

CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT SERIES: FARM TO FORK EVENT

OBJECTIVE: PROVIDE TRAINING ON A VARIETY OF AG-BASED, HANDS-ON LEARNING LABS.

OVERVIEW

This event is designed for area-influencers (bloggers/journalists, politicians, community leaders, etc.) in your community. These local leaders will enjoy a nice home-cooked meal and come away with a better understanding about the production of our food, fuel and fiber.

Prior to planning this event, please review the Steps to Professional Program Planning resource located on the KFB Intranet.

TIMELINE

Months in Advance

- Research local farms to find the perfect location for your event
 - Once you've selected a location, choose a date that works well for the host family
- Set a limit of attendees based on how many you feel comfortable hosting and feeding
- Interview and select a chef willing to give 110% effort to help you pull off a successful event
- Contact local high schools, universities or churches who may help surface talented musicians
- Develop an agenda, registration form, save the date email and an informational web page
- Select a caterer (request a certificate of insurance if they are not a "brick and mortar" business)
- Determine expenses / set registration fees
 - Immediately upon receiving a registration, send an email to verify time, date, location, etc.
- Using email and your event webpage, share stories about what's happening on the farm with your guests so they have a sense of being connected before they even arrive
- Secure any rental items you will need such as: tables, chairs, China, silverware, water goblets/wine glasses, tablecloths/napkins and portable restrooms

Two Weeks Prior

- Registration closes
- Confirm and print the menu
 - Arrange for the host family to preview/sample meal

One Week Prior

- Send reminder email
 - Include instructions attendees may need prior to the workshop such as your contingency plan in case of inclement weather and an emergency phone number
- Confirm participant count with caterer

One Day Prior

- Set up event area as much as possible
 - Prepare the dining area by mowing space in a field located close to the reception area

Immediately Following the Event

- Tear down / clean up location
- Pay chef, musicians, rental fees, etc.
- Send a "thank you" email everyone who helped make this event a success

SAMPLE TIMELINE, MENU CONSIDERATIONS, CHOOSING A CHEF, ETC.

Sample Timeline

5:30 PM	Reception with musicians
6:15 PM	Welcome, introductions and an opportunity to share agricultural information
6:30 PM	Head to tables for dinner
Dusk	End of event

Menu Considerations

- Ideally the dinner will include four courses
 - Feature as many locally-sourced foods as possible
 - Other than letting the guests know in advance what the entrée will be, the rest of the courses remain a surprise until they arrive at the table
- Print the menu on colored cardstock
 - Acknowledge all suppliers and sponsors on the back of the menu

Choosing a Chef

Be sure you and the chef are on the same page. Let them know you are expecting this to be a first-class dinner. Qualities of an ideal chef for this event include:

- Possession of a catering license
- Interested in promoting agriculture and Kansas foods
- Connections to Kansas vineyards (able to secure discounts or donations)
- Ability to plate a large amount of meals (usually 60-80) artistically
- Enthusiastic about using local/regional ingredients
- Ability to pair fine wines with two or three of the courses
- Comfortable working outside in various temperatures
- Supplies own water and heating source (portable oven or grill)
- Large client base to help publicize the event
- Able to persuade local producers to donate in order to keep cost of plate down

Other Things You May Need:

- Seating for musicians
- Centerpieces/flowers for tables
- Tiki torches and fuel
- Water coolers with ice
- Wine bottle pourers/opener
- Paper towels
- Garbage cans/bags
- Check-in list (appoint a volunteer to greet and check off guests as they arrive)
- Parking lot attendees to guide cars
- Bug repellent
- A cooler with soapy water – rags/sponge
- Snacks and drinks for servers
- Hand fans (include your logo) for summer events
- Patio heaters for fall events

INVOLVING YOUR COUNTY LEADERS

Opportunities for your county leadership team and other motivated volunteers of all ages!



Volunteer Projects:

Any of the tasks listed above may be organized in the following volunteer positions: event coordinator, budget coordinator, volunteer coordinator, presentation/equipment coordinator, materials coordinator and publicity coordinator.

Micro-Volunteering Opportunities:

For volunteers who don't have much time or for those who have a specific interest, any of the projects listed above may be broken down into smaller duties.

PUBLICITY

Early in the planning process, think about how you might promote information to local media outlets.



Tools to Help Cover Your Event:

- Media Alert – an invitation designed to inform the media about your event and entice them to attend.
 - Provide event details: who, what, where, when and why.
 - Keep it short, no more than one page.
 - Most media outlets prefer to receive alerts via email.
 - Send the alert at least 24 hours prior to the event.
- Post-Event News Release
 - A concise summary of the event sent to the media.

Further publicize your event by creating an attractive web page and by sharing event information with your local Convention & Visitors Bureau.

SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Social media event invitations are free and are an easy way to spread your message quickly.



Pre-Event Push

- Create an event.
- Promote the event in advance and entice people to attend.
- Highlight the basics: who, what, when, where and why.
- Have your chef post about the event on their social media pages.

Realtime Sharing

- Post photos, live-Tweets, Facebook Live, commentary, etc., as the event unfolds.

Post-Event Follow-Up

- Provide information about the event such as total number of participants, quotes from attendees and what was unique or educational about the event.

KEY MESSAGES/THEMES

Connecting with influencers is a great way to engage them and answer any questions they may have.



- Common misconceptions of agriculture
- Establish common ground/shared values between farmers and consumers
- Food safety and affordability
- Nutrition and healthy choices
- Farm Bureau membership benefits

OTHER

Anything can go wrong at any time. If something does go wrong, find a way to go with the flow!



- Prepare your guests for the elements... "there could be bugs, dirt, wind, sun, etc."
- Maintain a no refund policy, but have a waiting list in case there are people who can't make it and want to sell their seats
- Above all, remain flexible

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Butler County Farm Bureau - butlerfb@kfb.org

Doniphan County Farm Bureau - doniphanfb@kfb.org

Reno County Farm Bureau - renofb@kfb.org

Mary Mertz, Feast of Fields at River Creek Farms Coordinator – rcfbobmary@gmail.com