

Checklist for Organizing NRCS/IPM Farm Tour and Workshop

Instructional Objectives:

- Facilitate communication and collaboration among growers, NRCS, and other agricultural consultants, such as Extension specialists, crop advisors, and agricultural suppliers.
- Model best conservation and IPM practices to assist growers in achieving conservation goals.
- Inform growers and others about available cost-sharing programs that support IPM.

NRCS, Extension partners, and other IPM cooperators meet seven to eight months prior to workshop to draft agenda. Consider the following. (See attached sample brochure.)

- Learning objectives
- Target audience (i.e. NRCS staff, Extension personnel, crop advisors, growers and other agricultural professionals)
- Possible farms for tour, including: type of farm (e.g. conventional, organic, and/or EQIP-participating), farm accessibility and location, focus crop (e.g. mixed vegetable farms, orchards), and specific IPM or conservation practices to showcase
- Possible speakers and presenters
- Date, time, workshop length (Date should be set in time to announce at winter meetings and other agricultural events.)
- Incentives for participation (e.g. NRCS staff training credits, CCA credits, pesticide credits/recertification, nutrient management credits, field guides or other literature, refreshments)
- Registration fee, funding/sponsorships, endorsements
- Outreach, promotion – interest/contact sheet and announcements at meetings and events, and on websites and list serves

- Learner and impact pre- and post-assessment criteria (e.g. participant evaluations, numbers of participants, numbers of EQIP IPM-participating farms, acres farmed using conservation and IPM practices, environmental quality assessments, etc)
- Establish workshop planning committee to design program, work out logistics, invite speakers, etc.

Planning Committee Checklist for NRCS/IPM Farm Tour and Workshop

6-7 months prior to workshop

- Confirm host farms, date, time, and format. (*See attached sample brochure.*)
- Determine specific conservation and IPM practices to be showcased and experiential (hands-on) learning activities.
- Select speakers (welcome and workshop overview, keynote), farm tour presenters, and presentation topics. (*See attached sample agenda.*)
- Address mobility and access issues (transportation between fields and farms).

4-6 months prior to workshop

- Solicit and confirm speakers, presenters, and presentation topics. Ask speakers to provide/recommend handouts.
- Apply for Continuing Education Unit (CEU) credits (pesticide, nutrient management, CCA).
- Contact farmers to set up date and time to visit farms prior to workshop. Identify resource concerns, discuss conservation practices, and possibly introduce a new practice (e.g., inter-seeding, perimeter trap cropping, etc.).
- Visit farms.
- Plan menu and refreshments (preferably using local foods and caterers). Contact local caterers and tent rental companies for price quotes.

3 months prior to workshop

- Finalize agenda.
- Finalize menu and refreshments and contract with caterer.
- Rent and reserve vehicles and necessary equipment (tents, tables, chairs, and portable toilet).
- Follow up on endorsements/funding, and set fee, if any.

- Create and print pre-registration brochure.
- Announce the workshop through grower associations, NRCS staff, IPM coordinators, Extension Service, granges, newsletters, calendars, websites, listservs, meetings, and other important events.

**The NE IPM Center staff can use the contacts database and listservs to announce the workshop date.

- Develop pre- and post-program knowledge assessments and follow-up questionnaire for mailing to participants 6 months after workshop. (*See attachments.*)
- Select and order additional supporting literature for inclusion in participant packets.

5-6 weeks prior to workshop

- Distribute pre-registration brochure.
- Write and send press release to media. (*See attachment.*)

3-4 weeks prior to workshop

- Conduct follow-up farm visits to identify stations for presentations and determine sites for parking.
- Remind speakers to send handouts.
- Obtain CEU credit forms.

1 week prior to workshop

- Finalize number of participants with caterer and rental companies.
- Compile packets of handouts for each participant.

Day of workshop

- Post directional signs and flag parking areas.
- Set up refreshments. (Provide water throughout the day.)
- Check in participants and speakers.
- Distribute and collect evaluation and credit forms.
- Confirm that all necessary equipment is in place (portable toilets, tent, demonstration tools, vehicles, etc.).

Post-workshop

- Breathe a sigh of relief.
- Review and compile pre- and post-assessments.
- Tally numbers of NRCS, Extension, other agricultural advisors, and farmer participants attending the workshop.
- Six months post-workshop, mail out follow-up questionnaire to participants asking which changes participants plan to promote or utilize.
- Compile data for outcomes assessment (e.g. compare numbers of EQIP contracts for targeted farmers statewide and in the host county before and after the farm workshop, determine the proportion of those contracts used for pest management).
- Use all assessment data and follow-up questionnaires to inform planners for next workshop.