

Rural Comedy Night Shows – A Community Toolkit



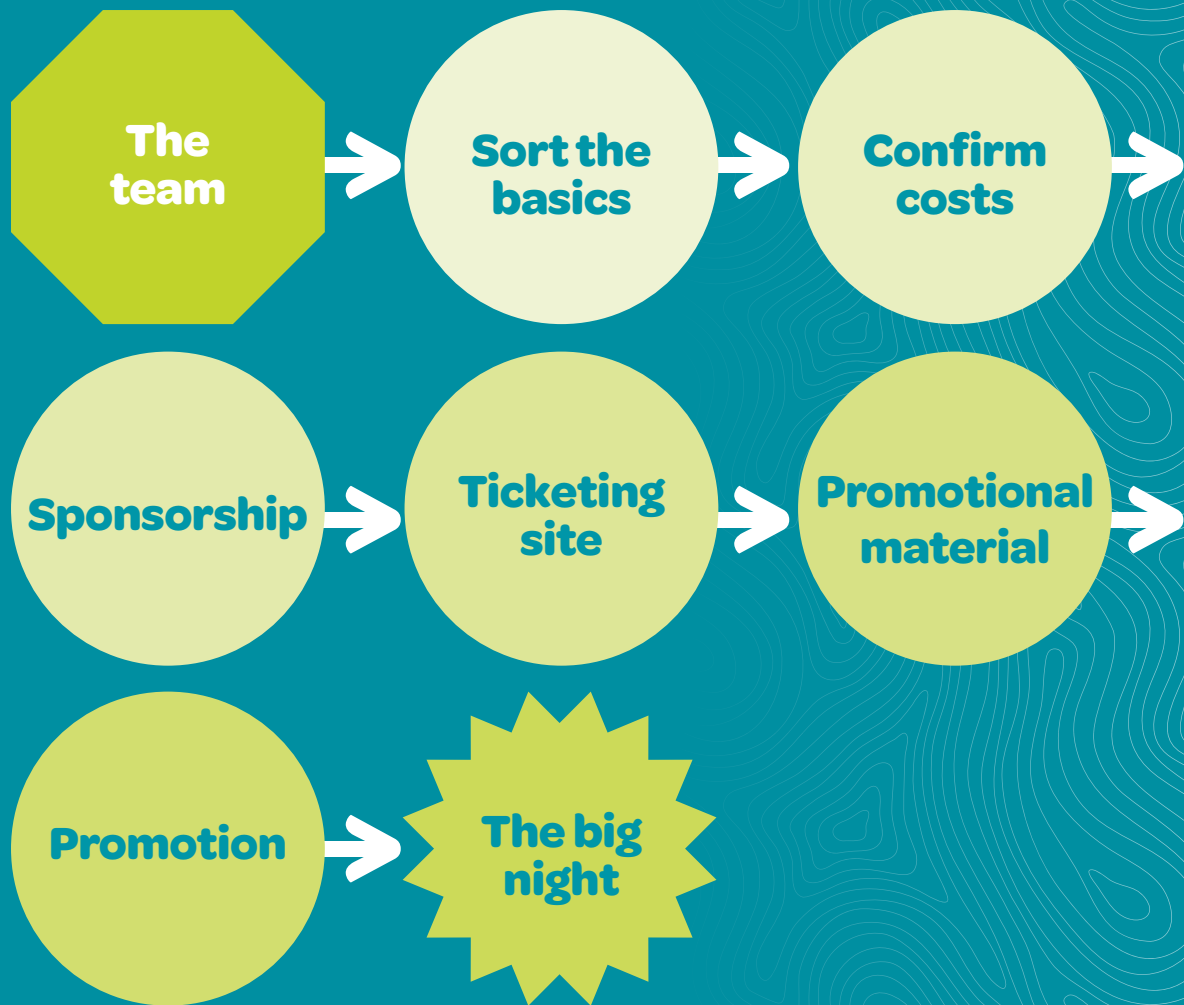


Everyone loves a good night out and a rural comedy night is a great way to bring people together, have a good laugh and a catch up with neighbours, mates and the community. To help you organise your own show the Farmstrong team have created this toolkit to give you all the information you need to run a successful community event.

The toolkit shares what Farmstrong have learnt from running comedy shows in different regions of New Zealand over the last few years. The message we're hearing is that some communities are now wanting to run their own comedy nights. That's why we have pulled this toolkit together.

A rural comedy show is a great way to give people a night off farm or orchard so they can recharge their batteries. Sometimes laughter really is the best medicine. This is particularly true for communities that have experienced major challenges, such as severe weather events. A night out is a tonic for anyone doing it tough and a chance for everyone to celebrate the resilience of their rural community.

Making it Happen



The Team

Pulling together a fun night for your community is incredibly rewarding but it's no small task so having the right people helping make it happen is the key to success.

You will need a committed group of people who can be relied upon to get things done, connect with others, and help with or source the sponsorship needed to run the event.

Once you have the group in place and roles assigned, regular meetings to keep you all moving forward will be essential.

Sort the Basics



Venue

Select a venue that's going to work for the crowd you want and has everything that you need for a great night out. For a comedy night to work well you do want a full house, as the more people there having a good laugh together will make the evening more successful. A venue with a capacity of up to 200 is recommended. Work through the checklist below with the hall keepers to make sure they have everything you need.

Venue check-list

- ☒ Heating/cooling
- ☒ Kitchen
- ☒ Tables/chairs
- ☒ A room for comedians
- ☒ Stage



Food

Everyone likes a decent feed so having food on offer is always a winner. Options could include food trucks, or a BBQ or supper fundraiser provided by the local school or community group. If it's going to be a sit-down meal, then tables will be needed.

Depending on what you organise, clearly promote what food is on offer, how people can pay for it and what time the food will be available. Make sure you have enough cutlery, crockery and anything else you need.

Beverage

Dependent on the venue there are several options.

Licensed venue

If the venue is a licensed premise, then work with them to organise drinks.

Unlicensed venue

If no bar service is available, then a special license will need to be sorted through the local council and someone organised to run the bar. A cost will apply, and approval time can be a few weeks, so make sure you or the team running the bar get this organised early.

BYO

BYO is also an option, just make sure you get approval.



Signage

If you are wanting the event to also promote Farmstrong messages, we have a fantastic visual link-wall that can be used on the stage as a backdrop behind the comedians. We also have a Farmstrong welcome counter you can use and the Farmstrong flags which look great at the entrance of the venue. Some of these items require special instructions to put-up and pack-away so check in with the Farmstrong team about this.

Comedians

People turn up for a good night out, so you need top quality comedians. Farmstrong has worked with the Laugh Club who have world class comedians and they connect well with rural audiences. The cost of four comedians for a night of comedy has been \$6,000 plus flights and accommodation (as at 2023).

Nick Rado and Tarun Mohanbhai are the principals at the Laugh Club and Nick Rado is the preferred MC. He is highly experienced at warming up rural crowds and winning them over for a fun evening.

Once the Laugh Club are locked in, they will email the lineup, headshots and traveler details for flights and accommodation to be booked.

A telephone conversation the week of the event for final briefing and confirmations is valuable.

Audio Visual

The audio-visual set-up is essential to ensure a professional show. The minimum recommended requirement for the audio-visual set-up is:

- Handheld microphone and stand
- Speakers to capacity of venue
- Monitor/foldback to stage
- LED lights on performance area (white)
- Music playback pre-show and during interval

There is only ever one performer on stage at any one time, other than at the end of the show when the lineup comes out for final call. It's important for the AV supplier to be aware of this.

It is recommended a reputable AV supplier is engaged to provide this service for confidence and quality of sound on the night.

Confirm Costs

To ensure you have enough income and sponsorship locked in to cover the night a basic income and expenditure sheet needs to be done. An example is below (costs will vary from region to region).

Date	Description	Income (Money In)	Expenditure (Money out)	Balance
Jan	Ticket Sales	(200x \$20) = \$4000		\$4000
Feb	Sponsorship	\$6000		\$10,000
Feb	Hall Hire		\$400	\$9,600
April	Cost of Comedians		\$6000	\$3,600
April	Accommodation comedians		\$800	\$2,800
April	Misc comedians		\$200	\$2,600
April	Flights comedians		\$800	\$1,800
April	AV		\$1500	\$300
April	Promotion		\$250	\$50

Sponsorship

A successful comedy show will require sponsorship. The amount required will vary depending on venue hire, audio visual set-up and the comedians. All these aspects are covered in detail below. Get quotes up-front so you have a clear idea of the costs involved so you can then secure the required sponsorship.

A clear agreement on how you can acknowledge each individual sponsorship is important.

Depending on the number of sponsors this could include their logo on promotional material, presence at the event and shout-outs on the night.

Ticketing Site

For the Farmstrong run comedy shows we set the price, so they were accessible to everyone in the community. We kept the cost per ticket to a maximum of \$20 which meant that the rest of the event was covered by the generous sponsorship from local rural organisations, as well as contributions we made from Farmstrong.

To keep track of sales we have used the ticketing site Trybooking. The functionality of TryBooking allows events to be created with branding. Tickets can be purchased securely online, with the ability to communicate directly with ticket buyers, collect data and run reports during and after the on-sale period.

If you use Trybooking you will need to create a new event for your account to activate a link to book tickets. This link can then be included on all promotional material www.trybooking.com.



Promotional Material

Poster & Banner Design

All events need great promotional material. Ensure Laugh Club' events are marketed as R18 as there may be some explicit language. If you want assistance with designing promotional material the Farmstrong team can help. Below are examples of what we have used in the past.

Social Media Banners



Posters



Ticket Sales

Once you have everything locked into place and the promotional material organised, you can go live with your ticketing sales. People will be able to purchase tickets by following the ticketing link that is being promoted on the promotional material and sites.

Promotion

Good promotion is essential to ensure a well-attended event. Local connections are key and being able to utilise all your networks to promote, support and build momentum will really help ensure those tickets sell like hot cakes.

Important other promotional channels include your:

- Local radio station
- Local newspaper and newsletter advertising
- Local community Facebook pages
- Rural organisations in the area

Put together a promotional plan and ensure owners of the various promotional actions are agreed. It is recommended that promotion kicks off at least six weeks prior to the event.



On the Night

AV Setup

The AV crew will probably be the first ones who need access to the venue to start getting all their gear setup and ready to go for when the doors open.

Venue Setup

Give yourself plenty of time to set up the venue. Dependent on the food being offered on the night theatre or cabaret style set-up works well.

A Room for the Comedians

It's important to have a room for the comedians to hang out in when they are not on stage performing. This provides a private space for them to relax in and prepare for the show.

Farmstrong Merchandise

Farmstrong have lots of great collateral and merchandise that can be made available for your event including caps, magnets, beanies and the Farmstrong 'Live Well, Farm Well' book. These can be placed on seats or the tables for people to pick up and take home.



Format of the Night

We have found that the tried and tested format of the night is a total of four comedians, where one is also MC. The MC warms up the audience ahead of introducing the first act then returns to the stage to introduce the second act and then announces a half hour break for food and drink. The MC is the third act after the interval before introducing the headline act to finish the night off.

The first half is 60 minutes, the interval is 30 minutes, and the last half is 60 minutes. Making the night of comedy 2 ½ hours.

House Lights

The usual method of signaling the show is about to start is to use the house lights. Familiarise yourself with the location of the light switches ahead of audience arrival. In the case of split light switches for front, centre and back or sides of the venue simply switch off these sets five minutes before showtime. After a minute or so, switch another set off and continue to do this until you have darkness. This is an effective way to settle the audience. Do the same as interval is ending.

For lights up, plan to be on the house lights as the MC announces interval and switch these all on at the same time. Similarly, be ready at the end of the show to switch lights on enabling the correct light for comedians to take a selfie on stage with the audience in the background.

Acknowledgments

It is recommended any show acknowledgements are printed for the MC to read throughout the show.

Finance

All payments are securely held by TryBooking, and once everything is wrapped up, the money can be transferred to help off-set the cost of the show.

Celebrate Your Efforts!

Make sure you take plenty of photos on the night which you can share on social media and invite along local media to cover the event. It's a great way to spread the message about the importance of sticking together and staying Farmstrong during challenging times.





Want to know more?

For more information



Email

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Text or call

027 642 9759.

**We look forward to working with you to help
the rural community become Farmstrong.**