

7 Ways For Farmers To Be Involved In Your Local Community

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I don't think there are many occupations that are more busy than farming. On our farm, we have many days that start in the early morning and go to late at night. There is always something that needs tending to on the farm.

But even though we are busy, it's important for all of us to find time to be involved in organizations---both ag and non-ag. Even if you only choose one organization, be involved.

Why should you be involved?

Our voice is important.

We have a unique and special perspective that is needed today. And not only that, our involvement can make a difference. Sometimes terrible decisions are made today because the decision-makers don't know how their decisions affect agriculture. The phrase I hear often is, "if you are not at the table, you will be on the table."

And that's why we need to be at the table.

In addition, the personal networking and connections are priceless. We talk often in advocacy about needing to reach outside the choir. Being involved in non-ag organizations allows agriculture to network and connect with many non-ag people.

Here is a list of seven reasons on how you can be involved and why it's important.

1. **Join agricultural boards or organizations.** These organizations allow you an opportunity to give input into areas that affect you directly. The list of potential ag organizations and boards are endless: Commodity organizations (local, state, national), or other ag-related organizations like Farm Bureau, Farmers Union, Commonground. Choose what area you are interested in and make it known to others that you are interested. Organizations welcome enthusiastic and willing people to participate.
2. **Join your local Chamber of Commerce.** Say what? "Why do I want to be a member of the Chamber of Commerce? That is for city businesses." *Because we are a business, something we cannot forget.* We need to share our voice with our city counterparts.
3. **Be active in your school.** Whether it means helping out in your children's school rooms,

chaperoning a school field trip, being a member or running for a position on your local PTL or run for your local school board. Why is this important? Being involved in your school is another way to reach outside the choir and network with those in charge of educating our children. Think of agriculture education. Think of the fairness of property taxes which fund schools. *We need an ag voice in our education system.*

4. **Civic organizations.** Join your local Kiwanis or Rotary clubs. Not only is it fun but you are giving back to your community through service projects. A great way to connect with non-ag people to share your story.
5. **Government entities.** Consider running for your township board, county commissioner or state or federal representatives. Decisions are made in our government and many those decisions affect ag adversely. *People just don't know what they don't know.* Agriculture absolutely needs to be there.
6. **Church.** Be active and volunteer in your church. There is a special bond with people who share their religious commonality with each other. Church involvement may not directly affect agriculture but it's another avenue to connect both ag and non-ag people by praying and sharing fellowship with each other.
7. **Coach.** If you are interested in sports or other coaching events, please volunteer. It's a nice release from the day-to-day activities on the farm and volunteers are always needed. So what does this have to do with agriculture? *Absolutely nothing.* And that's the point. A great way to connect with non-ag people.

One thing that makes our nation special is the amount of volunteering and participating we do. It really is unique compared to other nations. Being involved allows us the quality of life we have come to treasure. And for agriculture, by being involved we can contribute to that quality of life and also give our perspective on issues, which we all know is desperately needed and important for our nation and for agriculture to thrive.

So let's become involved.