

Farm-to-Table Events, Do's and Dont's

Recently I presented at the last AgChat conference on Farm-to-Table Events. I talked about the Do's and Dont's of such an event. Here is a list of my slides from my presentation.



WHAT TO DO

- Start Early!
- Form Steering Committee
 - Keep small
- Plan for Funding
 - Sponsors?
 - Event Planner?
- Who to Invite? Invite only?
- Think about time of year, day of week, time of day.

The image shows a chalkboard-style sign titled "Minnesota Ag Rankings (Among all U.S. States)". The sign lists the top agricultural products in Minnesota:

- #1 in sugar beets, processed sweet corn, & green peas
- #2 in wild rice
- #3 in dry beans, oats
- #4 in corn, soybeans, & flaxseed
- #5 in rye
- #6 in canola

Logos for "Minnesota Department of Agriculture" and "#FieldtoFork" are visible at the bottom of the sign.

We started in January for the event in August. Stay away from Mondays and Fridays due to long weekends.

PLANNING YOUR BUDGET

- Food and beverage = 35% of total budget (the food, chef's, servers and bar staff, alcohol and non-alcoholic drinks, dishes/glassware/cutlery, napkins, etc.)
- Rentals = 20% (tenting, tables, chairs, linens, A/V, lighting, restrooms, etc.)
- Volunteer mileage/hotel = 14%
- Printing = 10% (invitations, nametags, programs, menus, large on-site signage, etc.)
- Photography = 8%
- Misc. = 6% (décor, florals, entertainment, bug control, trash, etc.)
- Videography = 5%
- Contingency = 2%

Our percentages we used at the CommonGround Farm-to-Table. Prepare for the unexpected.

DO:

- Setup Event Website - We used Squarespace at CommonGroundMinnesota.com
- Use a "Day of Coordinator" - Too many moving pieces for one person.
- Prioritize guests - "A", "B" and "C" list. Have plan for people substitution.
- Invitations - Call/contact initially. Telling them they will receive an invitation. Invitation can be electronic or paper. About 70 people in attendance.
- Leave enough time for social
- Q & A, disperse farmers among guests



We love the Q & A portion! Gives attendees the opportunity to ask the tough questions.

DON'T

- Skimp on food.
- Hire an amateur photographer/videographer
- Forget bathroom facilities
- Forget backup facility plan
- Have too few volunteers
- Put social hour on invitation



Have a social hour but don't put on invitation. You want people to attend for the entire time. Farm-to-Table

"FROM THE GROUND UP" DO:

- Use Conversation Starters!!!! Can't emphasize enough!
- Utilize local FFA and 4H groups for setup/teardown
- Pick the right people



Pick the right people – positive people who have a positive message. Farm-to-table

ADDITIONAL PICTURES



Some of our props. The first pic was put into the portable bathrooms!



Farm-to-Table



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SUMMARY

- Lots and lots of work!
- Lot of fun!
- Great conversations and connections
- Well worth the effort!

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Minnesota Farm Living

Connecting Consumers with Farmers

<https://www.mnfarmliving.com>

The ultimate goal is conversations and relationships.

Keep the conversation going by checking out my [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Email Subscription](#) !

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