

# Farmer Meetings



## What makes a good farmers' meeting?

### Prepare

Analyze your audience. What are their major interests and resources? Make sure the meeting covers the group's interests and not just the interests of the meeting organizers. Make sure time suits religious and cultural preferences and place is politically, socially and religiously neutral.

### Gender

Be sensitive to gender and decide what mix of males, females or both is appropriate.

### Facilitation

Show a genuine interest in the farmers' concerns. Do not to push your own agenda. While farmers do not necessarily have technical expertise, they have plenty of valuable knowledge and experience.

Use visuals to explain points and tables (See example below) or flipcharts to collect information. Use language the audience can understand.

### Offer something

Farmers are often giving up their time for no pay. Reward them - give extension information or an extension tool about a major issue they are concerned about, etc. At other times, it may be appropriate to provide snacks, refreshments or a meal, a cap or a shirt, etc.

### Running the meeting

- State and achieve a desired output. (e.g., collect information on problems and possible solutions, teach a technique, etc.)
- Keep an open mind and listen to what the farmers have to say. Show the farmers that you are truly interested in what they think and do with regard to the topic at hand.
- Highlight but do not push your own agenda (e.g. a technology you have developed that you think will help farmers).
- Take breaks to keep people fresh and active.
- Be conversational and empathize - try to be on equal footing with farmers in order to establish rapport and build trust.
- Collect feedback. Any farmer's meeting is a good opportunity to learn about their concerns and ideas. It can help focus research and extension efforts.
- Engage the group – do not lecture.
- Although you have may have more expertise, never engage farmers in a debate nor pass judgment on their views or practices.
- Build trust. Just like anyone, farmers need trust before they will believe or try what someone else says.
- Accept offers to snack with farmers or visit their fields as this builds trust.

Example Table

Problem	Cause	Option(s)	Who can adopt	Best medium to learn about technology
Brown plant hopper	Excessive early spraying	Reduce early spraying	All	Field demonstrations, brochure, radio

## Why conduct a farmer's meeting?

Farmer's meetings are held to:

1. Collect input on needs, challenges, and proposed solutions
2. Train on new technologies or process innovation
3. Collect feedback on technologies or process innovations
4. Promote farmer to farmer learning

**Remember: Your audience and their interests dictate what you cover in a meeting or field day.**

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