



Getting to Know Your Audience

Conference attendee workshop evaluations strike some common themes in the praise and frustrations expressed about the workshops they attend. Below are some suggestions based on this feedback.

Conference attendees really appreciate...

- **Handouts:** We do not require them, but comments often suggest that people like materials they can take home and reference. If you are giving an in-person workshop, OEFFA will make copies for you up to ten pages (five sheets of paper, printed front and back). If you are giving a virtual workshop OEFFA will upload your handouts to the conference app.
- **Pictures:** Visuals are a very effective way of communicating information at conference. If you are giving a presentation on a practice you use on your farm, document it with lots of pictures and use the pictures in your slide show. Please make sure that any pictures you use are large enough, clear enough, and with enough contrast for attendees to see its subject.
- **Practical information they can use on their farm, homestead, or garden:** Many people come to OEFFA looking for tools and techniques they can apply in the coming season. Think about specific actions that you can teach people to implement.
- **Presenters that use their time well:** Think about how much time you have and make sure you have the appropriate amount of information to fill it without running long. Attendees are often frustrated when presenters leave out information because they run out of time or end early because they failed to plan appropriately for their allotted time. Timing yourself doing a practice run is a useful tool. Make sure you build in about 15 minutes for questions, and don't be afraid to cut off questions and move on to ensure you cover everything before the session ends.

Conference attendees are often disappointed by...

- **Workshops that don't match the description:** Before you write your description, take some time and really think about what information you plan on presenting and who your specific audience is, then accurately represent that in your description. If you are still unsure of some details just do the best you can and, if your workshop is selected, you can update and edit in November and December.
- **Presenters that only promote their own product or service:** We understand that for many speakers raising the profile of their business is an important benefit of presenting at OEFFA's conference. This is totally fine. But it is essential that the goal of your presentation is education, not sales. When attendees feel like a workshop is more infomercial than education, they may leave with a poor impression of your product or services and often complain on the evaluation form.
- **Presentations that ramble or appear disorganized:** When you plan your presentation, consider how each subject builds on the previous one and leads into the next. Put together an outline and have someone else review it. Practice the outline so you are comfortable with it and edit the outline if you find a transition awkward in practice. You may even consider practicing in front of a supportive audience. Sharing the outline on a PowerPoint slide or a handout at the beginning of your presentation lets attendees know what to expect and how to follow along with you.

Workshops are the backbone of the OEFFA conference. Thank you for taking the time to develop a quality presentation. If you have questions about your application or presentation, please contact Milo Petruziello at (614) 421-2022 or milo@oeffa.org.