



FarmDemo

DESIGN GUIDE FOR ON-FARM DEMONSTRATIONS





Introduction

On-farm demonstrations have been organised for at least two centuries, originally as a way to introduce farmers to innovation, but more recently also to share experiences in a farmer-to-farmer setting, and to support knowledge co-creation between farmers and other actors. Increasingly, farmers themselves are opening their farms to connect with their peers and the general public as part of business development strategies (e.g. short food supply chains, community supported agriculture).

Demonstration activities can range from one-off 'field day' events to multi-year 'monitor farms' where farmers, advisors and industry members come together at regular intervals to assess farming opportunities in situ, to permanent 'research farms' where researchers test and demonstrate innovative technologies and approaches. On-farm demonstrations thus follow a wide range of approaches, are planned with different objectives in mind, and are initiated and organised by a wide range of actors. Given this variety, there is no 'one-fits-all' approach for a successful on-farm demonstration event.

This guide offers an overview of the most important elements that should be considered when it comes to preparing, carrying out and evaluating on-farm demonstrations. It proposes 6 simple steps to follow when designing an on-farm demonstration event, starting from a clear definition of the objectives and ending with a good evaluation and follow-up. Throughout, this guide offers concrete tips and tricks and provides specific tools to support the design of your event.



An online version is available at:

<https://farmdemo.eu>

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DESIGN YOUR ON-FARM DEMONSTRATION EVENT IN 6 STEPS

1 Demo objectives and target groups



- State clear objectives
- Target your farming audience in line with your objectives
- Invite other actors to increase the impact

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2 Demonstration farm



- Select your host farm in line with your objectives
- Go for a credible and innovative host farmer
- Ensure access by good location and facilities

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3 Demo set-up



- Compose a balanced organisation team in line with your objectives
- Provide enough time for interaction and networking
- Consider trade-offs when selecting a suitable time
- Compensate the host farmers

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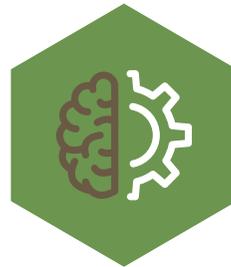
4 Promotion



- State your key messages in line with your objectives
- Adapt the jargon to your target audience
- Go for a clear and appealing invitation
- Use multiple communication channels

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5 Learning and facilitation methods



- Relate learning content to farming practice
- Engage participants in active knowledge exchange
- Use a variety of learning methods
- Split up larger groups

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6 Evaluation and follow-up



- Evaluate if your objectives have been met
- Use and implement the results of your evaluation
- Organise follow-up activities for both participants and non-participants

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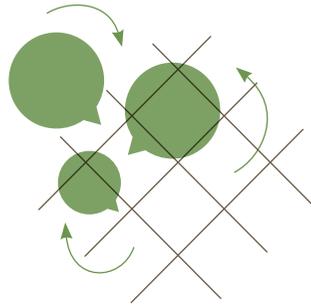
1

Demo objectives and target groups

“What do you want to achieve with the demo?”

For any demo event it is important to explicitly state clear objective(s) and key messages well in advance. They determine all the other decisions you will make during the preparation and the performance of the demo event: the set-up, which actors to involve, the evaluation of effectiveness.

Start by addressing the ‘why’ (why are we doing this demo) and then the ‘what’ (what do we want to demonstrate). From this demo objective subsequently follows the ‘who’ (the targeted audience for the demo) and the ‘how’ (the demo set-up and learning methods).



Demo events can act as meeting place for participants

TIP

Take regional agricultural developments and challenges into account to attract farmers and to increase your impact.

WHY DO YOU WANT TO ORGANISE THE DEMO EVENT?

This specifies the motivation or need for the demo.



Possible targeted effects:

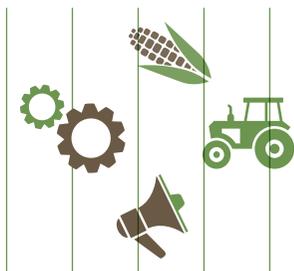
- **Knowledge co-creation.** You can aim to create (new) knowledge, by profiting from the knowledge pool of the participants that attend the demo event.
- **Innovation adoption.** Demos help the transfer of new opportunities, novelties or practical experience that can be used directly on farms. These innovations can emerge from research, business (related to product sales) or pioneer farmers and give farmers the confidence to make a grounded decision on the usefulness of the demonstrated practices or innovations for their own farm.
- **Problem solving.** Demos are a useful platform to link extension to the needs of local farmers. You can demonstrate solutions to farmers' problems, for example related to reducing farm labour or how to grow crops in a changing climate, or you can validate conducted research and innovations under local conditions and tailor them to the farmers' needs.
- **Training.** Demos serve as a platform for skills enhancement and capacity building, thus enabling practical implementation of innovative practices on the farm.
- **Building awareness.** Demos can raise awareness on topics like for example social demands. Also, sustainability topics are often not addressed explicitly, but are often part of the demonstration to create awareness with the participants.
- **Networking.** Demo events can act as meeting place for participants. Regular (e.g. yearly) demo events can be used as network event to gather all people involved in the programme, network or project. They can contribute to the strengthening and development of collaboration and boost possible partnership for cooperative problem solutions, both national and international. Also, the social aspect of networking, being able to meet other farmers, is very attractive to some participants.
- **Research implementation.** On-farm demo events can act as a platform to transfer knowledge on applied research results to agricultural practice. Innovations and practices can be trialled, compared or validated in 'real' farm conditions.
- **Policy implementation.** Demos are an opportunity to inform farmers on new legislation and policy regulations and to provide specific practices and examples on how they are able to implement them on their farms.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DEMONSTRATE?

Demo topics can be very diverse, like for example the demonstration of a product, a machine, a process, management or marketing.

The characteristics of the topic demonstrated influence the demo set-up and which target groups can potentially be reached. Is it an innovation not at all known by the farming community with no real-life implementation examples? Is it already implemented by a minority of farmers? Is it a widespread practice that could be optimised and refined by farmers?

Often the strength of a demo event lies in its simplicity. It is therefore advisable to limit the number of topics addressed during one event. If you want to address multiple topics, you may consider organising a series of demo events or make sure sufficient time is planned for each individual topic.



The choice of the topic can be made top-down by the organisers, by farmer representatives, or by the project in which the demo is embedded, as well as bottom-up with farmer involvement, or by participants on a previous demo event when it involves a series of demo events. Either way, a thorough consideration or discussion beforehand is necessary to select an interesting, inspiring and relevant topic.



Series of demos vs. one-off

An important choice in deciding on the set-up of a demo, depends on whether it will be a one-off demo, a series of demos on the same topic, or a reoccurring (network) event organised by the same organisers.

Series of demos are sometimes mentioned as being more effective because:

- Participants get to know and to trust each other (they will be less reluctant to share information).
- Demos can address several steps in the adoption process (more targeted effects).
- It allows to show evolution through time, seasonality.
- You can reach more farmers and multiple stakeholder types.
- Demos can rely on the good reputation of previous demos.
- The organisation and set-up can be improved/enhanced.

WHO DO YOU TARGET?

The selection of the target group(s) depends on what you aim to achieve with the demo. For example, if intensive knowledge exchange or knowledge co-creation on a very specific topic is envisioned, you might choose to target a small group of farmers who “speak a similar language” to assure qualitative and intense interactions. Identifying specific target groups will determine which information channels should be used to reach them.

The target group can be specified in relation to:

- Specific sectors (e.g. dairy farmers, sugar beet producers)
- A specific region (e.g. a specific province, nationwide, or international)
- Their experience with a specific technique, e.g. novice or expert. Depending on the goal, organisers could opt for experienced farmers only (e.g. for improving a practice or innovation) or the combination of both (when you want exchange). ‘Expert’ farmers can help to start discussions during the demo event and encourage each other to ask questions.
- Specific ‘types’ of farmers (e.g. ‘innovative’ farmers for topics that need further development, ‘average’ farmers for ready to use demo topics, young farmers or new entrants)
- Gender, ensuring all the relevant representatives of the farm participate and feel welcome.

Often, but depending on what you want to achieve, it is beneficial to invite other actors to contribute to the impact of the demo event on the longer term:

- Farm advisors can act as potential ‘multipliers’ of the key messages of the demo. They can spread and increase the demo content to non-participating farmers and they can connect farmers who applied a practice or innovation to those who are interested.
- Agricultural press who can communicate the demonstrated topic to a wider audience.
- Actors from the agri-food chain (e.g. suppliers, food processors, consumers...) are important partners in cooperative solutions and their presence can strengthen the links between producers and markets. They can contribute with data and experience from other areas.
- Policy makers can raise awareness of policy barriers and incentives which might increase the anchoring and scaling of the demo content on one hand, but also learn themselves on the practical problems or barriers farmers are confronted with to improve policy regulation. On the other hand, farmers are often reluctant to participate and share experiences in a group when there are authorities present in the group.
- (Agricultural) students and teachers can bring in research innovations, they can question the farmers on their ways of producing while learning about farming practices. They can help to carry out monitoring & evaluation, learn from co-organising and are good extra hands.



TIP

The presence of male and female host farmers encourages the participation of both male and female participants.





2

Demonstration farm

Demo events can be hosted on different types of sites, ranging from farmer owned farms to publicly owned fields leased by universities, research centres or extension sites. There are some criteria for selecting a good host site for the demo.

? *“Can farmers identify with the host farm?”*

A demo might have more impact when the host farm operates under the same ‘real life’ conditions as average farms. On the other hand, for example, pioneer farmers can show innovative and more experimental techniques.

? *“Is the host a ‘good farmer’, recognised as being credible and ‘wise’ as well as innovative and productive?”*

The public perception of the host also plays a role in the attractiveness of the event to the potential participants. Choosing someone you already know or a farm that is appointed by organisations for several years, during which trials are tested on the farm, can be a ‘safe’ option as the demo events often require a lot of efforts from the hosts to prepare their farm for the visitors. On the other hand, not always using the ‘usual suspects’ should be considered.

? *“Is the host farm suitable for the demo event, taking into account the topic, the location and the planned activities?”*

You should check whether the host farmer’s activities, practices and farm facilities coincide with the purpose of the demo and the expected number of participants. Travel time can be an important criterion, however participants are willing to travel further for demos on innovative techniques that are not common in their own region.



Choosing a host location has an influence on the accessibility of the demo:

- Geographic (location, travel time, good and easy access for the targeted audience)
- Social (facilities, comfort & security for the visitors)



TIPS

Check the EU-wide inventory of demonstration farms on the FarmDemo hub:
<https://farmdemo.eu>

Collaboration between commercial companies and farms could be beneficial: it allows participants to see the newest innovations on a real working farm.

An ‘atypical’ farm can provide inspiration and increase reflection on current practices.

To reach a wider group of participants, you can organise the same demo at different locations in your region/country and on different types of farms.

Increase accessibility of more remote host farms by organising group transport.

Provide transportation facilities to visit multiple sites.



3

Demo set-up

ORGANISATION TEAM

? “Which type of partners (such as farmers, farmers’ organisations, advisors, agro-businesses) will be involved in the demo organisation to make it successful in meeting the demo objective(s)?”

The collaboration between diverse actors can be challenging because of their different professional backgrounds, skills, knowledge bases, priorities, work routines, and motivations. To help this endeavour succeed, it is important to agree upon objectives, content and division of labour.

The regional AKIS (see the box) can define the context in which demo events are organised. A good collaboration and pre-existing networks of regional AKIS actors might make it easier to organise or to create a strategy for demos, adjust the topic to the specific region and benefit from the available social capital and networks to find the right profiles and competences to organise the demo. The success of a demo is often also related on how the organising team is perceived by the local community. Organising teams can therefore benefit from a collaboration with respected local organisations who have a lot of contact with farmers.

The regional Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS) comprises the whole agricultural knowledge exchange system within a region and is defined by the way that people and organisations such as advisory services, researchers, policy and farmer organisations interact and work together.

Collaboration with commercial partners can realise very effective demo events in terms of knowledge and information provision. However, sound agreements with commercial companies, prior to the demo event, are needed to avoid that farmers perceive the event as a sales pitch. This can be avoided by involving more than one commercial company present or invite ‘neutral’ parties like non-commercial advisory services or researchers alongside the commercial company.



Roles in the organisation team

A clear definition of roles and sufficient personnel (both in expertise and number) can support the preparation and structure of the demo event. Four important roles should be fulfilled during a demo event:

- the host farmer
- the demonstrator,
- the logistic manager/coordinator
- the facilitator

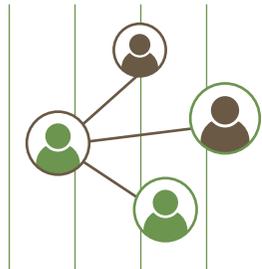
TIPS

Involve the host farmer family early on in the organisation of the demo.

Invite multiple organisations sharing your objective(s) to reach target group(s).

Involve regulative authorities sensibly: appropriate (e.g. information clarification/demonstration of compliance) can attract farmers, inappropriate will repel farmers.

A facilitator is helpful in many cases. The facilitator can handle a discussion and act as a neutral third party.



A BALANCED PROGRAM

The available time for the demo is determining the decisions on the demo content and the learning methods to be used. The available time could range from one hour to half a day, to a full day or even multiple days. Remember to provide enough time for discussion and Q&A, but also for networking and social interaction.

A good program of the demo event provides sufficient variation. It should at least entail:

- A welcome/introduction, preferably together with the host farmer
- Actual demonstration of the innovation (either or not in combination with a presentation)
- A facilitated discussion or interactive Q&A
- An evaluation of the demo by the participants
- An official closing of the event with clear conclusions and take-home messages
- Time for informal talks, discussions and networking (provide food and drinks! – see also learning and facilitation methods for demo events)
- Feedback evaluation of the event

TIPS

A welcome by the host farmers is very much appreciated.

Provide a tour around the farm.

CHOOSE A SUITABLE TIME

The timing of the demo is a key factor to ensure good attendance of the demo. Although you cannot always plan this precisely (e.g. when it accidentally happens to be the first warm week of the season), you can make an estimation on the periods when farmers have less work on the farm. Take into account the timing during the day (e.g. milking hours) and/or the week (e.g. school days).

Often, choosing the right time will be a trade-off between multiple aspects. For example, a period when there is a lot to see on the field, is often also a period when there is a lot of work on the farm.

TIPS

Choose a fixed date for recurrent demos (e.g. last weekend of September, every 6 months to show seasonal variation, ...).

Take other events into account.

FACILITIES & EQUIPMENT

Feeling welcome and being well treated adds to the effectiveness of the demo. Make sure to have suitable facilities, good access, toilets, parking, a tidy well prepared environment etc.



CHECKLIST:

- ✓ Clear audio and visual equipment
- ✓ (Bio)security measures
- ✓ Toilets
- ✓ To increase accessibility, where possible provide wheelchair access
- ✓ Provide road signs and banners, parking
- ✓ Provide shaded areas or shelters, anticipating weather conditions
- ✓ Include logos and banners of sponsors, if applicable
- ✓ Think about food and drinks!



BUDGET

- ? *“Who will finance the demo event?”*
- ? *“Will participants have to pay an attendance fee?”*
- ? *“Will the budget influence the set-up and the number of participants?”*

The budget should cover all expenses like inputs, transportation costs, organisation expenses and publicity expenses. Also, make sure to compensate the farmer for any shortfall in yields as well as for dedicated time (including preparation time).

The available budget correlates to the funding partners in the organisation team and can have a big impact on the set-up and size of the demo and might define some decisions, e.g. regarding the target group size, whether participants have to pay an entrance fee, or the demonstrators that are invited. However, limited resources should not necessarily impact the effectiveness of the demo. Less expensive methods can be as effective as more expensive methods but might need a more considered approach during the planning phase of the demo.

For bigger events, additional help (e.g. in the form of human or material resources) can be covered by sponsoring, possibly by allied organisations.

Budget table: trainingkit.farmdemo.eu/budget-table

REGISTRATION

This allows you to easily contact participants afterwards for a follow-up and evaluation, and enables a good organisation for the estimated number of participants. Registration for the demo event should be easy and fluid.

TIPS

Register participants before the event: to know your audience and to send interesting material before the event.

Provide a participant contact list.





4

Promotion

CLEAR INVITATION ADAPTED TO THE TARGET GROUPS

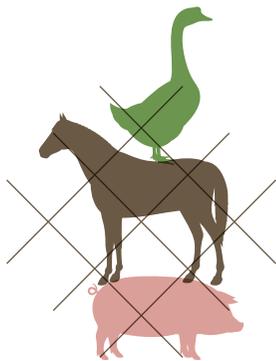


“Which people get to hear about the demo taking place?”

An effective recruitment has an influence on the attendance rate of the demo.

TIP

Where appropriate, send the invitation to the whole family.



It is essential to adapt the invitation to the target group. Make sure to adapt the language (jargon) to the target audience.

There are some questions to consider when designing an invitation:

(see <https://thefloorisyours.be/en/pitchinghandson/>)

Who is your target audience?

- Each target audience has a unique set of expectations and problems. If possible, focus on one single target audience at a time.
- Specify your target group in the invitation (e.g. only organic farmers, or both organic and non-organic farmers). This can ensure that you attract farmers with a specific interest.

What is your main message?

What is your call for action?

- State clearly it is an invitation to join the demo event.
- Choose a good name for the demo event that also reflects the key message.

What is the problem your target audience is struggling with and how will you solve it?

- Clearly mention the goals and objectives of the demo, because it contributes to the demo's effectiveness.
- If you have knowledgeable demonstrators, skilled facilitators or host farmers, clearly mention it on your invitation as they might attract farmers.

What advantage will your target audience get out of it?

- Specify what will be the added value for the participants of the demo.

TIPS

Communicate about all organisers on the invitation.

Mention the admission fee, if applicable.

Make the invitation visually attractive, and search for the right balance in information. You can use software such as <https://www.lucidpress.com/pages/examples/online-invitation-maker> and <https://spark.adobe.com/make/invitation-maker>

Increase the visibility of a series of demo events by using a fixed template. This 'branding' should then also be reflected in the name of the event. This helps with the recognition of the demo event, and when they have developed a good reputation, they will be more successful in attracting participants.

Make the invitation clear and appealing. Do not overwork it, do not use a lot of different fonts. A welcoming friendly photo of the farm(er) could be good.



USE THE RIGHT COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Multiple communication channels can be used for recruitment of participants. Invitations can be spread using flyers, letters, e-mails, posters, newspaper articles, websites, social media, mouth-to-mouth or radio and television promotions. To spread the invitation, one might make use of meetings, personal contacts, own networks or mailing lists, networks of other organisations (e.g. farmer unions, advisor networks), announcements in schools.

TIPS

Send personal invitations.

Use a stepwise combination of communication channels in time.

Consider who will spread the invitation.

Make special efforts for hard-to-mobilize farmers!

INTERACTION WITH PARTICIPANTS BEFORE THE DEMO

You can already organise some kind of interaction with the expected participants:

- Extra information on the host farm, demo content, field trials, ...
- Ask participants to complete online registration form (e.g. specific interests).
- Ask participants to prepare some reflective questions.

Offer extra incentives for farmers to come:

- Test samples
- Free soil analysis
- National championship in an agricultural discipline
- Food and drinks
- A show
- A party
- Prizes to win



5

Learning and facilitation methods

A variety of learning methods can be used to transfer and exchange knowledge and to develop skills. It is important to realise there is no single right method, but that the actual choice depends on several factors, like for instance the group size & composition. The demo event should also contain a combination of well-considered and well-balanced activities, to support good learning conditions.



GROUP SIZE & COMPOSITION

The decision on the group size depends on the objective(s) of the demo and has a major impact on the format of your demo event.

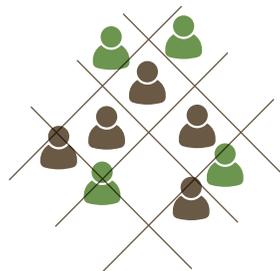
- Smaller groups (8-15 participants):
 - More effective for knowledge exchange, reflection and deeper peer-to-peer learning
 - Easier to manage
 - Small closed groups who meet regularly have built up trust, possibly enabling effective discussions.
- Larger groups:
 - When the objective is to raise awareness and wide knowledge transfer
 - Help to attract sponsors and farm supplying companies
 - Need good audio and visuals

More homogeneous groups appear to be 'prepared to share' and to trust other participants, while groups made up of different types of actors can be beneficial to spark discussions and networking, by looking at the same problem together from different angles. This is of course also an important element when thinking about recruitment.

Also, the extent of familiarity between the participants can have a big impact on the group dynamics, and can influence the appropriateness of some learning methods over others. You need more organised facilitation methods to spark networking, sharing and discussions for groups that don't know each other. A skillful and friendly facilitator can create a nice and friendly atmosphere and environment that makes it easier for farmers to speak openly and create a good discussion.

TIP

Split up large groups in smaller groups to increase active participation and discussion.



This video on low stress stockmanship demonstrates how the host farmer makes use of real farming conditions to explain the technique, rather than for example by using a ppt presentation.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_vAcn7WlOcE&feature=youtu.be

SELECTING SUITABLE LEARNING METHODS

There are 3 basic principles:

- 1 | Relate learning content to farming practice
- 2 | Engage participants in active knowledge exchange
- 3 | Use a variety of learning methods

1 | Relating learning content to farming practice

Pay attention to the broader context. Address the impact of the demonstrated practice or innovation on the whole farm, and also discuss the wider context (e.g. societal, economic, political). By providing this additional information participants can make more informed decisions on whether or not to adopt a practice or innovation.

Make use of the host farm, and the experience of the host farmer. The opportunity to visit another farm is often one of the main motivations of farmers to attend a demo, so it is important to link the demonstration content to actual farm management conditions on the host farm and provide as many practical examples as possible. This also means paying attention to problems, failures, mistakes or the negative side effects of a practice. These problems often reflect the barriers for adopting practices. So, when they are addressed and explained how they could be dealt with, they might contribute to the adoption of practices and innovations by the participants.

2 | Engage participants in active knowledge exchange

Offer opportunities for peer-to-peer knowledge exchange. You can increase participation in presentations and demonstrations, by e.g. actively giving participants the opportunity to share their experiences with the audience, by organising discussions with smaller numbers of participants, or by organising workshops in which active knowledge exchange is stimulated. Create opportunities for more informal knowledge exchange, by providing enough time for farmers to chat to each other, for example during lunch, drinks or workshops.

TIP

DON'T FORGET ABOUT FOOD AND DRINKS

Breakfast or lunch during which introductory speeches are held.

Food and drinks after the “formal part”, so people can discuss what they have seen or done.

Provide home-made goods, preferably by using ingredients of the host farm.

Provide food from local sources who are co-organisers or sponsors.

Provide refreshments and snacks as a break in between.

Offer a wide range of experiences and look for ways to surprise participants. Include a range of diverse activities. Examples may be field walks, observing practical demonstrations carried out by a demonstrator, and letting participants carry out hands-on activities. Such practical activities enhance learning and understanding, and also the interactions between participants. By adding a surprise effect to the demonstration activities, participants will more likely remember the information for a longer time. This surprise effect can be generated in different ways, for example, by skilful storytelling techniques, using an original engaging activity for participants, or by revealing a product/innovation during the demo event.



Figure 1. Pictures of the Soil my Pants test, as an example of a surprising and simple test for soil health. (sources: <https://cereals-blog.ahdb.org.uk/when-i-soiled-my-undies/> (left); ILVO (right))



This video shows the ‘Soil my Pants’ test, as a surprising and simple method to test the soil health based on buried cotton underwear.
<https://cereals-blog.ahdb.org.uk/when-i-soiled-my-undies/>

Create a stimulating and familiar setting. Arrange the meeting room/space in such a way that everyone can comfortably listen to and understand the speaker(s) and other participants. Some ideas are:

- Use microphones so that each participant can hear the speaker (in particular, when outside)
- Use visual material that each participant can see (i.e. do not use posters with small font size, which may be only visible to the front row)
- If indoors: put chairs in a circle/half circle, so everybody has clear sight of the other participants.
- Organise a “market” with different stands/presenters so people can walk around in smaller groups.
- Think about where you will hold discussions, considering that farmers tend to be more at ease in the field or barn, than in scholarly classrooms.
- Provide some funny icebreakers at the beginning of the event. Inspiration can be found on the internet, for example: <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/top-ice-breakers-1918426> or <https://www.icebreakers.ws/large-group>

3 | Use a variety of learning methods

Go for a combination. Various learning methods can be employed during demonstration events, e.g. posters, presentations, experiments, discussions, workshops, etc. These methods differ in the degree of interaction between demonstrator and participants and the active engagement required by the farmers, and appeal to different learning styles. Again, the choice of what combination of learning methods is being used depends on the objective of the day, and the group composition and size. An overview of learning methods can be found on pages 28-30.



Adapt to different knowledge levels and learning styles in the audience. If possible, get an idea of knowledge levels of your participants in advance. If not, start with basic information for newcomers in the field. Typical types of learners are (<https://blog.prezi.com/the-four-different-types-of-learners-and-what-they-mean-to-your-presentations-infographic/>):

- Auditory learners prefer to hear the information. They often talk to themselves while they are studying or thinking. This can be supported by stimulating the audience to repeat the key messages out loud, e.g. by asking them questions.
- Visual learners prefer to see information and visualize the relationships between ideas, for example in infographics, charts, schemes and colours.
- Reading/writing learners prefer to read or write down information, in booklets or handouts.
- Kinesthetic (Physical) learners prefer to actually perform hands-on exercises and experiments.

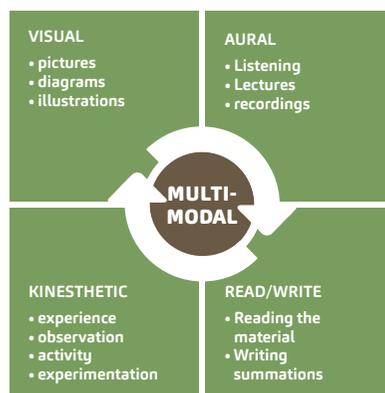


Figure 2. Different types of learners and how to take them into account during a demo. (Source: <https://tutoringwithatwist.ca/var-k-learning-styles/>)

Make use of suitable educational tools. Educational tools are all sorts of materials used during a demo to facilitate learning (e.g. hand-outs, videos, interactive electronic voting systems), to:

- Increase interaction: by, for example, the use of voting systems or interactive apps (e.g. <https://www.men-timeter.com> or <https://kahoot.com>)
- Visualise content: e.g. show equipment used on the farm, posters with engaging infographics (free on-line infographic makers on <https://www.canva.com/create/infographics>), videos to show ‘good’ or ‘bad’ practices.
- Provide supporting information for the demo event: e.g. booklets with additional information on the host farm or a list of attendees. An example of this are the “farm walk booklets” published by Teagasc (<https://www.teagasc.ie/rural-economy/organics/farm-walks>)
- Provide information to take home: e.g. booklets with practical information on the demonstrated innovation. This is of particular importance, since participants don’t always have the opportunity to take notes. Make references to webpage, Instagram, Facebook if available.

TIP

Think about how to distribute materials during the demo event. If they are distributed during presentations it might distract participants. Some of this information can also be sent in advance to the participants.



A PROFESSIONAL AND FLUENT DEMONSTRATION EVENT

Follow the “rule of three”. Provide three key messages that are repeated throughout the demo event and are also summarized at the end, as ‘take home’ messages for the participants. A good practice here is to bear in mind the “rule of three”. This principle, often used in advertising campaigns, suggests that formulating three key messages is more effective than other numbers.

Have a good facilitator present. Stimulating active participation is often missing during demos, most probably because of the lacking facilitation skills of demonstrators. The importance of a good facilitator cannot really be overstated, since he or she is pivotal during the whole event, making sure that everything runs in a fluent manner, actively engaging participants in discussions, and guiding them throughout the event. He or she can also collect questions that come up during the event.

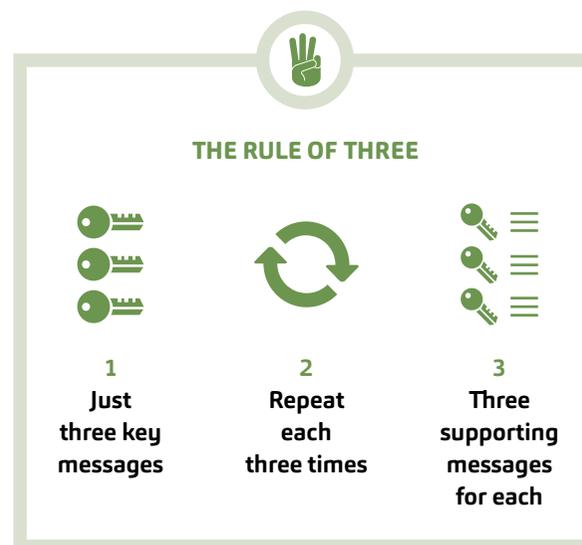


Figure 3. Use the rule of three to convey your key messages.

Safeguard good time management. There is nothing as frustrating for participants as having to leave when the programme is not yet finished or having the feeling that the programme has come to an abrupt close. Make sure to appoint a time keeper during the event who helps to keep to the time schedule. This might be someone from the organisation or facilitation team, or in some cases (e.g. smaller groups) even a participant.

Plan for the unexpected. Some unforeseen circumstances can always happen, and it is advisable to think in advance and be prepared for the unexpected. Examples are bad weather forecast, groups size is too big or too small, group composition differs from what was expected (e.g. few active farmers), problems with equipment, problems with field trials, etc. For example, when bad weather is forecasted the demo can be postponed, or indoor presentations, videos, demonstration or discussion set-up could be planned as an alternative.



6

Evaluation and follow-up

EVALUATING SET-UP & IMPACT OF YOUR EVENT

Evaluating your event helps to improve the organisation of future events. It is important to link the evaluation to the objective of the event: If the objective was networking, it is useful to focus on whether participants were able to expand their network. If the objective was innovation adoption, organisers need to monitor the participant's inclination to adopt the demonstrated innovation.

Feedback can be gathered on the set-up (programme, locations, facilities, topic, ...) and organisation of the demo, but also on what participants have learned, and what they believe to be applicable for their farm:

Shorter term:

"What do visitors take home?"

- Know-why (motivation, raised awareness): participants are aware that there are specific problems or challenges and/or that new options are available and may be needed in the future
- Know-what (the demo topic): participants are informed on specific novelties (new practices, materials, varieties, machinery, etc.)
- Know-how: participants can connect the new information to their own practice and are able to assess possibilities to implement it on their own farm.

Longer term:

"What do visitors do with what they have taken home?"

This impact rarely comes from a demo alone, and is less straightforward to evaluate, because of the time lag. It takes time for participants to make actual changes in their farming practice, since it might require financial investments, new skills and knowledge, and a readjustment in the farmer's usual routine and mind-set. The actual decision for change is also not influenced solely by the demonstration event, but includes a wide array of other information sources, such as publications in (agricultural) press, follow-up demo events, workshops, newsletters, contacts with advisors, other farmers, etc.

You can do the evaluation in different ways, such as:

- Informal talks with participants during the demo event
- Facilitated participant feedback during the demo event, using forms or based on discussions
- Evaluation forms sent to the participants afterwards. The risk of exit polls is that they are often completed too quickly when people are in a hurry to talk to other people or to go home.
- Follow-up emails or telephone calls. If wanting to assess impact, you can wait a couple of weeks, or even months for a follow-up telephone call.
- Evaluation forms for the demo organisers, to be completed during the demo event

Acting on the evaluation is important to improve future on-farm demonstration. So once the evaluation has been gathered it needs to be shared and improvements for future activities need to be implemented.

TIPS

Use only a few and relevant questions. A questionnaire with many questions will be harder to get people to complete.

You are more likely to have success in collecting feedback on the day, than afterwards through email.



This video shows how evaluation of the event by the participants is included in the program of the demo event.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BfkkuhbJ9OI&feature=youtu.be>

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

'Follow-up' refers to the further development and distribution of the content of the demo, after the event is finished, to further increase its impact. Although follow-up activities take place after the event, it is important that they are announced or discussed with the participants during the demo event.

Follow-up activities could be formal, such as organised follow-up demo events. Informal follow-up can include telephone contact between participants, the demonstrator or participating farmers talking to their neighbours.



This video shows the benefits of a platform for knowledge exchange on organic varieties, and the role demo events can play in this.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQMam6-eKI&feature=youtu.be>

Good follow-up activities for participants include:

- Share the participant list, with consent from the participants (in accordance with European GDPR privacy rules).
- Share contact details from the host farmer or other demonstrators for participants who are interested to learn more or to implement a practice on their farm.
- Provide information leaflets to the participants.
- Create an online platform, social media groups (e.g. WhatsApp), blogs or physical networks in which practitioners can report their experiences with other interested farmers.
- Provide a newsletter or create a website in which participants are informed about further insights and developments on the demo topic.
- Provide (group) support for those interested participants who plan to implement the practices or innovations.

Good follow-up activities for people who did not participate in the demo event include:

- Providing a report or video online of the demo event. If the video is attractive, it might also attract other farmers to participate in future demo events.
- Make use of different media sources (social media, blogs, webpages, written press, radio, etc.) to report on the event.
- Release press articles for farmers in the agricultural press, and provide brochures that can be distributed amongst farmers and advisors. It is advisable to get journalists at the event, and dedicate a specific session to journalists, to make sure they spread the right message in their articles or news items.
- For longer term trials on the host farm, the trials could be made publicly accessible, so local farmers are free to come and see the progress of the trial without the demo events.

Overview of various learning methods. More information also to be found on trainingkit.farmdemo.eu

METHOD	USEFUL FOR THE PURPOSE OF / IN THE DEMONSTRATION SITUATION	POINTS TO CONSIDER / PREREQUISITES	GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE
Webinar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To reach a broad range of people who are not able to physically attend the demo event. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carefully consider the objective and target audience Look into tutorials for webinars. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> https://www.wiley.com/network/researchers/promoting-your-article/so-you-want-to-create-a-webinar-six-tips-for-success How to make a webinar with Powerpoint: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Atzswy5VhFI Free training on how to make webinars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> https://webinarsthatwork.net/free-webinar https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xsXeSupL_d8
Information panel, stands, signposts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitors can self-direct their information gathering, through independently reading all the information stands at their own pace At multiple test strips a signpost can outline each treatment and mention who to contact for more information Signs and/or posters can be also used to direct farmers to the demonstration location. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited information can be conveyed to visitors No possibilities for interaction Make signpost simple, attractive and easy to read Need to meet the visual literacy levels of the farmers observing the demonstration Provide guidance and explanation at the information panels or stands. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AwMFhyH7_5g
Lecture or classroom presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To introduce the topic and the context to a bigger group that it is possible to easily host on farm. To present clear conclusions and take-home messages. To show pictures/videos when live presentation is not possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theoretical or top down presentations risk the participants remaining distant from the topic and not involved Lack of farmers' engagement and interactivity might compete with the demonstration outside (if part of a larger event) Link to practice and demo farm during presentation Keep presentations short (max. 20 minutes) Think from the perspective of your target audience when preparing the presentation Recycling the latest presentation you gave at a (scientific) conference won't do! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> https://thefloorisyours.be/en/ https://blog.polleverywhere.com/presentation-advice/ https://www.iowalearningfarms.org/content/field-day-toolkit,p.30-31
Storytelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows participants to better remember the main messages When you have an enthusiastic user or performer of the practice you want to demonstrate Links the theory with practice The exchange with practitioners who have already implemented a certain technique or innovative approach is often very engaging and thought-provoking Anecdotes support remembering content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The story teller has to be gifted to tell a lively story and to be understood. Think carefully where to place storytelling in the demo; e.g. at the beginning to raise interest or in the middle to give an example 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yhQxwnT11Tw https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i68a6M5FFBc
Q&A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Important to timetable following one-way communication slots To help digesting information received 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encouraging and mediating questions, allowing everyone the chance to speak (role of the facilitator) Plan sufficient time Repeat questions using a microphone to ensure all participants can hear Be clear how many questions can be taken / how much time there is Keep answers short and precise, to have time for several questions Ask participants to prepare questions in advance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples of activating questions: https://www.iowalearningfarms.org/content/field-day-toolkit,p.20-21 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P2lgW_SXnEQ

METHOD	USEFUL FOR THE PURPOSE OF / IN THE DEMONSTRATION SITUATION	POINTS TO CONSIDER / PREREQUISITES	GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE
Interactive facilitated discussions between demonstrators and participants or among participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help to digest the information received Triggers reflection by the visiting farmers on how the demonstrated innovations would apply to their own farm. can be used to reflect on and link with earlier presentations To deepen knowledge and understanding on a particular topic Works well with both small or large groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look into facilitation guides Prepare activating questions to the group in advance Activate discussion by starting with a simple question, e.g. a poll that can be answered by all Ask participants to introduce themselves Participants who are already familiar with the topic or innovation can start the discussion and encourage unexperienced participants to also become involved in the discussion. It may be interesting/necessary to make sure some experienced farmers are present Good listening and facilitation skills needed: rephrasing, summarizing main issues Divide large groups into smaller ones Good listening and facilitation skills needed: rephrasing, summarizing main issues Divide large groups into smaller ones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples of activating questions: https://www.iowalearningfarms.org/content/field-day-toolkit, p. 20-21
Field/Farm walk		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some hosts don't like participants to walk freely around the farm. May be inaccessible for and prevent disabled or immobile participants from engaging. Presence of the hosts throughout field walk to provide guidance, explanation and answers on the questions Allow sufficient time to change between posts Consider all health and safety aspects of a farm walk/transport (by trailer), and undertake a risk assessment prior to the demo event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move people around on a trailer, when field or parts of the farm are not easily accessible for disabled participants.
Practical example showed by the demonstrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To illustrate the learning content and topic To make the presentation entertaining and attract attention Works well when combined with a field walk and other forms of presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use easy but surprising ways to explain your message Make sure to involve the whole group Consider the size of the group: everybody must be able to see the practical example. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple tools to test the soil quality: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9VWMoDijDm4&feature=youtu.be Slake test to visualize the structural stability of the soil (French spoken); https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pRaN6SLUPuk&feature=youtu.be
Multi sensorial presentation for more intense experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports remembering of the practice and anchoring the learning Works well when combined with a field walk and other forms of presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure sufficient time is allowed Include the experience into your presentation, e.g. by inquiring about it: "How does it smell to you?" "How would you describe the feeling of...?" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Touch and investigate the ground after the weeding machines have passed by Silently listen to the bees in a buffer zone on a field, Taste bread baked using the flour produced by the farm, to allow participants to gain an appreciation of the quality of the produce Demonstration of the spade test for analysing soil quality: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-kigHj3vbw Demonstration on the cultivation of legumes explains how the farmer demonstrator included experience in his demonstration: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=10E_13d85-l&feature=youtu.be

METHOD	USEFUL FOR THE PURPOSE OF / IN THE DEMONSTRATION SITUATION	POINTS TO CONSIDER / PREREQUISITES	GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE
Exercices giving visitors Hands-on experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action learning allows participants to come up with the solution themselves Supports remembering of the practice and anchoring the learning supports the mastery of skills by participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is not feasible for each topic, for example, when licences are required to use equipment, or because of biosafety measures Ensure sufficient time is planned within the timetable of the demo event. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Try on protective clothing during pest control applications Bring your own spraying machines to calibrate them Demonstration of the spade test for analysing soil quality https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-kigHj3vbw
Workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For in-depth discussion and a focus on a specific topic To apply the presented experience to own farm situation Output can be used for documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires at least one hour in a room or around a table outside Requires facilities to note down the key points of discussion / results of a focussed inquiry (E.g. provide templates). Carefully formulate goal of workshop (must be feasible in time available) and what outcome is expected Visitors expecting a field visit might not be open to a workshop involving paper and writing (avoid this by announcing it in the invitation); could compete with demonstrations Consider different preferences of visitors for methods applied Group needs to split into small groups around 3-7 people Look into workshop and facilitation guides 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible workshop facilitation guide: https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/shortfacilitatingworkshops
Dinner, drink, transport, etc that gives time for (Informal) exchange between participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possibility to speak freely regarding any failures or concerns in the innovative farming practices demonstrated, to allow for productive experience-based mutual learning During the informal (food and drinks) part of the demo event, or when moving between posts To reflect on earlier presentations given To digest the presented information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow for sufficient space and time so that informal exchange can take place Sponsorship of food/drinks/transport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Takes place anyway if there is time; encourage by leaving room in the programme for this informal exchange, and offer participants food/drink



AGRIDEMO



PLAID



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