CLIMATE FARM DEMO

# Demo Design Pocket Guide

Version 2

Agriculture and Food Development Authority

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# Introduction

This Demo Design Pocket Guide has been developed to support advisors in planning, organising, and delivering effective farm demonstration events, incorporating a focus on more resilient, climate-friendly farming practices. Drawing on best practice principles, it provides a structured framework to help ensure that each event is engaging, farmer-centred, and focused on achieving meaningful learning outcomes in reducing on-farm emissions and becoming more resilient to changing climatic conditions.

The objective of a demo event is to create an environment where farmers can share experiences, discuss challenges, and evaluate farming practices within the context of their own farming systems. By encouraging interaction and peer-to-peer learning, demonstration events can build confidence, stimulate innovation, and support informed decision-making at farm level.



This guide outlines the key stages of event design and delivery, from defining objectives and selecting suitable demonstration topics to facilitating discussions, encouraging participation, and evaluating outcomes. While every farm and audience is different, the principles and tools provided here can be adapted to suit a range of farming sectors, locations, and event formats.

The guide is laid out in four sections as follows:

**(1) Planning;**

**(2) Promoting the event;**

**(3) Learning and Facilitation Methods and**

**(4) Post-event engagement**

By following this guide, advisors will be better equipped to deliver impactful demonstration events, thereby empowering farmers to adopt more climate-resilient and sustainable agricultural systems.



# 1. Planning

## Purpose: Four Questions to Ask Before Organising a Demo Event

Before planning a demonstration event, it is important to clearly define its purpose. A well-defined purpose helps ensure the event remains focused, relevant and useful for participants, while guiding decisions about content, delivery and promotion.

Start by asking four questions:

### 1. Why are we doing this demo?

Identify the farming challenge, opportunity or question that the event aims to address.

**Ask:**

- What issue are we trying to address?
- Why is this important to farmers?
- What change, learning or action do we hope to encourage?
- How does this topic relate to climate and overall farm sustainability and resilience?

**Example:** A grassland management demonstration may be organised to help farmers improve grass utilisation and reduce feed costs, while also exploring climate-smart benefits such as improved nitrogen use efficiency, reduced fertiliser use and lower emissions.



**Tip:** Farmers often attend events because they are interested in improving farm performance, reducing costs or solving practical challenges. Climate-smart farming messages are most effective when linked to these priorities.

## 2. What do we want to demonstrate?

Identify the key messages and practical learning outcomes for participants.

**Ask:**

- What practice, technology or approach will be demonstrated?
- What should participants learn from the event?
- What evidence, results, or farmer experiences can be shared?
- What sustainability or climate-related opportunities and challenges can be explored?

Demonstrations should focus on practical examples, real farm experiences, and visible outcomes wherever possible.



**Tip:** Participants are more likely to remember and act on two or three key take-home messages rather than a large volume of information.

## 3. Who is the target audience?

Consider who will benefit most from attending the event.

**Ask:**

- What farming enterprise, sector or stakeholder group is the event intended for?
- What are their interests, priorities, and challenges?
- What level of knowledge and experience do they already have?
- What climate-related opportunities or concerns are most relevant to this audience?

Potential audiences may include dairy, beef, sheep, tillage, pig, poultry or horticulture farmers, discussion groups, advisors,

students, researchers, industry representatives or policy makers. Understanding your audience will help shape the event content, delivery approach and promotional messaging. Advisors may rely on previous event evaluations, one to one farm visits, farmer discussion groups or research and advisory programmes when looking for insights relating to participants' needs.

**Tip:** Talk to local farmers and ask the host farmer for insights into what is happening in the locality.



# Engaging Sceptical Audiences

When designing climate-focused demonstration events, it is important to recognise that participants may have varying levels of interest, understanding or acceptance of climate-related issues.

For audiences that may be sceptical of climate policy or climate change messaging, demonstrations should focus on practical farm outcomes rather than abstract climate targets.

Emphasise topics such as improved profitability, resource-use efficiency, farm resilience, soil health, animal performance and compliance with market or policy requirements.

Use trusted farmer experiences, local examples and measurable results to demonstrate the benefits of climate-smart practices.

Creating opportunities for open discussion and peer-to-peer learning can help build trust and encourage constructive engagement without requiring participants to agree on all aspects of the climate debate. This might involve drawing on a familiar face or a farmer you already know in the audience to offer his opinion.

Asking open ended questions whereby you try to encourage discussion is favoured.

Advisors should treat scepticism as useful information about the barriers to adoption. A farmer's objection may reveal a genuine problem with cost, practicality, trust, evidence or perceived relevance. If the event helps identify and address those barriers, it can be valuable even when the farmer remains sceptical about aspects of climate change.

In summary, the most useful approach is to demonstrate that credible, evidence-based farming decisions can improve performance while also reducing GHG emissions or building the farms resilience.

**Minimizing carbon footprint in dairy production and processing**



## How should we organise the demo?

Once the purpose, topic and audience are clear, planning becomes much easier.

**Ask:**

- Who should be involved in organising and delivering the event?
- What role will the host farmer play?
- How will participant engagement and discussion be encouraged?
- What practical arrangements are required (e.g. parking, registration, signage, health and safety, refreshments, equipment and facilities)?



**Tip:** Check the event calendar of other regional organisations.

## Focusing on Climate

Before planning the event, advisors should identify what climate challenge, adaptation measure, mitigation practice or climate-smart farming approach will be demonstrated and what participants should learn from it. Note, not all advisors will be specialised in all areas so it's important to involve other colleagues and stakeholders where possible to get other opinions.

Demonstration events should be designed to help farmers understand how climate actions can improve farm sustainability, resilience and environmental performance while maintaining profitability. For example the simple message of spreading lime; focus on selling a combination of benefits for example increased productivity, financial benefits and greenhouse gas (GHG) benefits.

**Why include climate in your farm demonstration event?**

Agriculture has a key role to play in achieving European climate and environmental objectives. The EU has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 and achieving climate neutrality by 2050. Demonstration events help translate these policy goals into practical actions that farmers can observe, discuss and evaluate under real farm conditions.

Farmers are very interested in the weather, and are among the first to experience the impacts of a changing climate, from increasingly unpredictable weather to drought, flooding and challenges to grass growth and crop production. They are continually adapting their farming practices to manage these risks, improve efficiency and safeguard their livelihoods.

Including climate at a farm demonstration event provides an opportunity to explore practical, proven approaches that can help farmers reduce emissions, strengthen farm resilience and improve long-term sustainability and profitability.

By showcasing what works on real farms, these events help farmers learn from one another, identify opportunities for their own businesses and make informed decisions for the future.

## Demonstrating Progress

Where possible, demonstrations should show measurable changes over time. Events can be structured around the farm's climate journey:

- **Baseline Event:** Present the farm's starting position, carbon audit results and Adaptation and Mitigation Plan (AMP).
- **Progress Event:** Review actions implemented, discuss challenges encountered and highlight early results.
- **Results Event:** Compare audit results over time, quantify emissions reductions and discuss wider impacts such as carbon sequestration, biodiversity, water quality, farm resilience and profitability.

## Desired Outcomes

A successful climate-focused farm demonstration should contribute to one or more of the following outcomes:

- Increased awareness of the impact of climate change on their own farm system.
- Greater understanding of relevant climate-smart farming practices for their own farming system.
- Improved farmer confidence to use adaptation and mitigation measures.
- Knowledge exchange and peer-to-peer learning.
- Stronger farmer-advisor-researcher networks.
- Increased uptake of practical adaptation and mitigation measures.
- Enhanced capacity of farmers to improve environmental and economic performance.

The overall objective is to support farmers in making informed decisions that contribute to climate mitigation, climate adaptation and the long-term sustainability of their farming systems.

## Role of the host farmer in on-farm events

After you have identified your key learning outcomes and before the event, ask yourself: what role can the host farmer play in the demo event? How can they contribute to knowledge exchange?

The host farm is central to the delivery of an effective and impactful on-farm event, so it has to be used to its maximum potential. This can include inviting the host farmer, or other farm staff, to explain why certain practices are used, or to share their experiences with the demonstrated technology. So, they need to be prepared to ensure the best result.

Ask yourself the following-

- Are they capable of speaking coherently to a crowd of fellow farmers?

- What is their knowledge of the planned topic? Do they know why they are using the climate mitigation and adaptation measures to be demonstrated?
- Are they the best person on the farm to discuss the topic and reason behind the actions, is their spouse or another family or staff member more equipped to speak on the topic?

**The Role of the Host Farmer**

- The host farmer is often the most influential speaker at a demonstration event. Participants value practical experience and peer-to-peer learning. Advisors should therefore involve the host farmer throughout the event and encourage them to explain:Why they adopted particular measures?
- What worked well?
- What challenges were encountered?
- What benefits have been observed?
- What they would do differently?
- Authentic farmer experiences often have a greater impact than technical presentations alone.



As an advisor, you have a key role to play in ensuring the farmer or chosen speaker is adequately prepared. You will need to work with them before the event to ensure that they can clearly communicate their insights and experiences with the given measure. This will likely involve you questioning the farmer and reviewing farm performance data with them.

***@FarmDemo YouTube channel:***
***How to increase interaction at farm demo events?***



**Tip:** Remember, farmers listen and appreciate other farmers explaining the methods, reasons and results of new actions and practices being implemented on farm as they can relate to them more than hearing solely from advisors or researchers.





# 2. Promoting the Event

Effective communication and promotion are essential to ensure demonstration events attract the appropriate audience and clearly communicate the value of attending.

Given the increasing number of demonstration events and the competition for farmers' attention, advisors and demonstration event organisors are having to work harder to promote their events. Both traditional and new ways of attracting participants to a demonstration event are necessary.

## 1. Review the target audience

Before promoting the event, review the target audience identified during the planning stage.

Consider:

- Who are you trying to reach?
- What information is most relevant to them?
- What messages are most likely to encourage attendance?

This will influence:

- The communication methods used
- The most appropriate promotion channels
- The messaging and language used
- The timing of promotional activities

## 2. **Define why the audience should attend**

Before promoting the event, clearly identify the value the event will provide to attendees.

Farmers and other agricultural stakeholders are more likely to attend demonstration events when they can clearly see how the event is relevant to their own farming system, business, or professional role.

Consider the following questions:

- Why should someone attend this event?
- What practical knowledge or skills will attendees gain?
- What problems or challenges does the event help address?
- What makes this event different from simply reading information online or in a publication?
- How will attendees benefit from participating?

The answer to these questions should form the basis of all promotional activities.

**Tip:** If you cannot answer the question "Why should someone attend this event?", then it is unlikely that farmers and other actors will be motivated to attend.
**Tip:** Identify the hook for your event.



## 3. Integrate the Host Farmer into Promotional Activities

The host farmer is one of the strongest attractions of a demonstration event and should be featured within all promotional activities.

Where possible, promotional materials should include:

- Photographs of the host farmer and farm
- Quotes or testimonials
- Short videos or interviews
- Information about the host farmer's experiences
- Practical actions being implemented

## 4. Integrating Climate and Sustainability Messaging

Climate and sustainability topics should be linked to practical farm outcomes that matter to farmers.

Many farmers are motivated by opportunities to improve farm performance, reduce costs, improve efficiency, or increase resilience. Climate-related messaging is often most effective when connected to these outcomes.

Where relevant, promotional materials should highlight benefits such as:

- Improved farm efficiency
- Reduced fertiliser, fuel, feed, or other input costs
- Improved productivity
- Enhanced resilience to weather and climate risks
- Better nutrient management
- Improved soil health
- Biodiversity benefits
- Improved water management
- Long-term farm sustainability

Climate action should be presented as part of overall good farm management rather than as a standalone objective.

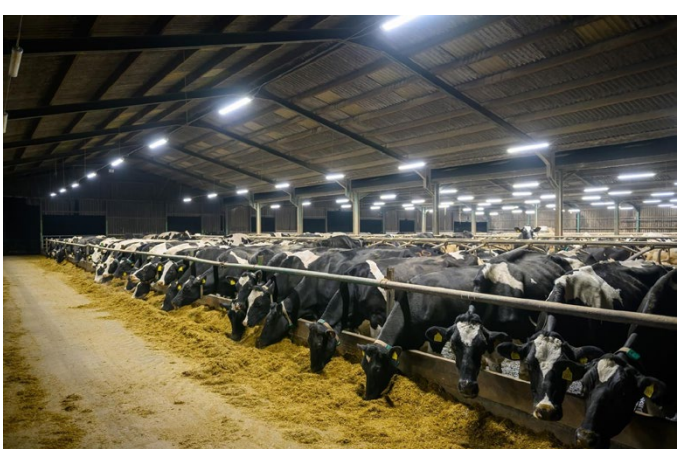
## Examples:

**Less effective message:** "Learn about greenhouse gas reduction measures for dairy farms"

**More effective message:** "See how practical nutrient management and clover establishment can reduce fertiliser costs, improve nitrogen use efficiency, and contribute to lower greenhouse gas emissions"

**Less effective message:** "Demonstration of climate-smart farming practices"

**More effective message:** "Learn how improving soil fertility and nutrient management can increase grass growth, improve farm efficiency, and support long-term farm sustainability"



## 5. Select Communication Methods

Choose the most appropriate communication methods for the target audience and scale of the event.

Communication methods may include:

- Posters or flyers
- Newsletters
- Email invitations
- Social media posts
- Short videos or interviews with the host farmer or videos of the farm site
- Local radio broadcasts
- Press releases
- Text messages or WhatsApp groups
- Event webpages
- Online registration platform
- Booking links or QR codes linked to the registration page

When selecting communication methods, consider the target audience, scale of the event, available resources, timeframe, and suitability of the method for sharing practical information and visuals. Also, consider what communications methods have worked well for you previously (and those that have not).




This is a good example of an event announcement poster

## 6. **Select Promotion Channels**

Identify the most appropriate channels to distribute event communications. Promotion channels may include:

- Advisory service providers
- Farmer discussion groups
- Stakeholder organisations
- Local farming organisations
- Agricultural media
- Social media platforms
- Industry newsletters
- Project websites
- Local community networks
- Personal invitation via text message, email or card.

Promotional activities should begin 3–4 weeks before the event, followed by reminder communications one week and 1–2 days before the event.

Larger events may require earlier promotion.



**Tip:** Don't forget the power of a personal invitation from the host farmer, or the advisor. This could be a phone call, a personalised text message, card or email. This is especially true where the event is targeted at a small number of participants.

## 7. **Ensure Key Information is Included**

All promotional materials should clearly include:

- The event title and topic
- The date, time, and location
- Purpose and relevance of the event
- Key speakers or host farmer details
- Practical value or learning outcomes for attendees
- Contact details for further information
- Relevant logos, branding, or partner information
- A clear call to action such as:
    - Register Now
    - Book your place
    - Contact your advisor for further information
    - Scan the QR code to register/learn more





# 3. Learning and Facilitation Methods

Successful climate-focused demonstrations combine good facilitation with practical, evidence-based learning. While farm performance data provides the foundation for discussion, it is the way information is presented, demonstrated and discussed that influences whether participants engage with and ultimately adopt the climate-smart farming practices.

## 1. Using Data in Climate-Smart Farming Demonstrations

Farm-specific data helps make climate discussions practical, credible and relevant. Demonstration events should use selected, farm-specific data to tell the farm's story rather than overwhelm participants with technical information (about the farm).

The most useful information to present includes:

- The farm's greenhouse gas (GHG) baseline.
- Key emissions hotspots identified through the farm audit.
- Carbon sequestration potential where relevant.
- Adaptation and Mitigation Measures (AMMs) selected for implementation.
- Changes in emissions over time.
- Economic impacts including productivity, input use and profitability.
- Wider environmental benefits such as biodiversity and water quality improvements.

When presenting data:

- Focus on a small number of key messages.
- Use graphs, maps and visual summaries rather than large tables.
- Explain how the data informed management decisions.

- Show progress over time where possible.
- Link GHG emissions performance to practical farm outcomes.

***@FarmDemo YouTube channel:***
***Minimizing carbon footprint in dairy production and processing***

Farmers are generally more interested in understanding what the figures mean for their own businesses than the technical details behind the calculations.

There are several questions that you should answer:

- What to do if you are unfamiliar with the data?
- What to do if participants have a low level of understanding of emissions figures?
- Should you refer to where participants can find the comparative figure for their own farm? Should you position the host farm's figures against national/ regional average figures (benchmarking)?

**Tip:** Benchmarking the host farmers' figures against national averages often works well and provides context

**Moving from Data to Action**

The purpose of farm data is to support decision-making. Advisors should encourage farmers to consider:

- Which emissions hotspots are most relevant to their farms?
- Which mitigation measures are practical and achievable?

- What adaptation actions could improve farm resilience?
- What benefits and challenges might arise from implementation?

Discussion around these questions helps move participants from awareness towards action.

## 2. **Props to Use in a Climate Demonstration**

The host farm, and the technologies and practices used on the farm, should be central to the farm demonstration. The advisor should carefully plan and choose the features they wish to demonstrate during their demonstration event.

Physical props and visual aids can help turn abstract climate concepts into practical learning experiences.

Useful props may include:

- Carbon audit summaries.
- Farm maps.
- Soil pits and soil samples.
- Grass measuring equipment and pasture records.
- Feed samples and feed analysis reports.
- Fertiliser products and other input samples
- Equipment, machinery, tools.
- Biodiversity features such as hedgerows or tree planting schemes.
- Water quality monitoring equipment.
- Before-and-after photographs showing farm changes.
- Farm plans outlining adaptation and mitigation measures.

The best props encourage participation, discussion and peer-to-peer learning rather than passive observation.

Use the demonstration farm as a living classroom. Bring the story to life by choosing a suitable spot, getting farmers close to the action and using available props such as machinery, soil/ slurry/ feed/ fertiliser samples, farm records and carbon audit reports to illustrate

key points. Encourage farmers to look, handle, compare and ask questions. Show, don't just tell — make the practice visible, practical and relevant to farmers' own businesses.



**Tip:** Make the invisible visible

Use the demonstration farm as a stage, and consider the props you will use to enhance the "show".

**Props to use during an on-farm event.**

> ***"There is no point in a grassland management discussion taking place inside the farmyard – it has to be out in the field. Hail, rain or shine."***
> *— Teagasc Advisor*

Use the Farm as a Resource

- Show, don't just tell. Use the farm to demonstrate the topic in a real-world setting.
- Use relevant livestock, crops, machinery, soils, grassland or technology as props.
- Plan your route and stops in advance to make the best use of your time, the host farmer's time and attendees' time.
- Choose locations and props that directly support your key learning messages.
- Simple props can be highly effective, e.g. livestock, forage or soil samples, supported by relevant farm data.

Remember the Two Most Valuable Props

**1. The Farm**
**2. The Host Farmer**



**Tip:** Use both to make your key messages practical, visible and relevant.

## 3. Presenting Your Message at a Demonstration Event

The effectiveness of a demonstration often depends as much on the delivery as the content.

Participants are more likely to engage with speakers who are knowledgeable, authentic and practical. Advisors should work closely with the host farmer and encourage them to share their own experiences, including both successes and challenges. The advisor must also be prepared to add their technical/ scientific expertise to underpin the host farmer's insights.

**Key Presentation Tips**

- Preparation is key; the better prepared you are, the better your presentation will be.
- Rule of three: organise your content around three main ideas:
    - Why change is needed (the challenge or opportunity)
    - What works in practice (the demonstrated measure or innovation)
    - What farmers can do next (the action to take away)
- Use clear, practical language.
- Explain the farming challenge before presenting the climate-friendly farming solution.
- Use examples from the host farm wherever possible.
- Encourage questions and discussion.
- Listen actively to participants.
- Avoid overloading audiences with information.
- Be honest about limitations and challenges.

Your body language also matters. Maintain eye contact, use open gestures and position yourself where participants can easily see and hear you. During discussions, step back and allow participants to contribute and learn from one another.

**The Role of the Host Farmer**

The host farmer is often the most influential speaker at a demonstration event. Participants value practical experience and peer-to-peer learning. Advisors should therefore involve the host farmer throughout the event and encourage them to explain:

- Why they adopted particular measures?
- What worked well?
- What challenges were encountered?
- What benefits have been observed?
- What they would do differently?

Authentic farmer experiences often have a greater impact than technical presentations alone.

**Tip:** A great way to involve the host farmer is to interview him or her about their experiences. Try ask open ended questions.

**Farm Information Sheet**





# 4. Post-event engagement

Plan your follow-up before the event. Book photographer, or ask a colleague to capture photos/ images. Draft a media press release, article or social media post, leaving space for key messages and relevant quotes from the event.

After the event:

- Identify the 1–3 key messages you want to reinforce.
- Consider how you will reach those who attended and those who could not attend.
- Share key learning through media, newsletters, social media or other relevant channels.
- Use high-quality photos captured during the event in newsletters, social media posts and other communication materials.
- Where possible, prepare media content in advance so it can be shared quickly after the event.



**Tip:** Turn a successful event into ongoing action
Keep the momentum going by sharing key messages, photos, resources and answers to outstanding questions with participants and wider networks. Use lessons learned in future farm visits and advisory conversations, adapting them to farmers' needs and priorities to turn interest into action.

**Review and Evaluate**

With the host farmer and organising team, reflect on:

- What went well?
- What could have worked better?
- Were the key messages clear?
- Did participants achieve the intended learning outcomes?
- What could be improved for the next event?
- What could attendees apply to their own farming systems?

**Evaluation:** All events should have some level of reflection. Use more detailed participant evaluation where there are clear learning outcomes and where the feedback will provide useful learning for future events.

**Tip:** Build a short evaluation into the event itself where possible. Keep it simple and collect contact details if you plan to follow up with participants.

**Evaluation/Post Event Report**



# Supporting materials

**Pre-event Registration Template**



**Steps to a Successful Event**



**Event Safety Protocol for Climate Farm Demo Events**



**Evaluation/Post Event Report**




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