

The Farm Tech Challenge

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Schools' Media Pack

We have developed this handy "Schools' Media Pack" to help you raise awareness of your school and students' involvement in **The Farm Tech Challenge** and get the best media coverage.

We've included some top tips on how to promote your participation in the media and example templates that you can adapt to help you spread the word. It would be great to involve the students in these activities as much as possible.

Communication can be at different stages of the competition; it is not just for the winners or finalists. These tips could also be useful for other school events and activities too.

Top Tips



1. What's your story?

- It's important to define your story. You need to be clear what your story is about and to make sure it's 'newsy' for the media.
- You could take a look in your local newspaper / magazines to give you some ideas for what would work and what would attract attention.

2. Write your release

- Remember to include the key details in the first paragraph, the who, what, when, where and why. Press people are busy so the more information they can see upfront, the more likely they are to read on.
- Include a quote from a key person – it's a great way to get your most important message across. Remember to always get approval from the person you're quoting!
- Styling tips: keep information concise and interesting; be brief – one page is preferable; use short sentences and everyday language; include a date at the top and your contact details at the bottom.

3. Create a media list

- Your school may already have a contact with the local press. If not, it's easy, a Google search will provide the email address of the newsdesk so you can send them a press release about your activities. Other outlets could include websites, community magazines or newsletters.

4. Prepare your media materials

- There'll be an opportunity for you to develop a number of news releases including: pre-event, post-event as well as a photo call to invite photographers from newspapers to attend and take a photograph.
- Below is a template press release for you to use.

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5. **Spread the news**

- Send your release. If you email your release, include the headline in the subject line and text in the main body.
- Don't forget your school's communication channels to spread the news. This could include communications that go to parents, governors, teachers and the local community.

6. **Talk to the media**

- Call the news desk to check they've received your release and whether they need more information. The best time is usually mid-morning.
- Always assume the reporters are in a hurry – if they are busy or on a deadline, rearrange a time to call back. Remember have all key facts and information about your event to hand.
- You could offer photographs or interviews if they're interested in your story or you could invite them along to your school to see it first-hand.

7. **Take a picture**

- The press might want to come to the school to take some pictures, so be prepared and ensure that your school's Safeguarding Policy is taken into consideration.
- It's always worth having a student briefed as spokesperson and ready to answer any questions.
- Think about the photo you want to see in the paper and plan where it will be taken – it might be worth talking to the photographer or journalist before they come so you can have a space set up.

8. **Media monitoring**

- The media will not always tell you their plans or publishing dates, so ask friends and colleagues to look out for mentions of your school in the media, or set up a Google Alert for the name of your school.

9. **The media need you!**

- Remember the media need you as much as you would like them! They will tell you what they want and will be happy to have a local story that is interesting.

10. **Don't forget Social Media**

Social media channels are a great way to get your story heard...especially Twitter!

- Follow your local newspapers on twitter and tweet them!
- Write your tweet – attach any pictures or film – and include the @handle of the publication/station... They might contact you directly or they might just retweet your message to their followers.
- Don't forget to include #FarmTechUK so we can see your tweets too.



The Farm Tech Challenge – Pre-Challenge Press Release

[add date]

Local school students to develop new technology for The Farm Tech Challenge

Students from [name of school] in [town] are taking on the Farm Tech Challenge!

The Farm Tech Challenge is inviting students, aged 11-14 years, from across the UK to develop an invention using digital technology that could help farmers throughout the world.

The Challenge follows the themes of Syngenta's Good Growth Plan and its commitment to make a measurable contribution to agricultural productivity, the environment and farm safety.

With a strong focus on innovation, the Challenge is being used to highlight the essential role of technology in modern farming.

Teacher [enter name]

"insert quote....."

Jim Morton, Outreach Manager, Syngenta, explains:

"The future of agriculture is very exciting and there is enormous potential for the application of technology to help us meet the challenge of sustainably feeding a growing population.

We are delighted to give students an opportunity to take part in this Challenge where they will gain the experience of developing real-life innovations, together with the skills and knowledge that are relevant to a range of STEM-related careers."

Judging for the Challenge takes place in April 2017, finalists will have the opportunity to visit a research facility – to see science & computing in action and present their idea to a panel of experts. £1000 in computing vouchers will be awarded to the winning school.

-ENDS-

For further information please contact: [Add your contact details]

Name & Position:

Email:

Telephone:

Notes to Editor:

About [name of school – include website address]

About Syngenta -

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