

Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster

County Public Relations Officer Role Description and Guidelines

Revised September 2007

Introduction

The County Public Relation Officer PRO is an integral part of the team with responsibility for the perception of the YFCU within the County and beyond. The YFCU needs to be seen as an attractive, active, progressive and positive organisation. You are the team leader in fostering and harnessing all communication methods at your disposal in spearheading the quest for coverage for your County. Good coverage for your counties activities boosts the morale of officers and clubs.

Role Description

As County PRO, you need to do the following:

1. KEY TASKS:

Leadership Role within the County:

- **Attending County meetings, Club & County Events**
- **Attend Office Bearer training and assist in Club Office Bearer training**
- **Display Leadership qualities at all times**
- **Supporting the teamwork ethos, at all times**

Be informed

- **Read the Associations Policies and guidelines, implement them and be in a position to inform others.**

PR Strategy:

- **Guiding the development & implementation of a PR strategy**
- **Effective use of existing media contacts, radio, newspapers, TV. etc**
- **Supporting and developing the PR network within the County**
- **Use all available resources, to present an effective organisational image.**
- **Constantly seek new and innovative methods of PR.**
- **Identify resources and constraints, message and purpose, then plan your action.**

Motivate

- **All Officers need to be encouraged and recognized for their work. You hold the key in publicizing their efforts & thus raising morale.**

Planning

- **You should play a strong part in the County planning process particularly with respect to development and**

recruitment ensuring an effective PR strategy and implementation thereon.

Delegate & Promote Teamwork

- Involve assistants and delegate coverage of events for example if you are unable to attend.

2. EVENT SPECIFIC TASKS:

Dealing with Guests/Contacts

- Look after photographers/journalists, guests and sponsors at competitions.
- Organize PR for specific events, such as fundraisers, competitions recruitment initiatives, community activities etc.
- Work as part of a team to ensure County initiatives are successful.

Assist in County Recruitment Campaign

- Ensure awareness among club officers of the need for a uniform strategy.
- Spearhead the networking of Club PROs in the design and implementation of this strategy.

3. GENERAL TASKS:

Be Objective

- Do not allow your opinion of an individual to colour your opinion of their ideas or suggestions. Be mindful of the aims and objectives of the organisation.

Be Positive

- The main enemy of any organization is negativity; do not allow this to set in.

Avoid Burn Out

- While it is important to be committed to your role you must avoid becoming “burnt out” by trying to do too much.
- It is important to seek help during busy periods. You should enjoy your role it should not become drudgery.

Task List

What does the County PRO have to do?

- **Consult with the previous PRO if newly elected.**
- **Familiarise yourself with the role.**
- **Acquire necessary contacts and contact details.**
- **Develop PR and recruitment strategies for your County**
- **Meet club PROs to review and link with County PR Strategy**
- **Work with local clubs in helping them implement a recruitment strategy**
- **Attend and assist with County and Club Office Bearer training**
- **Ensure clubs have up to date contact details for local and farming Newspapers, radios and photographers**
- **Keep information about the County current on the YFCU website**
- **Make effective use of PR resources and meet local radio and newspaper contacts.**
- **Publicise all County events**
- **Attend County meetings and update committee members.**
- **Focus on programme plans and highlight opportunities**
- **Establish new PR initiatives**
- **Support other County Officers**
- **Ensure the YFC has a presence at your County agricultural show**
- **Tackle issues like photography, displays, festivals, and media access.**
- **Maintain County PRO Scrapbook to document years activities**
- **Seek out replacement PRO if you are finishing your term of office in readiness for County AGM**
- **Assist secretary and chairman in writing up AGM reports**
- **Prime new Public Relations Officer in readiness to continue on where you have left off.**
- **Read and honestly answer twenty questions for self appraisal**

Duties of a County PRO

The duties of the County PRO are as follows:

1. **Writing newspaper/ magazine reports**

The County PRO has responsibility for writing reports for newspapers and magazines. If the County produces a yearly magazine or a monthly newsletter then he/ she has the main responsibility for producing these.

2. **Attend County Meetings.**

County PRO should attend County Meetings and County Sub-Committee meetings. A report of activities by County PRO should be given at these meetings. Attending these meetings allows them to be kept up to date on club and County events. It also allows the County PRO be a part of the planning of the County programme. It is a team effort.

3. **Keeping in contact with club PROs**

It is also very important for the County PRO to keep in contact with the club PROs to keep up to speed with club activities and to advise and assist them in promoting their clubs within their own areas. Each club should have a regular presence in their local paper and in local newsletters.

4. **Keeping in Contact with Macra National Press officer.**

To keep in contact with the MACRA Press Officer to keep them up to date with County activities. It is also important to be aware of all promotional material and to use it where possible for benefit of the County.

5. **Working with local papers.**

It is important that the County PRO develops a good working relationship with local newspapers. Articles should be sent on a regular basis (either weekly/ monthly) to the papers. These should be sent on time meeting with deadlines set down by the newspaper for such articles. Remember news has a short life span. All articles MUST be emailed to journalists and the report should be attached as a word document and included in text form in the body of the email as well. The Club PRO should also have photographs if possible to accompany the articles. Photographs should be attached as JPEGs and the captions for the photographs should be included in text form in the body of the email as well labelled with the name/ number of the picture. An example of how an email should be laid out for the media can be seen in Appendix 1.

6. **Attending Club/ County Functions**

The County PRO should whenever possible attend County functions in order to write a report on the event afterwards. You should also invite photographers and reporters to County events if you are confident that they will be well attended. You should only invite journalist to an event that will make a good story and that you are confident that you will be able to answer any questions on from the journalist. If you bombard the journalist with invitations to every tiny event they will become immune to all invites that you send and, therefore, may not turn up to the most important event of the year.

7. *Dealing with Guests, Judges and Sponsors.*

It is the function of the County PRO to work closely with other County Officials to deal with guests, judges and sponsors at a competition or event. This usually involves writing to the sponsor beforehand to ask for sponsorship and if you have been successful in obtaining the sponsorship, you should invite them along to an event. Where possible, a press release should be written up about the event prior to it to announce the details of the sponsorship and the event/competition. This should be issued at least two weeks prior to the event. A press should also be written about the event and issued after it accompanied with photographs to give the sponsor maximum coverage from the event.

On the day of the event the Club PRO should be present to welcome the sponsor and keep them informed. A letter of thanks should be sent to the sponsor after the event.

8. *Produce County Display Boards*

We live in a visual age and visual materials that can quickly and easily be absorbed is often the most effective way of getting a message across. Photographs, press clippings, posters, literature, etc can be used at local and County events. It also provides the opportunity for the community to see what the County has achieved.

9. *Web Site Maintenance.*

It is your responsibility as County PRO to ensure that all information about County events on the YFCU Website is up-to-date and accurate.

10. *Be an Opportunist!*

Fully exploit every opportunity that arises during the year, to promote the County or Clubs and events to the maximum. A good example of this is getting requests played on local and national radio for clubs who are participating in competitions or have events coming up.

Media Contacts

The main sources of media available to you are the local papers and local radio stations. To exploit these to their utmost you must make sure that information is received on time and above all that it is correct and up-to-date. For local radio, make sure it is concise, mention people's names and get your message across.

Important points to consider when dealing with the Media:

- ❑ Find out what your local newspapers deadlines are.
- ❑ Compile your own press list with named contacts and phone numbers and keep it up date. It is much better to send information to contacts rather than just to the editor.
- ❑ Use the phone to follow up articles – you get a chance to make contact and it is difficult for your contact to refuse to deal with your requests. Do not

get downhearted if some of your articles are not included, this will increase the chance of future articles being included!

- ❑ Find out which reporter has a special interest in your area and identify the radio programmes most likely to use your items.
- ❑ Arrange to meet your local journalist and tell them what YFCU is all about and that you will be sending them on weekly/ monthly reports.
- ❑ Use headed paper for press releases.

Article Writing

When writing an article or a good PR report, one does not have to be a literacy genius. Follow a few basic rules and you cannot go wrong.

1. *The ABCs*

Accuracy Make sure everything you write is accurate.

Brevity Present the facts in brief concise English. Keep your reports short, snappy and to the point.

Clarity Write the facts clearly. Read over what you have written to make sure that you have written what you intend to get across to the reader. Give it to a friend to read and ask did he/ she understand it.

2. *Content*

Any report must resolve around five major facts:

- ❑ What happened?
- ❑ When it happened?
- ❑ Where did it happen?
- ❑ Who did happen to?
- ❑ Why did it happen?

3. *Writing*

Good writing is clear thinking made visible. The content of the press release/report should be summarised in the first paragraph. This should be followed by the main points of the story, a quote from Club Leader/sponsor and then a final summarising paragraph at the end.

The article should be typed in a word or text document, in the 'Arial' font, size 11 and 1.5 spaced.

The first paragraph is of utmost importance and should emphasize the message indicated in the title/ headline. See appendices 1 for an example of how a press release should appear.

4. *Identification*

At the top of the article you should include a line of identification. For example you should type “ISSUED ON BEHALF OF LISNAMURRICAN YFC” at the top of the report along with the date of issue. You should also include your name, address and telephone number at the bottom of the article so that the reporter can contact you if necessary for further information.

5. *Photographs*

If photographs are available they should be included in the email along with the press release. Every photo submitted should have a caption and this should be included in the body of the email and attached as a separate word document labelled with the name of the picture. Digital photographs should always be used and should be of good quality saved at 8 x 10 inches in size. Most newspapers will not be inclined to use heavily branded pictures. Where possible banners should be used as a backdrop or placed somewhere in the picture to frame the image. Company logos can be placed in photographs in t-shirts or fleeces etc. One way to ensure that the sponsor gets a mention in the caption and represented in the photograph is to have a representative from the sponsor present in the picture. Animated/action photographs of people doing things are much more interesting than static photographs. Remember to reference the file name(s) of your photo(s) and caption(s) in the email.

Press Releases

The structure of a press release is very important as it makes it easier to be understood by reporters who work to similar procedures.

1. Structure of Press Releases:

- Article must be typed.
- Write on one side of the paper only.
- Include author’s name, address and telephone number at the end of the article.
- Base your release on the WHAT structure [see next page].
- When continuing onto another page put . . . /more. When finishing the article put . . . / End.
- Have 1.5 line spacing between sentences.
- When using figures, spell them out brackets e.g. 9 (nine).
- Do not carry a sentence onto the next page.
- If photographs are available this should be stated on the report.
- Address your article directly to the appropriate person.
- If possible try to keep your press release to one page.

2. Some extra Points

- Identify your county name if this is not on the paper.
- Make sure that your contact numbers are at the bottom of the release
- Make sure you date your release.
- Keep a copy of all outgoing releases.
- Check for accuracy in detail and spellings.
- Have a clear layout.
- Never use a page from a copy or notebook.
- Ensure that the release is followed with a phone call or personal contact.
- If you need advise are unsure of the appropriateness of your release seek advise from your county chairman or YFCU Headquarters.

3. Story Structure – Hard News Formula

The W-H-A-T Structure:

W WHAT is the Story? The Intro must tell what happened.

- The story in a nutshell that could be used as a stop press part.

H HOW did it happen, or often what happened next? Explanation.

- Background information or non-narrative facts.

A Tell the story again..

- AMPLIFY the points made in the intro one by one in order of importance.

T TIE up any loose ends. Additional or background information.

- If the story follows this pattern it can be cut from the bottom up.

Sample Press Release Below

ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE YOUNG FARMERS' CLUBS OF ULSTER

5/06/08

YFCU GEAR UP FOR ANNUAL BEEF AND SHEEP STOCKJUDGING

YFCU are preparing for the forthcoming County Heats of the annual 2008 Beef and Sheep Stockjudging competition which is run in association with Ulster Bank.

For Co Armagh and Co Down clubs the Area Heat will take place on Monday 23rd June in Hillsborough. For Co Londonderry clubs the County Heat will take place on Tuesday 24th June in Maghera. For Co Antrim clubs the County Heat will take place on Wednesday 25th June in Cullybackey. For Co Tyrone and Co Fermanagh clubs the Area Heat will take place on Thursday 26th June in Enniskillen.

YFCU President, Adrian Cooper, believes that the Beef and Sheep Stockjudging County Heats will be very popular:

"The Stockjudging competition provides YFCU members the opportunity to show their core skills in assessing livestock and continues to be one of the most popular events in the Young Farmers' calendar.

The event continues to attract increased entries as shown by the staggering 23% increase in members that took part in the recent Dairy Stockjudging County Heats held in March 2008 and so we are expecting high levels of membership participation at the forthcoming Beef and Sheep Stockjudging County Heats".

Ulster Banks Agricultural Manager, Cormac McKervey added his support for the event and congratulated YFCU in running consistently successful stockjudging competitions. "The ability to identify good quality stock is a key management skill on many Northern Ireland farms and YFCU deserve great credit in ensuring this skill is passed to successive generations of young farmers. Ulster Bank are delighted to continue our long running sponsorship of this event and wish clubs every success."

[more]

The successful County Heat finalists will attend the grand final of the YFCU Beef and Sheep Stockjudging Competition on Wednesday 2nd July 2008 at CAFRE, Greenmount College.

[ends]

MEDIA ENQUIRIES: For more information please contact Amy Hunter of the Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster on 028 90 370713.

Radio and Interviews

There are a wide variety of radio stations in the country. Your local radio station provides an opportunity to promote the YFCU. Most of these stations have various slots where your County information could be aired as well as providing an opportunity for you, as County PRO, to develop your PR skills. The use of local radio allows provides a base for the local community to hear what your County is up to. This all helps to promote the County in a positive manner.

1. Local radio can be used in a variety of manners. You can use it by:

- ❑ Playing requests for members who are taking part in a competition.
- ❑ Using the free social round up spot to make announcements.
- ❑ Advertising for particular fund-raising events organised by your County.
- ❑ Presenting your own YFCU slot on a Radio Programme.
- ❑ Sending in press releases on your Club's events and activities throughout the year.

2. Useful tips for your own Radio slot

- ❑ This may sound difficult but a couple of records and a bit of information is all there is to it.
- ❑ Radio is an entertainment media so keep it interesting by avoiding monologues and reading lists by using interviews and phone-ins.

3. The Radio Interview

When you are reading an article you can always go back and re-read the previous paragraphs or read the headline again. Not so with radio – whatever you say disappears immediately. So it is important to make your points clearly, concisely and with impact.

4. Useful Radio Interview Tips

- ❑ There are only *three people involved* in any radio interview; you, the interviewer and the one listener at each radio. You are not addressing a meeting. It's an *intimate three-way conversation*.

- ❑ Always assume no knowledge on the part of the listener, so avoid using jargon.
- ❑ If a radio station contacts you, ask them what programme the item is for, is it recorded or live, how long do you have and are there to be other contributors?
- ❑ Have three or four main points you want to get across – and get them across.
- ❑ If it is recorded never be afraid to ask to do it again, or repeat an answer your not happy with.
- ❑ Try to be natural. Smile or frown as you speak, you can hear these on radio.
- ❑ Have notes of vital information, but never read a prepared speech.
- ❑ Don't worry about accents or pauses. These happen in everyday conversations – you will be the only one to notice.
- ❑ Use examples to illustrate your points.
- ❑ If the interviewer challenges you do not get angry or defensive, they are probably trying to get more information.
- ❑ Beware of what you are wearing such as jewellery that rattles, leather that squeaks, nervous habits such as pen tapping, hand rubbing. Get a comfortable seat, relax, keep still and talk directly into the microphone.

Exhibition Display Boards

1. An Exhibition Stand could contain the following.

- ❑ Photographs.
- ❑ Posters.
- ❑ Map of County indicating club location.
- ❑ Trophies won during year.
- ❑ Promotional literature.
- ❑ Badges.
- ❑ Display of winning work from competitions.

Send away to exhibition and display board suppliers for their leaflets and price lists. You can get some good ideas this way.

2. Before you exhibit you should check the following:

- ❑ Where is the exhibit to be?
- ❑ When is it to on display?
- ❑ How much space do you have?
- ❑ Do you need tables?
- ❑ Do you require access to sockets?
- ❑ Do you require electricity?
- ❑ Do you need lights for display?
- ❑ Do you have to supply tablecloths, projectors, computers, handouts and screens?

- ❑ Have you someone to man the stand at all times?
- ❑ Is the area accessible for all?
- ❑ Does your stand have to be freestanding?

3. *For Design and display purposes*

- ❑ Everything on the display board should tie together with a logo, colour or headings.
- ❑ Don't use text like or reading material on exhibition boards. Short snappy phrases are better.
- ❑ Get your display out and about. Plan to have it available for County shows, open days, launches, libraries etc

Dealing with Sponsors

If your County secures sponsorship for an event, it is customary to invite a representative of the sponsor to the event.

Points to Remember

1. *Preparation*

- ❑ When agreeing details of the sponsorship, give full details of the event to the sponsor.
- ❑ Before the event takes place, ensure that both your club and the sponsor are very clear on what has been agreed – what you have agreed to do as a club and what the sponsor will do in return for this. You **MUST** ensure that you deliver what you promise and ensure that the sponsor does the same.
- ❑ Send a formal letter of invitation to the sponsor.
- ❑ Contact the sponsor beforehand to make sure he/ she turns up.

2. *At the Event*

- ❑ Be there on time to welcome the sponsor.
- ❑ Bring him/ her to the reception area, or to where other invited guests are and introduce them to each other.
- ❑ Make sure the event runs on time.
- ❑ Do not neglect your sponsors, ensure they have adequate refreshments etc.
- ❑ If the sponsor is required to act as a judge ensure he/ she is fully briefed about this beforehand.

- ❑ **At the time of presentation, give the sponsor opportunity to speak.**
- ❑ **If there is a sole sponsor, acknowledge this on all advertising and posters.**
- ❑ **The sponsor may request a trade display or a free information stand, which should be provided if requested.**
- ❑ **Ensure that the sponsor is any photographs and that these are printed in local papers etc.**

3. *After the Event*

- ❑ **Ensure the sponsor's name features on all press coverage.**
- ❑ **Send a formal letter of thanks to the sponsor.**

Questions For Self Appraisal

1. Am I using all PR avenues open to me?
2. Have I got a complete and up-to-date list of Media Contacts & details (email, phone numbers, addresses)? E.g. Local/national Newspapers, Newsletters, Radio Stations/shows, Magazines websites etc.
3. Am I aware of all PR deadlines? Are these being fully utilized?
E.g. Local/National Papers, Radio Show, YFCU Magazine, Website etc.
4. Are all members in County being informed about all upcoming events
5. Is the current PR strategy employed, being implemented?
6. How well is it working?
7. What revision if any does PR strategy require?
8. In submissions & publications, is desired County Image achieved?
9. Are all Articles & submissions getting published?
10. If not, why?
11. Are all Clubs in County being represented by submissions?
12. Have previous or upcoming County events been publicized fully?
13. Could any of these been publicized more efficiently or more innovatively?
14. Are all Media open to me been used and used constructively?
15. Have articles been noticed and have I taken Feedback from them?
16. Are there any upcoming events that PRO stand could be erected at?
17. Are there any linkages that could be developed or explored that would increase PR exposure e.g. Community Involvement fundraiser.
18. Could County PR gain added value or dimension with a partnership with local sponsors for both parties mutual benefit?
19. Am I fulfilling my role as County PRO fully?
20. Am I aware of and understand my responsibilities in accordance with the Associations Policies and guidelines, implement them and be in a position to inform others
21. Am I fulfilling my duty to the local & National Org in terms of the image of the YFCU projected?