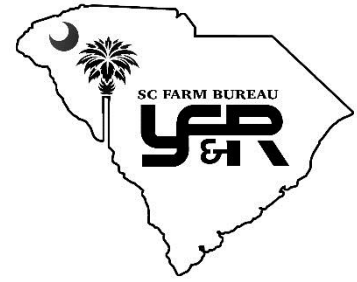


SC Farm Bureau County YF&R Programs



Getting Started Guide

What is the point?

1% of the U.S. population is farming. The majority of people in this country, including our decision makers, are completely removed from the farm and have little appreciation for agriculture or understanding of how food gets to the table. SC Farm Bureau exists to promote agricultural interests in South Carolina and to make the lives of those involved in agriculture better. We must create a unified front for the voice of the 1% to be heard. The whole point of SCFB is to unify each and every farmer in the state of South Carolina and all of those who support our agricultural industry so that we can create a strong voice for agriculture and promote the agricultural interests in this state. In doing so, we are ensuring a safe, abundant and affordable food supply for years to come.

What does a YF&R Chair or committee do?

County YF&R Chairs are most instrumental if they can round people up and get them together to do something. What you are trying to do is to build a community or network of farmers and friends of Ag. This group of people can then work together to promote agriculture in your area (schools, county councils, fairs, educational events, civic organizations, etc.). Promoting agriculture can be anything from inviting someone to visit your farm to hosting a legislative event for your political representatives, or anything in between. At the end of the day, you want to get as many people as possible joined together in the same network and getting the message out about agriculture to anyone and everyone possible.

Boards and Committees?

SCFB is organized so that everything happens from the “grassroots”. Farmer members in each county across the state work together in their perspective counties to create county level programming and policy. Counties send representatives to the state organization to create state-level programming and policy, and the state sends representatives to the national level. County Boards govern the county organization and are intended to represent the interests of the agricultural enterprises in that county. Committees are in place to make sure the organization is productive in all of its areas of interest and to ensure that the board officers are not the only people involved....they basically give the local organization arms and legs. Committee Chairs seek approval from the Board for programming and they report to the board about their activities, which is a way to ensure that the programming and activities of the committee are in line with the mission and purpose of the organization. The structure of this organization is extremely important because it is the backbone of its grassroots nature.

Political Involvement?

Farm Bureau Federation is a well-known name at the Statehouse and in Washington D.C. This organization was originally formed in 1919 to give a voice to farmers who were facing the consequences of decisions made in D.C. by people who were not hearing the message of the farmers. Nearly 100 years later, we continue to do the same exact thing! We have state and national lobbyist that make it their job to look out for agriculture day in and day out. Agriculture is not like any other industry when it comes to politics. If you are involved in agriculture, you are involved in politics....like it or not. Fortunately, Farm Bureau exists to bring all farmers together so that their collective voice is much louder than a single voice. All policy that Farm Bureau stands behind is developed and voted on by S.C. farmers for S.C. farmers. This is the beauty of our grassroots membership and our grassroots policy development structure.

Visit www.scfb.org/YFR to find additional information about the SCFB YF&R Program or contact the Leadership Development and Member Relations Coordinator, Heather Barberio, at hbarberio@scfb.org.

How does a county YF&R Committee get started?

- Someone interested in making a difference needs to take on the role of county YF&R Chair
- You can talk to the SCFB field staff, the YF&R staff, your county board, and your District YF&R representative serving on the state committee about how you want to get something started. Everyone will do what they can to try to help you!
- Identify others involved in agriculture in the county and start talking to them about getting everyone together. You might have to explain Farm Bureau to people who are unfamiliar with it.
- Hold a meeting. It doesn't have to be formal, but get together with a plan for actually discussing the importance of staying connected and promoting agriculture. You can consider asking your board if they would support you hosting a dinner or breakfast. If people who attend are not members, ask them to join. You might have to do this a time or two in order to get things started. If you live in a very small county, you can consider clustering up with neighboring counties and meeting together.
- Once you have a couple of people interested, get together to set goals and develop a plan for what you want to do during the year. What you plan can be for networking, advocacy or outreach.....anything that will build a unified voice for agriculture and promote agricultural interests! You can start out small and work your way up. Staff and volunteer leadership can give you ideas if you need them.
- Have all young farmers you are in contact with in your county join the SCFB Young Farmers & Ranchers Facebook Group. www.scfb.org/YFRconnect
- Collect information from all YF&Rs involved so that people can stay informed about what is going on with Farm Bureau and YF&R. There is a place to submit info and emails for new people at the bottom of all YF&R e-updates.

Ideas for County-level Activities:

- Attend or host a "cluster" meeting with another county or several counties in your area
- Plan and participate in activities that educate others about Farm Bureau and recruit new members.
 - Speak to a local FFA Chapter meeting (ask SCFB for a PPT you can use)
 - Visit or help launch a Collegiate Farm Bureau Chapter or a High School Discussion Meet
 - Host an event for members or non-members (BBQ, Picnic, etc.)
- Plan or participate in Ag education activities
 - Bringing the Ag Simulator to a local school for an event
 - Educating folks about Ag at a county fair or event
- Organize a "Harvest for All" activity to give back to your community. Be sure to submit a project report to be eligible for a Harvest for All award. (info available at www.scfb.org/harvest-for-all)
- Network with non-ag-related organizations – attend a meeting or event and speak to them about agriculture
 - Local Chamber of Commerce
 - County Council
 - Local Rotary Club or Business Group
 - Career Day at a local school
- Invite the SCFB YF&R Chair, a District Representative from the SCFB YF&R Committee, or the YF&R Coordinator to a meeting or event in your county.
- Identify and encourage people in your county to apply for one of the following:
 - Learn to Farm Classroom Mini-grant
 - Achievement Award
 - Excellence in Agriculture Award
 - Discussion Meet competition
- Participate in as many legislative activities as possible:
 - SCFB Legislative Contact Program
 - Invite legislators to your farm
 - Participate in legislative advocacy via social media. Visit www.savescfarmers.com
 - Chair can attend the District Policy Development or Legislative Update meeting

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