

# **Farmers Union President And State & Local Leadership Manual**



*As of October 2021*

# Introduction

This handbook will introduce you to the concepts and information you will need as a state president, a member of the National Farmers Union board, or a member of a Farmers Union division board or staff. It does not contain everything you need to know. Much of what you will learn comes from the experiences you will have as you serve your members and the support you will receive from fellow board members.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with basic information and emphasize the areas of greatest importance. Ultimately, the success you achieve in your job depends on you. You are the one whose skills and energy will help direct and enhance your Farmers Union.

Your job as a state president, board member, or staff is dynamic. Each situation and each meeting presents new opportunities for you to learn and grow. The key is being open to such opportunities.

This book was last updated in 2021.

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# National Farmers Union Information

## Introduction to Farmers Union

### Mission Statement

Advocate for family farmers and their communities through education, cooperation, and legislation.

### Vision

A world in which farm families and their communities are respected, valued and enjoy economic prosperity and social justice.

### Facts

- Farmers Union was founded in 1902, in Point, Texas.
- The official name is “Farmers Educational and Cooperative Union of America.”
- Farmers Union is a grassroots, democratically-controlled, general farm organization representing about 200,000 farm and ranch families in the United States.
- Individuals and families can join at the national level and become at-large members if there is no state or regional organization in their area. We have members in almost every state.
- Farmers Union is organized as a federation of organizations. Under our federated structure, once state and regional organizations adhere to a minimum set of requirements provided by our charter and bylaws, each state/regional organization functions autonomously.
- Farmers Union works on a wide variety of issues ranging from farm income, trade, food safety, credit, rural education, rural health care and property taxes, to environmental issues. Our members are a group of like-minded people working in union to address common concerns and achieve common goals.
- Farmers Union is the voice of family farmers and ranchers throughout the United States.
- Farmers Union is made of 24 state organizations and 3 regional organizations for a total representation in 33 states:

Alaska  
Arkansas  
California  
Hawaii  
Illinois  
Indiana  
Iowa  
Kansas  
Michigan  
Minnesota  
Missouri  
Montana

Nebraska  
New England  
Connecticut  
Maine  
Massachusetts  
New Hampshire  
Rhode Island  
Vermont  
North Dakota  
Northwest  
Idaho  
Oregon

Washington  
Ohio  
Oklahoma  
Pennsylvania  
Rocky Mountain  
Colorado  
New Mexico  
Wyoming  
South Dakota  
Texas  
Utah  
Wisconsin

## Philosophies

- Farmers Union believes that family farmers and ranchers should receive a fair price for the products they raise.
- Farmers Union believes that a strong and prosperous family farm agricultural structure in the United States is sound agricultural policy. Family farmers and ranchers contribute greatly to rural communities, produce high-quality, safe food and are responsible stewards of the land.
- Farmers Union believes in the power of organizing and the values of activism.
- Farmers Union believes in educating its members, consumers, journalists, elected representatives and government officials about farm income and quality-of-life issues affecting rural Americans.
- Farmers Union believes in cooperative development and education.
- Farmers Union prides itself on being a democratically controlled and producer-controlled general farm organization.
- Farmers Union believes in its youth and building leaders for the future.

## Logo



The three stars represent the three core components of the NFU: Education, Cooperation and Legislation. The stars—aligned in a triangular formation—are a nod to the past shape from earlier brand identities. The color blue represents the sky. The waves represent both field and water. In addition, the wave action also represents movement (not stagnant), which signifies an organization that is progressive and forward thinking. A rich, dark green color represents earth and growth. The gold color was chosen as a neutral color, as not to define either -- field or water. The color also evokes attributes such as prosperity and wisdom. Gold is also appropriate for a national organization positioned and defined as a leadership group.

## Principles



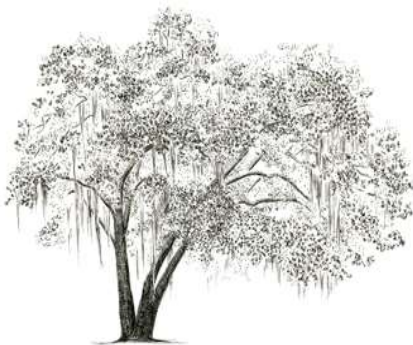
The triangle represents Farmers Union's core principles. The base of the triangle represents education. Education of members and others is considered the foundation of Farmers Union's success in all areas of the organization. The sides of the triangle represent cooperation and legislation. The cooperation side of the triangle represents members working together to achieve common goals and Farmers Union's commitment to cooperative education and cooperative business development. The legislation side of the triangle represents Farmers Union's lobbying efforts in the legislative arena.

## Insignia



Our insignia is the plow, rake, and hoe. The plow, rake and hoe are tools used by farmers. Although in America we consider these to be historical tools, the plow, rake, and hoe are still used daily by farmers in other parts of the world.

## Emblem



The Live Oak tree is our emblem. The live oak tree is predominantly found in the South where Farmers Union originally grew. It is significant to note that our forefathers selected the live oak tree as our emblem because it is always alive like they hoped Farmers Union would be! Live oak trees do not lose all their leaves in the winter and their leaves stay green. Older leaves are dark green and new leaves are a bright lime or spring green. There is further symbolism in our emblem according to our history books which tell us that the trunk of the tree represents National Farmers Union; the branches represent regional, state, district, county, and local Farmers Union organizations; and the leaves on the tree represent members.

## National Farmers Union Structure

### National Farmers Union Board

The National Farmers Union board is comprised of the NFU President, NFU Vice President and the elected State/regional Farmers Union presidents. As board members, they are responsible for long-range planning for the national organization, implementing national policies and maintaining the financial health of National Farmers Union. The NFU Board is authorized to organize Farmers Union divisions in new geographies and maintain the integrity of the Farmers Union brand. The board is required to meet no less than 4 times per calendar year according to the NFU bylaws.

### Officers

The **Board President** shall be elected for a two-year term by a majority vote of the membership as cast by the delegates at the annual convention held in even-numbered years. He/she shall be the chief executive officer and preside over Board meetings and the annual convention. He/she shall appoint committees, sub-committees, and ad-hoc committees.

The **First Vice President** shall be elected for a two-year term by a majority vote of the membership as cast by the delegates at the annual convention held in even-numbered years. He/she shall perform the duties of the president in his/her absence. If the office of president does become vacant, he/she shall serve as president until a successor to the president is elected by the Board of Directors.

The **Board Treasurer** shall be elected by the Board at the annual reorganization meeting immediately following the annual convention. The Board Treasurer is responsible for reviewing monthly financials, presenting quarterly financial reports to the Board, approving the President's expenses, meeting with the auditors annually to review their report, presenting financial reports at the annual convention, authorizing accounting staff to sign and file all required filings, authorizing the accounting staff to deposit all monies received and disburse monies in accordance with the instructions of the Board.

The **Board Secretary** shall be elected by the Board at the annual reorganization meeting immediately following the annual convention. The Board Secretary is responsible for supervising the recording of Board and Executive Committee minutes, preparing a record of the annual convention, receiving, and maintaining full records of all membership dues and related information, supervising the disbursement of forms and procedures to the divisions regarding membership and delegate certification, filing all required annual reports.

### Committees

In addition to full board member responsibilities, each state/regional president serves on two of the following standing board committees:

**Budget/Audit Committee:** The NFU Budget and Audit Committee oversees the financial condition and performance of NFU and all related entities. The Committee reviews regular financial performance reports and the organization's annual budget before it is considered by the Full Board of Directors. It also receives reports directly from NFU's external auditors.

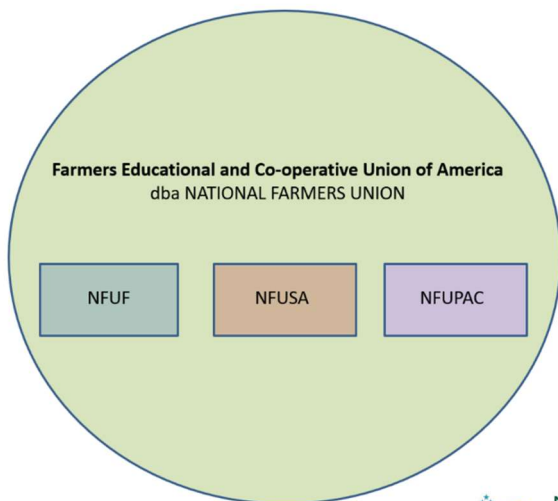


**Education & Cooperation Committee:** The Education & Cooperation Committee monitors NFU’s education and cooperative programming.

**Legislative Committee:** The Legislative Committee receives reports and monitors NFU’s legislative activities and policy priorities.

**Membership Committee:** The Membership Committee oversees the development and growth of membership across the Farmers Union divisions.

The elected chairperson of each standing committee, the National Farmers Union President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and two additional state/regional presidents elected by the board, serve as the Executive Committee of the National Farmers Union. Members of the National Farmers Union board are also appointed to serve on the boards of other Farmers Union entities such as National Farmers Union Foundation and National Farmers Union PAC (NFUPAC).



### The Farmers Union Entity Structure and Network

To accomplish the diverse needs of the organization, and support America’s family farmers as comprehensively as possible, National Farmers Union has organized several other legal entities. The entities described below are distinct in their legal status but nonetheless part of the Farmers Union family. National Farmers Union Foundation, National Farmers Union Service Association and NFU PAC each are governed by their own boards. However, the majority of each of these boards

is comprised of individuals who also sit on the National Farmers Union board to ensure that their mission and operations remain consistent with the overarching needs and philosophy of National Farmers Union.

### National Farmers Union Foundation (NFUF)

The National Farmers Union Foundation was created in 1998 as a 501(c)(3) organization to support education on rural and agricultural issues and provide resources for rural economic and cooperative development.

The Foundation's mission is to empower people to educate our youth, neighbors, media and policymakers of the social, economic and cooperative contributions of family agriculture.

Through the NFU Foundation, we support educational programming that benefits farming mid-career professionals, early career professionals and youth interested in the farming profession. Programs include youth leadership camp, youth advisory council, college scholarships, a college conference focused on cooperatives, special topic or populations conferences and state division educational funding administration scholarship.

The Foundation's success has enabled NFU to play a transformative role in the domestic and international food system: healthy, local food for our dinner tables and restaurants, a better, more energy efficient environment, a less oil dependent U.S. foreign policy and feeding the hungry around the globe (as a founding partner of CARE and a dedicated member of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers, among many other institutional commitments).

**National Farmers Union PAC (NFUPAC)**

National Farmers Union PAC combines the contributions of many family farmers across the country to support candidates with similar goals and values. The PAC enables NFU members to have greater influence on Capitol Hill than they would have individually.

**National Farmers Union Service Association (NFUSA)**

NFUSA is a wholly owned for-profit subsidiary of National Farmers Union and was established to allow National Farmers Union to pursue for profit endeavors, such as the marketing of insurance services, in those states which do not currently have a Farmers Union Service Association. NFUSA is currently invested in a number of business ventures including insurance agencies, restaurants and wind energy projects.

## NFU Department Overview

### Administration & Operations

#### **Operations responsibilities: Ethan Whitmore**

- Prepare annual budgets and long-term strategies for the organization
- Assist Farmers Union divisions with administrative and other functions
- Maintain accurate accounting of equipment and financial resources
- Administer employee benefits and administrative policies
- Maintain information technology hardware and software
- Manage office functions including supplies, equipment maintenance and document retention and disposal procedures
- Coordinate in-house events and member legislative Fly-ins
- Assist the president and others for scheduling, travel arrangements, meeting arrangements and maintenance of logistical information
- Organize and manage annual convention logistics
- Manage membership database and online event registrations
- Assist with administration of membership development programs

### Communications

#### **Communications responsibilities: David Schuller**

- Develop strategies to communicate with internal and external audiences through news releases, op-eds, newsletters, speeches and talking points
- Organize news conferences/calls and other media events and field media calls
- Develop, design, and produce brochures, handouts, posters, and other materials
- Oversee content for website, newsletter, and social media sites

### Education

#### **Education responsibilities: Emma Lindberg**

- Develop, coordinate and project manage national education programs, including All-States Camp, National Youth Advisory Council, College Conference on Cooperatives, Beginning Farmers Institute, and Women's Conference.
- Fundraise for national and state division education, including donor, event, and grant project management.
- Administer Hubert K. and JoAnn Seymour, MANRRS, and Stanley Moore Scholarship programs
- Develop and manage cross-division collaboration activities, such as State-to-State Forum, and Departmental Directors Meetings.

## Government Relations

### **Government Responsibilities: Mike Stranz**

- Lobby the United States Congress (House and Senate) and the Administration on behalf of the NFU membership
- Build, work with and participate in coalitions of other non-governmental organizations
- Write testimony for hearings and submit comments to agencies
- Draft official letters of correspondence with Congress, Administration, NGO's and other governments
- Update the NFU membership on legislative issues as they progress through Congress or through the Administration
- Represent NFU on panels, at briefings and at other events in Washington, DC and across the country
- Coordinate the policy development process in advance of each National Convention
- Assist in the organization and planning for the National Convention

## Membership

### **Membership responsibilities: Abby Ferris**

- Provide membership reports to Board of Directors and states (per request)
- Implement membership policies and programs as directed by members through By-Laws, at the Annual Convention and through the Board and Membership Committee
- Manage the Small States Assistance Program, Development Grants, Membership Awards and Leadership Awards
- Explore and implement member services and benefits
- Assist state/regional organizations with membership development and strategic planning
- Explore and coordinate affiliation memberships with state/regional and NFU
- Explore establishing new Farmers Union state/regional organizations

For a full list of NFU staff and contact information, please visit <https://nfu.org/staff/>

## Farmers Union History

Farmers Union was founded in 1902, in Point, Texas. Our founder, Newt Gresham, was orphaned at age 10 and sent to live with his brother who was a tenant farmer in Alabama. From age 10 on, he worked up to 15 hours a day in the dusty fields of Alabama. As an adult, he returned to school and became a newspaper man. He was a man of ideas who saw the need to create an organization to unite farmers and represent their best interests. Gresham struggled to develop a structure that would not only benefit farmers but would survive through the years. Gresham published a newspaper called the *Graphic Truth*, where he expounded on his ideas. His ideas were often considered radical at the time. Gresham worked and reworked his ideas and eventually shared them with nine of his fellow farmers. Together, the ten of them held scores of meetings across the Texas countryside and on August 28, 1902, almost a full year after the first meetings began, the ten-man corporation secured a charter for a farm organization from the state of Texas.

The first official meeting of Farmers Union (Farmers Educational & Cooperative Union of America) was held on September 2, 1902, in a country schoolhouse. In the beginning, secret passwords were required for entrance into Farmers Union meetings and new members underwent elaborate initiation ceremonies. The organization's growth spread like wildfire. Membership estimates ranged all the way from a half a million to several million by 1906. Newt Gresham died suddenly in 1906 due to a ruptured appendix. In 1903, he said, "I would be willing to die now if I could be assured that Farmers Union would survive." It is doubtful that at the time of his death Newt Gresham realized the significance and power the organization he had helped create would have on future generations.

In 1906, Charles Barrett, a veteran of the Farmers Alliance and a Georgia farmer, became president and served for 22 years. Charles Barrett was a visionary leader and possessed a gentle personality. His calm, stable leadership was just the healing salve our troubled organization needed. One of his contemporaries at the time stated, "When trouble appeared, Barrett came on the ground never to stimulate more trouble, never to take sides in a conflict, but always to bring parties around a common table."

As a member of the Farmers Alliance, Barrett had lobbied in Washington, D.C. There he developed many important contacts and earned lasting respect. Barrett was welcomed to the White House by several presidents from Roosevelt to Coolidge. Theodore Roosevelt was even persuaded to become a Farmers Union member! Even after Barrett resigned in 1928, he remained in Washington to represent National Farmers Union. Barrett's presidency was pivotal for several reasons, but perhaps the greatest of his accomplishments was to transform a southern protest movement into a viable national interest group which marked the entry of a permanent farm public onto the political scene.

In 1940, another important leader, James Patton, was elected to serve as president of NFU. At 38, he became the youngest person ever to be president of NFU. Patton was our sixth national president and served 26 years. One of his first actions to unify the organization was to establish the NFU headquarters and move national staff scattered throughout the country to Denver, Colorado. During

the 1940 convention, delegates raised the dues and changed the composition of the national board of directors. Patton explained, “We took the politics out of it. Whenever someone is elected state president, that person automatically becomes a member of the NFU board.” Patton, like Barrett, also had tremendous respect in Washington, D.C.

Franklin D. Roosevelt asked Patton to be his Secretary of Agriculture; Patton declined. Patton and President Harry Truman were on a first name basis. President Kennedy greatly respected Patton’s advice and many Farmers Union leaders received political appointments in the Kennedy Administration. Lyndon B. Johnson and Patton had worked together as young men and at Patton’s urging, Johnson declared “war on poverty.” If Charles Barrett can be credited with giving Farmers Union a national presence, then Jim Patton must be credited with giving Farmers Union an international presence. Patton was an American delegate to the founding meeting of the United Nations, served on the founding board of CARE and was elected twice to the presidency of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP).

To date there have been 14 National Farmers Union presidents, all of whom have had the knowledge and vision to help the organization become a nationally known and well-respected general farm organization.

### **National Farmers Union Founder and Presidents**

|                   |                    |             |
|-------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| <b>Founder</b>    | Newton Gresham     | 1902-1906   |
| <b>Presidents</b> | Charles Barrett    | 1906-1928   |
|                   | C.E. Huff          | 1928-1930   |
|                   | John Simpson       | 1930-1934   |
|                   | E.H. Everson       | 1934-1937   |
|                   | John Vesecky       | 1937-1940   |
|                   | James Patton       | 1940-1966   |
|                   | Tony Dechant       | 1966-1980   |
|                   | George Stone       | 1980-1984   |
|                   | Cyril Carpenter    | 1984-1988   |
|                   | Leland Swenson     | 1988-2002   |
|                   | David Frederickson | 2002-2006   |
|                   | Tom Buis           | 2006-2009   |
|                   | Roger Johnson      | 2009 – 2020 |
|                   | Rob Larew          | 2020 -      |

## Farmers Union Connections

### **Farmers Union Industries, LLC**

Farmers Union Industries, owned by Farmers Union Marketing & Processing Association (FUMPA) and Farmers Union Enterprises (FUE), has six operating divisions: Central Bi-Products, Northland Choice, Midwest Grease, Pet Care Systems, Redwood Metal Works and FUMPA BioFuels. FUMPA was established in 1929 by Farmers Union to service the needs of Farmers Union members who were livestock producers. In the beginning, 80 to 90 percent of its business was derived from rendering dead animals. Today this livestock rendering cooperative still serves the needs of livestock producers and members, although most of their energies are spent servicing large processing plants. Farmers Union Industries is based in Redwood Falls, Minnesota, and is a very profitable and successful Farmers Union cooperative.

### **Farmers Union Milk Producers Association**

National Farmers Union assisted milk producers in Pennsylvania with the formation of the Farmers Union Milk Producers Association in 1961. When the cooperative first began, it was marketing milk for 18 producers. Today it handles milk marketing for 130 producers.

### **National Farmers Union Insurance Companies (NFUIC)/QBE of the Americas**

National Farmers Union Property and Casualty Insurance Companies were started by National Farmers Union in 1945 and are now owned by QBE. The National Farmers Union Insurance Companies pay the National Farmers Union a "use of name" fee on insurance sold. In addition, NFUIC pays state Farmers Union organizations a state "service" fee for services provided by the state Farmers Union organizations in promoting the National Farmers Union Insurance Companies and the respective agents for marketing their lines of insurance. The National Farmers Union and state service associations from Minnesota, North Dakota Mutual Insurance Company, Rocky Mountain, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Montana Farmers Union Mutual Insurance Company have established a limited liability partnership with the National Farmers Union Insurance Companies to generate significant growth in the future.

The Minnesota, North Dakota, Rocky Mountain and South Dakota Farmers Union organizations own state service associations through which their local agents are hired and trained to market products on behalf of the National Farmers Union Insurance Companies. Montana Farmers Union Mutual Insurance owns the Service Association in Montana. These service associations will also contract with other insurance companies to provide their local agents with other lines of insurance not available from the National Farmers Union Insurance Companies.

The National Farmers Union in part with the with the Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, Rocky Mountain, South Dakota, Kansas, and Nebraska Farmers Union organizations have formed Midwest Agency LLP, which owns the state service association that serves the states of Kansas and Nebraska.

In the states of Arkansas, Montana, North Dakota and Oklahoma, the state Farmers Union organizations have formed state mutual insurance companies to provide insurance products to rural people. These mutual insurance companies have a very close working relationship with their respective state Farmers Union organizations.

#### **CHS Inc.**

In 1998, Cenex and Harvest States merged and became a new entity called Cenex Harvest States. In 2001, Cenex Harvest States began referring to the organization as CHS Cooperatives. In 2003, CHS Cooperatives officially changed their name to CHS, Inc. The CHS Inc. headquarters is located in Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota which is in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area.

#### **CENEX**

In 1931, a group of Farmers Union members representing about two dozen local cooperatives formed a regional cooperative. This idea, along with a \$525.00 investment, was the beginning of the Farmers Union Central Exchange (CENEX). Twelve years later CENEX became a fully integrated oil company and two years after that entered the feed, fertilizer, and seed business. In 1987, CENEX and Land O'Lakes Agricultural Services formed a joint venture in order to offer a wider variety of services to its farmers and ranchers through more than 1,600 local cooperatives.

#### **Harvest States**

This cooperative's history goes back to 1926 when the American Society of Equity merged with Farmers Union to form the Farmers Union Terminal Association. Later, under reorganization, it became the Grain Terminal Association (GTA). In the early 1980's, GTA merged with Northern Pacific Grain Growers and became Harvest States.

#### **CHS Cooperatives Foundation**

The merger between CENEX and Harvest States led to the merger of the CENEX Foundation and the Harvest States Foundation which became the Cenex Harvest States Foundation a year after the Cenex Harvest States merger (1999). Formerly, the CENEX Foundation provided many state/regional Farmers Union organizations with educational funds to run cooperative education programs for youth and adults.

In 2001, the Cenex Harvest States Foundation followed Cenex Harvest States, adopted the new name, and was referred to as the CHS Cooperatives Foundation. Today, following CHS's official name change in 2003, it is referred to as the CHS Foundation. The CHS Foundation accepts grant proposals from our state and regional organizations to operate youth and adult cooperative education programs.



## Farmers Union International Connections

### United Nations

National Farmers Union was a supporting non-governmental organization (NGO) of the United Nations. In fact, former NFU President, James Patton, was an American delegate to the founding meeting of the United Nations and was instrumental in the passage of the Public Law 480 (Food for Peace).

### CARE

National Farmers Union was a founding member of CARE (Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe) in 1945 to provide food assistance packages to the millions of people left hungry throughout Europe because of the devastation brought by World War II. In 1953, as it became obvious that the need for relief work in Europe was ending and the organization was beginning to provide relief assistance in other areas around the world, the formal name was changed to Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere, thereby maintaining the acronym CARE. It was clear in the 1960's that many Europeans who had received CARE packages after World War II were interested in repaying the assistance from North America by helping people in the needy nations. In the late 1970's the birth of CARE International, the global network of eleven independent CARE organizations, provided an organizational framework to use in carrying out assistance to developing countries. National Farmers Union continues its support and involvement in CARE. The need to assist with famine and natural disasters in developing countries continues to be as great as faced by the founding members.

### World Farmers Organization

WFO was organized Sept. 12-13, 2011, in Stellenbosch, South Africa. The two main goals of the WFO are to promote profitable farming and food security. WFO is based in Rome. Prior to the WFO, National Farmers Union was a founding member of International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) in 1946, an umbrella organization of farm groups from more than 50 nations. In the beginning, the purpose of IFAP was to help achieve agreement on the International Wheat Agreement. IFAP's agenda was to help bring up lesser-developed countries to our standards. Standing committees and working groups also dealt with cooperative issues, meats and feeds, grains, dairy, and regional commodities. Special committees, from time to time, dealt with trade, agricultural concentration, and relevant topics. Only two NFU presidents served as president of IFAP, Tony Dechant and James Patton. IFAP consisted of 120 member organizations and NFU was the only U.S. participant. IFAP was headquartered in Paris, France. IFAP dissolved in 2010.

### Others

At the 1946 national convention, delegates called for a Farmer-to-Farmer Exchange program. An initial exchange began that year with France and many of these arrangements were aided by IFAP. In addition, National Farmers Union conducted another exchange program in the Former Soviet Union and Hungary in the 1990's.

National Farmers Union maintains connections with farm organizations and farmer-owned cooperatives in Canada, Japan, Europe, Central America and throughout the world.

# National Farmers Union Board of Directors

## Responsibilities, Duties and Liabilities

### Meetings and Elections

The supreme authority of the National Farmers Union shall be vested in the membership, either by referendum vote or by delegates in convention. The responsibility for administration of policies and programs of this association shall be vested in the Board of Directors, subject to the provisions of the Bylaws and of resolutions adopted at the annual convention.

Immediately following the annual convention, the Board of Directors shall convene to elect a Secretary, Treasurer and two at-large members of the executive committee. Also, each standing committee will elect a chairperson and vice chairperson, with the chairperson serving on the executive committee. The member-elected president and vice-president automatically sit on the executive committee. (BYLAWS-Article VII, Sec. A)

The Board of Directors shall hold regular quarterly meetings, with one meeting no earlier than three days prior to each annual convention.

Special meetings of the directors may be called upon request of the President or any seven or more members of the Board.

Most of the members of the Board shall constitute a quorum of the Board. (BYLAWS-Article VI, Sec. A-E)

The Board of Directors shall consist of not less than five nor more than 50 members. The board shall be composed of the president and first vice president elected at the annual convention and each duly elected and qualified president of a chartered state division. Also, an unchartered subdivision and/or affiliate association or organization is allowed to have its president seated at the National Board of Directors with full voice but no vote. (BYLAWS-Article VI, Sec. A & Article V, Sec. H-I)

### Powers and Duties of Directors

Financial statements shall be prepared each month, listing the organization's income and expenditures, and comparing the organization's operations with the previous year and the Board's adopted budget and is available upon request.

A full financial statement shall be provided to each Board member quarterly. A list of dues receipts as received by the states will be prepared and provided to each Board member quarterly.

At the close of the fiscal period, December 31 of each year, the Board shall engage a qualified auditor to prepare an audit showing receipts and disbursements and actual condition of the association, the same to be printed in time to be available at the annual convention.

The Board shall have full and exclusive jurisdiction over all territory in the U.S. not embraced within a chartered state division in good standing. But, upon issuance of a state charter, jurisdiction shall be transferred to the state division. (BYLAWS-Article V, Sec. B)

The decision to grant a charter shall be made exclusively by the Board of Directors, when it appears that a state or states have reached 1,250 or more members, or when the number of farmers in a single state is less than 20,000 and it is determined that a lesser number of members would constitute a useful and effective chartered state. (BYLAWS-Article V, Sec. D)

The charter of a state division may be suspended or revoked by a majority vote of the members of the Board of Directors if activities are conducted in violation of its charter or the national bylaws. (BYLAWS-Article V, Sec. F)

The Board shall assist the President and other officers in building and maintaining the general membership.

The Board of Directors shall determine the salary of the President. (BYLAWS-Article VIII, Sec. C)

## **Director Duties and Liabilities**

The following material is intended to give the reader a general overview of the topics of director duties and liabilities. These matters are governed primarily by state law and as a result the reader is advised to confirm the application of the various topics discussed herein with their respective state statutes and case law. The information herein is based upon reference to model acts and common law concepts. In order to properly prepare yourself as a director you need to understand the law within your state.

### **Legal Standards Determining Liability of Directors**

Directors of a nonprofit enterprise have a duty to manage the affairs of the organization so that its property will be used for the public purposes for which it was entrusted.

As a general rule, a court will not interfere with the internal management of a nonprofit organization unless there is a willful abuse of the discretionary powers of the trustees or directors, or if there is a neglect of duty or bad faith. Trustees and corporate directors can be liable for losses caused by their negligent mismanagement of property and investments. However, in determining whether negligence occurred, the standard and degree of care required differs in many states.

The director may also rely upon legal counsel, public accountants, or a committee of the board of which the director is not a member as to matters within its jurisdiction. If a director so relies, the Act

provides that he or she will not be liable for the performance of his or her duties. However, a director will be deemed not to be acting in good faith if the director has knowledge concerning a matter in question that makes reliance on the above-named persons unwarranted.

### **General Duties of Corporate Directors**

While directors of corporations are also subject to a duty of loyalty and a duty of care to the corporation, the duties of directors are less stringent than those required of trustees. The lesser standards have been applied to the corporate director based upon the theory that corporate directors have many areas of responsibility.

Despite the fact that corporate directors are held to lesser standards than are trustees, directors are nonetheless fiduciaries and continue to have a status similar to that of trustees. A director must act for the benefit of members of the corporation, and, in the case of a nonprofit corporation, for the benefit of the public.

### **Duty of Loyalty**

The duty of loyalty for a corporate director requires that a director not exploit corporate opportunities or misuse inside information. Only reasonable salaries may be paid to board members, and often directors serve without compensation. A board member must account to the corporation for any profits received as a result of the directorship.

A director may not obtain a private or secret profit as a result of his or her official position; the corporation must have the benefit of any advantage the director has acquired.

Section 8.31 of the Revised Model Nonprofit Corporation Act defines a conflict-of-interest transaction and provides the means by which a conflict-of-interest transaction may be upheld. It defines a conflict-of-interest transaction as one in which a director of a corporation has a direct or indirect interest. An indirect interest is defined as one in which another entity in which the director has a material interest or in which the director is a general partner or a director, officer, or trustee, is a party to the transaction. For a public benefit corporation, the Act provides that a conflict of interest transaction is not violable or the basis for imposing liability on the director if the transaction was fair at the time it was entered into or if it was approved (a) in advance by the vote of the board of directors or a committee of the board when all material facts of the transaction and the director's interest were either disclosed or were known by the board or committee of the board and the director approving the transaction reasonably believed that the transaction was fair to the corporation or (b) before or after it was consummated by obtaining approval of the attorney general or a court in which the attorney general was joined as a party.

For a mutual benefit corporation, the Revised Model Act provides that a conflict-of-interest transaction may be approved if (a) the material facts of the transaction and the director's interest were disclosed or known to the board or a committee of the board and the board or a committee of the board ratified

the transaction or (b) the material facts of the transaction and the director's interest were disclosed or known to the members and the members ratified the transaction. A conflict-of-interest transaction is ratified when it receives the affirmative vote of a majority of the directors or members of the committee, who have no direct or indirect interest in the transaction.

However, a transaction may not be ratified by a single director. If a transaction is to be ratified by members of a nonprofit corporation, votes cast by or voted under the control of a director with a direct or indirect interest in the transaction may not be counted.

The purchase or lease of corporate property by an officer or director is avoidable, but not void, in contrast to the trust standard. A director may assert a fairness defense to a charge of self-dealing. However, such a transaction will be upheld only if it is indeed fair and was for a sufficient consideration. The presumption in such cases generally is against validity. In addition, courts apply a more stringent test to determine fairness.

A corporate director may not cast a vote upon a matter in which the director has an adverse interest.

### **Corporate Opportunity**

A corporate director is under a fiduciary obligation not to divert a corporate business opportunity for his own personal gain. This so-called doctrine of corporate opportunity is a species of the duty of a fiduciary to act with undivided loyalty to the corporation. The doctrine charges any interest acquired by the director with a trust for the benefit of the corporation. The theory is that an insider should not use his inside position to benefit himself by seizing an investment opportunity available to and suitable for the corporation. It operates because the corporation was not given the opportunity to engage in the transaction.

The test in determining whether a corporate officer has appropriated a corporate opportunity is whether there was a specific duty on the part of the director to act or contract in regard to the particular matter as the representative of the corporation.

### **Use of Inside Information**

The law relating to a corporate director's duty regarding use of inside information is ill-defined. Under some state law and under federal law, it is a higher duty, resembling the duty of a trustee.

### **Duty of Care**

The duty of care requires that directors exercise reasonable skills in the exercise of their responsibilities. A director should exercise the same care and skill which an ordinarily prudent person would exercise under similar circumstances in his or her own personal affairs. While this duty is similar to that of a trustee, a corporate director has broader discretion than does a trustee. A director may delegate to officers or to committees the operation of the corporation. Further, courts have stated that while directors are liable for negligence in the performance of their duties, they are not insurers and thus are not liable for errors of judgment or for mistakes so long as they act with reasonable skill and prudence.

The liability of corporate directors for damages caused by negligent or unauthorized acts rests upon the common law rule that renders every agent liable who violates his authority or neglects his duty to the damage of his principal. By accepting the office, directors implicitly undertake to give their best judgment to the enterprise. The acceptance of the office of director implies a knowledge of the duties assumed. Directors will not be excused because of their lack of experience or ability. However, directors are not responsible for mere errors of judgment or want of care short of clear and gross negligence.

Directors are entitled to some protection for their negligent acts when they act under advice of counsel. However, where the terms of their powers are explicit, advice of counsel may be of no avail.

### **Standards Applicable to Nonprofit Enterprises**

To apply fiduciary standards to directors or trustees of nonprofit enterprises involves an analysis of the type of nonprofit organization. The nonprofit corporation that, while nonprofit, is not charitable in nature, is governed by corporate standards. However, the charitable nonprofit corporation presents a dilemma because it is much the same as the charitable trust.

### **Basic Requirements to Avoid Liability**

Directors of nonprofit corporations should take certain basic steps to fulfill their fiduciary responsibilities and to avoid liability for their actions or failures to act. The following are a minimum:

- Directors should be familiar with the provisions of the state statutes relating to nonprofit organizations. State statutes generally prohibit loans to directors and officers and prohibit the distribution of income to members, directors, or officers except for the payment of reasonable compensation. Should a nonprofit corporation be dissolved, particular attention should be directed to state provisions regarding disposition of assets so that the assets are not wrongfully distributed.
- Accurate books and records must be maintained.
- Directors should attend meetings and review the minutes and other documents. Should a director object to a decision of a majority of the board, that objection should be noted in writing.
- Directors should avoid self-dealing. If a director has an interest in a transaction with the nonprofit organization, that interest should be noted. The transaction must be fair and reasonable, and the interested director should not attempt to influence other members of the board. If the organization is a private foundation for tax purposes, no transaction should be entered into if a director or any disqualified person with respect to the foundation has either a direct or indirect interest in the transaction.
- Directors should make certain all tax returns are timely filed. All commercial activities of the enterprise should be reviewed to determine if the organization has unrelated business income that would subject the organization to income tax liability.

- Directors must make certain all social security and income taxes are properly withheld from salaries to employees and that quarterly returns are properly filed with payments timely made.
- Directors should be familiar with provisions relating to tax-exempt status and should carefully monitor the organization's activities so that such status is maintained.
- Directors of § 501 (c)(3) organizations should monitor public charity versus private foundation status. If the organization is a private foundation, directors should be knowledgeable of the prohibited activities and transactions relating to private foundations. Penalty taxes on prohibited activities are severe.
- Directors should establish and monitor fair and non-discriminatory personnel policies.
- Directors should obtain opinions of legal counsel and/or accountants where needed.

### **Investment of Institutional Funds**

A number of states have adopted the Uniform Management of Institutional Funds Act which provides a standard of business care and prudence in the investment of funds of certain nonprofit organizations. The act authorizes the delegation of investment decisions and provides for the expenditure of the appreciation of invested funds. The standard of care is that of a reasonable and prudent director of a nonprofit corporation—similar to that of a director of a business corporation.

### **Indemnification of Officers and Directors**

While the expenditure of reasonable sums to defend a suit brought against a nonprofit organization has been held to be an expenditure for the carrying on of the ordinary business of the organization, the payment of attorneys' fees to defend directors of a nonprofit corporation prior to a determination that the directors were not guilty of negligence or misconduct in the performance of their duties has been held to be an unauthorized transfer of funds of the corporation, not in conformity with the nonprofit purposes for which the corporation was formed.

There is no common-law right of indemnification for corporate directors. Any such right is statutory. Consequently, a few states have added provisions providing for indemnification of directors for liability for damages and for expenses to defend an action brought against the director.

# Farmers Union Division Information

## Election and Selection of Farmers Union Officers

In most Farmers Union divisions, nominations by members from the floor for positions of elected officers usually are in order and should be encouraged.

Your Farmers Union division also may want to consider using a nominating committee, as an additional aid to the election process and as additional help to the President in selecting directors and chairs for the non-elected officer positions.

There are several good reasons for using a nominating committee as part of the selection and election process. First, it allows the Farmers Union division the opportunity to determine in advance if there are people willing to serve in the various positions and to recruit people to serve if they find they are in the unenviable position of having a lot of reluctant candidates.

Second, such a nominating process can give a long-time office holder a graceful way to give notice that they would like to step down and let someone else take over a job that has become associated with their name and presence.

Third, it gives the Farmers Union division a chance to take advantage of the talents of its various members, their desires to take jobs with responsibilities and make sure those desires and talents are matched in a way that can keep the division active and vibrant and to avoid officer “burn-out.”

Fourth, it provides the Farmers Union division with the opportunity to groom people for leadership positions by nominating them for a variety of jobs during their “career” in Farmers Union life.

Fifth, the nomination process, if used in the right way, can be used in a manner to do an annual review to make sure the division is being inclusive in electing and appointing people to positions of leadership and not driving away the Farmers Union members who feel they are being left out of the process.

If the division does determine to use a nominating committee as part of the election process, the division must make sure that it is not used as an exclusionary device. It should not be used as a means to keep people from office, but only to help find and encourage the selection of officers willing and able to serve. One way to do this is to rotate terms on the nominating committee.

If at least one member on the committee is new every year, there will be no danger of the committee becoming an “old guard” that recommends the same people for office year after year.

Having alternating appointments makes it possible to retain members with some experience while also getting new people involved. This way every member of the division knows that they have the



opportunity to get involved, while having some returning officers guarantees continuity of the committee structure. Also, changing the committee membership every year makes it more likely that no one individual keeps any particular office without anyone ever questioning whether someone else may enjoy the opportunity to serve.

### **The Officers Are Elected -- What Now?**

Once the officers are elected (and the non-elected directors or chairs are selected), they should be sworn in. The ceremony does not have to be elaborate; in fact, a simple ceremony actually would be better.

A swearing-in ceremony is important, however, as it serves multiple functions. It can impress upon the newly elected office holder, the importance of the job in which they have been chosen. It provides the Publicity Director with an opportunity to take pictures of the ceremony which they may submit to the local newspaper.

Who should swear in the new office holders? There are several potential answers. Consider using a youth leader or the senior member of the division. An outgoing office holder, the chair of the nominating committee, or a visiting member from the national office also might serve in this function. Just make sure you have determined who will conduct the swearing in ceremony prior to the election so that the process moves smoothly, and all know their responsibilities.

What follows is a sample oath of office you may use. Don't be afraid to write your own if you so desire.

**"I \_\_\_\_\_, solemnly pledge I will abide by the constitution and by-laws of the \_\_\_\_\_ Farmers Union and will to the best of my ability promote the ideals and activities of the Farmers Union within the state of \_\_\_\_\_ and the United States of America."**

## Officers

Every Farmers Union office at the local, county, state or national level is critical to the success of the organization. As an officer of Farmers Union, you have the responsibility of representing a farm organization that has been instrumental in positively impacting the lives of farmers and ranchers and rural America.

In the coming section, each office's duties will be explained in detail. Below are some roles and responsibilities each and every officer must carry out.

All officers should:

- Attend division meetings.
- Be responsible for the recruitment and retention of members.  
**This is the primary role for all officers.**
- Assist in planning and developing programs and special activities for the division.
- Patronize local cooperatives and promote patronage to all other members.
- Support other officers.

## 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.

## Vice President

The duties and responsibilities of a Vice President in most organizations have historically been minimal, often only ceremonial or to stand in during the President's absence. Because of Farmers Union's emphasis on grassroots organization, this under-utilization of talent does not make sense. Members and officers hold many responsibilities on and off the farm, and a Vice President taking an active role in the Farmers Union division bolsters grassroots activity. It is an office to be taken very seriously and can be highly visible in the organization and community if the Vice President is aware of the importance of the role.

In the President's absence, a Farmers Union Vice President's responsibilities make the post and its office holder much more important and active in most Farmers Union divisions.

From the office of National Farmers Union President to President of the local or county level, Farmers Union Presidents have always known they must rely on their Vice Presidents to share responsibilities. Effective presidents delegate a variety of tasks and responsibilities to their Vice Presidents, making them active members of the Farmers Union leadership team. The tasks assigned to Farmers Union Vice Presidents vary greatly from division to division. In some divisions, they chair all special committees and may serve as the division's Legislative or Publicity Directors. In other cases, they also may lead membership drives or take on other responsibilities that fit their various talents.

Whatever the unofficial duties assigned to them, Farmers Union Vice Presidents have one big responsibility. They must be prepared to take over the top office in the event it becomes vacant for any reason. They must remain active in the division so the membership recognizes and respects his or her leadership abilities, and they must remain up to date on all Farmers Union policies and the day-to-day activities of the organization.

### Helpful Hints for the Vice President

- Always come to the meeting prepared to take over in case the President is unable to preside or conduct the meeting's business for any reason.
- Display a willingness to take on any task the President may delegate to you.
- Take the time to discuss your areas of interest with the President and express a willingness to take responsibility.
- Stay active in the organization and other community activities that interest you and make sure the community is aware of your active involvement in Farmers Union.

## Secretary/Treasurer

In most Farmers Union states, the jobs of Secretary and Treasurer are combined into a single position. The handling of membership records--a secretarial function--and membership dues--a financial function--seem to go together naturally. A combined Secretary/Treasurer position may make the handling of the written records of the organization easier to coordinate. In some instances, however, the jobs are split between two different individuals--one handling the financial records and another handling the written records of the organization. Encourage the separation of these jobs, as this is a very good way of getting more people involved.

The person who holds the double-billed position of Secretary/Treasurer has several important duties and responsibilities. What follows is a fairly long list of these duties. It may appear daunting at first, but it is manageable providing the office holder keeps them up regularly.

### **Combined Position Duties:**

- **Assisting the President.** In many instances the President delegates to the Secretary/Treasurer responsibility for the following:
  - Notifying the membership and others of the time and place for both regular and special meetings.
  - Having on hand at each meeting a copy of the constitution and by-laws, a book on parliamentary procedure and a copy of the current official policy document of both the division and National Farmers Union.
- **Ordering supplies and materials.** Many organizations have adopted a uniform procedure for ordering supplies needed by the various officers in carrying out their responsibilities. This procedure often involves:
  - Receiving orders for educational materials, recreational materials, organizational materials, etc. from the officers who need these items in their work.
  - Bringing the request before either the appropriate officers or membership for approval in cases where a substantial expense is involved.
  - Ordering the supplies from the national office or other source.

### **Secretary's Duties:**

- **Recording the minutes of the organization's meeting and presenting them at the following meeting.** The minutes should include:
  - The name of the group, meeting time and place.
  - The kind of meeting (regular or special).
  - Name of the presiding officer.
  - The number of people present. (At times it is desirable to take a roll call and minutes should contain the names of guests).
  - Action on minutes of the previous meeting (adoption or amendment).

- Action on the Treasurer’s report.
- Main motions written word for word as stated by the proposer. Routine motions do not require recording the names of the mover or seconder. Motions dealing with policy or spending money should include the names of the mover and seconder. Records should be made of the decisions on all motions and the number of affirmative and negative votes on important issues.
- A summary of what was discussed during the meeting including any action proposed, committees appointed, guest speakers or panelists, etc.
- A summary of the remainder of the program.
- The motion to adjourn and time of adjournment.
- Taking care of all correspondence.
  - Routine letters should be answered promptly.
  - Important mail should be discussed with the division’s officers and then discussed with the membership if the leadership deems it of enough importance.
- Reporting division’s activities to the national office.
  - Following elections or any changes in officers, the names should be reported immediately to the national office. The information should include names, addresses and telephone numbers, including FAX and e-mail addresses.
- Membership records should be kept up-to-date, and changes should be sent to the state office as required by established procedures.

**Treasurer’s Duties:**

- Developing a budget. This should be done with the advice and consent of the Executive Committee.
- Paying promptly the division’s bills as approved for payment by the membership.
- Keeping the division’s financial records and reporting on them at each meeting. The financial records should include receipts and disbursements, including the balance on hand in the organization’s account. A sample financial report follows:

**Financial Report for the period ending \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_**

**Receipts**

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| Balance on hand, June 1, 20__ .....         | \$ 84.96        |
| Dues collected, June 1 to June 30.....      | \$ 50.00        |
| Funds from Box Social Auction, June 13..... | <u>\$ 23.14</u> |
| <b>Total.....</b>                           | <b>\$158.10</b> |

**Disbursements**

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| Stationery and Postage .....                    | \$ 8.36        |
| Educational materials .....                     | \$15.00        |
| Contribution to National Legislative Fund ..... | <u>\$50.00</u> |
| <b>Total.....</b>                               | <b>\$73.36</b> |
| <b>Balance on hand, July __, 20__ .....</b>     | <b>\$84.74</b> |

## Helpful Hints for the Secretary/Treasurer

- Always come to the meeting prepared so time is not wasted while you search for letters or arrange the last meeting's minutes.
- Have the minutes written in a complete form and open for reading as soon as the meeting starts. Notes jotted on the back of an envelope or some other piece of paper are not meeting minutes and should not be accepted in that form.
- Keep a large loose-leaf notebook in which to store letters. Take the notebook with you to meetings.
- When the meeting must consider the content of any letters, read aloud only the portion of the letter that is of concern to all members, and which must be read in detail. The reading of long, dull letters will destroy the interest of most members and ruin the pace of the meeting. You can post the letter on a bulletin board for those who are interested in reading the entire letter.
- Always bring to the meeting a copy of the organization's constitution and bylaws and a book on parliamentary procedure with which to resolve any disputes which may arise on the manner of conducting business.



## Cooperative Director

The Farmers Union division's Cooperative Director is vital to the growth of the organization. The Cooperative Director serves in a high-profile role as the division's official liaison in the local community between the Farmers Union division and its members and the cooperative businesses in the area. In that role, the Cooperative Director should do everything possible to foster and nurture the relationships between local cooperatives and the Farmers Union. It would be beneficial if the Cooperative Director was a cooperative board member. Also, the Cooperative Director and the Legislative Director could be easily combined into one office if you are short on participating members.

The division's Cooperative Director is responsible for:

- Recruiting Farmers Union members to run for local cooperative boards.
- Being a good patron of all area cooperatives, especially those with traditional ties to the Farmers Union promoting patronage to other Farmers Union members.
- Encourage cooperative managers, field representatives and members of their boards of directors to attend local Farmers Union meetings.
- Maintaining close contacts with the cooperatives in the community by being sure to:
  - Invite cooperative managers, employees, and directors to attend Farmers Union meetings.
  - Advertise the cooperatives' shareholder meetings and urge Farmers Union members to attend.
  - Report on the cooperatives' shareholder meetings to the Farmers Union division and advise members on the cooperatives' financial statements.
  - Keep the cooperatives advised on the Farmers Union's use of any cooperative check-off funds or education funds.
- Being informed and working on the legislative problems of cooperatives
  - Work with the Farmers Union Legislative Director to explain bills affecting cooperatives. Get the division to act on them.
  - Keep the local cooperatives informed on the work Farmers Union is doing on the cooperatives' behalf in the legislative arena at the state and national levels.
  - Keep the local cooperatives informed on the activities of local Farmers Union members on behalf of cooperatives.
- Observing October as cooperative month and working with the Farmers Union division and the local cooperatives to arrange a proper observance. Contact the National office for ideas.
- Meeting with the boards of directors of your area's cooperatives to discuss common concerns and to explore policies beneficial to Farmers Union members and the cooperative.
- Working with the Education Director to teach members about the cooperative business model.

### Helpful Hints for the Cooperative Director

- Be able to explain what cooperative education funds are and show how they are used to

benefit and strengthen both the cooperative and the Farmers Union.

- Be alert for ways the Farmers Union can be of assistance to local cooperatives.
- Make sure that your reports on cooperative activities to your fellow Farmers Union members are complete and accurate but keep them concise as well.
- Have a list of helpful contacts who can assist you and other members with cooperative development questions and ideas.
- Keep a few Farmers Union membership forms and a couple of ballpoint pens in your car and farm trucks. You never know when you will meet a potential new member.

## Education Director

The Farmers Union Education Director has a special role in the organization because education is one of Farmers Union's three main principles. This person is charged with training our children in the Farmers Union way and is responsible for the educational needs of both mid-career farming professionals and early career farming professionals. The Education Director oversees our organization's future and posterity for its members--adult and young members alike.

The division's Education Director is responsible for:

### **Youth Programs:**

- Encouraging our Farmers Union youth in their work in your division's youth education program. This can include positive incentives such as awards, recognition in newsletters and other communication, scholarships, and the opportunity to present at various events.
- Preparing an annual calendar to achieve the division's objectives. See Potential Annual Farmers Union Program Schedule in the Appendix.
- Keeping accurate and up-to-date records of progress made by each individual participating in the programs. For an example, review the Sample Youth Education Records of Progress in the Appendix.
- Recruiting youth to participate in summer camps and help plan and operate the camp programs if camp is part of the planned activities. If your state does not offer a camp program, reach out to a neighboring state with a camp program. They may have vacancies that can be filled by youth from your state.
- Encouraging your fellow Farmers Union officers to have youth members participate regularly in Farmers Union activities in a leadership role. This can include serving as a camp counselor, volunteering at Convention, leading a local meeting, or participating in a lobby day.
- Coordinating your efforts with the Public Relations Director to publicize all youth activity in your community and recruit new members.
- Attending national youth leader meetings and seminars, such as the FFA Next Generation conference and the American Camp Association conference.
- Encouraging your Farmers Union youth to take an active role in your division by identifying opportunities that play to their strengths.

### **Adult Programs:**

- Coordinating public education campaigns on trending issues relevant to your division. Public education campaigns give you the opportunity to share with members and non-members all the work your division is doing, to discuss issues affecting farmers and to provide resources that will help strengthen farm businesses. Campaigns can include in-person seminars or webinars hosted on platforms like Zoom. Topics can include policies before your state Congress that

affect farmers, changes being made to the Farm Bill, food safety training, new USDA programs and ways to get involved at the local co-op.

- Coordinate with the NFU Education Director if you need assistance hosting a webinar or managing an in-person event.
- Working with the Program Director to determine topics of interest to address at division meetings and assist, when necessary, in finding appropriate speakers.
- Bringing valuable information and educational materials to the attention of members, including books, pamphlets, articles, videos, government reports and bulletins or recent division and national Farmers Union publications.
- Encouraging members of education programming to take an active role in your division by identifying opportunities that play to their strengths.
- Tracking registration for education programming and sharing contact information with the Membership Director for follow up communication. The Membership Director will be able to keep participants informed on upcoming events and membership benefits.
- Surveying education program participants on the success of the program to help identify gaps that need to be addressed or areas of interest for future program topics.
- Coordinating with Legislative Directors to design and implement leadership training that will prepare members to be delegates at Convention or lobby days.

### **Helpful Hints for the Education Director**

- Many of the lessons in the How to Handle A Meeting section in the Appendix can be helpful when planning education programs. When planning for events, be sure to give yourself, members, hosts and possible speakers enough time to prepare. When possible, plan programs at least six weeks in advance to allow for time to coordinate travel, invite presenters and advertise the event.
- Explore state, regional, and national funding opportunities to financially support education programming. For example, consider partnering with National Farmers Union if interested in federal funding opportunities or cross-state collaborative opportunities.
- Encourage youth over 16 years to run as delegates to Farmers Union conventions and lobby days.
- Recruit new adult and youth leaders to help with programming. When possible, offer incentives such as travel assistance and stipends.
- Plan an awards program for the youth once they have passed steps in the program. Many states offer a Torchbearer or Youth Advisory Council program. Reach out to the NFU Education Director for more information.
- Get young people involved in other activities such as publicity for the division, working in the Farmers Union booth at the state fair, etc.
- Have youth who participate in camps or conferences give a report on the event at the next regular Farmers Union meeting. This will help strengthen their leadership skills and provide members with some insight into youth education programs.
- When developing youth and adult education programs, be sure to include an opportunity for

networking. This includes mealtimes and fun activities such as farm or co-op tours.

**Stay Connected**

- Connect with other Education Directors to find how they have leveraged special partnerships, grants, or sponsorship opportunities to expand outreach and financial sustainability.
- Reach out to Emma Lindberg to receive the Zoom link for the bi-monthly Education Directors call. This call is hosted on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of every other month at 11:00 am ET.

## Legislative Director

The person serving as Legislative Director is both the first and last link in a chain forged to have an impact on the legislative and regulatory process. The Legislative Director can relay the concerns members have about how government is affecting their lives to those in office who make such decisions. Likewise, the Legislative Director can keep members informed about how government is responding to their concerns. Members can then, in response, exercise their right to protest or applaud the government's actions.

The Legislative Director's responsibilities should include:

- Keeping members informed about legislative activities carried on by the Farmers Union at the state and national level.
- Attending meeting planning sessions to make sure legislative issues are included on the meeting agenda.
- Encouraging division members to actively participate in the Farmers Union policymaking process at division and national conventions.
- Attending annual meetings of local cooperatives to make sure you stay informed of their legislative needs and to inform them about how Farmers Union is helping them with those issues. This responsibility is shared with the division Cooperative Director.
- Keeping a file of useful reference materials, such as national and division Farmers Union newsletters, legislative reports or action memos sent to you. Clip newspaper articles or save links to and other items of interest to family farmers.
- Arranging periodic meetings between your members and local, state, and national legislators and/or their staff to discuss issues of interest.
- Participating in the Washington, D.C. legislative fly-In. Help coordinate these events with the national office.
- Coordinating your activities with other Farmers Union members working on legislative issues.
- Maintain a contact list of members to be contacted when legislation demands action.

### Helpful Hints for the Legislative Director

- Keep copies of voting records compiled by the Farmers Union on your state and national legislators so you are aware of how they voted on our issues, and relay that information to your fellow members.
- Keep on file a current copy of the platform of each political party so that it can be referred to later as needed.
- Keep a file of Farmers Union issues and how candidates and office holders stand on issues. Inform members on issues and keep office holders accountable for their promises.
- Encourage your fellow members to develop resolutions on issues that make it plain where the Farmers Union stands on hot issues.
- Develop contacts with other community groups to encourage support for Farmers Union

issues.

- Identify areas of cooperation between Farmers Union, commodity groups and other farm organizations, and encourage joint activities on those issues with the Farmers Union identified as being in the lead.
- Visit regularly with other division Legislative Directors to share information.
- Participate in the monthly Farmers Union Legislative Directors' Call hosted by NFU's government relations staff. This call is hosted on the 3rd Tuesday of each month, at 1:00 pm ET. Reach out to Mike Stranz for the Zoom link.
- Initiate letters, telephone calls and post cards to your state legislators and members of the U.S. Congress as needed, making sure that your fellow members write them while they are at a local meeting--if that is where the action is initiated.
- Participate in government farm-related boards at the local level and encourage Farmers Union members to do the same.

## Membership Director

The Farmers Union division Membership Director serves as the coordinator and cheerleader for the organization's efforts to recruit new members as well as to service and retain its current members so they will stay involved. **The Membership Director is not the division's sole official membership recruiter; that responsibility is shared by every member in the organization.**

As the coordinator of membership efforts, the Membership Director's duties include:

- Establishing yearly membership goals with division leadership. These are to be set in conjunction with the division board's goals.
- Implementing a retention plan for current and past-due members.
- Helping plan and coordinate membership drives in conjunction with the division's leadership and other volunteers.
- Keeping track of individuals who become members through cooperative associate memberships and encouraging them to become active members of the division, coordinating this effort with the Cooperative Director.
- Reporting on division and national membership goals at each meeting and the division's progress in meeting those goals.
- Coordinating efforts with the Secretary/Treasurer to keep track of the status of current members and directing efforts to follow up on members who have become inactive or delinquent in their memberships.
- Encouraging fellow members to take part in Farmers Union award programs such as the national Membership, Leadership and Bruce Miller awards.
- Encouraging everyone to get involved in membership work.

### Helpful Hints for the Membership Director

- Be sure to ask your friends, family members and neighbors to join the Farmers Union. Don't fall into the trap of assuming they may or may not be interested in becoming a member just because they know about your involvement. People like to be asked and have to be asked before they will join.
- Make sure the new member receives a new member packet and is placed on the division newsletter mailing list.
- Keep in touch with the Secretary/Treasurer as to who is not current in dues payments and arrange for a follow-up visit, call or email to encourage their continued involvement.
- Divide the list of past-due members among the officers and have the officers contact them immediately.
- See that you and others are well-equipped with promotional material on the benefits of Farmers Union membership and what the organization stands for.
- Coordinate with the Cooperative Director to contact all people who become members through associate programs, invite them to a meeting and make them feel welcome. Encourage the



division to give them responsibilities which will make them feel like a valued member.

- Visit with other Membership Directors to share ideas on how to improve membership recruitment and servicing activities.
- Keep a few Farmers Union membership forms and a couple of ballpoint pens in your car and farm trucks. You never know when they may come in handy!

To access Membership resources, such member benefits, membership award qualifications, and certification forms, please visit the Dropbox: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/yzjm2hsaftdfio4/AAD7-i1j7Pn2AnDRVNkned4ea?dl=0>

## Program Director

The main job of the Program Director is to take the lead in making the meetings of the Farmers Union division interesting, educational, and entertaining and to encourage the maximum participation of member families. The Program Director should be familiar with how to run an effective meeting and entice people to attend. The duties of the Program Director could easily fit into the scope of the Vice President's job. Many divisions combine the two positions, and it has been very effective.

The Program Director's duties should include:

- Helping plan the division's program schedule for the year. You can find an example in the Appendix.
- Planning interesting and informational meetings.
- Inviting guest speakers to address the division. You can find an example in the Appendix.
- Keeping a list of possible program topics suggested by members as well as a list of available resource people for each topic. One way to gather this information is by surveying members during meetings or through email.
- Arranging for entertainment, if time is available, to provide a well-balanced program.
- Bringing valuable information and educational materials to the attention of members, including books, pamphlets, magazines, film catalogs, video tapes, government reports and bulletins or recent division and national Farmers Union publications.
- Maintaining and trying to enhance relations with other organizations in the community such as parent-teacher organizations, labor unions, extension officials, churches, service clubs and committees on health, education, welfare and farm and highway safety.

### Helpful Hints for the Program Director

- Explore state, regional, and national funding opportunities to financially support programming. For example, consider partnering with National Farmers Union if interested in federal funding opportunities or cross-state collaborative opportunities. Connect with other Program Directors to find out how they leveraged special partnerships, grants, or sponsorship opportunities to expand outreach and financial sustainability programming.
- In planning the program, the division's officers should designate how much time is allotted for each feature of the program, and this should be recorded by the Program Director. Encourage the President to start the meeting on time.
- Have a total program that directly reflects the purpose of the Farmers Union. Perhaps the best idea for effective Farmers Union meetings will involve the scheduling of meetings around a special issue. These meetings may involve a controversial division, local or national issue and should include the presentation of both sides in a panel discussion or debate-style format.
- Special holidays should be noted as interesting ways of presenting the educational themes, such as:
  - panel or forum discussions

- mock radio or TV shows, skits, socio-dramas, or musical skits
  - video, movie or slide presentations
  - quizzes
  - book reports
- Invite speakers or guest members of other groups such as labor unions, the PTA, farm program agencies, health agencies, etc.
- Don't overlook local cooperative employees/managers and Farmers Union insurance agents as potential speakers.
- Cooperate with the division Education Director in planning the program and with the Public Relations Director for promotion of the meeting.
- Include group singing at appropriate points in the program--at the start of the meeting or possibly in advance of the entertainment part of the program--as a means to lighten up the meeting and encourage group participation.
- Work with the other officers in the division to outline a schedule of programs for the entire year--subject to alteration due to current events--so each program can be well developed in advance.

## Public Relations Director

If you don't toot your own horn, who will notice your accomplishments? The answer is probably no one.

That is why the Public Relations Director in a Farmers Union division is so important. There is a lot of competition for the attention of the editor of your local newspaper and the producers of your local radio and television stations. If you want them to pay attention to what Farmers Union is doing, you need to give them a little help. Send them news releases regularly (samples of possible news releases are included in this manual) and get to know them on a personal basis. If you know of any breaking rural or agriculture news, tip them off so they feel that you are a good source of information for their news organization.

The Public Relations Director is also responsible for publicizing regular and special activities of the Farmers Union division and persuading both members and non-members in attending meetings and joining Farmers Union. Additionally, they should build good will for Farmers Union in the local community.

The public relations director is responsible for:

- Introducing themselves to local reporters, radio broadcasters, and TV producers
- Promptly delivering news releases announcing meetings, events, or activities, with their name, telephone number, and email address.
- Personally inviting members of the media to Farmers Union events well in advance.
- Keeping a digital file of published stories on the Farmers Union, as well as copies of news releases.
- Occasionally pitching stories about Farmers Union events or advocacy to local publications.
- Advertising events on social media and in newsletters

### Helpful Hints for the Publicity Director

- Maintain good personal relations with your local newspaper editors and radio and tv producers. If your news isn't always used, don't get angry. Try again the next time. Stress the importance of your event to your community and invite the editor or producer to attend a meeting.
- If you have a good rural correspondent who writes the news for the local newspaper, make sure you keep them informed about Farmers Union events. If the area newspaper does not have a correspondent in your community, consider offering to do it (but only if you want to write a regular column and cover non-Farmers Union activities as well).
- Encourage your members to help put up posters and flyers about upcoming events.
- Local news is names of people and what they do. Make sure your stories contain the names of people involved and name the town or community where they live. It makes your Farmers

Union news interesting to more people and may help convince the editor that the Farmers Union news release is news and not just propaganda.

- Make sure your fellow Farmers Union members have pins for their lapels, bumper stickers for their cars, and other materials that keep the Farmers Union visually present in your community. The Membership Director should help with this activity.
- Watch for advertisements of local Farmers Union Insurance agents in area papers. These papers in particular should be targeted for Farmers Union stories and/or activity reports.
- Keep a few Farmers Union membership forms and a couple of ballpoint pens in your car and farm trucks. You never know when these may come in handy and make the difference between signing up a new member or losing that opportunity.

# Managing a Farmers Union Division

## How to Handle a Meeting

*“Meetings don’t just happen, they are created”* wrote Victor Ray, National Farmers Union’s former director of field services, in a booklet entitled *“The Art of Meeting.”* While the time spent during the meeting is important, the planning time before the meeting is even more important. A lack of planning before an event can lead to stress and disorganization. Inaction after a meeting can cause you to lose out on potential new members and partnerships.

Given those facts, what follows is an outline you may use to help you plan and handle a meeting that people will be glad they attended and may leave them asking for more.

### What to Do Before a Meeting

- 1) Appoint a committee to plan the meeting with the committee charged to do the following:
  - a) Select a topic for the meeting. The topic should be of interest to the target audience. Even if the ultimate goal of the meeting is to recruit members, a meeting built around the topic of “information about joining the Farmers Union” will not draw many participants. Zero in on topics that interest local citizens and your neighbors. You can then explain Farmers Union’s role in those topics during the meeting.
  - b) Select and invite the speakers and guests. You may want to invite special guests, such as your local state representatives and/or a representative from your Congress member’s office.
  - c) Develop the format and agenda for the meeting. The committee should plan all of the logistics, such as break times between speakers, identifying who is going to introduce the speakers (many times it is a good idea to have someone else other than the chair to introduce the speaker) and how much time each speaker is going to be allowed for his or her presentation. It is a good idea to have the speakers or the ‘catch’ at the beginning of the meeting. Also, the committee should make specific plans for snacks and refreshments to be served after the program has been concluded to encourage people to stay and visit.
    - i) Review a draft agenda in the Appendix.
  - d) Select the time and date for the meeting. The time and date selected should minimize potential conflicts with other activities in the community. Check the community events calendar when setting meeting dates to be sure they won’t conflict with other events your members would be attending, such as school programs, local sporting events, etc. This applies to regular meetings as well as any special meetings you may decide to have. A maximum recommended length of

time for regular meetings is two hours, anything longer than that may cause you to lose the audience's attention.

- e) Select the location for the meeting. The location of the meeting--whether regular or special--should be easily accessible to the general public. The meeting room should be comfortable and suitable to the number of people expected to attend. The arrangements should encourage and facilitate interaction among the participants. This means arranging for microphones and sound equipment if more than 50 people are expected to attend, arranging for any audio-visual equipment needed by the speakers, and if possible, setting up the room so that people sit at tables rather than in a classroom or theater style arrangement. In some cases, the meeting can be an online event. This may require having access to a video communications service like Zoom.
  - f) Publicize the meeting. People won't come if they haven't been invited or heard about the meeting. "A meeting's importance is heightened in the minds of people in direct proportion to the number of times and ways they hear about it," Ray wrote. "Thus, a meeting they hear about six times is ordinarily regarded as six times as important as one they hear about only once." Therefore, the committee should use an appropriate mix of publicity techniques, including mailed meeting notices, telephone calls, newspaper stories, radio announcements, paid advertising in newspapers or on the radio, handbills, coffee shop conversations and chance meetings on the street. It is important to advertise the event early enough to give people time to plan their travel or make any necessary arrangements.
  - g) Plan to have all necessary materials on hand for the meeting. Make sure you bring blank membership forms and pens. Also bring appropriate Farmers Union brochures, publications, voting records and other informational materials. Bring large sheets of paper, marking pens, flip charts and other materials useful during an open discussion.
  - h) Invite representatives of the news media to the meeting. Do not assume that a news release sent to the local newspaper, radio or television station will entice a reporter to attend the meeting. Personal telephone calls and invitations prior to the meeting are more likely to be effective.
  - i) Plan activities for children. It would be beneficial to have someone plan activities for the children of members. This would allow for those who otherwise would need to find a babysitter to attend.
- 2) Appoint a person or subcommittee to handle the meeting follow-up activities. (See section on responsibilities below).

### **What to Do During a Meeting**

- 1) Start on time. Don't wait for more people to arrive; it's not fair to those who are on time, and it is

rude to keep speakers and special guests waiting.

2) Get to know the audience.

- a) Have everyone sign in with name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address.
- b) If time allows and the meeting is not too big, have everyone introduce themselves if they don't already know one another.
- c) For larger meetings, consider having people introduce themselves to those around them or use icebreakers.

3) Encourage communication and participation during the meeting.

- a) Allow the speaker (or speakers) to make his or her presentation first.
- b) Encourage the audience to ask questions of the speaker and allow sufficient time for interaction between speaker and participants. Be sure to let the speaker know they should leave time for questions during their presentation.
- c) In order to get the discussion moving, consider "salting your audience" with a couple of people who have a question prepared in advance that might be appropriate for the speaker. Or prepare a few questions yourself to get the conversation started.

4) Develop a "plan of action" based on the meeting discussion if that is appropriate.

- a) Utilize a round-table format to allow the audience and participants to discuss what action, if any, should follow the meeting.
- b) List all the ideas for follow-up action on a large flip chart and save them for later distribution.
- c) Have Farmers Union representatives explain the role Farmers Union is playing on the issues discussed during the meeting.
- d) Be ready with paper, pens, envelopes and stamps to have audience members write letters to congressional representatives on the topic of the meeting prior to adjourning the meeting. Collect the letters at the end of the meeting and send them the next day.
- e) Ask all participants to fill out a meeting evaluation form that includes a space for people to ask for more information about the Farmers Union and to leave their address, phone number and e-mail address. Have membership forms and pens at every Farmers Union meeting.

5) End the meeting on time. Afterwards, have refreshments and snacks available--this will keep the



members around and may spark conversation.

### **What to Do Following the Meeting**

- 1) Designate a person or subcommittee to issue a report to the news media about the meeting.
- 2) Send thank-you notes to the speakers and all other persons who helped make the meeting a success.
- 3) Distribute a summary of the meeting to all participants.
- 4) Any action called for at the meeting should be planned and implemented and that result should be communicated to meeting participants.
- 5) Send thank-you notes to non-members for attending the meeting. Include information on Farmers Union and ask them to join.
- 6) Keep a list of people who attended the meeting and send them invites to future events.

### **Summary**

Okay, the officers and leaders of your Farmers Union division have gathered around the table and agreed. You are going to meet once a month (or quarterly or semi-annually). Now panic time sets in. What are we going to meet about? What can we do to entice people to come and want to return?

Developing an interesting, informative and possibly entertaining program is not nearly as difficult as you may think. Think about what interests you. What are you curious about? What would you like to know how to do? What problems do you face in your farming operation, your family life and your local community? What changes would you like to make to improve your life and the lives of those around you? What do you find entertaining and fun? Answer those questions and you will come up with a wide range of ideas for intriguing programs for your meetings and some special activities which can attract attention to your Farmers Union division.

In addition to answering those questions, there are two more tried and proven ways to come up with meeting ideas. First, get together with your fellow Farmers Union leaders and share ideas about programs and special activities that the various divisions have developed. Second, keep your eyes open to new programs and projects that other groups and people have conducted. See if there is some way you can modify their ideas to put the Farmers Union stamp on them. For example, if another community organization sponsors a tractor pull, think about how your Farmers Union organization might sponsor a Harvest Day festival and conduct a corn husking contest or an old-time threshing demonstration.

Some additional resources are available in the Appendix section.

## Parliamentary Procedure – Plain and Simple

Farmers Union officers need to make sure they have a copy of Roberts Rules of Order or some other accepted book on parliamentary procedure handy and present at each Farmers Union meeting for referral if needed. What follows is a quick and handy procedure chart you can refer to for simple questions as they occur. For additional assistance on perfecting parliamentary procedure, consider reaching out to a local FFA chapter for a tutorial.

**\* = motion cannot be amended**

| To do this                                   | You say this                              | May you interrupt the speaker? | May you be seconded? | May motion be debated? | What vote is required? |
|--|---|--------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Adjourn the meeting                          | "I move that we adjourn."                 | No                             | Yes                  | No                     | Majority               |
| Recess the meeting                           | "I move that we recess until..."          | No                             | Yes                  | No                     | Majority               |
| Complain about noise, room temperature, etc. | "Point of privilege"                      | Yes                            | No                   | No                     | No Vote                |
| Suspend further consideration of an item     | "I move that we table it."                | No                             | Yes                  | No                     | Majority               |
| End debate                                   | "I move the previous question..."         | No                             | Yes                  | No                     | 2/3 vote               |
| Postpone consideration of something          | "I move we postpone this matter until..." | No                             | Yes                  | Yes                    | Majority               |
| Have an item studied further                 | "I move we refer this to a committee."    | No                             | Yes                  | Yes                    | Majority               |
| Amend a motion                               | "I move to amend"                         | No                             | Yes                  | Yes                    | Majority               |
| Introduce business (a primary motion)        | "I move that..."                          | No                             | Yes                  | Yes                    | Majority               |
| Object to procedure or to personal affront   | "Point of order"                          | Yes                            | No                   | No                     | No vote<br>Chair rules |
| Request information                          | "Point of information"                    | Yes                            | No                   | No                     | No vote                |
| *Ask for a vote count to verify a voice vote | "I call for a division of the house"      | No                             | No                   | No                     | No vote                |
| *Object to considering some matter           | "I object to consideration of this"       | Yes                            | No                   | No                     | 2/3 vote               |
| *Reconsider an item already disposed of      | "I move to take from the table..."        | Yes                            | Yes                  | Yes                    | Majority               |
| *Consider an item not in scheduled order     | "I move we suspend the rules and..."      | No                             | Yes                  | No                     | 2/3 vote               |
| *Vote on a ruling by the chair               | "I appeal the chair's decision"           | Yes                            | Yes                  | Yes                    | Majority               |
| *Take up a matter previously tabled          | "I move to take from the table..."        | Yes                            | Yes                  | No                     | Majority               |

## Order of Precedence of Motions

The ordinary motions rank as follows, the lowest in rank being at the bottom and the highest at the top of the list. When any one of them is immediately pending, the motions above it in the list are in order, and those below are out of order.

| Motion                           | Debatable | Usually Privileged | Not always privileged | Can be amended | What vote is required? |
|----------------------------------|-----------|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| Fix the time to which to adjourn | No        | Yes                | A                     | Yes            | Majority               |
| Adjourn                          | No        | Yes                | B                     | No             | Majority               |
| Take a recess                    | No        | Yes                | C                     | Yes            | Majority               |
| Raise a question of privilege    | No        | Yes                | No                    | No             | Majority               |
| Call for the orders of the day   | No        | Yes                | No                    | No             | Majority               |
| Lay on the table                 | No        | No                 | No                    | No             | Majority               |
| Previous question                | No        | No                 | No                    | No             | 2/3 vote               |
| Limit or extend limits of debate | No        | No                 | No                    | No             | 2/3 vote               |
| Postpone to a certain time       | Yes       | No                 | No                    | Yes            | Majority               |
| Commit or refer                  | Yes       | No                 | No                    | Yes            | Majority               |
| Amend                            | Yes       | No                 | No                    | Yes            | Majority               |
| Postpone indefinitely            | Yes       | No                 | No                    | No             | Majority               |
| A main motion                    | Yes       | No                 | No                    | Yes            | Majority               |

- A) Privileged only when made while another question is pending, and in an assembly that has made no provision for another meeting on the same or the next day.
- B) Loses its privileged character and is a main motion if in any way qualified, or if its effect, if adopted, is to dissolve the assembly without any provision for its meeting again.
- C) Privileged only when made while other business is pending.

## Working with the Media

### Why is the Media Important?

Media – including newspapers, radio, and television – is one way to reach consumers, potential members, and opinion and political leaders. By being proactive, you can prepare for a media opportunity by shaping your message early. It is important to know members of the media, what they do and a little about how they do their jobs. Reporters will most often call because they are looking for a reaction to something that has been in the news. To get them to cover positive stories about agriculture and Farmers Union, we need to “knock on their door.” Either way, there are some basic nuts and bolts to help you handle media opportunities. Perhaps most important: If you want a story on your event, let the reporter know in advance. ***They can't report on activities they don't know about!***

### Types of Media

- Daily Newspapers
- Television
- Weekly Newspapers
- Magazines
- Radio
- Wire Services
- Internet News
- Blogs
- Social Media

### Media Outreach

- Become a knowledgeable resource.
- Get to know the reporter.
- Write letters to the editor.
- Author an op-ed piece.
- Suggest stories.
- News releases.

### Media Excuses

There are a number of reasons people choose not to take advantage of media opportunities. Among them are:

- The reporter is out to get us!
- They won't get it right anyway, so why talk?
- I can't tell my message in just a few seconds.
- What I have to say is too complicated.
- I can't make time to talk to reporters.

### **The Reporter's Job**

A reporter's job is not to give you positive or negative publicity. The job is to find the most interesting aspect of a story and relate it to readers, listeners, or viewers.

### **Your Job**

Your job, as the news source, is to assist the reporter, provide accurate information and simplify key points. You can also suggest other angles, sometimes changing the direction of the reporter's original story idea.

### **Why You?**

You have the stories and local angle that allows you to become a storyteller. You have first-hand knowledge of how the issue affects you, your family, or your community. You are a vital link to strengthen local impact and coverage on many issues. Because unique stories get attention from hometown media, it is your responsibility to highlight what makes your perspective special.

### **Get to Know the Reporter**

A good time to meet a reporter is when no specific request is being made; a visit should not be dictated by urgency to cover an issue. Send them an email explaining who you are and arrange a time to meet in person or over the phone. It's helpful to discuss the issues that they cover and the kinds of stories they're planning to report on in the future.

During these meetings, you should convey an image of being a helpful and reliable source. They'll be more likely to reach out to you in the future if they know they'll get a prompt and helpful response.

### **It's News If It ...**

- Provides information.
- Is timely.
- Has an impact on a large number of people.
- Is interesting.
- Is unique.

### **The News Release**

- Make sure the information is newsworthy.
- Start with a brief description of the news, then distinguish who announced it, and not the other way around.
- Write in an inverted pyramid format: most important information first, least important last.
- Ask yourself, "How are people going to relate to this, and will they be able to connect?"
- Avoid excessive use of adjectives and fancy language.
- Make sure quotes are accurate and properly attributed.
- Provide contact information: name, address, phone, e-mail, website address.
- Basic Elements
  - For Immediate Release
  - Contact

- Headline
- Dateline
- Opening Paragraph
- Body

## SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE

 **National Farmers Union**  
UNITED TO GROW FAMILY AGRICULTURE

**NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
*DATE*

**Contact:** (202) 314-3106

**HEADLINE**

CITY, state (Date)- Opening Paragraph (Who, What, When Where, Why)

Remainder of body text

### (indicates end)

### Why Isn't My Phone Ringing?

In some cases, you will not be inundated with calls from editors and journalists. This doesn't mean that your press release wasn't newsworthy or never made it to print. If the quote in the press release was enough for the reporter to use, they may incorporate it in a story, even if they don't reach out. On the downside, there is a possibility that your well-written, newsworthy press release was overlooked because of another major news story. There is no industry standard that requires a journalist or editor to contact the source of the press release to inform them of their decision to use (or not to use) a press release.

### When the Reporter Calls You

Find out the reporter's name, affiliation, and deadline. If necessary, tell them you will call back in a few minutes. Use this time to gather information and prepare your answers.

Define your role. Are you the only person being interviewed? If appropriate, offer other sources that could add to the story.

Regard the interview as an opportunity to tell your story or to make your points. Remember your audience is the reader, viewer, or listener, not the reporter. Decide what you want the reader, viewer, or listener to understand about the subject and make that the focus of your answer.

Remember that nothing is off the record. Don't make off-cuff remarks. Assume everything you say in the presence of the reporter or news staff may appear in the story.

If the story doesn't seem like a good fit for Farmers Union, or if you think that offering a quote will stir up more controversy than is worthwhile, passing on the opportunity is an acceptable choice. Do apologize and offer to help in the future if another appropriate opportunity arises – you don't want to close the door on these relationships.

### **Gather Your Facts**

Use your resources

- Farmers Union offices
- Extension Service
- USDA
- Other Agricultural Organizations

### **Avoid Industry Jargon**

- Know your audience and speak in terms they will understand.
- If you must use an industry-specific word, be prepared to explain it.

### **Letters to the Editor**

Writing letters to the editor is something everyone can do. Letters pages are one of the most widely read sections of the newspaper. In addition, published letters often reach well beyond the local community. Elected officials frequently read the letters pages of local newspapers to get a feeling for their constituents' opinions on current issues.

There are at least three occasions when you should consider writing a letter to the media:

- a) When you see something that you don't like. The objective is to correct the message that was sent. Correcting errors of fact is important and can be done in a positive way. Always be constructive and polite!
- b) When you see something that you do like. When the reporter gets it right, it is OK to send a letter to help extend the positive message a little further and give the media a little "pat on the back" for doing a good job.
- c) When you want to express your opinion on an issue or event that is in the news. This does not necessarily have to respond to a specific story.

### **Lightning Rod Phenomenon**

If you get a letter published, don't be surprised if other letter writers sometimes take issue with your viewpoint. If that happens, it is usually advisable to let the matter drop. There may be a few instances when it's appropriate to respond, but it's important to choose your battles carefully.

### Message Development

You can prepare for an interview by developing your key messages in advance. This includes preparing for potential hot topic questions. In any case, this is your opportunity to provide a “commercial” for your message. This worksheet will help you think through the message and develop answers to bring the reporter back to the key point, should they get off track.

**Audience:** Who is the message aimed at, consumers, political leaders, members, potential members?

**Opening Statement:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Point 1, 2, 3, etc.** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supporting evidence and facts:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Example:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Potential questions or hot topics:** \_\_\_\_\_

### The “What Else?” Question

Be prepared for the “What else?” question. Often a reporter will finish an interview by asking if you have anything else to add. This is your opportunity to briefly reinforce the message of the interview or share any other information that they didn’t ask about. It’s helpful to consider ahead of time what you might want to say.

### Need More Help?

These pages only briefly explain what it takes to have an effective relationship with the media. For more information, or for help with media opportunities, contact the National Farmers Union communications director.



## Legislative Activity

### Visiting & Writing a Government Official. A Brief Guide to Making Your Point and Influencing Action.

Being prepared is the key to success in visiting or writing any government official, whether that person is a member of the state legislature, your state's governor, a member of the U.S. Congress, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, or the President of the United States.

National Farmers Union has developed a “Lobbying Guide for Farmers Union Fly-In Participants” which provides some useful hints on what to do when visiting with a government official. The suggestions in this guide apply to any government official: local, state, or federal. A copy of the lobbying guide is included here.

Many of the same tips covered in the lobbying guide apply equally as well when it comes to writing a letter to a government official. When writing a letter, you should:

1. **Do your homework** by educating yourself about the issue on which you are writing.
2. **Be as brief as possible and stick to the point** of your letter—don’t digress into a variety of secondary topics.
3. **Provide background information** on why the topic is an issue and what is not working right. Provide a positive alternative.
4. **Request a commitment** to a course of action and make sure they know how to get in touch with you.
5. **Finally, thank the person** receiving your correspondence for his/her attention to the matter.

## Lobbying Guide for Farmers Union Fly-In Participants

### A. Do your homework

1. Look at issue papers. Get comfortable with the topics. Look at the topics from a personal point of view. How will this issue affect your farm, town, state, family, and neighbors?
2. Visit with your team members. Find out where the expertise is-who- knows what, who can take the lead and who can best provide backup.
3. Make notes on specific items or examples for your own reference, but stay loose. The member of Congress or staff person may want to talk about other things too.

### B. Before the visit

1. Get -organized who on the team will discuss what? -Who might have firsthand experience on the issue? -Make sure everyone on the team understands how everyone else feels and what the NFU policy is on the -subject the- last thing you want to have happen is to sit in a congressional office and argue with each other. Team captains are not expected to do all the -talking each of you has valuable experience to share. You may want to alternate who takes the lead. -Take a moment before each meeting and divide the workload.
2. Prepare to overcome -objections let the member know that there are two sides to every issue. -If you want a senator or representative to believe your side is correct, you must be able to clearly describe, and then disarm, the opposing point of view.
3. Remember, in many cases a meeting with the staff person can be just as important as meeting his or her member. The staff person's area of responsibility may be our key issue area. The staffer will understand the issue and will have his or her member's ear.
4. Also, developing a relationship with a staff person can mean that you have made a useful contact for the future.

### C. During the visit

1. How, where and when you lobby someone is part planning (a scheduled appointment), part chance (bumping into someone in the hallway) and nearly all a matter of personal style (some people like to talk while others like to write). You will have some appointments but keep alert for chance opportunities. Here are two examples:
  - a. On their way to lobby the House Judiciary Committee on animal patenting with the Dairy and Livestock Councils, two Oklahoma Farmers Union members stopped to visit an Oklahoma representative who was not on the committee. The representative has always been a good friend of Farmers Union, and he took them on the subway over to the Capitol for a vote and introduced them to several key members on the way.
  - b. After a full day on the Hill, a tired North Dakota member/state legislator approached a television camera crew in the hallway. The crew was discussing the fact that it had more tape and would like to talk to another legislator. Brief

introductions were followed by a 10minute interview of the North Dakota visitor. The interview was on *Nightline* that evening. (The moral of the story: A fly-in is like running a marathon. Work hard but save a little for a sprint at the end!)

2. Judge your time investment by the "triage" -method for- those who are always with you, just stop by and say "thanks", for those who are never with you, just stop by and let them know you are in town and for those who are new to you or your issue, spend some time educating them.
3. Be brief, -stick to as few subjects as possible and keep "schmoozing" to a minimum. -A small amount can add to the personal factor, such as finding out where the staff person is from, how long he or she has been on staff, in Washington, D.C. and so forth, but more than two minutes is too much.
4. Be polite, even if the person you meet with doesn't agree with you.
5. Provide background information on why something isn't working right and provide a positive alternative to make it better. There's no use complaining if you don't have a better idea.
6. Discuss, do not argue. Intensity is fine, anger is not. If you come across a situation in which a member of Congress or staff person is tightly aligned with the technical side of an issue, remember that is his or her strength. Counter it with a patient, but not patronizing, illustration of what happens in rural America. Try to paint a mental picture, even a quick diagram on paper, or a response like, "Well that might be what the goal is, but the result in Doe County, Minnesota, was that four machinery dealers and 11 other Main Street businesses closed." Then suggest a way to correct or remedy the problem. (Your strength is local, theirs is not.)
7. Get some kind of commitment out of whomever you meet with--even if it's a commitment from staff to discuss it with the senator or representative at his or her earliest convenience.
8. Find out who the "players" are regarding your issue. This could be very important when planning future visits or establishing additional contacts.
9. Leave on friendly terms, no matter what. You may not have won this time, but there will likely be another. If you leave with a smile, it will make the job of the Washington staff easier.
10. Request a Capitol Gallery Pass from your representative and one of your senators. This will allow you to gain admittance to the House and Senate visitors' galleries to observe Congress at its best, LIVE.

#### **D. After the visit**

1. Fill out your copy of the gold report-back sheet immediately, while everything is still fresh in your mind. Compare your impressions with those of your other team members and jointly fill out the team report-back sheet. Stop at the NFU office or other designated location and give the sheet to the NFU staff member stationed there. Let him or her know about any follow-up that may be necessary on our part.
2. Strategize on which other members should be visited on the issue, or what other activities might be pursued to keep the heat on, such as a town meeting back home in the district.

3. Send a thank you note to the person you met summarizing your understanding of the meeting and reminding him or her of whatever commitments they might have made.

#### E. Once You're Home

1. Just because we let you go home from the fly-in doesn't mean we're letting you off the hook. By all means, take advantage of the rapport you've built up with your representatives and senators. Stay in touch. Let them know that you remember the commitments they made and that you're paying attention to what they're doing. Drop them a note of thanks for the meeting.
2. There are any number of ways to stay involved. Contribute to NFUPAC. Sign up to receive the weekly "e-newsletter." Or just keep those cards and letters coming.
3. Use these addresses when corresponding with Congress:

The Honorable John Smith  
U.S. House of Representatives  
### House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jane Smith  
U.S. Senate  
### Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Representative Smith:

Dear Senator Smith:

Dear Mr. Secretary:

4. If you'd prefer to call, the office of any member of Congress can be reached by calling the Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121. The phone number for the Secretary of Agriculture's office is (202) 720-3631. The phone number for the White House hotline for comments is (202) 456-1111.
5. Most congressional offices, as well as the USDA and the White House have forms on their websites where you can electronically submit your comment as well.

Your best effort will benefit not only you but also National Farmers Union as it strengthens the position of your NFU staff as they represent you before congress and government agencies.

#### F. Glossary

1. **Act:** Legislation that has passed both houses of Congress and has been signed by the president, or for which a veto was overridden by two thirds vote of the House and Senate.
2. **Appropriation:** Provides funding for authorized programs. An appropriation bill originates in the House and normally is not acted on until its authorization measure is enacted.
3. **Authorization:** Establishes a program (e.g., the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 authorizes the various commodity programs through 1995) and authorizes funding for the program either with a specific dollar ceiling or with an open-ended phrase, such as "whatever amounts may be necessary."

4. **Bill:** The form of most legislation, which is labeled in sequential order of introduction according to the originating body, e.g., S. 970 or H.R. 2467. Numbers begin with 1 at the beginning of each two-year session of Congress. A companion bill refers to identical or very similar bills introduced into both the House and Senate.
5. **Concurrent Resolution:** Designated H.Con.Res. or S.Con.Res., it must be passed by both the House and Senate, but it does not have the force of law, so it need not be signed by the president. It is usually used to make rules applicable to both houses. For example, the budget resolution, spelling out what the authorizing committees of each body must provide to their budget committees to meet deficit reduction targets, is a concurrent resolution.
6. **Conference Committee:** House and Senate members appointed to resolve differences between House-passed and Senate-passed bills. Conferees usually come from the committees that had jurisdiction over the bill when it was first introduced. The compromise package forged by a conference committee is then returned to both houses for a final vote without further amendments.
7. **Joint Resolution:** Designated H.J.Res. or S.J.Res., most joint resolutions must be passed by both houses and signed by the president, giving them the force of law. The exception is joint resolutions proposing amendments to the Constitution, which take effect only upon ratification by three-fourths of the states.
8. **Report:** A document accompanying a piece of legislation in which the committee having jurisdiction (including a conference committee) explains to the full House or Senate what was done and why. Report language does not have the full force of law, but it can be useful in determining congressional intent if the letter of the law is unclear.

## Hints for Planning and Holding a Membership Campaign

Signing up new members and holding on to the members you already have is the responsibility of all officers--elected and non-elected alike--of the local Farmers Union, as well as the many active members who volunteer to help in this endeavor. So far, we've covered some of the items which aid in this undertaking such as holding good meetings, getting people involved, etc.

The best way to get new members is to ask them to join. The best way to retain members is to ask them to renew their membership. Member recruitment and retention should be part of your everyday life. In addition, there does come a time when a concerted membership campaign is in order.

The success of a membership campaign depends heavily on -- PLANNING.

### **Key steps to planning a membership campaign:**

1. Division officers need to set a date to meet to plan a comprehensive membership campaign.
2. The Membership Director should prepare a list of past-due members and a list of all current paid-up members. Membership brochures and membership applications should be developed.
3. Assign the "past due" members to be contacted by division officers by email, telephone, or in-person. Develop lists of potential members to be divided amongst division officers and members.
4. Set a date or time frame for when the campaign is to be conducted.
5. Be sure each membership recruitment team has sufficient materials such as membership forms, brochures, membership benefits information, pens, etc.
6. Share the Do's & Don'ts document and brief each member of the recruitment teams with "key talking points" so he or she will feel comfortable talking about current issues. Review common objections and arm your team with good responses to overcome them.
7. If the membership campaign is to last more than a single day, set a time frame during which each team will make the contacts in its assigned area.
8. Set a date to get back together to review the progress that was made and to establish follow-up activity to contact those who have not been contacted.

## Do's & Don'ts for Recruiting a Member

### Things to Do

1. Be courteous as you approach the farm.
2. Make sure you visit with the farmer and not a hired hand.
3. Ask the potential member for a few minutes of his or her time.
4. Introduce your partner and yourself as volunteers of Farmers Union and try to find a common link by finding something positive to say about his or her operation. A compliment opens doors. Then, introduce the Farmers Union.
5. Give the prospective member a chance to talk about his/her concerns and tailor your message accordingly.
6. Keep it simple. Emphasize one or two points of value to the potential member.
7. If you are working with a team member, divide up who is going to talk about what.
8. Have some Farmers Union materials with you to leave behind such as a brochure, the policy statement, and a newsletter.
9. Don't forget to mention membership benefits such as family retreats, youth camps, youth programs, insurance, etc.
10. Let the potential member know of other members in the area.
11. Close the sale by asking for the farmer's membership in a positive manner (i.e., "We would like you to be a part of the Farmers Union", not "You don't want to join, do you?").
12. Concentrate on selling multi-year memberships.
13. Remember to sell associate memberships for non-farmers to people like feed dealers, the local barber and others who share Farmers Union's vision for rural America, if your state has an associate membership category.
14. If the individual joins, ask for suggestions on others he/she would like to see as members of the Farmers Union. This is a great way to increase your prospect list.
15. Secure an answer from the individual within the few minutes you told him/her you would visit.

16. Make sure you have a membership form and pen ready when you close the sale.
17. Remember to keep a few membership forms and a ball point pens in your car and farm trucks at all times to take advantage of the unplanned opportunity to sign up a new member. You never know when this may make the difference between signing up a new member you meet at the local cafe or feed store and losing that opportunity.
18. Thank the individual for his/her time. Invite him/her to attend an upcoming Farmers Union event and then follow up with a reminder call a week or so ahead of the event.
19. Most of all, have fun!

### **Things Not to Do**

1. Don't make your presentation too confusing or complex.
2. Don't argue with the farmer.
3. Don't oversell or make promises that can't be kept.
4. Don't talk down about other farm organizations as part of your presentation.
5. Don't hesitate to ask the person for a membership, but don't make them feel pressured into becoming a member. Rather, ensure the event encourages positive association to Farmers Union, and introduces membership.
6. Don't give the prospective member a chance to give you a definite "no," if the person won't give you a definite "yes."
7. Don't overstay your welcome.





## Sample invitation to guest speakers

Dear [NAME],

I am reaching out to you today to invite you to speak at the Farmers Union's [NAME OF THE EVENT] in [CITY, STATE]. This program, hosted [DATE], includes education sessions and networking opportunities for farmers. This year we plan to host sessions that focus on [TOPIC]. We feel that you would be a great addition to our panel of speakers and if you are available, we would like to invite you to cover this topic in a one-hour presentation.

Please let me know if this is something you would be interested in participating in or if you would like to recommend a colleague to be a speaker.

Best regards,  
[YOUR NAME]

## Potential Topics for a Farmers Union Meeting

### **Chemical Regulations**

#### **Computers**

*Hardware and Software*  
*Specialized Farm Programs*

### **Conservation Programs**

#### **Cooperatives**

*How to Form New Co-ops*  
*Supporting Existing Co-ops*  
*Running for Co-op Office*

### **CPR -- How to Save A Life**

### **Developing Farmer's Markets**

### **Estate Planning**

#### **Family Life**

*Developing Family Rituals*  
*Raising Children on the Farm*

#### **Family Relationships**

*Finding Time for Fun*

#### **Farm Finance**

*Beginning Farmer Programs*  
*Budget Management*

#### **Farm Safety**

*Kids on the Farm*  
*Reminders on Machinery*

#### **Farm Programs**

*This Year's Changes*  
*Proposals for the Future*

### **Farmers Union Insurance**

#### **Food Safety**

*Farm Record Keeping*  
*Staff Training*  
*Equipment & Materials*

### **Future of Small Communities**

### **Generational Transfers**

#### **Health Issues**

*Stress Management*

### **Intergenerational Farming**

#### **Legislation**

*Local Issues*  
*State Issues*  
*National Issues*

### **Market Concentration**

### **Rural Development**

### **Soil Conservation**

### **Specialty Crops and Diversification**

### **Strategic Partnerships**

#### **Supplementing Farm Income**

*Writing a Resume*  
*Searching for a Job*

### **Taxes**

### **Youth & Beginning Farmer Programs**

## Potential Annual Farmers Union Program Schedule

### **January -- Farm Programs Month**

Speakers -- FSA county committee chairman; legislators or their staff

### **February -- Farm Credit Month**

Speakers -- Bank presidents; Farm Credit officials

### **March -- Farm Implement Appreciation Month**

Speakers -- Farm implement dealers

### **April -- Rural Education Month**

Speakers -- School superintendent; students taking part in speech contest

### **May -- Agricultural Research Month**

Speakers -- Director of local or regional agricultural research station; member of university agriculture department

### **June -- No Meeting due to Harvest and Farming**

(off months may vary by region)

### **July -- Other Local Farm Organizations Relations Month**

Speakers -- Beef Council president; Grain Growers president

### **August -- County Commissioners Month**

Speakers -- Various commissioners

### **September -- Rural Crime Prevention Month**

Speakers -- County sheriff or other law enforcement official

### **October -- National Co-op Month**

Speakers -- Cooperative presidents, board members, or managers; political candidates if in an election year

### **November -- Food Production Month**

Speakers -- Supermarket manager; federal or state meat inspector

### **December -- Industrial Emphasis Month**

Speakers -- Cooperative managers; local union official; water commissioner

## Potential Farmers Union-Sponsored Special Events

Farmers Union Booth at County/State Fair

Harvest Day Festival

Farmers Union Booth at Local Farm Show

Public Forum on Key Issues

Farmer-Business Appreciation Dinner

Farmers Union Float for Regional Community Parades

Sponsor Tractor Pull at County Fair

Food Safety Training with Extension or Dept of Agriculture

County Farm Family of the Year Award

## Possible Program Sample for Quarterly Farmers Union Meetings

As mentioned earlier, many Farmers Union divisions do not meet monthly. Instead, they may meet on a quarterly or semi-annual basis. The important factor for good Farmers Union meetings is not how frequently they are held. What makes a good Farmers Union meeting is having a program that is interesting and useful for its members--a program that will make them want to come again and that will attract people to join the organization.

In the event you have less-frequent Farmers Union meetings, you may want to consider holding at least one or two of them on a weekend day and expand the program to a half-day event, including social activities such as a covered-dish supper, an after the meeting softball game or swimming party as part of the session.

A sample of a quarterly meeting program follows:

### **First Quarter -- The Upcoming Year's Legislative Agenda**

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Speakers         | U.S. representative or state legislator to speak on the legislative agenda |
| Business Session | Discussion of Farmers Union viewpoint on that agenda; resolutions          |
| Social Activity  | Favorite Family Dessert Social afterwards                                  |

### **Second Quarter -- Farm Stress & Prevention; What Can We Do**

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Speakers         | Local/county health department, local therapists and counselors |
| Business Session | Discussion of how Farmers Union may contribute to solutions     |
| Social Activity  | Ice Cream Social  |

### **Third Quarter -- Farm Programs; This Year's Changes and What Needs Are Unmet**

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Speakers         | FSA officials and legislators and/or staff                        |
| Business Session | Discussion of what has been learned; recommended changes programs |

### **Fourth Quarter -- Cooperative Month Observance (if October) or Candidate's Forum (if election year)**

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Speakers         | Managers of local cooperatives or political candidates   |
| Business Session | Election of delegates to national Farmers Union convention, discussion of cooperative activities, etc. |
| Social Activity  | Covered Dish Dinner  |

## Sample Agenda for a Farmers Union Meeting

What follows are some suggestions for how to construct the agenda, or order of business, for a couple of different types of Farmers Union meetings of your local organization. Be flexible and imaginative in using these, especially in what you may place in some of the categories such as the special program, etc.

What is important is that an agenda be written down as a guide for the person presiding at the meeting. It also is a good idea to note the amount of time you would like to allot for each item. The individual presiding should use that time allotment as a guide but be prepared to adjust as necessary.

### Agenda for Farmers Union Meeting

|    |  |                  |
|----|--|------------------|
| A. | Call meeting to order, welcome guests and call roll                                | 5 minutes        |
| B. | Minutes of previous meeting and Treasurer's report                                 | 5 minutes        |
| C. | Discussion of correspondence   | 5 minutes        |
| D. | Reports by directors or chairs   | 10 to 15 minutes |
| E. | Special program or topic for the meeting   | 30 minutes       |
| F. | Break  | 10 minutes       |
| G. | Old or unfinished business   | 5 to 10 minutes  |
| H. | New business   | 10 to 15 minutes |
| I. | Determine action needed as result of meeting                                       | 10 minutes       |
| J. | Adjournment--thank guests and people who made special contributions to the meeting | 5 minutes        |
| K. | Refreshments and social visits   |                  |

If your division is planning a special event, such as a summer picnic, you may want to follow this suggested agenda:

**Agenda for Farmers Union Summer Picnic**

- |    |  |            |
|----|--|------------|
| A. | Welcome everybody to the event                                 | 5 minutes  |
| B. | Introduce special guests                                       | 5 minutes  |
| C. | Give an overview of topic and outline Farmers Union's concerns | 5 minutes  |
| D. | Introduce guest speaker - special topic speech                 | 20 minutes |
| E. | Questions and answers  | 20 minutes |
| F. | Wrap up and thank everyone for coming                          | 5 minutes  |

**Agenda for Issues-Oriented Evening Program**

- |    |   |            |
|----|---|------------|
| A. | Welcome   | 5 minutes  |
| B. | Introduce special guests  | 5 minutes  |
| C. | Give an overview of topic   | 15 minutes |
| D. | Introduce guest speaker - special topic speech                          | 45 minutes |
| E. | Questions and answers   | 20 minutes |
| F. | Outline Farmers Union's concerns, wrap up and thank everyone for coming | 10 minutes |