



## BARN: FARM DINNER THEATER

# Planning Guide

### Steering Committee Formation

Stakeholder and community engagement contribute to the overall success of the BARN: Farm Dinner Theater program. A steering committee can help in many ways including program assistance, partnerships, and participation. A well-rounded committee for BARN: Farm Dinner Theater should include a diverse representation of the community members and professionals who may share similar goals. A good committee should have five to eight representatives. If your community is smaller, consider partnering with a neighboring county to increase your resources, participants, and target audience.

Potential steering committee members might include individuals from the following sectors:

- Extension (Homemakers, 4-H, District Board members)
- Education (principal, superintendent, counselor, ag teacher, drama teacher)
- Civic (Rotary, Kiwanis, Optimist, etc.)
- Financial and insurance (Ag Credit, Farm Credit, local agencies, etc.)
- Local government (magistrates, commissioner, mayor, judge executive)
- Mental health (therapist, psychologist, social worker)
- Arts organization
- Medical (nurse, physician, or medical system representative)
- Associations (Farm Bureau, Cattlemen's, Chamber of Commerce, etc.)

At your first meeting, use the Steering Committee Presentation PowerPoint to introduce the BARN: Farm Dinner Theater to your group. Explain the objectives, goals, and topics introduced in the BARN program and how they will develop into a community event in the form of the Farm Dinner Theater. Ideally, if the committee finds the program to be a good fit for your community, planning of the event will continue. Develop a timeline that is right for the scale of your planned event. Ideally, four to five months will be enough time.

## Logistics

After the steering committee formation, there are separate planning considerations for each part of the BARN: Farm Dinner Theater program.

### BARN Workshop

- **Staffing:** At least three adults should be available during the workshops to present, work with script-writing groups, and help with the oversight of the participant experience. Ideally, the BARN: Farm Dinner Theater is a program that engages all agents from the county office.
- **Recruitment:** The BARN program will need 15 to 20 participants. Each participant will need to commit to helping with the Farm Dinner Theater and be available for the event. You can recruit BARN participants in a variety of ways. For youths, you can work with local agriculture teachers, FFA, 4-H, and drama teachers to find participants. For adults, you can recruit from Homemakers, clubs, associations, community theater, and general community members.
- **Schedule:** The BARN programming is flexible for a variety of formats. With each learning objective or lesson taking between 1 and 2 hours, the programming can be delivered in a series of classes or within a weekend workshop retreat.
- **Space:** You need to plan for multi-day use of a space to accommodate all participants with the ability to break out into three smaller groups. This can be accomplished in the form of one large room, or one large room with two smaller rooms. Space should be large enough for groups to work distraction-free, move around, and rehearse.
  - Round tables are most suitable for group activity and the educational components of the BARN program.
  - You need a projector or screen with audio or a large-screen television for the presentations. Videos are shown during the session, so you need clear audio.
  - If applicable, set up a table with snacks and drinks.

### Farm Dinner Theater

- **Recruitment:** Recruitment assistance can be provided by the steering committee, Extension staff, and community partners. You can find marketing materials for advertising and promotion in the Marketing Pack. Promotion can include:
  - Social media
  - Printed flyers and posters
  - Radio spots
  - TV interviews
  - Encouraging stakeholders to “host a table”
  - Friends and family of BARN participants
- **Space:** Find a space that can accommodate your goal attendance for the Farm Dinner Theater of 125 to 200 attendees. This can be a large community room or theater space. Be sure that a kitchen is available for catering setup and use. Helpful considerations include:
  - Round tables should seat between 6 and 8 guests and accommodate dinner settings and information sheets.

- A raised stage area will enhance the attendees' ability to see the performances. This can be a riser or platform-type stage, or a theater stage. The stage size will be dependent on the number of actors on stage. An average stage size for this purpose will need to be a minimum of 8 feet by 16 feet.
  - Audiovisual capabilities are extremely helpful. The ability for microphone stands or on-person microphones will allow the entire room to hear the presentation. The ideal situation is the use of wearable microphones for each actor. A projection screen behind the stage can allow you to visually transition the environment from skit to skit as well as project cast pictures and bios.
  - A podium with microphone for the speaker(s) or MC adds a more formal touch.
  - An area close to the stage for cast members to gather between skits and prepare props will allow for more organized scene transitions.
- **Set Design:** Sets can be simple and use common objects and furniture found in most Extension offices, homes, or buildings. The focus will be on the characters, so props should be simple items that will enhance the scene. Many skits can use a table and chairs and rearrange them between scenes if necessary. Use common things that can be found around the Extension office, at home, or on the farm. Since there are three skits, you'll need to easily change the sets between acts.
  - **Catering:** Select a caterer that can meet your attendance and budgetary needs. Typical meals may include:
    - 1 or 2 meats
    - 3 sides or salad
    - Bread or rolls
    - Drinks
    - Dessert

Choose a menu that will accommodate a variety of diets while remaining relatable to your community or season.

- **Décor:** Decorate tables to create a hospitable and seasonal environment. Use the talent and skills of staff and steering committee members to create table arrangements. The Marketing Pack includes a print file for branded items.
- **Vendors (optional):** If space allows, invite stakeholders to set up vendor booths or tables in the foyer or entrance for participants to peruse before or after the show. These vendors should be related to programming and provide education or services related to agriculture, health and well-being, or education. Freebies are a fun way to attract participants. Potential vendors can include the following:
  - Local hospital or medical clinics
  - Mental health providers
  - Extension
  - Therapeutics (massage, etc.)

Additionally, you can set up information tables with copies of publications about content-related topics.

# BARN: Farm Dinner Theater Task List

Task	Details	Status
Create Steering Committee	Host informational meeting	
Set Dates	BARN date(s) and Farm Dinner Theater date	
Reserve Location	BARN facility and Farm Dinner Theater facility	
Create Budget	Find necessary sponsorships	
Book Caterer	Menu selection, price per person, timing	
BARN Participant Recruitment	Registration	
Marketing and Public Relations	Event posters, social media, radio, invites, etc.	
Invite Vendors	Invite, confirm room logistics, and needs	
Printing	BARN materials and Farm Dinner Theater materials	
Farm Dinner Theater Attendee Recruitment	Advertising, table hosts, invitations, etc.	
Décor	Arrange for table décor that fits the theme or season of the Farm Dinner Theater	

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