- \_\_\_ Speaking at hearings
- \_\_\_ Contacting county gov't officials
- \_\_\_ Serving on school board
- \_\_\_ Implementing local policy
- \_\_\_ Implementing state policy
- \_\_\_ Member of FB Act (national issues)

## Ag Education and Promotion

- \_\_\_ Affordable food events (Food Check Out)
- \_\_\_ Visiting classrooms
- \_\_\_ Commodity promotions
- \_\_\_ Hosting farm visits
- \_\_\_ Coordinating farm visits

## Membership

- \_\_\_ Associate member directory
- \_\_\_ Welcoming newcomers
- \_\_\_ New member events
- \_\_\_ Recruiting new members
- \_\_\_ Membership records
- \_\_\_ Contacting renewal members

## Members 35 or Under

- \_\_\_ Competitive events
- \_\_\_ Social events
- \_\_\_ Leadership training

## Communication & Publicity

- \_\_\_ Writing articles for newsletter
- \_\_\_ Newsletter layout & design
- \_\_\_ Newsletter mailing crew
- \_\_\_ Newsletter editor
- \_\_\_ Telephone tree
- \_\_\_ Brochures & publications
- \_\_\_ Media interviews
- \_\_\_ Writing news releases
- \_\_\_ Web page design and maintenance

## Special Events

- \_\_\_ County annual meeting
- \_\_\_ County picnic
- \_\_\_ Fall banquet
- \_\_\_ Refreshments
- \_\_\_ Child care planning
- \_\_\_ Set up and Clean up
- \_\_\_ Publicity
- \_\_\_ Fundraising

## Leadership Development

- \_\_\_ State leadership conference
- \_\_\_ State annual meeting
- \_\_\_ Leadership training
- \_\_\_ Serving on a committee
- \_\_\_ Mentoring new leaders
- \_\_\_ Recognizing volunteers
- \_\_\_ Recruiting new leaders

## Gifts and skills I would like to share:

---

---

---

## Gifts and skills I would like to develop:

---

---

---

## Hobbies and interests:

---

---

---

## Volunteer/professional experience:

---

---

---

## I usually choose to participate in activities that: (please check all that apply)

- Provide ways to meet and get to know people
- Are related to agricultural issues
- Help me to learn and grow
- Are related to children or education

## My desired level of commitment at this time is:

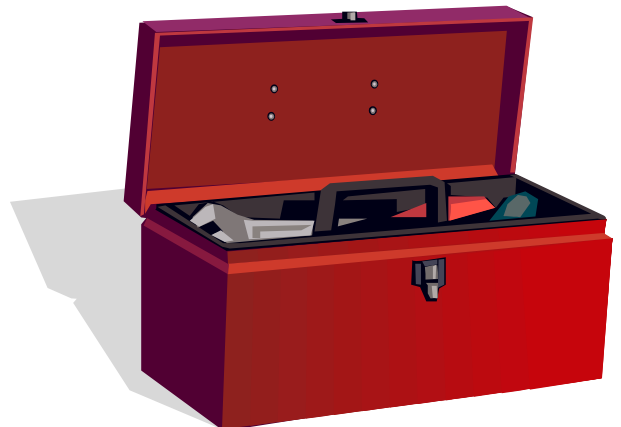
- One-time commitments
- Short-term commitments
- On-going commitments

## Implement Your Plan

---

In order to accomplish your goals successfully you need a plan of action that each committee member understands and commits to. The plan of action will use the diversity of skills and talents of committee members. It also integrates a time management plan that includes start dates and deadlines determined by how long each of the tasks will take to complete.

- Define the start date and end date of the project
- List individual tasks to accomplish and assign realistic end dates for each
- Ask for a committee member to be responsible for each task
- Summarize what needs to be done for each task
- Make sure all members receive a copy of the action plan







## Case Studies

1. The political education committee is an enthusiastic group made up entirely of new members. They hold an organizational meeting and decide that their main project for the year will be raising funds for a county commissioner who is up for re-election. They contact the candidate, plan a major fundraising dinner, and send out invitations to all members. The first time the board hears about this project is when board members receive their invitations in the mail.

3. The policy development committee held its organizational meeting and divided duties among the six committee members. As the summer progressed, all the committee members dutifully completed their tasks, except for Bill, who rarely attended meetings and never called in with a report. At the county annual meeting, all committee members, including Bill, are praised and rewarded for their outstanding work. The other committee members are bitter that Bill did not carry his share of the load, and they vow never to serve on a committee again.

2. In January, the board president verbally asked the county YF&R chair if her committee would head up the effort for a county Farm Bureau display at the county fair in August. Knowing that the display is an important project for the county, she said yes. At the board meeting two weeks before the fair, the president asks the committee chair for her report. She responds, "I thought the Women's committee was responsible for the fair display."

4. The annual meeting committee was asked to select a location, plan a program, and choose a menu for the upcoming meeting. At the first committee meeting, the chair presented the tasks that needed to be accomplished for location, menu and program. The committee looked at the task list and proceeded to discuss the vegetable selection for 45 minutes.

