

PRFI Meetings Survey May 2014

Total responses: 20 online, 1 paper as of May 31 2014

Do the dates, timing & location of our meetings suit you?

Yes=13

No=8

If no, please tell us how they could be better.

- We've yet to make it to a meeting because the times conflict with our schedules. An earlier time or an option where we could give our response/votes for what's on the agenda by email would be good.
- Start earlier: 7:00
- earlier start time - 7:00pm max running time 1.5 hours
- If meetings were Thurs or Fri, or on weekends, I could attend. (I realize this is a very personal "need" and certainly do not expect you to change for me!!)
- I would like to see the meetings start between 6:30 and 7:00
- Location is fine, frequency is fine. Meetings are too long in my opinion, and I am often away on Mondays, but you can't please everyone!
- Monday is not preferred - Wednesday would be better. We seem to have the meetings right after a holiday which is not great.
- At the moment, I can't work in the day and then attend meetings at night, and then go home/ return home to do chores...the plight of many farmers!

Would you like to take part in a once a season casual social activity?

Yes=18

No=3

FI members have requested that our meetings should include educational sections and/or time for general discussions, outside of business items. Would you like to see meetings INCLUDE business, educational, and discussion sections in the same meeting, or ALTERNATE BETWEEN business meetings and educational/discussion meetings?

Include at same meeting=13

Alternate between meeting types=10

If you chose ALTERNATE BETWEEN, should the number of meetings increase to accommodate alternating meeting types?

Yes=16

No=5

How many member meetings a year should there be? (currently 6)

1 vote for 4 meetings

11 votes to keep 6 meetings (one wants them "timed over the winter", one says "4 business, 2 educational")

2 votes for 8 meetings: " We could do educational workshops, Strategic planning, etc in the winter months."

1 vote for 9 meetings

1 vote for 10 meetings: " includes the current 6 and 4 for alternative meeting types, one each season"

Which months should those meetings happen? (currently Jan, Mar, May, Jun, Sep, Nov)

8 votes to keep the current meeting schedule

1 vote each for changed schedules:

- Jan-July and Sept-Nov.
- All except Dec, July, Aug
- October, December, February (*Kev: unclear, may mean added to the current schedule, not replacing it*)
- We could add October and April
- Sept to June with a social in July
- 6 timed over winter...Sept-March/April (Seedy Saturday wrap up?)

BUSINESS SECTIONS

How long would you like business sections to be?

Note: Adoption of Agenda, Minutes of last meeting and Treasurer's report are required as part of a business meeting.

10 votes for 15 mins

7 votes for 30 mins

3 votes for 45 mins

3 votes for 60 mins

1 votes for more than 60 mins

The following items have been part of previous business meetings. Please indicate whether you think each item should be:

(1) kept as part of business meetings

(2) discarded

(3) handled as a written report and attached to the meeting agenda

(4) moved to a Board meeting

(5) other

	kept	discarded	written report	Board meeting	other
Business arising from minutes of last meeting	16	1	1	3	0
Correspondence (received and sent)	11	0	7	2	1
FI Committee reports	14	0	5	0	2
Outside organisation reports (eg 4H, SALSA)	7	1	9	1	3
Old business (carried forward from previous meeting)	16	1	1	3	0
New business	21	0	0	0	0
Short member announcements	18	0	3	0	0

If you chose "(5) other", above, please explain

- It is my belief that 4H should continue to be a part of the Farmers Institute business meetings. 4H represents a new generation of potential farmers that should be supported. Any other groups should not be included, if people would like to be updated about another organization such as SALSA and be allowed to give opinions they should join that organization and not take up the Farmers Institutes time.
- There should be enough time for reports
- If the correspondence affects members then discuss I don't think a full treasurers report is needed every time
- I would like an "as needed" option.

EDUCATIONAL SECTIONS

How long would you like educational sections to be? (circle choices)

10 votes for 15 mins

4 votes for 30 mins

2 votes for 45 mins

9 votes for 60 mins

2 votes for more than 60 mins

What formats would you like to see for educational sections? e.g. speakers, videos, panels, field visits...

- Speakers and field trips (if possible)
- We can do this on the net ourselves.maybe the board point to the sections in question via e.mail?
- speakers videos
- speakers and field visits
- Anything!
- speakers, videos, panels, field visits. Depending on the topic and the availability of a local speaker, sometimes videos may work better.
- any format
- a variety of all the above suggestion dependant of the topic
- speakers , field visits
- All Options. It would depend on the topic, the presenter. I prefer a variety of formats.
- all of these formats
- Speakers,videos,field days if there were interested producers.
- all of the above
- speakers, videos field visits
- I would like to see it in whatever format is required, not sure I understand the question. In regards to length of educational section, it should be whatever length is required to receive that information.
- All of the above could work for different topics
- Yes to all of those
- Speakers, videos, our of town experts to give seminars/workshops if interest warrants
- a variety...the length of program depends on the event...a field trip, necessarily longer:)....a short information session might require follow up, or the group might request more...all kinds of possibiilities
- Speakers, field visits, videos. I think it would be better to split them out.

What topics would you like to see covered in educational sections? e.g. animal nutrition, cover cropping, fertilizers....

- Animal health and nutrition, crop ideas & suggestions.
- Cover cropping, Rotational grazing, Wintering livestock indoors, Growing winter feeds for large livestock, Farm Diversification, Alternative gardening methods such as using livestock to plow fields and making your own fertilizers
- same as above.
- how to expand livestock feed in our region - this is a crisis issue how to expand our purchasing power to reduce our feed costs
- I\'m a non-farmer, so I\'ll leave this to the farmers to decide.
- members could be given a short list of general educational topics of agricultural interest and rank them 1-5 in priority. Also could be asked for suggestions.
- identifying good bugs/bad bugs in the garden, animal nutrition, soil amendment, growing in greenhouses, some helpful permaculture tips that could be used on larger scale gardens
- All the above, Animal care, some how toos.
- all of above and farm financial topics animal welfare issues marketing new technology
- Pasture management. Innovations in organic agriculture. Soil science
- those sound like good topics. How about marketing, predators....
- pruning fruit trees, composting, animal nutrition, growing hay, its endless
- all of your suggestions above, as well information regarding pests, ways to eradicate weeds from fields, anything of interest to farming.
- Fruit fly control, fruit tree care...we need to cater to small scale growers as well as more traditional farmers
- Yep those and panel talk to brainstorm group buying, methods for building soil - what works for people etc
- Nutrition, common health issues and treatments as we have no large animal vet. Marketing strategies for products.
- All that you have suggested: soil health; eco-packaging; harvest , processing, packaging, and storage requirements for market veggies and fruits; practical value added production; broadleaf maple syrup production.....
- ? open to suggestions / ideas

DISCUSSION SECTIONS

How long would you like discussion sections to be?

10 votes for 15 mins
7 votes for 30 mins
4 votes for 45 mins
2 votes for 60 mins
0 votes for more than 60 mins

Would you like to discuss how we can become more effective ?

Yes=17
No=3

Would you like to have open discussions on new concepts and ideas?

Yes=19
No=2

Would you like to do some brainstorming about FI projects and committees?

Yes=15
No=5

What other discussions would you like to have?

- do not know at this point.
- I would like to see a discussion of the real need for a community farm such as that proposed by SALSA. I would like to see an attempt at some fence-mending between the FI & Ag Ass.
- Roberts Rules of Order - an overview
- FI activities in the community new FI initiatives
- I have suggested that I would like to see a lot of the reports written and attached to the agenda. With this system, members would have time to digest and be ready to discuss the reports at meetings once the business has been carried out.
- I would truly loved to be involved in ideas surrounding farming. What works for other farmers, who has breeding animals for rent or purchase, what hasn't worked so well. Just a simple sharing of knowledge. That is why I joined the Farmer's Institute and after 4 years it has never happened.
- Communication strategies - at meetings (at the moment they are a shameful free for all and I heartily endorse the comments Kevin made in his recent email on the subject), and between members (how the email list is used), AND between the FI and the broader community.
- Discussion of topics members submit can be a meeting focus

GENERAL

What do you like best about meetings?

- Hearing about how the other farms are doing, and how I can improve my farm.
- if constructive and upbuilding with out the legalism and falling over words and who sayd what,it is good.
- Reports of what the members are doing
- Hearing what other members are doing.
- The ability for each person's voice to be heard.
- pulling together as a group on projects/topics of agricultural interest.
- the networking that happens between members
- It is a meeting... I attend so I get relevent information on local farming. The information sharing - what is happening..
- connecting with farmers information sharing
- becoming a community, helping each other....
- Kathy Hodgins cookies
- Um, to be honest, not much. At the moment I find them painful and would rather not come but I am willing to be involved in (respectful) discussions to improve things.

- Keeping abreast of what others are doing in the farming community.
- sharing knowledge and working cooperatively to solve local problems

What did we forget to ask? What other ideas or preferences do you have related to meetings?

- add a new member, i feel uncomfortable about the idea to be able to vote without having "farmer" status. For i can affect other people's livelihood in doing so ,and that to me is a scary proposition.
- We need better and more effective chairing. Alan needs a quick course in good procedures and how to stay on topic. We are not his audience; we members ARE the Farmers' Institute and it is not the job of the chair to provide all the content. The VP should also know how to chair a meeting effectively in the absence of the chair.
- have one of more members designated greeters of visitors/new members to make them feel welcome and included. Also brief introductions to everyone in the group whenever someone new attends. Most of the 'new' people that have been signed up for membership in the past year or more, have been 'lost' as active members due to the nature of our meetings of late
- In regards to the question about the length of the educational vs business section of the meetings, if they were done as alternating meetings. There could be 30 minutes of business & 90 minutes of education, 1 month; the alternate month could be 90 minutes business plus 30 minutes for education.
- meetings to follow Roberts Rules of Order, a speakers list kept, a person designated as timekeeper, someone other than FI President to chair meetings, a respectful, positive atmosphere!!
- don't know
- I really think committee reports and updates should only be given when there is information to pass on. Asking for reports from committees or organizations that really have nothing to say is a waste of time. I just want to learn more about farming, that was my whole purpose in joining the F.I., an exchange of knowledge and to get to know the other farmers in the area.
- Keep them orderly, concise, effective.

NOTES from Kevin

1. When collating all the answers, I discovered that some people had answered both Yes and No to the same question, or picked more than one option when asked how long sections should be. In some cases I could sort out the real answer by looking at their comments, but in some cases I couldn't tell which it should be. That's why some questions have more than the total number of responses. For most questions there is a clear majority one way or the other, and a few ambiguous answers make no difference.

2. While it would be ideal to have the Treasurer's report pre-written and attached to the agenda; because we have meetings early in the month, quite often the bank statement doesn't arrive till the afternoon of the meeting itself.