

TIPS AND TRICKS TO RUNNING A 'GREAT' FIELD DAY

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Introduction

The efficiency, content and management of a field day are all factors that contribute to make the day a 'great' event. The people that attend, and how they involve themselves in the activities on offer will determine how successful the day is perceived to be.

Considering the following 'tips and tricks' during the organisational stage of the day will assist you to plan and organise yourself, staff, presenters and sponsors.

(This is a guide only, if a "tip" or "trick" is not included, please let the author know.)



Liebe Group Spring Field Day, 2005

Before the Event

(tick box when task completed)

- Do you have a convincing topic(s) of practical value to the local community?
 - Consult with group members for appropriate topics
- Do you have enough – but not too much – material to present?
- Have you selected a date that does not clash with other State events?
 - Check the date gives enough time for planning
 - Check if the date can “piggy back” with another local event
 - Does the date suit the field day topic?
- Do you have public liability insurance?
- Have you invited a keynote speaker or key local farmers to present on the day?
 - Consider a high profile, motivational lunchtime speaker (Use a Nuffield scholar to present a controversial topic?)
 - Provide speakers with presentation guidelines (expected format, target audience, timing etc.)
- Have you drawn up a timeline for the organisation of the day?
 - Include a list of tasks to be completed
 - Ensure all members of the organising committee have a copy
 - Allocate tasks to committee members
- Do you need a bus? Book early if required
- Is there a minimum number of people required to attend to make the event a success? If this number is not reached, do you have a cancellation plan?



Professor Bob Gilkes at Kojonup, 2005

Logistics

– Audience Considerations

- Have you positioned the audience so that:
 - The audience will look down on the speaker (if possible)
 - People will be seated/standing in the shade
 - The audience will face away from the sun?
- Have you provided adequate toilet facilities?
- Consider the comfort of participants ie. marquee size, seating for lunchtime, tables, shade?
 - Book appropriate equipment
- Provide three breaks during the day (morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea)
 - Ensure adequate time for eating and networking
 - Consider one hour for lunch
- Have you provided pre-printed name badges showing first and second names for all attendees?
- Have you printed the right amount of field day booklets?
 - Include site/tour map, programme, local area rainfall and soil statistics
- Provide an alternative plan in case of inclement weather conditions.

– Catering

- Have you approached local community groups to provide catering for the day?
 - Can they provide hot options for morning tea and lunch?
 - Availability of home baked goodies?
 - Are there alternatives to sandwiches?
- Consider providing free food – by increasing gate price or asking for sponsorship to cover cost
- Have you provided more than one tea/coffee station?
 - Allocate someone to look after them during the day
 - Ensure supplies 'topped up' and have adequate rubbish bins.

– In the Marquee

- Co-ordinate poster display before the event
- Ask presenters to provide handouts/samples to compliment poster display
- Provide power generator for urn
- Use a second power generator for computer (back-up)
- Hire a UPS to protect computer and data projector from power surges
- Provide a whiteboard for presenters to use
- Whiteboard can also be available for people to write new ideas for future research – offer a prize to encourage ideas
- Organise a community health station eg; “Pitstop” for blood pressure test
- Organise sponsors to provide tastings for lunchtime

– Group Committee Members

- Ask Committee Members to wear a 'group' jumper or shirt to be easily identified
- Allocate committee members to look after special guests
- Organise an MC for the day (consider a committee member).



*Facey Group Field Day
Soil core sample
2005*

Field Plots

- Ensure field plots are wide enough
- Mow a semi circle around each trial plot for people to stand in
- Have a portable microphone to be used by all presenters
- Dig a soil pit or organise soil core sample with pH measurements to show soil type under field site
- Omit trials that don't show visual results
- Don't visit every variety trial
- Locate machinery demonstrations away from presentations (to reduce noise impact)
- Organise an aerial spraying demonstration?



*Liebe Group
Aerial Spraying
Demonstration
2005*

Out on Site

- Have you selected an appropriate tour of the site?
 - Ensure your first stopping point is within sight of the car park
 - Test timing of walking/bus movements between sites before the day
- Have you organised:
 - o Field day signs (on-site and major roads nearby)
 - o Any extra handouts
 - o Transport for audience eg. walking, bus
 - o Microphone for marquee and in-field use
 - o Air horn (or similar) to notify participants of timing during the day
 - o Clips/weight to ensure posters/handouts don't blow away



Mingenew-Irwin Group Claying Demonstration, at Spring Field Day 2005

- Have you organised an area for parking and parking attendants (if necessary)?
 - Where will people will enter and exit the field day site?
- How will payment for field day entry be processed?
 - Do you have credit card options?
 - Will there be a member and non-member fee?
 - Do you have a list of sponsors and other non-paying guests at the door?
- Have you completed a Biosecurity Risk plan for the day?

Publicity

- Have you publicised through the newspaper, radio and television:
 - What is to be shown
 - Why it is important to farmers and the community
 - Where and when the field day is to be held
 - Meal arrangements?
- Have you publicised alternate wet weather arrangements?
- Have you organised for someone to take photos during the day for later publicity? (close up photos and peoples faces are best)
- Have you allocated someone from the group to be the key contact person for the media?
- Have you arranged for the media to interview the host farmer or key farmer from the group?



WANTFA Spring Field Day – September 2004

Trial Book

- Use a standard page layout, format and font throughout book
- Use page numbers
- Include a table of contents with all trial sites and corresponding page numbers
- Link table of contents to site map
- Include presenter's name next to topic in programme (people sometimes choose topic based on presenter)



Ladies at Facey Group Field Day, 2005

- Only include all trials on view during the day. If necessary, put additional trial results/information at the back
- Consider spiral binding the booklet for ease of use
 - Try to reduce number of loose inserts in the book
- Colour pages in the book can act as dividers
- Consider including a page for each sponsor to advertise
- Back cover is cardboard
- Consider paying for professional production
- Provide a "who's who" section with photos of grower group staff and executive committee



Evaluation

- Have you organised an evaluation of the day?
 - Do you know why you are evaluating?
 - Who will use the results?
 - What exactly do you need to evaluate?
 - Investigate alternatives to a paper form
- Organise prizes / beer tickets as reward for completing evaluation



*Rachel Bagshaw
Mingenew-Irwin
Group
Spring Field Day
2005*

*Corrigin Farm
Improvement Group
Field Day 2005*



On the Day!

- Start on time!
- Use a registration desk to issue name badges, trial booklets and evaluation form.
- Provide a map for latecomers to catch up with the tour
- Consider charging flat fee for interstate groups to attend
- Limit choice of topics eg; 6 out of 9 topics to look at during the day
- Use a Master of Ceremonies (MC) to:
 - outline day's proceedings
 - welcome corporate guests, sponsors, other grower groups etc
 - introduce organising committee and/or group executive committee
- Ensure presenters are kept to time limit
- Appoint a person to be in charge of overall timekeeping for the whole day



DAFWA Biodiesel display, SEPWA Field Day, 2005

- At each field site presentation use a committee or group member to:
 - introduce presenter
 - refer to relevant page number in trials booklet
 - ask mobile phones to be switched to silent and any conversations to be completed well away from the presentation
 - keep time during presentation
 - repeat questions for all audience to hear
 - give a vote of thanks
- Have you allocated someone to be the computer and microphone 'trouble shooter' for the day?
- Have you shown the MC, all the presenters and the field site chairpersons how to operate the microphone before their session?
- Ensure to check the microphone volume is:
 - At a sufficient level to discourage conversation
 - Not too loud
 - Have a person at the back of the audience to check the sound quality
 - Place loudspeakers in front of microphone to avoid feedback
- Provide poster display over lunch and/or locate next to machinery display
- Provide a panel of experts on selected trial sites to encourage questions and discussion next to the trial (include DAFWA, local consultants etc).

After the Day

- Hold a quick debriefing session straight after the event with the organising committee
 - Ask what they liked the best
 - Which topics worked really well/not so well
 - What would they change for next time
- Have you thanked all those who assisted?
- Have you prepared media releases for the press and radio if journalists did not attend?
- Analyse the successes and problems of the day and plan for next year while it is still fresh in your mind!



In the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity.

Albert Einstein

I know the price of success: dedication, hard work, and an unremitting devotion to the things you want to see happen.

Frank Lloyd Wright