



4 Organize Your Community

What to do before any meeting

Organizing the members of your community will involve many meetings of different sizes and for different purposes. Here are some guidelines that will apply to any meeting you hold.

Logistics

Set the date, time, and place. If you are planning to use a community hall make sure you book it and know who is going to open the doors to let people in.

Decide on an agenda.

(See the Organizing Tools section for a sample.)

Write down the items you wish to cover and print copies of the agenda for anyone helping out—this will help you focus and keep the group on track. Make sure to bring the agenda with you to the meeting! Your agenda can cover information you've already found out about the operation, a background on the factory farm issue in general, and a brief talk about what you would like to accomplish by creating a group.

Keep your agenda short. Focus on a few main points so you don't overwhelm the audience. Set up time toward the end of the meeting for a question and answer (Q&A) period. Use this time for issues not on the agenda. If, during the meeting, anyone strays, let them know you will address their questions or concerns during the Q&A session. If you cannot answer a question, simply say you will get back to them with an answer (and make sure that you do). Move on to the next question.

Chairing

The chairperson or moderator has to keep the meeting on track, maintain order and build confidence in your group among people attending the meeting. The person chairing the meeting does not have to be the most knowledgeable person in your group, but he or she needs to be self-confident and assertive.

Ground rules

Establish a few ground rules for the meeting. For example: no interrupting while someone else is speaking, no personal attacks, being acknowledged by the facilitator by raising your hand, no repeating what's already been said, etc. The organizer is responsible for making sure the stated guidelines are followed. For this reason it is a good idea to have a moderator who will keep everyone on track.

Target audience

Determine who you want at your meeting. For a public meeting, you want as many people as possible. If you are developing strategy, you only want core members of your group. Determine your audience from the start—that will help determine the agenda, who's invited, the type of advertising, etc.

Have a table by the door to the meeting. Put a sign-in list, handouts and fact sheets on the table. (See the *Organizing Tools* section.)

Notes

Take notes at all your meetings. Make sure someone in your group agrees to write the notes. These notes will be a record of the decisions made and form an important document of your group's history. Make copies of the notes for members of your group, and keep a complete set of notes from all your meetings in one place for future reference.

Recording meetings

Consider having the presentations at your public meetings videotaped or taped on cassette. Clearly label the tapes of your meetings and include them in your files—do not record over them! Determine a policy with regard to taping. Some groups have had great success and have held officials accountable for promises made and then broken. Other groups have found taping to inhibit group members from speaking up. If you do tape, inform everyone who will be recorded.

Have someone speak who has experience fighting factory farms or someone who has experienced the impacts of living near a factory farm. They can share insight on their successes, failures, and experiences. Contact the *Beyond Factory Farming Coalition* for help in finding someone suitable. If someone cannot make it to a meeting, have them write a testimonial letter that you can read aloud at the meeting.

Advertising

Get the word out to as many as people as possible. Here are some excellent ways to publicize your meeting:

- Phone your neighbors
- Type up a simple, one-page bulletin, voicing your concerns and inviting people to the meeting. Post on supermarket bulletin boards, schools, libraries, or any public place that has a bulletin board.
- Place your flyers (with permission) at the checkout stand of the local grocery store, café, or bar. Include your contact information on all flyers or bulletins so people can phone with questions.
- Advertise in your local paper at least twice.
- For public meetings, call your local radio and television stations and see if they do PSAs (public service announcements). CBC radio stations have an automated system where you can record your announcement over the phone.



Your First Public Informational Meeting

Use this meeting to educate your community on the factory farm issue and motivate them to help you confront the factory farm.

- Invite your public officials and let them know that they do not have to answer questions but that you will save them a seat with their name on it (have chairs set up in the front row with the names of public officials displayed on the back. That way, you know who doesn't show up). If the fear of being put on the spot keeps them away, let people at the meeting know up front that public officials are there as spectators only.
- Have someone who will be unbiased as the moderator. This person will ensure the meeting follows the agenda, that no one is disrespectful to anyone else, and handle comments and questions.
- As people arrive, ask them to fill out the sign-in sheet. Provide space for their name, address, telephone number, email, and a section for people to volunteer. Leave the sheet on a table by the door, with a big sign. Mention the sign-up sheet at the end of the meeting, for anyone who arrives late or forgets to sign up. Tell the audience that signing up does not commit them to being part of the group, but you will contact them in the future. Be sure to assign someone in your group to pick up the sign-up sheet at the end of the meeting.
- Handing out copies of the agenda is optional. Whether you distribute it or not, read the agenda to everyone in attendance at the beginning of the meeting. Post a copy at the sign-in table.
- Provide information on the table about factory farms and their impacts, including material people can take home. Consider making a poster with visuals of local factory farms. Pictures can be enlarged to 11 x 17 so people can see them better. If you do not have access to materials, print information from the *Beyond Factory Farming Coalition* website and make copies. (See the *Educational Tools* section)

During the meeting

- Show one of the videos recommended in the "Educate Yourself" section.
- Have any presenters talk about the social, environmental, and economic impacts of factory farms. You may wish to have experts like soil specialists, microbiologists, economists, water quality experts, etc., on hand. Find local experts who are established and familiar with your area. Try your nearest university. Please note that agriculture departments at universities can be heavily funded by agribusiness, so they might not be much help. You can try the Biological Sciences department. Know where presenters stand on the factory farm issue before you invite them to speak.
- If possible, have someone speak who lives next to a factory farm. If you can't find someone to speak in person, film them or get written statements about their experiences. A selection of testimonials can be found in the *Educational Tools* section.
- Have a jar where people can make donations to cover costs.
- At the close of the meeting, set a date and time for a follow-up meeting. Hand out a bulletin summarizing your concerns. Make sure to include your name and contact information on the flyer.

Your First Organizational Meeting

This meeting will help organize your community and determine what work needs to be done. You might need several meetings before you can assign all the work listed below, so be careful not to overload your members.

Invite everyone who attended your public informational meeting. Post flyers around town and advertise in your local paper—there might be interested people who could not attend or did not see previous information.

When developing the agenda for your organizational meeting, divide creative items that need discussion into three parts—brainstorming, evaluating and deciding. During the brainstorming process, anything goes; no matter how unusual an idea might seem, do not judge or criticize—just record it on paper. Sometimes the most unique ideas are the catalyst for the one that ends up being successful. Place an easel with large sheets of paper at the front of the room and write the ideas down. During the evaluating phase, participants discuss the ideas and rank them in order of importance. During the decision phase, the group agrees on which ideas to pursue.

Communications and Outreach

Develop an overall action plan

Develop a timeline so you can anticipate what is going to happen in the future. Map out the known and estimated dates for key decisions or deadlines. Assess the kinds of activities that will be required over the next several months based on the season, the requirements of the project, the approval process requirements, etc. Include other significant and relevant dates and events such as elections, conventions, community events, etc. Once you have a picture of what will or might happen, and when, you can develop a strategy for intervening, getting publicity, influencing decisions, etc. Review and update the timeline every few months and adjust your strategy accordingly.

Develop a petition listing the reasons you are opposed to the facility

There are two ways to use petitions depending on the results you wish to obtain. One would be used more as a media or political tool to demonstrate support for your cause. The other is a document which would have legal standing depending on the laws in the part of Canada where you are located. Legal petitions require very specific language and signatures must conform to specific requirements. Ask your local MLA, MNA or MPP for the applicable petition format for your province.

In some provinces there are specific types of petitions that are legally binding on the councils of local municipalities. Check with your local administrator or the provincial department in charge of municipalities to find out if this applies in your municipality.



Even with informal petitions, restrict signers to those 18 years of age and older who live within the county or municipality. This gives the petition more credibility. Ask for volunteers to go to your local shopping area, Main Street, or other high traffic areas to get signatures. If you know storeowners sympathetic to your cause, see if you can leave petitions in their store. Don't forget to pick them up!

If you're short on time, place the petition in your local paper. A large ad that people can cut out and mail to you is a great way to get people's attention. Run the ad at least twice, in case people miss it the first time.

The petition itself probably won't stop the factory farm but it can let facility owners, as well as local and provincial government officials, see this is a community problem and not just one person's complaint. This is also a good way to collect names and addresses of people interested in the issue. Never throw away your petitions, no matter how much time passes. They can be used in different ways, such as at a news conference or as a tool in testimony to help pass a local resolution against a factory farm.

Build coalitions

Speak with members of your community; try to both educate them and get them to join your organization. Make connections with other groups in your area. Get them to support your cause or at least distribute information to their members. Here is a list of possible groups to get you started:

- Clubs (garden, book, sports, fishing)
- Consumers
- Environmental
- Fall Fair
- Food Co-ops
- Local chapters of national groups
- Neighborhood groups
- Political and Governmental
- Professional Associations (medical, business, etc.)
- Religious
- Senior Citizen's groups
- School Associations (Home and School, alumni)
- Unions
- Wildlife Associations
- Women's
- Youth and Student (4H, college)



Create a flyer or brochure

Use quick facts, quotes from testimonials, or any of the information you gather in order to explain the potential impact on your community. Always use credible and documented facts. Keep a file of all your sources; this is advisable even if you footnote your brochure. Distribute to individuals, groups and elected officials. Find sympathetic places, like restaurants or stores that will put out your information. Mass mail to your surrounding community. You can find facts in the *Educational Tools* section handouts and on the internet at:

www.factoryfarm.org/facts/

www.beyondfactoryfarming.org/english/action/downloads.shtml

Establish a list-serve

Establish your own list-serve (email list) to distribute information. Go to groups.yahoo.com or lists.riseup.net to register and start a list-serve for no charge. Assign one person to post short, weekly updates on what the group is doing. Each member must keep up to date with activities. If a member does not have access to a computer, develop a phone system where s/he can contact one or two people for updates.

Create a website

It's a great way to get information to your community and a good resource for the media. If you create one, email the web address to *Beyond Factory Farming* at info@beyondfactoryfarming.org—we'll link to your site. Web sites can become very expensive if you pay someone to design and upkeep them, so try to find a volunteer with web experience—or teach yourself. Many email accounts offer free web space and often have simple tutorials on how to create a site.

Meet with your Elected Officials

Set up meetings with local elected officials, including provincial and national representatives. See the *Organizing Tools* section for tips on arranging a meeting. Remember that unless elected officials (local and provincial) hear from you, they will assume that nothing is wrong. The proponents will be lobbying for their cause so make sure you do the same. Remember, “the squeaky wheel gets the grease”.

Letters of Concern

Submit letters of concern to local and regional government officials. Keep a copy for your files and give a copy to others in your group so they can also submit similar letters. People who might not be inclined to get involved publicly might still be interested in sending a letter of support for your concerns.

Learn from Others

Collect testimonials from people living near a factory farm. Use them at meetings, news conferences, hearings, etc. They are very effective. Hearing someone's personal story about what its like living near a factory farm is extremely effective in helping people understand the issues. (See the *Educational Tools* section.) For more examples:

www.factoryfarm.org/takingaction-testimonials.html



Raise Funds

You will need money to effectively carry out your campaign, but the amount needed can vary greatly from group to group. Try to estimate how much money you think you'll need for your campaign, but be realistic about your budget and how much money you think you can raise. Don't let a lack of money stop you—usually a little bit of cash and a lot of people power is just as effective as a lot of cash.

If your group has adequate time to mount an effective campaign against the establishment of a factory farm, access to money will play a major role. You will require funds for activities such as:

- town hall meetings
- public events
- tabloids/posters/visual aids
- legal fees
- hiring experts (or covering traveling and accommodation costs)
- environmental monitoring
- radio/television/newspaper advertisements

Short term funding

If your group has limited time to prevent the permitting of a factory farm, raising money may not be necessary, or if it is, will need to be done informally as you go along.

It is best to assign an individual in your group the responsibility of fundraising chair. This person should be well known and respected in your community and not afraid to ask directly for a donation. Given that you have limited time to influence decision-makers, asking for money directly is the quickest way to raise money. It is important that your group establishes a comprehensive list of names (family, close friends, colleagues at work, members of similar organizations, community leaders and philanthropists) to approach and that the fundraising chair follows through. If you hold a community event, be sure to pass the hat around for donations.



Long term funding

If you have a longer period to organize, you may want to set up a fundraising committee and develop a campaign budget. Once you have established what items you wish to spend money on, there are many innovative ways to raise money, such as:

- bingos, auctions, garage sales, dinners, bake sales, benefits/socials
- create and sell items such as t-shirts, pins, and coffee mugs
- create a comprehensive database and mailing list and send out a letter of appeal to those who would support your cause
- door to door canvass
- an information/campaign tabloid with a cut-out box which allows the reader to easily send money in support of your campaign

A couple of communities recorded a song about factory farming—one had their song go to number one on the music charts in their area! All money raised from these activities can go toward your campaign.

Sometimes it is easier to raise money if your group has charitable status, as donors will want to take advantage of income tax exemptions. Obtaining your own charitable tax status is often a lengthy and difficult process and will require that your group is formally incorporated as a registered non-profit organization. Information about obtaining charitable status is available from Canada Revenue Agency at www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pub/tg/t4063/t4063-01e.pdf

As another possibility, you may want to approach a well-established environmental non-government organization (ENGO) in your region that has a charitable number and ask them to partner with you. Established organizations with charitable status are cautious with who they partner with, as Revenue Canada allows registered charitable organizations to use a maximum of 10% of their total budget for advocacy purposes. However, such partnerships can provide legal support, educational pamphlets and research that would support your cause.



Applying for Grants

Whether you have a charitable number, are partnering with an organization that has one, or just exist as a registered non-profit organization, you may want to write grant proposals for specific elements of your campaign. There are a number of public and private foundations across the country that may support you.

The Sustainability Network

A Canadian organization devoted to helping environmental groups build their own capacity. Its website links to many useful resources. As well, the organization holds workshops on fundraising among other things. Phone 416-324-2792 if you don't use the internet.

www.sustain.web.ca/

The Canadian Environmental Grantmakers Network

CEGN lists most of the foundations in Canada that fund environmental initiatives.

www.cegn.org/main.html

The Community Foundations of Canada

CFC is an umbrella agency for smaller community foundations in Canada.

www.cfc-fcc.ca

Philanthropic Foundations of Canada

There are many private foundations in Canada. The Philanthropic Foundations of Canada is the umbrella agency.

www.pfc.ca

Stewardship Canada

Stewardship Canada lists funders that support land stewardship.

www.stewardshipcanada.ca.

Each foundation will have its own guidelines for submitting applications and timelines to follow. Remember, grant making is a long term strategy and grants will usually take 1 to 4 months to turn around.

Many books have been written on the subject of fundraising. See, for example, *Grassroots grants: an activist's guide to grantseeking* by Andy Robinson (*San Francisco, CA. Jossey-Bass c 2004*). There are many guides to writing effective grants on the web. If you do not have access to the Internet, try your library or local bookstore.



