

Event Planning Checklist

Plan successful events well in advance. This checklist offers tips for organizing agricultural events, and is adaptable to any event.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

- What type of event will be held?
- How many will be expected to attend/participate?
- Who will organize the event?
- What is the budget for the event?
- What is your timeline?
- What amenities are important or critical to your event?
- What will attract attendees to your event?

PLANNING TIMELINE

12-18 months from your event:

- Hire judge(s) and send out contract(s), make necessary contractual arrangements
- Work on information to sell your show to potential sponsors
- Establish and secure the date(s) for your event
- Prepare an expense and income statement for the show

6 -12 months from your event:

- Organize committees, develop a list of responsibilities for each and timelines for what needs to be completed, provide a budget, and be sure you have obtained membership and paperwork requirements if your event is affiliated with a club.

Depending on the type of event, consider the following committees:

- Finance/Budget/Insurance
- Grounds and facilities
- Equipment
- Entries /Class Identification
- Public Relations and Advertising
- Ribbons and awards
- Class List and program
- Information
- Volunteers
- Sponsorship support

5 months from your event:

- Print a prize list, timetable, entry blanks and rules
- Order ribbons, trophies, medals, prizes, competitor numbers, and I.D. badges
- Enlist support staff as needed: Veterinarian, Farrier, Jump Crew, Announcer, Ring Master, Ring Stewards, Gate Attendant, Schooling/Warm-up Manager, Scorers, Parking Staff, Set-Up/Clean-Up Crew, Stable Maintenance Staff, General Maintenance Staff
- Arrange for food concessions and bathroom supplies as needed with your venue coordinator
- Make list equipment needed (P. A. Systems, 2 way radios, jumps, tents, barrels, poles, tractors, golf carts, etc.)
- Plan and secure decorations for the rings and competition grounds
- Mail prize list to attendees
- Mail information packet to the judges (include a confirmation letter, directions to the event, name and number of contact person for event, rules, class list, course design and any other important information)

PLANNING TIMELINE continued

2 months before your event:

- Create an inventory check list
- Get mailing labels and postage for post-event paperwork
- If needed, arrange for accommodations at a hotel for judges and staff
- Print forms/schedules/releases
- Obtain judge's cards and class
- Confirm event officials and staff
- Verify that food concessions, materials and equipment have been secured

2 weeks before your event:

- Assign support staff duties and hold training sessions if necessary
- Coordinate emergency plans with medical staff if needed

1 week before your event:

- Work with venue to prepare show grounds (temporary fencing to direct traffic, signs, lawn maintenance, etc.)
- Recheck inventory materials (clipboards, tables, chairs)
- If applicable, have the course designer work with the jump crew to set-up the course(s)
- Determine the working order of classes
- Designate parking areas, if necessary
- Have the Facility Manager coordinate delivery of bedding, as well as assign stalls and turnout areas to competitors
- Tour the property to check the traffic flow and adjust as necessary

Day of event - prior to start:

- Be sure to arrive early at the show grounds and assign all support team to their locations
- Turn on P.A. system, distribute 2-way radios
- Post courses/tests and/or class order near gates
- Give course/test cards to judges, as well as judging cards
- Announce start time for show
- Deliver ribbons to rings
- Outline announcements and give to announcer/emcee

After the event:

- Mail paperwork to club affiliation if required
- Write and send winners' announcements, press releases to local media
- Provide "Thank-you" notes for all show staff and sponsors
- Complete the income/expense statement for the show; analyze the statement and complete an evaluation report, (don't wait too long to do this!)
- Hold staff meeting to evaluate show with suggestions for improvement
- Take an inventory of left over supplies then pack and label them
- Break down course, show office materials, etc. if this is not done by the Venue
- Take down signs for show
- Dispose of all garbage in appropriate bins

ORGANIZING A COMPETITIVE EVENT

Competitive shows typically start planning a year ahead by addressing key questions crucial to event organization:

- What type of a competition will be held?
- When will the competition be held?
- Where will the competition be held?
- What is the budget for the competition?

WHAT KIND OF SHOW?

Choose a style of show that is familiar to you or someone in your organization. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the rules and regulations of the governing organization. Most clubs and organizations have their rulebooks online or you can call to request one be sent to you.

Whatever style you choose, be aware of:

- Rules of your type of show
- Judges who are familiar and experienced with the type of show
- Popularity of discipline in the area where the event will take place
- Equipment/facilities necessary for your type of show
- For rules on your type of show contact your national/governing for a copy of the rules or a handbook

Once you have decided what type of show you will be having, you will need to create a class list and determine the equipment needed.

WHEN WILL THE COMPETITION BE HELD?

Choose a preferred and alternate date when juggling schedules for judges, staff, and volunteers as well as availability of facilities. Determine which shows are being held on your intended date or around that date in your area. (Check out notices posted in tack stores or the published schedules of events in your local/regional related publications and newspapers. Many events have an online schedule.) You do not want your date to overlap that of a large show that may prevent many people from attending.

Arranging dates far ahead of time ensures that your officials will be available. If you are running a rated event, however, you will need to contact licensed officials well in advance to find one who is available to work on your date.

Most shows are held during the weekend. Those that operate as week-long shows are usually held from Wednesday through Sunday.

WHERE WILL THE COMPETITION BE HELD?

Once you've selected a location, work closely with the facility manager to discuss all your needs, and be clear on your contractual obligations. Be sure to get a specific list of what areas and amenities—water supplies, stabling and bathroom facilities, for example—are included in your contract for your use and where they are located. Confirm:

- What time period is the rental for?
- Will you be allowed access the day before for set-up?
- Is electricity available for the sound system?
- Are outbuildings available for use for secretary's booth, announcer's stand, or a kitchen/food booth?
- Is there equipment such as sound systems, jumps, tables, chairs, etc.?
- What area is designated for parking for guests and for attendees' trailers, vehicles, RVs?

ORGANIZING A COMPETITIVE EVENT, continued

In addition, you should know if there are designated areas for:

- Grandstand for spectators
- Warm-up rings
- Judges tent/table
- Show secretary booth or table
- Electrical outlets for P.A. system, computers, phone, etc.
- Vendor/food booths/Concession stand
- Bathroom facilities
- Stabling Facilities

WHAT IS YOUR BUDGET?

Your budget will determine the size of your show. The budget must include everything needed to run a show so be sure to take time to plan this out carefully. The finance committee should work closely with other committees to determine and monitor costs.

Items to be included in your budgeting are:

- Facility rental fee
- Applications and fees to horse organizations to recognize your show
- Equipment and supplies
- Fees for judges, officials and any support staff, (gate keepers, stewards, course designer, announcer, medical personnel, farrier, veterinarian, etc.)
- Ribbons, awards, numbers for riders and animals
- Advertising and promotion
- Printing and postage
- Insurance coverage
- Travel Expenses

Tri-State Exhibition Center is here to help you! Please contact us with any questions as you begin planning your event.

CALL 423-476-9310

EMAIL tsecfacility@gmail.com

or visit our website at www.TriStateExhibitionCenter.org