

Topic 12

EMERGE
Supporting Farmer Led Groups

A collaborative project between
TAS FARM INNOVATION HUB
RMCG

Event Planning

Events are a great way to bring people together to share knowledge, build connections and make progress on things that matter to your group. Planning an event takes time and effort - the best events look effortless, thanks to their preparation.

This information sheet runs you through what you'll need to think about in the lead up to running an event, being prepared on the day, and using feedback to help plan for future events.

Purpose of the event

What do you hope to achieve?

It helps to consider what you hope attendees will get out of the day. It could be a key take home message, piece of information, call to action or a better connection to others in your community.

Who should be there?

Some members of your community are likely to show regularly, review if there are people that are 'missing' that may need a specifically targeted invite. Depending on what you hope to achieve, it may be useful to hold a small invite/member-only event, or something more public to reach more individuals.

Understand what the audience already knows, and pitch the material accordingly.

What style of event will suit?

Your purpose will guide the style or type of your event. Farmer groups often arrange social events that feature shared learning with a meal, a field day, workshop or tour several farms, but can also arrange forums, conferences, markets and online webinars. Understanding where your audience feels most comfortable, as well as the time they will likely invest, and the budget you have, is critical.

Understanding these elements will guide how you select and brief presenters, and promote your event.

Planning the event

From the points below, tailor what you need to organise according to the event you are running. Events can arise at short notice because there is an opportunity that is too good to miss (ie speaker availability). But if you can, try and organise your event well in advance (at least 4 weeks). If you are expecting 10 people to a farm visit, you probably won't need to make it too complex, but you will still need to think about how the day will run and organise some things ahead of time.

Using the checklist

The following checklist moves through different steps to think about. It may be that there are some sections that you do not need to complete because of the type of event you are running and where. For example things that you may need to think about for a field day, will be different for an event in a meeting room.

Also, if you are running an event for more than 999 people, then you will need to plan more than a month in advance as there are regulatory issues you need to plan for (including licences, traffic management plans) and this will be more complex if you are at someone's property vs an event venue.

Before the day

Social gathering

- [x] If you can, start planning a month before the day
- [ ] Be clear on why you want to hold the event, and what you want to achieve (its purpose)
- [ ] Select topic(s) of practical value to present to the local community. Ensure there's enough, but not too much material to present. Make sure your topics support the purpose of the event
- [ ] Select a date that doesn't clash with other significant events (e.g. planting, harvesting, lambing, shearing, holidays)
- [ ] Be clear on how many people you would like to attend – does there need to be a cap on numbers due to venue size, catering, or budget?
- [ ] Nominate someone to organise the day, and nominate someone to give them a hand (people fall sick and life happens, it's good to have someone else know what's going on and where things are up to)
- [ ] Contact potential attendees – email, text, phone calls – inviting them to attend. Ask them to let you know about dietaries. Consider using a registration system like Humanitix.
- [ ] Let attendees know what to expect:
  - Day and date
  - Start and end time
  - Place
  - Topic / speakers
  - Nominate who they can contact with questions and how (mobile / email)
  - Catering (e.g. morning tea provided; ask about dietaries)
- [ ] Arrange a runsheet and allocate tasks to specific people.
- [ ] Request slides and handouts ahead of the day.
- [ ] Make a cancellation plan if adequate numbers are not reached (how many do we need, which date do we cancel).
- [ ] Develop a simple budget: presenter costs, venue hire, audivisual hire, photographer, bus, promotions, catering, internal staff, welcome/statement of country. How much will it cost to run the event? Is there a venue fee and a catering cost? Will you need to hire equipment such as microphones, speakers etc? Will you need to hire tables and chairs? Will a bus be required for transport? How much do you need to charge to break even? How many people will you need to break even? Or is this a simple event where people will be reimbursed for their costs such as coffee/milk. For a ticketed event: cost/attendee = ticket price. **See links to event budget templates under 'Budget templates' on page 6**.
- [ ] Draw up a timeline for the day (run sheet, see pages 6-8), it can be an A4 page with who's doing what and a start and end time. It's good to be clear about who is doing what, when, and for how long
- [ ] Develop a plan to know who is coming and how many? If you need to know numbers, will you call people personally to check? Will you use a free a booking system like Humanitix? Or are you running a public event where people can arrive and purchase a ticket on arrival or attend for free?
- [ ] Invite a keynote speaker or key local farmers to present on the day
- [ ] Check if public liability insurance will be required.
- [ ] Organise to have blu-tac, pens, tea and coffee.

Field day: are you running a field day or event on someone's property?

- ◯ Is it at someone's property?
- ◯ Prior to the event, discuss how they'd like people to enter and move around the property. Discuss parts of the property that are safe to access / use (good weather and bad)
- ◯ Is the event for less than 1,000 people. If no, then see 'Larger Events' below
- ◯ Ensure adequate toilet facilities – and organise if needed (e.g. portaloo)
- ◯ Have a back-up plan in case of adverse weather or other change
- ◯ Develop a biosecurity protocol for the day
- ◯ Check the public liability insurance for the property. Is it current? Discuss how it will cover visitors vs visitors attending an event?
- ◯ If required, book a bus. Understand if they supply a driver. If you are arranging someone, what licence is required?

Publicity / Social media

- ◯ If you have sponsors, make sure you know in advance how they would like to be identified on social media or other promotion you plan (i.e. their company name, branded logo, or formal funding statement if you are using grant funds to help run the event)
- ◯ Promote the event on your social media, and provide a link to registration
- ◯ Organise for someone to take photos during the day for later publicity / social media posts
- ◯ Consider publicising the event through the newspaper, radio and television.
- ◯ For larger events, consider using the Tourism Tasmania Event Resource Guide: https://www.tourismtasmania.com.au/siteassets/2.-resources-for-industry/2.3-marketing/2.3.4-telling-your-story/2.3.4.8-promoting-your-events/event-resource-guide/

Logistics

- ◯ Check the weather ahead of time and have an alternative plan in case of adverse weather (wind, rain, heat)
- ◯ Understand how you will access the venue (i.e. will gates or the venue be locked and who has the key)
- ◯ Do you need location signage (i.e. a flag or sign to let people know the gate to arrive at)
- ◯ Know the location of evacuation points and make sure first aid kits are available and their location – do you need to bring any with you?
- ◯ Organise someone to lead the day, e.g. Master of Ceremonies (MC) for the day
- ◯ Hire equipment such as portable microphone, data projector and power surge protector – label them so that they do not get confused with equipment at the venue
- ◯ If you are catering let the caterer know the number of people you are expecting and any dietary requirements. Ask the caterer ahead of time how many business days notice they need of final numbers.
- ◯ Provide name badges for all attendees (can be just masking tape and a marker pen)

Logistics (continued)

- ◯ Position the audience so that they can see and hear the presenter and have shade if it's sunny
- ◯ Ensure toilets are stocked with toilet paper, soap, hand towel and are working
- ◯ Provide breaks during the day (morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and 'comfort stops'). Ensure ample time for eating and networking.
- ◯ Provide a whiteboard and pens for presenters to use, if needed.
- ◯ Have biosecurity footbaths, ensure everyone uses them.

For larger events

- ◯ Check to see if you need a special event permit (events 1000 or more) from your local council
- ◯ Discuss with your caterers how they will manage dietaries.
- ◯ Provide an opportunity for sponsors and supporters to organise a display before the event, and ask presenters to provide handouts or samples
- ◯ Make committee members identifiable by asking them to wear a distinctive jumper, shirt or badge.
- ◯ Allocate committee members to look after special guests and/or presenters
- ◯ Consider how you'll tour the site. Concurrent sessions? Self- guide? Guided tour? Test the timing.
- ◯ Organise direction signs and an bell (or similar) to bring participants together
- ◯ Arrange an area for parking and assign parking attendants (if necessary)
- ◯ If you have been required to get food licences, liquor licences, or put other plans in place because of the size or type of event you are running make sure these are displayed
- ◯ Provide poster display over lunch, or locate next to machinery display
- ◯ Plan for smooth payments by having a visible registration point, credit card options, clear fee structures, and a list of sponsors and other non-paying guests
- ◯ Consider charging a flat fee for larger or interstate groups to attend
- ◯ Allocate someone from the group to be the key contact person for the media
- ◯ Arrange for the media to interview the host farmer or key farmer from the group
- ◯ Organise an evaluation of the day and consider prizes as a reward for completing evaluation. You may also consider facilitating an evaluation session, to ensure you get feedback.
- ◯ For examples of evaluation questions, see Table 1.

On the day

- ◯ Start on time, finish on time
- ◯ Make sure evacuation points are clear and unobstructed (i.e. no trucks parked across access roads). Check kits are present and stocked
- ◯ Use a registration desk for sign in sheet and to issue name badges, evaluation form, etc.
- ◯ Check the microphone volume is sufficient to discourage conversation – but not too loud
- ◯ Use a Master of Ceremonies to outline the day and welcome guests, it can be relatively informal – as the formalities start, get them to announce what happens in event of emergency (i.e. evacuation points and who to see for first aid), and location of toilets
- ◯ At each field site presentation, use a committee or group member to:
  - introduce the presenter
  - ask for mobile phones to be switched to silent
  - ensure presenters keep to time limit
  - repeat questions for all audience to hear
  - give thanks.
- ◯ Provide a map for latecomers to catch up with the tour or direct them to any demo site.
- ◯ Take photos (with consent).



After the event

- ◯ Hold a quick debriefing session straight after the event with the organising committee, presenters, farm hosts
- ◯ Thank all those who assisted
- ◯ Analyse the successes and challenges of the day and plan for the next event while it is still fresh in your mind
- ◯ Prepare media releases for press and radio if journalists did not attend
- ◯ Post photographs and outcomes on your social media channels.

Resources

Sign in sheet

Ensure you gather information from attendees at your event.

At a minimum collect:

- Name
- Mobile
- Email.

If you know all your group members or expected attendees you might just tick their name off a list.

Collecting this information is important if you need to:

- Report to a funding body how many attended
- Support future grant applications
- Invite people to your next event
- Follow up questions after the event.

Using a simple sign in sheet (often on a landscape A4 page) like the following can be easy. Consider what else might be useful to collect e.g. would it be good to know how many attendees grow a particular crop.

It is important to respect the privacy of these shared details:

- Store contact details in a safe location
- Do not share details beyond the group without permission.

The Australian Privacy Act 1988 covers large organisations and businesses of greater than $3 million annual turnover.

Budget template

Use this events budget tool to help you to start building your own events budget: https://explore.fundingcentre.com.au/tools/events-budget-tool

If your group does not have a budget to identify all forms of its income and expense for the year (including events) you can use this: https://business.gov.au/finance/financial-tools-and-templates/create-a-budget

Evaluation template

Evaluating an event is about asking people the

- Appropriateness of the event (was it useful, will they use the knowledge, is there something else they'd rather know about) and
- Effectiveness of the event (what went well, what could be improved).

It is feedback on how it went and what they felt they got out of it. Use this feedback to inform how you conduct and structure future events.

Table 1 contains some template questions for evaluating the success of your event (tailor the questions to suit your event). These questions are usually asked at the event wrap up. Make it as easy as possible for people to complete (only a few questions, tickboxes where appropriate). Event planning questions can be asked prior to the event, as these can inform current preparations, or future events.

You can collect feedback via paper or electronically (links, QR codes to programs / apps such as Slido or Survey Monkey). If possible, enable feedback to have the option of being anonymous to allow people greater freedom to share their experience of the event.

If you receive funding for an event, you may be expected to report on the evaluation of the event, i.e. you'll have to ask at least some of these questions. Extension events are expected to encourage practice change. Evaluation of these events should ask questions that contribute to measuring practice change, particularly in knowledge, attitude, skills, aspirations/actions (KASA).

If you need to ask other questions, it is worth looking up 'Likert Scale' to get an idea of the kinds of words you can use in the 5 answer options.

Figure 1 - Sign in sheet example

Name	Mobile	Email	Company/ Business/ Property / Production Type	Interested in future events?
John Smith	*0479 050 050*	*John@email.com*	*Smiths*	*Yes*

Table 1 - Possible event evaluation questions

Evaluation 'area'	Possible questions	Answer options
Appropriateness	How relevant was this event to your business?	• Not at all relevant • Slightly relevant • Moderately relevant • Very relevant • Extremely relevant
	What was the most valuable insight or takeaway for your farm / business?	Open-ended question (blank space to write)
Knowledge change	On a scale of 1-5, what was your level of knowledge of [cover crops]* prior to this event?	• Not at all familiar / no prior knowledge • Slightly familiar / heard of it, but lack understanding • Moderately familiar / basic understanding of core concepts • Very familiar / strong working knowledge • Extremely familiar / expert level
	On a scale of 1-5, what is your level of knowledge of [cover crops]* now (after the event)?	• Not at all familiar / no prior knowledge • Slightly familiar / heard of it, but lack understanding • Moderately familiar / basic understanding of core concepts • Very familiar / strong working knowledge • Extremely familiar / expert level
Feedback	Do you have any other feedback, comments or questions?	
Optional questions		
Effectiveness	What went well?	
	What could have been improved	
Attitude	Statement e.g. Participation in the event has encouraged me to think about changes in the way I might undertake activities on our property to improve productivity and/or farming efficiency.	• Strongly disagree • Disagree • Neutral / undecided • Agree • Strongly agree
Skill change	On a scale of 1 to 5, how confident do you feel applying [this new skill]*?	• Not at all confident • Slightly confident • Moderately confident • Very confident • Extremely confident
Aspirations / actions change	How likely are you to [change your practice, e.g. implement reduced tillage]* after attending this event?	• Not at all likely • Slightly likely • Moderately likely • Very likely • Extremely likely
Future events	Rate your preference of an event on the following topics	List the topics with a box in front of them, include 'other suggestions' at the bottom with space to write their suggestions.
	For future events, what other speakers or topics do you think would be worthwhile?	

Runsheet

The purpose of this Runsheet is so that everyone involved in presenting the event knows what they're doing, when they're doing it, how long it needs to go for and how their bit fits in with any other presenters so that you avoid repetition. Knowing who the audience is likely to be, what their needs are and questions they are likely to have can help shape what you present and how you present it.

It's also useful to think about what presenters might need (microphone, whiteboard/pens, computer, etc.), use the resources/outputs column for this.

Keep to time, respect the time people have put aside to attend.

The items in the Runsheet (Table 2) are included as examples, edit for your event as appropriate.

Event name:

Purpose

A sentence or two to about why you are running this event (and maybe who the audience is).

Table 2 - Event details

What	Details
Timing	Day, date, start and end time
Location	
Organising Team	Nominate someone to lead the day (introductions, ensuring things run to time, etc.)
Growers / producers hosting	
External contributors / speakers	

DAY 1 — Event name (or focus of individual days or multi-day event)

Day 1 Objective:

(only include if it is different to 'Purpose' on page 1)

Table 3 - Event example runsheet – If you are running a site tour or field day, session 4 has more content and process to guide you

Time	Session	Topic	Content and process	Resources / outputs	Lead (name)
As needed	Bump in	Sets up the venue or field day in advance of guests arriving	• Set up location signage if needed (ie flag or sign at gate) • Check evacuation points and presence of first aid kits • Check toilets and other amenities – are they stocked and working • Check catering has arrived and that food, beverages are stored appropriately (ie covered, refrigerated) • Position biosecurity kits • Position any sponsor or group banners or flags • Make sure microphones and other equipment working • Prepare food and beverage stations with cups, water etc • Make sure you understand how waste will be managed (ie bin locations and type)		Name
8:15am - 8:45am	Arrival			Sign in sheet	Name

Time	Session	Topic	Content and process	Resources / outputs	Lead (name)
8.45am - 9.15am	1. Set the scene	Purpose, welcome and participant expectations	Emergency / Amenities: announce emergency / evacuation procedure, and where amenities are. Position the event: what is it, why are we here, what will happen (what to expect). Explain group's role: what do you do, why this event. Set expectations of behaviour: e.g. respectful, phones off, if on farm set expectations of where to go and not go, biosecurity, etc. Confirm objectives: e.g. testing ideas, sharing experience and designing practical next steps. Quick introductions: • Name • Business / company, role /function • An introductory sentence relevant to the event, e.g. What have you already changed, what are you unsure about, and what do you want to take away?	• What do you need for this section / topic to work (e.g. pens, paper, microphone, computer, computer connectors and leads, etc.) • What can participants expect to take away (e.g. workbook, worksheet)	Name
9.15am - 10.30am	2. Next item	What is this session	What will happen in this session (Keep in mind): • What is the purpose of this session • What do you expect people to get out of this session	As above	Name (lead) supporting names (responsible for…)
10.30am - 10.50am	Break	Morning tea		Coffee / tea / catering	Name
10.50am - 12.15pm	3. Next topic	Name of next topic / session	What will happen in this session (Keep in mind: • What is the purpose of this session • What do you expect people to get out of this session)	• What do you need for this section / topic to work (e.g. pens, paper, microphone, computer, computer connectors and leads, etc.) • What can participants expect to take away (e.g. workbook, worksheet)	
12.15pm - 13.30pm	Break	Lunch and travel to field site	• Use travel/lunch as informal networking time. • Brief participants on field visit approach: guided observation, not passive listening. • Remind participants to think about…	• Lunch • Transport plan, site address, PPE/biosecurity instructions.	Name(s)

Time	Session	Topic	Content and process	Resources / outputs	Lead (name)
13.30pm - 16.00pm	4. Next topic / item / session	Run as per session 3 above. If you are running a site tour or field day, this content and process is helpful	• Host grower introduces the farm context, practices and challenges. • Structure around guided observation at field stations, with prompts: what are we observing; what decision created this; what would need to be adapted on your farm? • At each topic, explore: what problem was being solved; what changed; what did not work; what worked and why; what will they do differently. • Suggested stations: soil condition, rooting, water/ nutrient holding; cover crops, termination and residues; nutrition strategy and nutrient cycling; pests, weeds, diseases and beneficials; economics, including costs, labour, timing, risk, yield/quality and confidence.	• Field site briefing notes for host grower • PPE/biosecurity requirements, maps, water, first aid • Output: observations, trade-offs and ideas to trial captured by participants.	Name Supporting name (responsible for…)
16.00pm - 16.30pm	5. Step back and reflect	Reflection and synthesis in field or on bus	• Short individual reflection. • Prompts: what did you see that reassured you; what raised new questions; what is one idea you could realistically trial next season?		Name(s)
As required	Bump out	Clean down venue or field day in advance of guests arriving	• Check toilets and other amenities – make sure there is no rubbish present • Check catering and food waste has been disposed of as agreed with venue host • Remove biosecurity kits • Remove sponsor or group banners or flags • Remove microphones and other equipment and power cords • Manage waste according to venue requirements • Lock up venue and return keys • Remove any location signage (flag or sign) • Advise host you have left the property and provide feedback on your experience (good and bad)		
19:00pm - 21:00pm	Dinner				Name

Additional Resources

- **Resource developed in Australia and Tasmania**

  https://event-lab.io

- **Events checklists**

  https://www.thepurpleguide.co.uk

Acknowledgement

The “Planning the event” section content is originally based on a similar section in the WA Grower Group Alliance Toolkit (https://www.gga.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/GGA_Grower-Group-Toolkit-WEBSITE.pdf).



How this resource came about

The Emerge project was funded by the Australian Government’s Future Drought Fund to support new, emerging and informal farmer groups to develop their skills and knowledge, and to create this set of resources for use by groups into the future. Groups participating in 2026 received coaching and additional learning opportunities to supplement the content of these resources.