



FLORIDA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

THE VOICE OF AGRICULTURE

Hello! I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued participation and involvement in membership recruitment and retention for Florida Farm Bureau. As you know, President Hoblick has set a goal for all of us, to reach 155,000 members by our 75th anniversary on October 1, 2016.

Your help in this effort is crucial to our success. Our organization is totally dependent upon people who belong, and we need their involvement. We need members to protect, promote and enhance our agricultural standing in this state, just as we need to be involved in agricultural policy nationwide. Your county Farm Bureau is the key. With your contacts within the local agricultural community, you can make sure Farm Bureau remains a strong voice for agriculture.

We all know that the success of any membership drive is to have a good, quality list of contacts for your members to actually call or go to see. We have used many different lists in years past, but the very best list is a list of folks that your members already know!

To help achieve our goal, we have enlisted many resources, including the hiring of a marketing firm, to help us create materials to promote what we do. All of these materials are available to counties free of charge and can be ordered through the Florida Farm Bureau Intranet. All county staff have access to this order form. We hope you find these resources valuable for your efforts. The firm has also created a video that helps promote some of these resources to county boards and staff. The video can be viewed by visiting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2UldROZBygs&feature=youtu.be>. Attached to this letter, you can find some hints on prospecting new members.

As a state, we are committed to helping you receive the tools you need to do your part in helping us reach our goal of 155x75. If you have an idea for a new resource, success story of a program that is working well, a question or anything else that may be relevant to the cause, please contact us and let us know.

We can't thank you enough for your efforts and wish you the very best in showing the rest of Florida why they should be members of Farm Bureau. In the words of Pat Cockrell "Go forth and do great things for agriculture!"

Thanks,

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Prospecting for New Members

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Here is a suggestion for you to work on. At the next regular meeting of your county board, have your directors come with a piece of paper. On this piece of paper, they should have written down a list of 20 names and address of individuals they feel should be members of Farm Bureau. These names can be your banker, son in law, a farming neighbor, someone you do business with or even an old friend. Anyone that you know personally can be added to this list.

Once these lists are completed and collected, have your county staff member cross reference this list with your county's actual membership list. When this is complete, you should have a good solid list of potential members to recruit!

Also, take some time to work with your local Extension Service, Cattleman's Association, Nursery Growers and Landscape Association, Kiwanis Club, Rotary Club and others in your community to recruit members. Tell them our story and what we do. I am sure they will help!

FFA Chapters and 4-H Clubs can be members of your county Farm Bureau, too. This is especially important if your county participates in local livestock shows by purchasing an animal or two or benefits youth in any way.

Another good list is those members who have not renewed their membership during the past few years. Many times these folks have probably been attending your County Annual Meeting and for some reason were wondering why they had to call the office to get the details and did not receive an invitation. Simple reason is they probably forgot to pay their dues! This list can be run by a county staff member in the Membership Center. It is called the "Members Terminated Report".

And finally, another great list can come from your current agents. There are many times that our agents just cannot write all business. Take some time to contact those folks and explain just how important Farm Bureau is to your county, our state and our nation. Remember folks don't have to purchase insurance to be members, anyone can join!

A prospective member letter has been created as a template for you to use. Feel free to customize to meet your county's needs!

Important Things to Remember in Membership Recruitment

Have a Plan: A plan that involves other people is often a successful plan. Achieving our goal of 155x75 cannot be done alone nor should anyone expect it to be done by a single person.

- **Select a Membership Chairman.** This can be anyone from a Board Member, Young Farmer and Rancher, Women's Committee member, or even just a regular ole' county member.
- **Select the Membership Committee.** This committee will be the backbone in recruiting and retaining members. An important thing to remember is that while the committee is the backbone of the effort, all board members must assist in order to receive maximum results.
- **Set a Goal.** We have helped you with this step. Each county has received their membership number needed for us to reach our goal of 155x75. Make plans to exceed that goal, why not reach for the stars?!
- **Have a timetable set.** You already know the goal must be reached by October 1, 2016. Start your committee meetings now. Planning is of the utmost importance.
- **Make your start known.** Some counties may want to start with a "kick off" meal function, or start your efforts at a special event. The size and scope can be different, as long as it fits your needs. You want to make it known to your members what you are doing in hopes you can gather their support and assistance.
- **Update everyone on the progress.** It is important to keep everyone motivated. This can be done in a very simple way by keeping everyone updated on the progress of the campaign on a regular basis.
- **Recognize the results and efforts.** Be sure to recognize the results and those who made it happen at your County Annual Meeting. This will keep everyone informed and motivated to help in the future.

Choosing a Chairman and Committee: It is vital that you choose the best chairman and committee members who will be active in helping you reach your goal.

- **Appoint Correctly.** Be sure they are appointed by the County President and approved by the board.
- **Lead and Direct.** Those are the two best qualities of a good chairman. Also, make sure the chairman is someone who believes in our organization and what we do. **Passion is not something that can be taught.**
- **Energetic and Influential.** These are two of the best qualities you can have in a member of your membership committee.
- **County Board Member.** Remember, your committee does not have to be made up of county board members. Reach out and involve your general membership. Give them some ownership in the organization. Don't forget about the husbands and wives of board members. These are sometimes the movers and shakers behind the scenes and only need to be asked!

- **Demographics.** Make sure each geographical and specialty (industry, commodity, etc.) are covered. This will get you maximum exposure of your campaign.
- **County Insurance Agents.** They make great workers also and should be considered a valuable part of the team.
- **Federation Field Representative.** Don't leave them out of the picture! He or she can be of vital assistance in helping to answer any questions that you may have. We also have folks in the home office in Ag Policy, Public Relations, Local Government Affairs and others that can assist if asked. We need to get everyone on the bandwagon!

Now is the time: Time is of the essence, get started on the local level today! Some final words of wisdom:

- **Give each person you contact a positive and definite invitation to join.** This kind of attitude really gets results.
- **Be proud of your organization.** Tell our story with pride!
- **Always assume that your prospect will join.** In most cases, they will. They are just waiting to be asked.
- **Do not waste time.** Sign your neighbors as soon as possible. You have other people to see so refrain from using high pressure sales tactics. If telling your story and our story doesn't do the trick, there is not much that will.
- **Programs.** Tell your prospect about the Farm Bureau programs that you think will interest them. We offer something for everyone!
- **Know your goal.** Keep that number in the back of your mind. It will help to keep you motivated.
- **Share Success.** Share your successes with your members and the state office. We want to hear all about the great things you are doing.
- **Most importantly, HAVE FUN!** Remember, you are talking about the industry that you love and an organization that you are proud to be a part of. Have fun while you do it. When potential members see your excitement, they will want to be a part of it. Remember, we are **FARM RAISED, FARM PROUD, FARM BUREAU!**

