

# How to ensure demonstration events are successful for knowledge exchange

## Problem

Researchers need to communicate better with farmers and advisors. Failure to do this limits the uptake of outcomes and restricts the legacy of research as well as its scope. It can also inhibit the on-farm application of research findings.

## Solution

Facilitating improved inter-sector communication through skills training in knowledge exchange and event coordination is essential. This can enhance the quality and quantity of research dissemination while influencing on-farm practices.

## Benefits

Better engagement and understanding between farmers, advisors and researchers can increase the practical application of research.

## Practical recommendations

### What to consider when organising the event:

- Define the target audience: farmers, advisors, researchers or a mix, to help identify their key interests and areas of influence
- Consider whether press coverage of the event, this could help to promote key messages of the event to a wider audience
- Tailor communication around key messages which you want the audience to remember
- Decide the location of the event based on your target audience as well as relevance to at least three key messages
- Consider a suitable number of participants, given the venue size and staffing capacity - remember that staff attending the event should be included in overall numbers for venue requirements
- Consider the amenities that will be required, such as room size, toilet facilities, parking and availability of catering and refreshments
- Use an online booking system such as Trybooking or Eventbrite to help keeping track of the attendance and avoid over-booking
- Indicate the attending fee, if any, when advertising the event
- Consider booking a diversity of speakers, e.g., farmers and advisors showing how research can be applied on-farm, or researchers explaining how trial results were obtained
- Remember to organise the schedule well in advance of the event and always have a backup activity in case there is a speaker no-show
- Include practical activities, e.g., display of soil or biodiversity measurements. Ensure to have indoor activities in case of inappropriate weather. Organise demonstrations to disseminate findings and illustrate novel applications
- Consider health and safety. Organisers should ensure that



*Picture 1: A panel of researchers, farmers, and advisors at a demonstration event. Photo: (LEAF, 2018)*



*Picture 2: Soil pit test at a demonstration event. Photo: (LEAF, 2018)*

all attendees at on-farm events are informed of biosecurity measures, potential farm hazards and farm environmental policy. Always follow national health and safety guidelines, particularly if transporting attendees around the farm

### Promotion of the event:

- Use a variety of communication channels to promote the event, share snapshots of similar events and post-event trial outcomes. This could include social media in the form of promotional Tweets and/or videos and press links. Include the location and date of the event and a booking or registration link
- Consider collaboration with a range of relevant organisations such as other research centres, industry bodies, NGOs or farmer groups. This will help to maximise visibility of the event
- Contact the attendees the week and the day before the event to remind them of the schedule. An accurate map, directions to the location and parking instructions are essential. Remember to include guidance on suitable clothing and footwear depending on the ground and weather conditions.

### The day of the event:

- Make sure the site is accessible, refreshments are organised and that the person chairing the event is present to welcome attendees
- Register the attendees on arrival, taking contact details (if appropriate) to allow for follow up communication. Data protection should be considered i.e., have them agree that pictures can be taken and used by the organisers. Consider name badges to make the event feel more personal and facilitate networking
- Ensure you dedicate a staff member as timekeeper to make sure demonstrations and activities run on time
- Ask attendees to fill out a feedback form, at the end of the event, to help with the continual improvement of demonstration events

### After the event:

- Follow up with attendees after the event to ensure demonstrated approaches are remembered and utilised. This could include newsletters, follow up emails with links to related resources, video updates and hosting of workshops or discussion groups

## Further information

### Weblinks

- LEAF Speak Out Toolkit (<https://leafuk.org/speakout>) Funded under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under agreement No 727284, Diversify)
- Just Farmers (<https://www.justfarmers.org/>)
- Farming is Magic (<https://www.farmingismagic.co.uk/>)
- Visit My Farm (<https://visitmyfarm.org/why-farming-matters>)

Use the comment section on the [DiverIMPACTS discussion forum](#) to share your experiences with other farmers, advisors and scientists! If you have any questions concerning the method, please contact the author of the practice abstract by e-mail.



## About this practice abstract and DiverIMPACTS

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**Project website:** [www.diverimpacts.net](http://www.diverimpacts.net)

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