



Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster

**County PRO**

Role Guide





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# Introduction

## **Congratulations on being appointed as County PRO!**

We have produced this booklet to help you in your role as Press Relations Officer of your Young Farmers' Clubs of Ulster (YFCU) County.

In your role, you will be responsible for creating imaginative and eye catching content for social media as well as well-written press articles for local or national press. You will have the power to promote and share updates from the clubs in your county and the county plans and activities.

The County PRO is an integral part of the wider committee team. Your coverage should align with the YFCU strategic plan and showcase the Organisation as attractive, active, progressive, and positive. You are the team leader in fostering and harnessing all communication methods at your disposal in to ensure coverage for your County. Good coverage for your county activities boosts the morale of officers and clubs.



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## RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ROLE

As County PRO, you need to do the following:

### **Show leadership**

This is done by attending county meetings and sub-committee meetings, supporting, and promoting club and county events, attending/ facilitating office bearer training and assist in with any other training requirements.

### **Be informed**

Read the Articles of Association, YFCU Policies & Procedures and implement them and be able to inform others of YFCU procedures and protocols.

### **Promote Planning**

You should be assisting with leading the county planning process for the year ahead and finalising and circulating relevant information to your county clubs and Headquarters.

### **Have a PR Strategy**

As PRO, you are responsible for implementing the PR strategy as agreed with your committee.

The plan should detail how you will use appropriate social media sites, contact local press and seek new methods of promotion.

## Be Positive

Maintaining a positive attitude is essential for committee and team morale. As PRO, your role is key to ensuring the wider committee remains positive and productive.

## Avoid Burn Out

Whilst it is important to be committed to your role, you must avoid 'burn out' by trying to do too much. It is important to seek help during busy periods. Your role should be enjoyable and not become a chore.



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## DUTIES OF THE ROLE

### 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.
- Work with your county committee to develop PR and recruitment strategies for your County.
- Contact club PROs and offer support throughout year.
- 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.
- Establish a good relationship with your local paper. They are always looking for good news stories and to support the local community to fill their pages.
- Create a routine of sending articles and pictures to the papers regularly. Remember to be careful of deadline dates when trying to promote events.
- Make effective use of PR resources and meet local radio and newspaper contacts.

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- Keep records of all press clippings in either a scrapbook/ lever arch file, as well as digital scans or copies, if possible. This will make it easy when it comes to gathering information and photos for club anniversaries and other high-profile events.
  - Publicise all County events.
  - Support other County Officers
  - Ensure YFCU has a presence at your County agricultural show.
  - If you are finishing your term of office, seek out a successor in readiness for County AGM help the new Public Relations Officer to continue where you have left off.

## **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. YFCU HQ may also request updates to include in Rural Spotlight magazine, or other press.

## **Attend county meetings**

County PRO should attend county meetings and county sub-committee meetings. An update and report of activities by county PRO should be given at these meetings. Attending these meetings allows you to update fellow committee members 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.

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## **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. Each club should have a regular presence in their local paper and in local newsletters.

## **Working with local papers**

It is important that the County PRO develops a good working relationship with local newspapers to help continue to promote the county. Articles should be sent on a regular basis (weekly/ monthly) to the papers, ensuring they are submitted in line with papers deadline. All articles emailed to journalists should be attached as a word document, if applicable. Photographs should be attached as JPEGs and include captions detailing who/ what is in each image. It is best practice to label each image with the name/ number of the picture.

## **Attending Club/ County functions**

As County PRO, you should, whenever possible, attend and support county functions to be able to write a thorough report on the event. For larger county events, it would be good practice to invite photographers and reporters to the event for additional press cover. However, carefully consider which events you extend the invitation to, as it would be best to have their support at larger events, rather than smaller, more minor events.



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## Produce County display boards

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

## Be an Opportunist

Maximise and utilise every opportunity that arises throughout your term to promote the county or club events.





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## MEDIA CONTACTS

The main sources of media available to you, along with social media channels, are local papers and local radio stations. To maximise the contact, you must ensure that information is up to date, correct and submitted on time.

Important points to consider when dealing with the media:

- Arrange to meet your local journalist and share with them what YFCU is all about as well as upcoming county events
- Find out what your local newspapers deadlines for print are
- Compile your own press list with named contacts and phone numbers and keep it up to date
- It's good practice to follow up email/ article submissions, with phone calls. This will help to build a strong working relationship with your media contacts
- Be sure to use headed paper for any press releases as further promotion



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## ARTICLE WRITING

When writing an article or press release/ report, you can follow a few basic rules:

### The ABCs

*Accuracy* Ensure everything you write is accurate and a true reflection of events. Pay close attention to detail and any information on dates/ times etc.

*Brevity* Present the facts in a brief and concise manner. Keep your reports short and to the point.

*Clarity* Write the facts clearly. Proof read your writing and ensure you have written clearly, in a comprehensive manner. If you can, or wish, give it to a friend to read and ask did they understand it.

### 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

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## Writing

The content of the press release/ report should be summarised in the first paragraph. The first paragraph is of utmost importance and should emphasise the message indicated in the title/ headline. This should be followed by the main points of the story, a quote from a relevant source or sponsor.

The article should be typed in a word document, using a clear font/ spacing. Always be sure to save the document with an appropriate title.

The top of the article should include a line of identification along with the date of issue. For example, you should type "ISSUED ON BEHALF OF COUNTY DOWN YFC" at the top of the report. You should also include your name, and contact details at the bottom of the article so that the reporter can contact you if necessary for further information.

*See appendix for a sample press release*

## 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 noted in the press release. Photographs should be used and of good quality (it's best to save them at 8 x 10 inches in size) It's worth noting, 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 is to

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invite a representative from the sponsor to be present in the picture. Animated/ action photographs of people doing things are much more interesting than static photographs.

## **Press Releases**

The structure of a press release is very important as it will keep a reader engaged as well as flow well in a newspaper.

### **Guidance to follow:**

- Article must be typed in word format
- Include author's name, address, and telephone number at the end of the article
- Have 1.5 line spacing between sentences
- When using figures, spell them out in brackets e.g. 9 (nine)
- If photographs are available this should be stated on the report
- Write in the third person. Do not use "you", "I", "we" and/or "us"
- Identify your county name if this is not on the paper.
- Keep a copy of all outgoing releases

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- Check for accuracy in detail and spellings, sometimes the computer can be wrong and doesn't pick up on misspelling of certain words e.g. where / were, there / their, our / are, etc.

### **Structure to follow:**

- Contact information
- Title and subheading to summarise the news
- News/ event location
- Two or three paragraphs to add body/ context and detail
- Bulleted facts and/or figures
- A boilerplate at the end – this is a summarising paragraph on the company or organisation which can be used in all press releases with little change/ updates

If you need advice or guidance, reach out to your county committee or YFCU HQ.

### **If including photos:**

Always have good quality, clear photos to go along with your press release. Photos must be high resolution for papers to use them. Ensure all photos are labelled correctly and you include captions in the press release and that they correspond to the right photo.

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## SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media can be a great platform for sharing information and events to a wider community and network. It can promote connection, communication, participation and engagement in the conversation. A few points to remember:

- Update social media regularly
- Share posts from clubs within the county, for example events which they are organising and achievements
- Share the YFCU HQ social media posts
- Like/ follow the YFCU HQ pages and tag in your posts
- Remember the YFCU policy on no alcoholic drinks to be photographed at any YFCU event including BBQs and discos
- Keep in mind you are representing your County and YFCU so do not share content that could embarrass or damage the image / reputation of either party





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## EXHIBITION DISPLAY BOARDS

### **An Exhibition Stand could contain the following.**

- Photographs
- Posters, usually including the YFCU President's theme for the year
- Map of your county, indicating each club location
- Achievements through the year, including trophies/ awards
- Promotional literature
- Badges
- Display of winning work from competitions

### **Before you exhibit you should check the following:**

- How much space do you have
- Do you need tables
- Do you require access to sockets
- Do you have to supply tablecloths, projectors, computers, handouts and screens
- Ensure you have enough stewards to man the stand at all times

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## 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**

### **Preparation**

- When agreeing details of the sponsorship, be sure to share all the details of the event
- Before the event takes place, ensure that both your county and the sponsor understand the agreement and expectations
- To maintain strong relationships, it is vital to deliver what has been agreed in the sponsorship deal
- Formally invite a representative from the sponsor to your event
- Reach out to the sponsor beforehand to confirm their attendance
- Include sponsors logo on all advertising and posters. Be sure to ask them directly for the correct logo to be included on advertising/ press

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## At the Event

- Be punctual and on time to meet and welcome the sponsor representative
- Show them to the reception area, or to where other invited guests are and introduce them to each other
- Support your committee members to ensure the event runs on time
- Regularly check in with the representative throughout the event
- If the sponsor representative is required to act as a judge, ensure they are fully briefed and understand their role
- If there is a presentation of awards, invite the sponsor representative to speak, if they desire
- Include the sponsor representative in any photos and be sure to include their name, job title/ role and company information in the post

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## **EVENT SPECIFIC TASKS THAT YOU WILL ENCOUNTER ON THE ROLE**

### **Greeting guests/ contacts**

- As PRO, you will be responsible for hosting photographers/journalists, guests, and sponsors at competitions.
- This can involve welcoming them to the event, showing them the site and liaising with them throughout the event.
- Organising 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**

- Support clubs within county through promotion of their events and meetings.
- Support Club PROs in their promotion and offer advice and tips, if needed.
- Be sure to also offer praise to any successful or well designed campaigns you see from clubs/ other counties.

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## HANDOVER

It is good practice to spend some time with the incoming county PRO to fully brief them on the role. Be sure to talk them through this booklet and familiarise them with your local contacts. Pass on all passwords and usernames for the club's social media and show them how to update the sites. Share a selection of press releases for them to use as examples when undertaking the role for them to see what has been sent before.



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## PERSONAL QUALITIES OF A COUNTY PRO

- Good and clear communication
- An eye for creativity and design skills
- Adaptability and the ability to manage multiple projects
- Confidence
- Good organisation and planning skills
- A willingness to learn
- Be reliable and dependable within your committee
- Have good teamwork skills
- Be a critical thinker
- Ability to write effectively and in a concise manner
- Commercial awareness
- Ability to network and liaise with sponsors and press comfortably



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## QUESTIONS FOR SELF-APPRAISAL

- Am I using all PR avenues open to me?
- 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.
- Am I aware of all PR deadlines? Are these being fully utilised?
- Are all members in my county being informed about all upcoming events?
- Is the current PR strategy being implemented?
- How well is the strategy working?
- Is the strategy effective or does it require modification?
- In my submissions & publications, am I achieving the desired county image?
- Are all articles & submissions getting published? If not, why?
- Are all clubs in county being represented in my submissions?
- Have previous or upcoming County events been publicised fully?
- Could any of these been publicised more efficiently or more innovatively?

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- Am I using the media channels open to me constructively?
  - Have articles been noticed and have I taken feedback from them?
  - Are there any upcoming events that a stand could be erected at?
  - Are there any links that could be developed or explored that would increase PR exposure?
    - e.g. Community Involvement fundraiser.
  - Could county PR gain added value or dimension with a partnership with local sponsors for both parties mutual benefit?
  - Am I fulfilling my role as County PRO fully?
  - Am I aware of and understand my responsibilities in accordance with the Associations Policies and guidelines and implement them and be in a position to inform others?
  - Am I fulfilling my duty in terms of the image of the YFCU projected?

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## APPENDIX

### PR layout

At the top of your page put in bold

**Issued on behalf of ..... (insert club name) YFC**

**DATE:**

**HEADLINE:** this is essential and needs to sum up the essence of the release in one line. It should be centred and capture the journalist's attention.

If your press release is more than one page in length then put [more...] at the bottom of each page.

On the final page of the press release put [ENDS] on the line below the main body of the text.

Contact details: Insert your contact details after [ENDS]

e.g.

**MEDIA ENQUIRIES: For further information please contact... of County Antrim Young Farmers' Club on tel/mobile...**

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## Sample of Press Release

### **ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE YOUNG FARMERS' CLUBS OF ULSTER**

**05/06/24**

### **YFCU GEAR UP FOR ANNUAL BEEF AND SHEEP STOCKJUDGING**

YFCU are preparing for the forthcoming County Heats of the annual 2024 Beef and Sheep Stockjudging competition which is ran 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".

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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 Irish farms and YFCU deserve great credit in ensuring this skill is [more]

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."

The successful county heat winners, 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.



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