

# Ideas for an Engaging and Successful Field Day



With input from various including Mark Bell, Brad Hanson, Leslie Roche, Bruce Linqvist, Mark Lundy

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Below are a few suggestions on how to make your field day more engaging and successful.

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Don't bore your audience.  
(Photo from Midult.com)

## Before Starting

**Why are you having people in the field and not in a class?**

**What's interesting for people to see and learn in the field?**

**Don't just give an outdoor lecture!**

**Formal versus informal?**

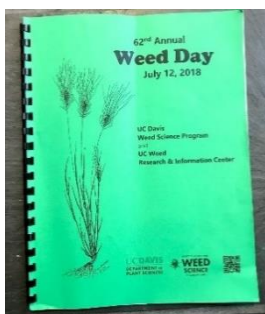
**If something interesting is happening in the field, you can always call a group together informally. Not all outreach will be through formal events.**

**Remember: Engage - Make your field day interesting.**

## Planning - Pre-Field Day

Item	Purpose
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Event preparation</b>	See the WSARE site <a href="https://www.sare.org/Grants/Farmer-Field-Day-Toolkit">https://www.sare.org/Grants/Farmer-Field-Day-Toolkit</a>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Know your audience</b>	Ensure content and thus speakers are relevant and therefore interesting to participants. Diversify speakers!.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Invite key stakeholders</b>	Ensure support from key stakeholders (including County Boards, local political and company representatives, etc.).
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Invite or notify press</b>	Can help raise the profile and awareness of the event and the work
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Keep speakers informed*</b>	Communicate so speakers know timing, logistics, etc..
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Collect speaker bios</b>	Moderator introduce speakers consistently (i.e., have bios for all speakers). If not, have speakers introduce themselves.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Offer Continuing Education Units<sup>1</sup></b>	To register your event. PCA continuing education units - Apply to DPR CCA continuing education units - Apply to CCA.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Time of day or year</b>	Ensure people are comfortable, paying attention. Ensure there are relevant things to see and make sure time of year fits clientele's schedules.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Promote event through different media and spotlight speakers</b>	People use different media (newsletters, social media, local/regional trade publications). Spotlighting speakers/topics engages interest.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Consider a small registration fee (e.g., \$15-\$25)</b>	Helps cover snacks/meals and reduces no shows
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Event reminder</b>	Sending about 1 week before helps ensure attendance.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Thank-you email</b>	Sending a follow-up thank-you to all participants and speakers with any relevant links, information builds support.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Photographer or video</b>	Document event for awareness raising

\* If a speaker has travelled several hours to a workshop; then ensure they have time and means to interact with the group. Note though: That does not mean they have to give a long presentation in the field.



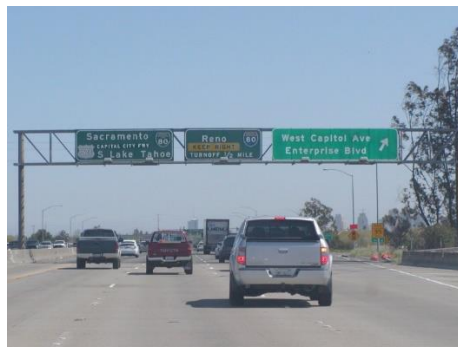
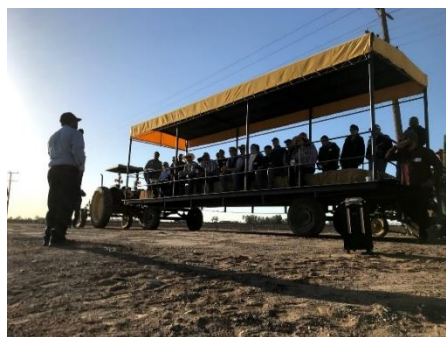
A program helps manage expectations.

<sup>1</sup> PCA = Pest Control Advisor; DPR = Department of Pesticide Regulation, CCA = Certified Crop Advisor

# Tour Considerations

Item	Purpose
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Ask yourself - Why a stop?</b>	Why do people need to be at a stop? What's to learn or show? Don't just give an outdoor lecture.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Identify things to see, learn and do</b>	Get People out in the field to see and do interesting things. If it's just a lecture have it in the classroom.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Quiz or activity sheet</b>	If included, engages participants
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Time of day or year</b>	Ensure people are comfortable. If they are too hot or too cold, they likely won't be paying attention.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Group size and planning.</b>	Consider the one large group vs several small groups in rotation*. How balance the desired engagement vs repetition?
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Bus or tractor/trailer</b>	Move people together for ease and safety. Have seats or hay bales to ensure people are comfortable.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Drive the proposed route before the day</b>	To check times and traffic flow. Remember: check space required for tractor or bus turning.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Check site noise, dust and wind</b>	Limit distractions and ensure participants can see, hear and are comfortable.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Check site layout<sup>2</sup></b>	Is there space for parking and for people to see the speaker? Avoid people standing several deep <sup>3</sup> .
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Weather protection (e.g., shade)</b>	Ensure participants are safe and comfortable.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Microphone and PA system (with back up batteries)</b>	Speakers – you're not as loud as you think – and be considerate of those who maybe can't hear so well.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Pace the program</b>	People really enjoy and appreciate time for breaks and informal networking.

\* Consideration: Giving the same presentation multiple times back to back can be very tiring for presenters and the speakers miss the other presentations.



**People enjoy being on a trailer – especially with hay bales! Make sure people can see and hear. Avoid distractions - like nearby highway noise**

<sup>2</sup> Consider needs for a field trip when laying out an experiment.

<sup>3</sup> The worst example of site layout that one author saw involved people standing in a long line on a small narrow rice levee. Only the front 2 or 3 people could hear the speaker or see what was being shown!

## Collection Point - Start Area

Item	Purpose
<input type="checkbox"/> Event Signs	To efficiently direct people to sign in and assembly points.
<input type="checkbox"/> Event Greeters (in branded gear)	Make participants feel welcome and to direct people
<input type="checkbox"/> Event agenda, /Hand outs and map to provide when signing in	Participants know what is planned, what to expect and can self-guide (if a map is included). Fact sheets and/or relevant data strengthen key points.
<input type="checkbox"/> Snacks and coffee	Who doesn't like to eat?
<input type="checkbox"/> Name tags	Allows easier networking. If color coded, identifies speakers, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/> Sign-in sheets	Record participation Request email contacts for follow-up, newsletters, etc..
<input type="checkbox"/> CEU sign-in sheet <sup>4</sup>	Sign in for continuing education registration
<input type="checkbox"/> Microphone and PA system (with back up batteries)	Speakers – you're not as loud as you think.
<input type="checkbox"/> When ready - Greet and layout the program	Set expectations and inform people, recognize key people, thank sponsors*, etc..
<input type="checkbox"/> Parking	Space to park and turn around as needed (considering a variety of vehicle types).

\* Be aware of and use sponsor disclaimers (e.g., DPR has a specific disclaimer that has to be used regarding pesticide companies, etc.).



Signs, snacks “Branded” greeters – all part of a good start

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Livestock Field Day UC  
Tehama, May 2015 ANR

Meeting Sign-in Sheet

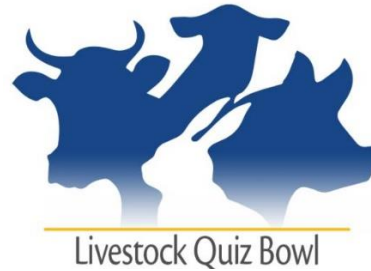
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE	NAME	CHECKED	TIME	MARK

Have Name tags and Sign-in sheets

<sup>4</sup> DPR may audit events to ensure that credits are being properly distributed. If offering credits, you will need a person devoted to this task during sign-in.

Preregistration allows preprinting of name tags (which looks professional and are easier to read). Can include company name which facilitates conversation and networking.



**Welcome everyone & outline the program introduce main people, thank sponsors & Indicate any quizzes or competitions**

**Consider a quiz or other engagement activity** - provide a challenge with an answer sheet (e.g., Have a weed identification challenge with different weeds marked at the different stops. Provide questions that have to based on the key points at each stop. Have a field day bingo. etc..) Provide small prizes.



**Have a quiz –to engage people throughout the different stops.**

**Remember: For Continuing Education, have the appropriate sign in sheets.**

## At Each Site

After a brief introduction, let people roam to

- explore plots and observe,
- ask further questions,
- network with other participants, and
- find answers to questions or the tour quiz (if included).

Consider a demonstration or other hands-on activity. A field day should not simply be an outdoor lecture with a field backdrop.  
After an introduction, schedule enough time for people to explore, observe and network.

Item	Purpose
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Turn off the bus or tractor!</b>	Reduce noise so participants can hear
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Actively manage the speakers and time</b>	Clearly communicating times in advance of the field day and using time cards/signals keeps everything on track. Time management ensures respect for the audience and for all those presenting.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Brief introduction and brief presentations</b>	Assume people have relatively low attention spans. Keep things moving. Give <b>Be clear and concise</b> about the key points of the stop. What is there to learn, do or explore? Communicate the time allotted for the stop.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Interact with the group (samples, Questions, quizzes)</b>	Plant samples, asking questions (e.g., Who has this weed? Anything relevant to the topic being presented.). Have a quiz to draw people in and engages them.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Allow for questions (Repeat questions if the group is big)</b>	Draws people in and engages
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Demonstrations and models</b>	Draws people in and engages
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Participants explore the site</b>	Allows Interaction with presenter(s) and between participants. People can explore, observe, network and question. (Consider time required)
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Presentation site (including seats and sound)</b>	People need to be able to see and hear the speaker (and easily see the information being shown).
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Crowd control</b>	For large crowds, consider people to help with directing people to move, sit down or to be quiet (as needed).
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Speakers available after talks</b>	Allow follow-up or clarifying questions.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Collect Feedback</b>	What did they like? Learn? What could be improved? (WSARE has some examples)



**Reduce noise - Turn off the tractor or bus!** Also when the vehicles start back up, people know you are moving on.



**After a clear concise introduction, let the people explore the plots to network, observe and ask further questions.**



**Have clear field signs. Have demonstrations or models to foster additional interest.**



## Support Items

Participants have to be comfortable. Check accessibility of sites and participant needs.

Item	Purpose
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Drinks (Water)</b>	For safety and comfort
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Food and snacks</b>	For comfort – everyone loves to eat.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Restrooms</b>	For comfort
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Microphone with back up batteries</b>	Speakers – you’re not as loud as you think – and be considerate of those who maybe can’t hear so well.
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Lunch is a good idea (when possible).</b>	People appreciate food!
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Places to sit</b>	People need to be comfortable
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Time cards (e.g., “5 Mins”, “2 Mins”, “Stop”)</b>	Helps keep the event on time and shows respect to all.



Drinks (Water)



Food and snacks



Restrooms

Let us know if we need something further for the lists.