

Field Day Guide

How to host a field day
and effectively increase
project outreach



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Find this guide online at www.cdfa.ca.gov/go/FREP
Or on the FREP blog: www.blogs.cdfa.ca.gov/FREP



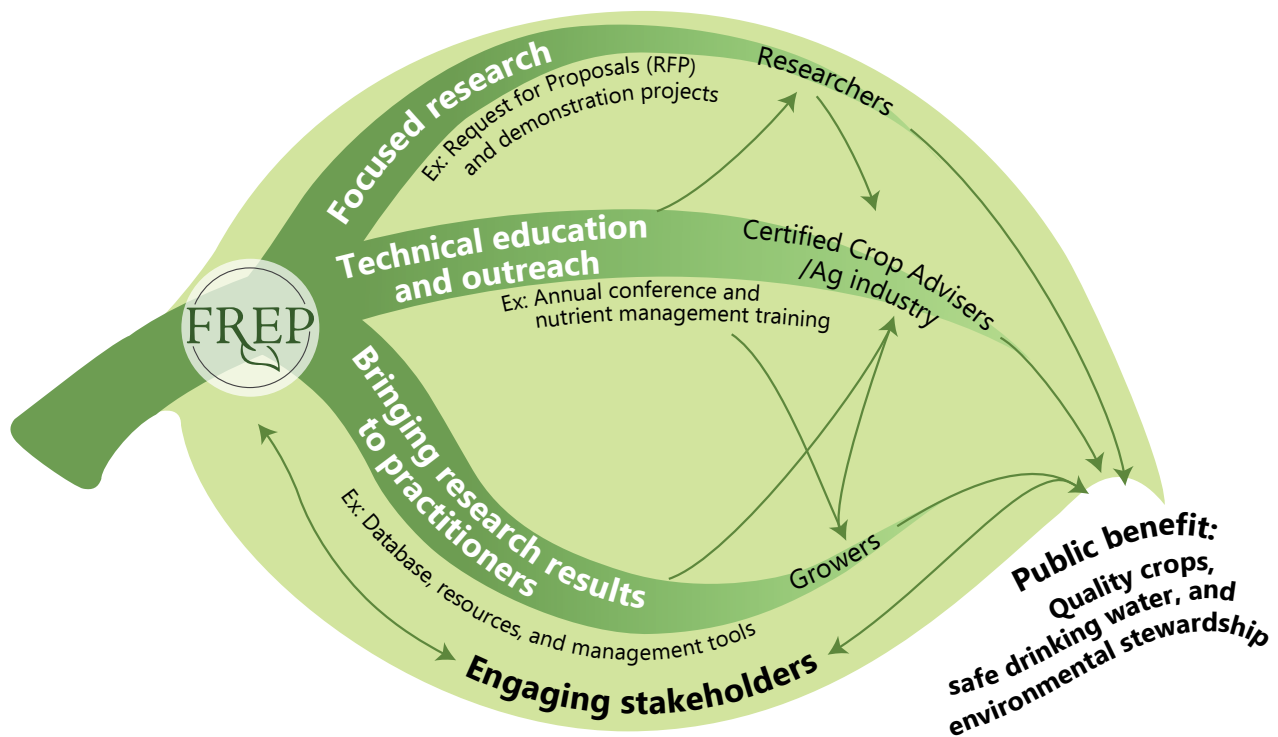
This Field Day Guide was inspired and shaped by the Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education's Farmer Field Day Toolkit.

About FREP

The **Fertilizer Research and Education Program (FREP)** was established in 1990 through legislative action to provide funding for basic and applied research, education and outreach for nutrient and water management practices in California, with the goal to advance the environmentally safe and agronomically sound use and handling of fertilizing materials. Funding is provided through a mill assessment (\$0.001 per dollar) on fertilizer sales. FREP serves growers, agricultural supply and service professionals, extension personnel, public agencies, consultants, and other interested parties.

Successful Projects Make a Difference

FREP grants have supported a wide variety of research and education projects. These projects improve agricultural productivity while protecting the environment.



Focused Research – With over 220 projects funded for more than \$17 million, FREP has developed a baseline for improved fertilizer management practices.

Technical Education and Outreach – FREP provides growers and crop advisors with technical education, through funded projects and an annual conference.

Bringing Research Results to Practitioners – FREP’s online searchable database, a growing number of crop fertilization guidelines, and many decision-making tools.

Engaging with stakeholders – FREP works with those impacted by nutrient management and water issues.

Why Host a Field Day?

“I believe in the future of agriculture, with a faith born not of words but of deeds- achievements won by the past and present generations of agriculturalists; in the promise of better days through better ways, even as the better things we now enjoy have come to us from the struggles of former years.”

-E. M. Tiffany

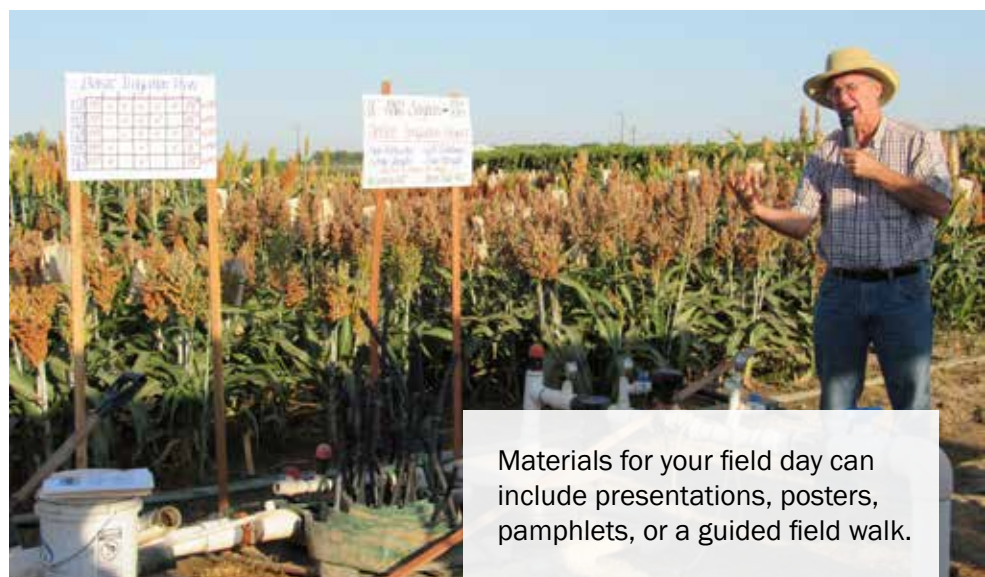
Deciphering information from a research report can be a daunting task for growers, students, and the public. Hosting a field day transforms words into a visual representation that can increase understanding and impact.

A field day is a great opportunity to display your valuable work and achievements and leave a lasting impact on the future of agriculture. It also provides an opportunity for feedback, peer-to-peer learning and increased support from members of the agriculture community.

What Does a Field Day Look Like?

A field day is intended to be an educational event that highlights the findings of your project. The event should include demonstrations of techniques used for retrieving data, specific management practices implemented, and recommendations developed from results.

You should consider partnering with complementary organizations, coalitions and boards, and your respective funding source. These partnerships can provide publicity and support, and increase the overall impact of your event.



Materials for your field day can include presentations, posters, pamphlets, or a guided field walk.

Planning a Successful Field Day

Brainstorm the Basics

WHY

Decide why it is important that your research is shared with others. Be sure to showcase recommendations for management practices.

WHAT

Choose two or three main points that you intend to convey to the audience. Don't overload them with scientific jargon.

WHEN

Decide the length and date that would best suit the information you are trying to communicate. Timing is key!

WHERE

Can your presentation be done in the field, and where are the best sites for demonstrations?

WHO

Identify the audience you intend to reach; growers, coalitions, advisors, environmental organizations, etc. Will your audience be large enough to make an impact but small enough so that everyone feels engaged?

HOW

Can pamphlets be made to summarize findings or highlight key points? Is a sound system needed or will speakers talk loud enough that everyone can hear? How about posters or other visual aids?

Safety and Convenience

Provide restrooms, as well as shade and water, for participants.

Consider the safety of your audience and check your liability insurance restrictions prior to the event.

Consider the importance of biosecurity and take measures to prevent the spread of pests and diseases. This can include having a designated parking area and hand washing stations.

In the case of longer events, food/refreshments should be served. A small fee can be charged to cover costs.

If your intended audience speaks other languages, consider making materials multi-lingual and obtaining translation services.

Outreach

In order to effectively promote your field day, broadcast your event to a target audience using several resources. Possibilities include social media, press releases, public service announcements on ag radio, email contact, and reaching out to other agricultural groups.

Decide how registration for the event will take place: email, mail-in form, or an online-based system.

Take a record of emails during registration in order to provide additional information prior to the event and to obtain feedback through a follow-up survey.

NOTE FOR FREP-FUNDED PROJECTS: Please share your events and field days with FREP. Our team is available to help organize and disseminate the results of timely research projects such as yours. It is our intention to increase the impact of research and education projects. Send a courtesy email two weeks prior to your outreach events to: frepcdf@cdfa.ca.gov

Preparing Your Field Day

One Month Prior to Event

Finalize why, who, what, where, when, and how.

Create a flyer for the event and share via social media, email, etc.

Create registration options.

Provide interested organizations, such as Farm Bureau, Cooperative Extension, Ag Commissioners, and commodity groups with event information and flyers.

Begin working with the media to release information and schedule coverage of event.

Contact FREP for outreach assistance.

Order food, refreshments, and portable restrooms if needed.

Find someone to record or capture your event with photos or videos.

Create a tentative schedule and handouts for the event.

One or Two Weeks Prior to Event

Send out final information to registered participants and final requests for media coverage.

Monitor registration, and close if capacity is reached.

Make signs directing people to different areas of the field day.

Take measures to prevent the spread of pests and diseases, such as having a designated parking area and hand washing stations.

Print informational material.

Check weather and plan accordingly.

Ready, Set, Go!

Set up signs, tables, chairs, food etc.

Ensure dangerous equipment, chemicals and other hazards are clear of walking areas.

Be sure to allow time for questions.

Enjoy; people are interested in what you have to say!



If your field day or outreach event is relevant to FREP's mission or priorities, please let us know. We can help disseminate the information to our contacts. Email event info to frep@cdfa.ca.gov

Alternative Outreach Options

What if a field day is not a viable option, or another type of outreach will help to communicate better? Consider the following methods to distribute or collect information.

Workshops

When a field day is not possible, indoor training workshops on specific management practices can be useful.

Workshops are also helpful for training growers on how to use a web-based tool or app. These types of outreach instruments are becoming more popular in the agricultural industry.

Videos

Another option for visual outreach is to create a tutorial video demonstrating your findings and recommended management techniques.

Add links to videos on associated websites and social media platforms.

Blog Posts

Blog posts are a quick way to announce events, share research information, and convey results.

Posts should be kept short and simple in order to capture a broad audience.

Often a simple overview will provide ample information.

Presentations

An overview of research findings can be presented at related conferences and meetings.

Associated commodity group meetings are a good place to start for crop-specific research projects.

Surveys

Surveys can be conducted during the start of a project to get a feel for current grower knowledge on the subject or standard management practices.

Surveys can also be conducted during and after field days or workshops to measure the impact of your recommendations and management practices.

To gauge long-term impacts, consider a follow-up survey six months or more after a field day.

Using an online survey generator can increase accessibility and decrease time spent on analyzing feedback.

Controlled Focus Groups

Seeking advice from a target audience can help increase the future impact and relevance of your project.

Controlled focus groups are also a worthy outlet to test a web-based tool or app.



For more information and examples, check out the FREP blog at www.blogs.cdfa.ca.gov/FREP



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