



Connecting to the COMMUNITY



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The idea of improving children’s nutrition and supporting local farms is easy to “sell” as a local media story. The more positive media coverage a project receives, the more support it will generate from the school administration, school board, parents, teachers, food service staff, and the local community. By collaborating with teachers, administrators, and community members, you can find the appropriate individual and organization to support and develop different aspects of your farm-to-school initiatives and farm education program.

As a farmer, you can do many things within your community to get the word out about your interest in selling food to local schools and having community education on your farm.

Ways to reach out to your community:

- Create a flyer with your farm’s information on it.
- Develop a logo for your farm, if you haven’t already, and put it on all information that you distribute.
- Develop advertisements for local television and radio announcing how your farm can be a part of local community members lives and interests.
- Consider hosting open-house/open-farm days.
- Develop various seasonal festivals on your farm. Each festival can reflect what is being harvested or grown at that time and can include activities such as:
 - making salve, wreaths, or bouquets
 - hosting Solstice/ May Day festivities
 - holding a community harvest celebration.
- Contact a local band or musician to have an outdoor concert on the farm.
- Create a web site for your farm posting events and general farm information.

continued



- ✓ Consider creating a “farm tour” with other local farmers, representing a variety of farms in the area. You could even have a “tour scavenger hunt” to draw people to each farm.
- ✓ Take an ad out in the local paper describing your events and goals.
- ✓ Local papers often welcome photos with captions about community events. Be sure to submit a photo announcing your event and follow-up results.
- ✓ Write a once-a-month, on-the-farm column for your local paper. (If you’re not a writer, have a customer or group of students write the piece.) Writing the columns during the winter months makes it doable.

Your interaction with the public will be important in developing your farm’s relationship to the community. Try to identify one “spokesperson” for the farm. This means insuring that the person who is communicating with the public is comfortable with this role. It is also important to identify one person who fields questions about activities on the farm. Conveying consistent information is vital in developing a solid reputation. For instance, if you are charging a certain amount for group visits to the farm, be sure this information is consistently conveyed.

Points to remember:

- ✓ Be sure to follow up with phone calls. Don’t drop the ball — always follow up!
- ✓ Keep all newspaper clippings and articles relating to your farm; you can access them later to show that your farm is relevant in the community.
- ✓ Have events annually. This will help ensure your farm as a place identified with the community.

The following are sample press releases to use as a reference when advertising a community event.

Name of Your Farm Here

N E W S R E L E A S E

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Your Name Here

Insert Date Here

Your Phone Number

NAME OF EVENT HERE

Your Town, VT – Saturday, June 5 _____ Farm hosted five classes of fifth and sixth graders from _____ elementary school. The school group has been studying soil cycles and farming this spring and finished the unit with a trip to the farm. Teachers were eager to take a trip to _____ farm because of the variety of opportunities to see first hand the topics that the students had been so interested in during the school year. Students helped farmer _____ mix potting soil in the green house and planted some seeds which will turn into large beautiful pumpkins months from now. While visiting the pigs students learned about the benefits of having animals on a farm to maintain healthy soil. _____, a teacher from the school raved about the ability for the students to learn experientially on the farm, and gain a deeper understanding about where their food comes from. Students were impressed with the farm, and some even asked if they could return to help with the harvest in the fall.

_____ farm schedules field trips throughout the school year for students of all ages. Field trips vary depending on the season, what is happening on the farm, and the visiting groups' interests. For more information on scheduling a field trip, please call _____.

_____ Farm is a 7 acre mixed vegetable farm that provides agriculture education to the local community while supplying fresh local food. Its mission is to support local agriculture and promote environmental stewardship by educating about the value of small farms in Vermont.

YOUR FARMS ADDRESS HERE

Name of Your Farm Here

N E W S R E L E A S E

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Insert Date Here

Contact: Your Name Here

Your Phone Number

NAME OF EVENT HERE

Your Town, VT – Saturday, November 26 _____ Farm will be hosting its annual Harvest Festival. The farm will be bustling with exciting annual events and friendly community faces. The day-long event features music, storytelling, traditional crafts, and foods from the bounty of the harvest. Visitors can participate from 11:00 am to 5:00 in a variety of harvest activities including wreath making, salve making, and learning how to make dried flower wreaths. Hay rides are free, weather permitting, and are offered on a first-come, first-served basis.

The _____ band will be providing entertainment for the whole family to enjoy. Other family friendly activities include pumpkin picking and carving, pressing apple cider and visits with farm animals. Enjoy your neighbors cooking skills and fresh baked pies from the annual apple pie contest at the festival.

Admission to the Harvest Festival is \$6/adults; \$4/children. Children under three years of age are free. THE EVENT IS HELD RAIN OR SHINE. For information, please call _____.

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YOUR FARM'S ADDRESS HERE