

# MANUAL FOR ORGANIZERS

1. WHAT should I know about the people and the rural community where I organize?
2. WHAT steps do I take when I first go to a new county or community?
3. HOW do we decide where and what kind of a meeting is to be held?
4. WHAT is to be done in the first meeting? The second? And the third?
5. WHAT information about the Farmers Union shall be given when I organize?
6. HOW do I interview people regarding the Farmers Union?
7. HOW should a Farmers Union organization meeting be publicized?
8. WHAT are the steps in setting up a County (or parish) Union?
9. WHAT Farmers Union materials should be delivered to the new organization?
10. HOW do we get an action program started in the newly organized group?



I.

WHAT SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT THE PEOPLE  
AND THE COMMUNITY WHERE I ORGANIZE?



A Farmers Union organizer must know.....

1. Who are the recognized leaders among farm people in the community? These may be:
  - Pastors of local churches.
  - Officers of Parent-Teachers Association.
  - Editors of local papers.
  - Members of school boards.
  - Members of county agricultural committees.
  - County commissioners.
  - Officers and managers of co-ops.
  - Key farmers.
2. What is the religious, political and nationality make-up of the community?
  - Is there a German, Dutch, Italian, or other national group?
  - Which neighborhoods are Catholic, Mormon, etc?
  - Which neighborhoods are generally progressive and more active?
3. What are the facts about the economic life of the area?
  - What are the main cash crops or products?
  - What is the land tenure situation?
  - What is the farm credit situation?
  - What is the market situation?
  - What are the main farm problems that people talk about?
4. What is the previous history of the community with farm and cooperative organization?
5. What are the facts about the farm population? What neighborhoods have enough Farmers Union type farmers to make good locals?

II.

WHAT FIRST STEPS DO I TAKE?

(Note: This refers to starting work in a County, Parish, or area which includes several local communities.)



1. Talk with the key people and present leaders. Find out from them who are the influential working farmers.
2. Talk with these selected key farmers, preferably with another acceptable person.
3. Arrange for a county-wide meeting of key people, preferably to be called by some leading respected person who believes in the program and philosophy of the Farmers Union (from 5 to 20 persons). General advance publicity is not advisable. Attendance should be by invitation.



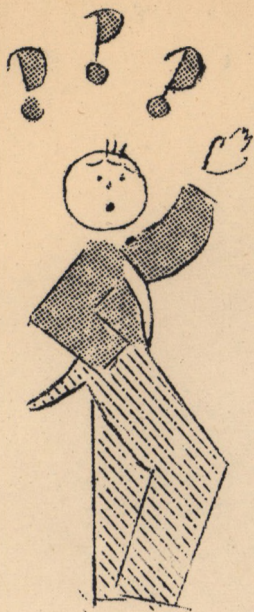
4. Got recommendations in advance and have a clear idea about who should be chosen as Chairman of this meeting.
5. Set a definite date, time, and place for this first county-wide meeting and include this information in the invitation.
6. Program recommended for this first county-wide meeting of key farmers.
  - A. Have a competent chairman chosen.
  - B. Thoroughly outline Farmers Union Program and Philosophy.
  - C. Ask for expression from selected persons about their endorsement.
  - D. Present detailed plan for organizing the County.
    - (1) Local organization meetings.
      - a. Follow up by Organizer.
      - b. Education-Action Program.
    - (2) Final Set-up of County Union
    - (3) Got suggestions from people.
  - E. Collect Union membership dues from each person who will pay.
  - F. Organize this group into County Organizing Committee, duties to begin when County Union is set up. Only those who join the Union should be on County Organizing Committee.
  - G. Got expression of needs, problems, and hopes of the Committee members.
  - H. Have the group list communities where Locals should be organized.
  - I. Select the three communities which shall be first to be organized.
  - J. List the key person, or persons, to take the lead in each community.
  - K. Arrange, if possible, to have the call for local meetings sent over the names of the County Organizing Committee.
  - L. Have Committee set time and place of its next meeting.
  - M. Have a good exhibit of Farmers Union literature on hand and give a copy of National Union Farmer to each person.

7. Arrange for local organization meetings.

- A. Plan publicity campaign in conference with County Committee.
  - (1) News items in papers
  - (2) Postal cards
  - (3) Radio announcements
  - (4) Handbills
  - (5) Announce at schools and churches
  - (6) Personal invitations by interested people
  - (7) Organizer canvass house to house the day of the meeting
  - (8) Got women-folk to telephone their neighbors
- B. Arrange for a key farmer to give a short talk at the meeting.
- C. Arrange to have special music and other local entertainment when possible.

8. Try to have County Committee well organized and shouldering responsibilities. Supply them with postage, etc., if possible.





### III. HOW DO WE DECIDE WHERE AND WHAT KIND OF LOCAL MEETINGS ARE TO BE HELD?

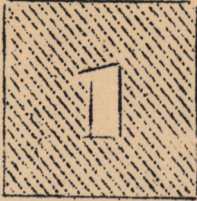
1. Possible meeting places are: Churches, Schools, Court House, Township or Town Hall, or farm home.
2. Preferably the meeting should be held where farm people are accustomed to meet.
3. What common interests bring people together in this community?
4. What transportation facilities do people have?
5. What are the "Issues" about which the working farm families of this community are concerned?
6. What are the customs of the people and what are they now doing in an organized way?
7. What other community activities are to be considered in setting the date of the meeting?

### IV. WHAT IS TO BE DONE IN FIRST AND SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS?

1. Have a strong competent local person as chairman.
2. Have group singing led by a local person.
3. Have a local person read the "Message To The Local" from the monthly program.
4. If people are accustomed to religious observance have a local clergyman to open the meeting with Invocation.
5. Have a display of Farmers Union literature and buttons to give away or to sell.
6. Have National Union Farmer and other F. U. papers for free distribution.
7. Be prompt and have meeting called to order on time.

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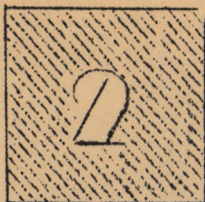


## THE FIRST MEETING

1. Explain previous steps leading up to this meeting taken by the County Organizing Committee.
2. Arrange so the Organizer or other Farmers Union speaker is first to speak.
3. After the Farmers Union speaker has finished, call on a local key person (man or woman who has agreed in advance to speak in favor of organization) for a few remarks.
4. Have those in the meeting who have become members of the Union to raise their hands, or stand up.
5. Ask all those who think it is a good idea for working farmers to organize to raise their hands.
6. Ask those to raise their hands who think it would be good for the local community to have an active Farmers Union Local in it.
7. Distribute "Request for Membership" blanks and have several interested Union members to speak individually to people about signing up.
8. Collect dues and write receipts.
9. Have members elect a temporary Chairman and a temporary Secretary to serve until the next meeting.
10. Make every interested person an organizer to bring friends and neighbors to the next meeting.
11. Close meeting with a song if possible.
12. Sit down with temporary Secretary and help to make out first reports to go to State or territorial office.
13. Field work after the first local organization meeting if time and funds permit.
  - A. Follow up or have others follow up, on key people who did not attend first meeting.
  - B. Call on Temporary Officers and help them to plan program.
  - C. Try to discover the sentiments of the people about the first meeting.
  - D. Help local leaders to provide good publicity for second meeting.
  - E. Help local leaders to develop a substantial list of prospective members.
  - F. Enlist the interest and participation of the women.



## THE SECOND MEETING



1. Have the meeting called to order on time by the Temporary Chairman.
2. Speaker review briefly the purpose, structure, and program of the Farmers Union. If time permits, add some important facts on achievements of the Farmers Union and the functioning of the Educational Program.
3. Report the success in local membership drive and proceed to sign up new members.
4. Elect local officers.
5. Set time and place of next meeting. After adjournment meet with the officers to:
  - A. Set time and place for officers to meet.
    - (1) To discuss the immediate action program.
      - a. Membership expansion
      - b. Cooperative activities
      - c. Legislative activities
      - d. Plan program of next meeting
      - e. Plan publicity for next meeting
    - (2) To select:  
Education Director  
Recreation Director  
Legislative Director  
Cooperative Director  
Junior Leader  
Organization or Membership Director  
Publicity Director
  - B. Make application for Charter or set time for such application. Holding the Charter open to a certain date may induce certain persons to join in time to have their names included charter members.
6. Field Work after second local meeting.
  - A. Get officers together:
    1. Discuss plans for immediate action program.
    2. Select Recreation Director, and if possible, an Educational Director.
    3. Arrange for selection of Cooperative, Legislative and Membership Director.
    4. Help Secretary to make sure minutes of second meeting are properly prepared for reading at next meeting.
    5. Help Treasurer to prepare report for next meeting.
    6. Urge Executive Board to purchase official Secretary's Record Book.



- B. Help Chairman to prepare program for next meeting.
- C. Make sure that Chairman, before he goes to next meeting, has a detailed list of the program including order of business.
- D. Follow up approach to local Ministers, Editors, Teachers, and others to enlist support and reduce opposition.



### THE THIRD MEETING



Note: We should hope that the local can move "under its own steam" after this meeting.

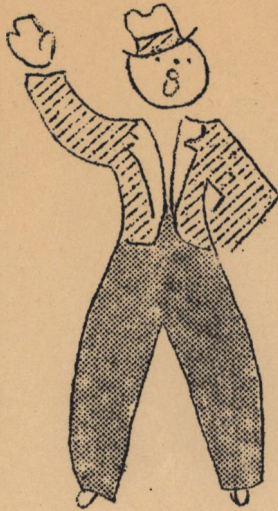
1. Have President and Secretary in their proper places at front of hall when meeting is called to order.
2. The President should follow a program prepared in advance.

#### Suggested Program:

1. Group singing led by local song leader.
2. Call to order by the President.
3. Invocation by Chaplain or local clergyman if in keeping with wishes of local people.
4. The Message To The Local. To be read from Action Letter by local person.
5. Reading the minutes.
6. Report of the Treasurer.
7. Presentation of Charter (if issued).
8. Installation of Officer by Organizer or visiting Union officer.
9. Report of Membership campaign.
10. Short Talk on Farmers Union Fundamentals.  
Organizer may wish to explain in detail the election of delegates to the County Union and announce plans to set up County Unions.
11. A Farmers Union quiz.
12. Reports on legislation and cooperation.
13. Questions and discussion.
14. Announcement of time, place, and program of next meeting.
15. Group singing.
16. Adjourn.

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V. WHAT INFORMATION ABOUT THE FARMERS UNION SHOULD BE GIVEN WHEN WE ORGANIZE?

1. History (Read "Short History of Farmers Union", "For These Things We Stand" and "We Are Building Security").
  - A. Organized in 1902 by Texas farmers who were going broke raising cotton.
  - B. Work of Newt Gresham.
  - C. Spread of Union to other parts of country.
  - D. History of Union in this state or region.
  - E. Reason for organization work in this area now.
2. What Is The Farmers Union
  - A. Organization of working farm families.
  - B. Who can be a member?
  - C. A People's Movement.
  - D. Authority is with the members in the local rural community.
3. The Structure.
  - A. Local, County or Parish, State or Territory, National.
  - B. The State or Territory Union Officers and Organization.
  - C. The National Union
    - Officers
    - National Staff
    - Denver and Washington offices
    - Services of National Union
    - National Union Farmer
  - D. The nature, organization, and functions of the County or Parish Union.
  - E. The Union Local - the real authority in a people's movement.
4. The Program of the Farmers Union - The Triangle
  - A. The Educational Program
    - (1) To gain understanding
    - (2) The base of the triangle
    - (3) Study and action program for children, young people and adults



- (4) The Program Service for local leaders
- (5) Service of field workers
- (6) Educational Director and Program Chairman in Local.
- (7) Farmers Union schools, to train leadership

B. The Cooperative Program (Read "Second Hundred Years of Cooperatives")

- (1) Farmers Union has promoted cooperatives.
- (2) Explain the Cooperative program in the area where this meeting is held.
- (3) List Farmers Union cooperatives in various parts of the county (List of Co-ops)

C. The Legislative Program

- (1) Much of our daily lives are now affected by government agencies. Working farmers must be represented in USDA and in congress.
- (2) Other organized groups are represented and get a hearing.
- (3) Need for action in local and county government.
- (4) Need for State Legislative Program drawn up by working farmers. Roads, schools, markets, taxes.
- (5) National Farmers Union Legislative program.  
Washington Office: National Farmers Union  
300 E Street, S.E.  
Washington, D.C.
- (6) Farmers Union achievements in legislation.

VI. HOW DO I INTERVIEW PEOPLE REGARDING THE FARMERS UNION?

1. Aim to have the most of the talking done by the person you are interviewing.
2. Try to ask questions that call for information or opinions.  
Try to avoid questions that can be answered by "yes" or "no".



3. Get the person to tell you something about himself - size of farm, past experience, participation in local activities, interest in making conditions better for working farm families.
4. Try to get opinion and facts about how the small farmers are faring at present.
5. Try to find what your informant thinks should be done by farmers like himself.
6. State that you work with the Farmers Union and why you believe in its program.



7. Get your informant to tell you what he knows or thinks about the Farmers Union.
8. Ask what your informant thinks could be done if local farm people would get together to sing together, think together, work together, and stick together.
9. Find what this person thinks about the need for a constructive program of study, recreation, and action for young and old in his community.
10. Try to get the names of other persons who might be interested in working for a better income for farmers and a happier life in the community.
11. Try to get this person to commit himself to some action on the things in which he believes or in which he is interested.
  - A. Pay his dues in the Union
  - B. Go with you to talk to others
  - C. Call a meeting of friends in his home
  - D. Attend a local meeting
  - E. Take a leading part in organizing the Farmers Union.

VII. HOW SHOULD A FARMERS UNION ORGANIZATION MEETING BE PUBLICIZED?

1. The question for discussion at the meeting should be a live local issue.

In one area the issue is the marketing of dairy products. In another area it is improvement of schools. Other issues are:

"How Can Farmers Have Security On Their Farms?"; "Recreation for People In our Community"; "How Can The Small Farms Stick Together To Help One Another?"; "How Can We Organize a Fertilizer Cooperative"; "Does Congress Serve Farm People?"

As a rule farm people do not respond to just a "meeting".

2. Use all possible methods of publicity.

News items in papers

Postal cards

Radio announcements

Handbills

Announcement at schools and churches (Be sure that written notice is handed to proper persons)

School bus drivers and milk haulers may be interested to distribute handbills.

Personal invitation by interested person.

Telephone calls by telephone committee.





3. Persons employed in friendly government agencies should have full information about the meeting.
4. Friendly interest of local people such as Doctors, Ministers, Postmasters, Editors, etc., will help greatly.

#### VIII. WHAT ARE THE STEPS IN SETTING UP A COUNTY ( OR PARISH ) UNION?



1. At least three Locals must be chartered before a County Union can be chartered. Consult Constitution and By-laws of State or Territorial Union.
2. The original County Organizing Committee may hold County Farmers Union meetings or conferences before the County Union is chartered. This might be advisable to stimulate enthusiasm in the County.
3. Consult Constitution and By-laws to determine basis of delegate representation in the County (or Parish) Union.
4. As soon as there are enough Chartered Locals in the County each Local should elect its delegates to the County Union according to provisions of the Constitution and By-laws.
5. The meeting called for the purpose of setting up the County Union should be called by the County Organizing Committee.
  - A. Time should be given to permit all Locals to elect their delegates.
  - B. Notice should be sent to all Local Presidents, Secretaries, and Educational Directors.
  - C. Good publicity should be given in locals and the papers.
  - D. All members should be urged to attend but only delegates will vote.
6. Meeting should be opened with singing if possible.
7. Chairman of County Organizing Committee should call the meeting to order and see that delegates are seated together.
8. The Secretary of the County Organizing Committee shall call the roll of Locals. Each Local should respond with announcement of number of delegates present and number of delegates allowed.



9. The meeting should then elect a temporary chairman and a temporary secretary.
  10. The organizer or other representative of the Farmers Union should then outline the organization and the program of the County Union and duties of County Officers.
  11. Each Local should report on their program, successes, and give names of their officers including Educational Director and department directors... (Cooperative, Legislative and Membership).
  12. The meeting will then proceed to elect the officers of the County Union in accordance with the Constitution and By-laws of the State or Territorial Union.
  13. A motion should be passed to make application for County Charter.
  14. Frequency of County Union meetings should be decided and date, time and place of next county Union meeting should be decided.
- Note: This information should be sent with application for charter in order that a representative of the Union may be on hand to present the County Charter.
15. An educational or entertainment feature presented by each Local would be valuable to the meeting at this point.
  16. Offer opportunity for discussion of program in the County - particularly the organization program and the organization of new Locals.
  17. Organizer, after discussion, should offer a program for further organizing in the County.
  18. Officially release the County Organizing Committee and thank them for good work done.
  19. Sing a song and adjourn.
  20. Organizer, meet with County Officers to select County Educational Director and department directors.
  21. Organizer meet with County President and County Educational Director (if one has been chosen) to plan the program for the next County Union meeting which should include Installation of officers.
  22. Note: There should be an exhibit of Farmers Union literature at every County Union meeting.



IX. WHAT FARMERS UNION LITERATURE SHOULD BE DELIVERED TO THE NEW ORGANIZATION?

1. Each Union Secretary should have a Farmers Union Secretary's Record Book.
2. Each officer should be given a copy of the "Action Guide", and his name added to the Action Letter mailing list.
3. At least one copy of each of the following should be left in the Local, either by purchase or by gift:



Farmers Union Handbook  
The National Farmers Union Program  
National and State Constitution and By-laws  
State Policy and Action Guide  
Catalogue of Current Farmers Union Material

4. A bundle of National Union Farmers should be presented to the new Local with recommendation that Local buy a bundle of each issue for a few weeks to hand to prospective members.

X. HOW DO WE GET THE ACTION PROGRAM STARTED IN NEWLY ORGANIZED GROUPS?

1. We get action:

By having regular meetings

By using Action Letters and Bulletins from National and State Union.

By planning programs in advance. (All Action Officials should meet to plan in advance.)

2. The Action Officials in the Local are:

President

Vice-president

Secretary-Treasurer

Education Director

Junior Leader

Cooperative Director

Legislative Director

Organization Director

Recreation Director

Publicity Director

Veteran's Services Director

(Other officials may be added as needed.)

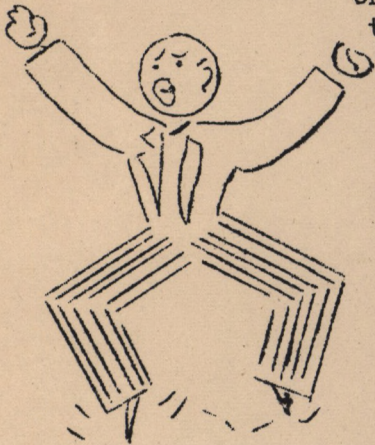
3. It is the responsibility of the Local President to see that the action program operates. He has general responsibility -- he works with his Action Officials.
4. It is the responsibility of the Cooperative Director to bring recommendations for cooperative action to the membership.



In the same way the Membership (or Organization) Director is responsible for action program of membership expansion.

The Legislative Director is similarly responsible for recommending action which includes letters or telegrams to Congressmen, or getting a bridge repaired on a rural by-road.

5. Each proposal which arouses interest should be taken by a study group or discussion group of interested members who may want to meet several times in homes to go into the question carefully and report back to the membership meeting. This might not be true where immediate action is necessary



on a bill pending in Congress provided the position of the National Union is well known. It should certainly be true in proposals for cooperative action. The Cooperative Director is responsible for gathering information and facts for discussion of cooperation. In the same way the Legislative and Membership Directors are responsible for gathering important information.

6. Suggestions for action may come

- A. from officers
- B. from members at Local meeting
- C. from speakers
- D. from Farmers Union papers
- E. from Action Officials

7. Some proposals may be of such a nature that they should be carried to the County Union before final action is taken - such as a County-wide cooperative project.
8. The Farmers Union Local is built for service and action. Do not fail to use it.
9. Cooperatives approved by the Farmers Union can be the place for action at once. Managers of such cooperatives should be invited to attend meetings to answer questions of Farmers Union members and to explain the services of the Cooperatives.