

Ideas for an Engaging and Successful Field Day



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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?

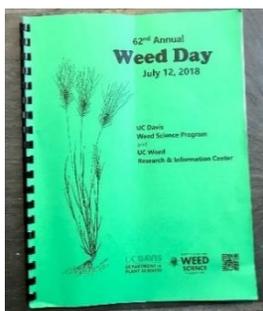
If something interesting is happening in the field, you can always call a group together informally. Not all outreach will be through formal events.

Remember: Engage - Make your field day interesting.

Planning - Pre-Field Day

Item	Purpose
<input type="checkbox"/> Event preparation	See the WSARE site https://www.sare.org/Grants/Farmer-Field-Day-Toolkit
<input type="checkbox"/> Know your audience	Ensure content and thus speakers are relevant and therefore interesting to participants. Diversify speakers!.
<input type="checkbox"/> Invite key stakeholders	Ensure support from key stakeholders (including County Boards, local political and company representatives, etc.).
<input type="checkbox"/> Invite or notify press	Can help raise the profile and awareness of the event and the work
<input type="checkbox"/> Keep speakers informed*	Communicate so speakers know timing, logistics, etc..
<input type="checkbox"/> Collect speaker bios	Moderator introduce speakers consistently (i.e., have bios for all speakers). If not, have speakers introduce themselves.
<input type="checkbox"/> Offer Continuing Education Units¹	To register your event. PCA continuing education units - Apply to DPR CCA continuing education units - Apply to CCA.
<input type="checkbox"/> Time of day or year	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"/> Promote event through different media and spotlight speakers	People use different media (newsletters, social media, local/regional trade publications). Spotlighting speakers/topics engages interest.
<input type="checkbox"/> Consider a small registration fee (e.g., \$15-\$25)	Helps cover snacks/meals and reduces no shows
<input type="checkbox"/> Event reminder	Sending about 1 week before helps ensure attendance.
<input type="checkbox"/> Thank-you email	Sending a follow-up thank-you to all participants and speakers with any relevant links, information builds support.
<input type="checkbox"/> Photographer or video	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.



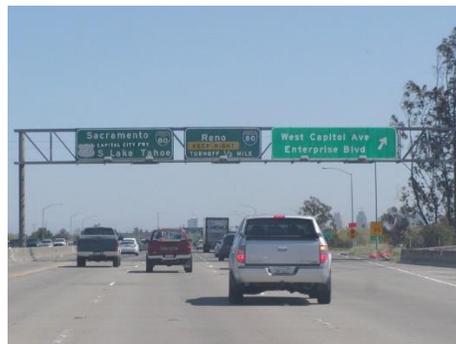
A program helps manage expectations.

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

Tour Considerations

Item	Purpose
<input type="checkbox"/> Ask yourself - Why a stop?	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"/> Identify things to see, learn and do	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"/> Quiz or activity sheet	If included, engages participants
<input type="checkbox"/> Time of day or year	Ensure people are comfortable. If they are too hot or too cold, they likely won't be paying attention.
<input type="checkbox"/> Group size and planning.	Consider the one large group vs several small groups in rotation*. How balance the desired engagement vs repetition?
<input type="checkbox"/> Bus or tractor/trailer	Move people together for ease and safety. Have seats or hay bales to ensure people are comfortable.
<input type="checkbox"/> Drive the proposed route before the day	To check times and traffic flow. Remember: check space required for tractor or bus turning.
<input type="checkbox"/> Check site noise, dust and wind	Limit distractions and ensure participants can see, hear and are comfortable.
<input type="checkbox"/> Check site layout²	Is there space for parking and for people to see the speaker? Avoid people standing several deep ³ .
<input type="checkbox"/> Weather protection (e.g., shade)	Ensure participants are safe and comfortable.
<input type="checkbox"/> Microphone and PA system (with back up batteries)	Speakers – you're not as loud as you think.
<input type="checkbox"/> Pace the program	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

² Consider needs for a field trip when laying out an experiment.

³ 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!

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"/> Turn off the bus or tractor!	Reduce noise so participants can hear
<input type="checkbox"/> Actively manage the speakers and time	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"/> Brief introduction and brief presentations	Assume people have relatively low attention spans. Keep things moving. Give Be clear and concise 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"/> Interact with the group (samples, Questions, quizzes)	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"/> Allow for questions (Repeat questions if the group is big)	Draws people in and engages
<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrations and models	Draws people in and engages
<input type="checkbox"/> Participants explore the site	Allows Interaction with presenter(s) and between participants. People can explore, observe, network and question. (Consider time required)
<input type="checkbox"/> Presentation site (including seats and sound)	People need to be able to see and hear the speaker (and easily see the information being shown).
<input type="checkbox"/> Crowd control	For large crowds, consider people to help with directing people to move, sit down or to be quiet (as needed).
<input type="checkbox"/> Speakers available after talks	Allow follow-up or clarifying questions.
<input type="checkbox"/> Collect Feedback	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"/> Drinks (Water)	For safety and comfort
<input type="checkbox"/> Food and snacks	For comfort – everyone loves to eat.
<input type="checkbox"/> Restrooms	For comfort
<input type="checkbox"/> Microphone with back up batteries	Speakers – you’re not as loud as you think.
<input type="checkbox"/> Lunch is a good idea (when possible).	People appreciate food!
<input type="checkbox"/> Places to sit	People need to be comfortable
<input type="checkbox"/> Time cards (e.g., “5 Mins”, “2 Mins”, “Stop”)	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.