

President

While the person who serves as president of the Farmers Union division has an important job, he or she does not and should not bear the responsibility of doing everything alone. In reality, the total effectiveness of the organization will be diminished when the President tries or is expected to do it all. It is physically and mentally impossible for any individual to run a well-organized program without some help.

Being a motivator--someone who challenges and encourages the other members of the organization to play an active role in the organization--is probably the most important responsibility of the person who holds the presidency of the division. Working with the organization's Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer and other officers and members to keep the division active is the President's most important and challenging responsibility. The President should possess great leadership skills. Later, we will present some ideas and material which may help you meet the challenge to keep the division active and visible as a respected contributor to the life of the local community.

In your role as a Farmers Union President, you have several duties and responsibilities. These include:

- Calling the division's meetings, or authorizing the Secretary to call them
 - announcing the time, place, and program for the meeting well in advance
 - preparing the order of business in advance of each meeting
- Presiding at the meeting and maintaining order
 - starting and finishing the meeting on time
 - following parliamentary procedure (an item covered later)
- Serving as chair of the division's executive committee, composed of
 - the President, Vice President and Secretary-Treasurer and
 - possibly the other standing committee chairs that are either appointed by the President or elected by the division's membership, depending upon the structure established by the division's charter and by-laws.
- Appointing special committees when needed
 - following up with committees to see that they perform assigned duties
 - calling for special reports as needed.
- Keeping informed on local, division and national activities of the Farmers Union and bringing requests for action to the attention of the division's membership.
- Setting an example to the membership in loyalty, integrity and faithfulness to the organization and its affiliated cooperatives and business entities such as insurances.
- Playing an active role in other community activities.

Helpful Hints for the President

- Make your Vice President an active member of your division's leadership team. Delegate some of your duties and responsibilities to your Vice President so that person feels he or she is more than someone who just presides over meetings in your absence.

- Keep in mind the various talents and interests of the members of your Farmers Union division as you set up committees and engage in activities. Try to utilize those talents and interests when the opportunity presents itself.
- Have the division set a meeting time that is convenient for members and then call the meeting to order at that time. Do not delay the meeting waiting for more people to come. Start on time with whoever is there.
- Use a gavel to bring the meeting to order. A gavel gives an atmosphere of business and lends authority to the chair. It also separates a period of chatting with neighbors prior to the start of the meeting from the period of transacting business.
- Know exactly what the order of business is to be and move as rapidly as possible to cover the business of the meeting. Give people enough time to fully participate in the business at hand, but don't stall or let one member dominate the discussion and delay the proceedings. Keep the meeting moving.
- Stay alert to ideas and suggestions that may make your meetings interesting and useful to your members. Share meeting ideas with your fellow Farmers Union presidents.
- Determine in advance approximately how long the meeting will last. If the business portion of the meeting is completed prior to that time, dismiss early. Try to end the meeting at or near the scheduled time. Always formally adjourn the meeting using the gavel to separate the business function of the meeting from the social time that follows.