



# PODCAST GUIDE

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**Developed by:**

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**For:**

Agri Tech Talk International



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<b>1 – Definition of a Podcast</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2 – Questions to ask yourself</b>	<b>4</b>
Defining the audience	4
Defining goals and objectives	4
Help choose platform to host your podcast	4
Help choose frequency, length, etc.	5
<b>3 – How to make decisions about content</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4 – Writing for the ear</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5 – Information and Storytelling Interviews</b>	<b>8</b>
Information Interview	8
Storytelling Interview	9
Gender equality	10
<b>6 – Tools</b>	<b>11</b>
Launch Checklist	11
Episode Checklist	11
Evaluation Questions	11
<b>7- Other important things to consider</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>8 – Other FRI Resources</b>	<b>13</b>



# 1 – Definition of a Podcast

“In the broadest terms, a podcast is an audio file that can be downloaded or streamed from the internet to a computer or mobile device for listening on demand. You can download or stream them when desired, or you can receive them automatically on your phone or other device through a subscription...

Many people think that podcasting is the next generation of audio programming. Podcasts don't have the restrictions that programs broadcast from a radio station have—there is no time limit, there is room for opinion, advocacy, and there is no required or standard production style.

A podcast can be an ongoing series of audio programs published on a regular basis. It can also be a limited series of programs available all at once.

Some podcasts feature a single voice talking about a particular subject. Some have two hosts chatting with each other, telling a story or giving information. Some are documentaries, some are magazine-style. There are panel podcasts, interview podcasts, fiction podcasts, and podcasts that feature music. Some podcasts are designed for a general audience, but the majority are made for listeners with specific interests as varied as politics, movies, model trains, religion, or economics. There are podcasts for people who love football or cooking. There are podcasts that talk about new books, fashion, gardening, or how to create an NGO. There are even podcasts about podcasts. Podcasts come from all around the world on almost any subject imaginable. And yes, there are a few podcasts for farmers. Not many, but they exist.”<sup>1</sup>

Many radio programs are made available as podcasts so listeners can hear them at their convenience. Some people think that radio programs and podcasts are interchangeable and in many ways they are but only if the radio programs contain or DON'T contain certain elements. For example if a radio program makes references to other programs or hosts or any other types of “inside information” or if they are hosted in a way that is meant for too large a demographic then the podcast audience may feel left out. In these cases we are dealing with a radio program uploaded online. Podcasts place more emphasis on a specific presence and style. They are unique and authentic, specific and consistent. This also means a certain level of quality is expected. Podcasts are made for active listening.

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from FRI's Broadcaster How To entitled Podcasts written by Dick Miller



## 2 – Questions to ask yourself

### Defining the audience

- Who do we need to hear from to determine the content?
- Who do we need to hear from during the podcasts?
- What does the audience have in common?
- What differences are there between different members of the audience?
- What might influence the audience's decision making? (i.e. culture, religion, gender, education, experience, position or status within a community, access to tools and inputs, ability to purchase what is needed, etc.)
- Are there any circumstances that the audience might face that would prevent them from accessing this podcast and how can we mitigate them?

### Defining goals and objectives

- What do you hope will change as a result of the podcast?
- What difference do you hope the podcast will make?
- What is a doable realistic change?
- How do you want your audience to feel after hearing your podcast?

### Help choose platform to host your podcast

- What devices does my audience use to access this type of media?
- What type of bandwidth, internet connection, speed, etc. will this type of podcast need?
- Is the podcast produced using the most adaptable type of audio file?
- Is the platform that I'm choosing popular among my target audience? Can I distribute the content to the most popular [podcatcher apps](#)?
- Will it provide me with good and trusted analytics to track the listenership stats?
- Does it have features that could help me monetize my content better?
- Does it have built-in recording or editing software that can help me manage my audio content on the go?
- Does it have good features that could help me enable automatic social media sharing to boost interactivity?



## Help choose frequency, length, etc.

- How long should your podcast be?
- How much time does your audience have to listen to your podcast?
- Are the themes better explored in short or long?
- What will be the balance between very technical information and storytelling?
- Will you roll out the content all at once or follow a schedule?
- If on a schedule, will you be able to roll them out consistently?

## 3 – How to make decisions about content

When making decisions about content it is important to keep in mind how people make decisions and changes in their lives as well as the audience you are speaking to. This is often more complex than simply sharing information. Motivation and ability related to the proposed practice must be discussed for the audience to make an informed decision about what is best for themselves, their family and their community.

If motivation and ability are low no amount of information or triggers would be effective and no change will occur. If motivation is high but ability is low the programming must discuss ways to make the change easier to increase ability. If motivation is low but the proposed practice is fairly easy the programming should address ways in which motivation can be increased.

When determining motivation it is important to consider what brings the intended audience pain and pleasure, what brings them fear or hope, how they feel acceptance and rejection. When determining if something is difficult to do or easy to do it is important to consider cost implications, how much time something takes, the effort one must put into implementing the promising practice, if there are any other competing priorities, how many new things do they need to learn, etc.

Motivation and ability will be different depending on your audience. These discussions should always take into consideration their needs and wants. When making decisions about content, keep the audience engaged. They should be determining the level of complexity you need to include.

Analysing motivation and ability along with knowledge of the audience will help determine the discussions that must be included in your podcast as well as the level of complexity in your language and technical detail. When in doubt choose a middle ground.





- People add meaning to information based on the context in which they live.
- People's livelihood decisions compete with other priorities.
- People will be at different stages relating to a specific change.
- People will have different information needs at different stages.
- People often make decisions based on emotional or social factors, not logic.
- People cannot always control the issues that determine behaviour.
- Community and environmental factors may facilitate or impede change, even if there is motivation.

## 4 – Writing for the ear

Writing for the ear is different because listeners can tell when we are reading. There is a radio saying "The listener hears the eyes move." The more we can make our writing conversational and the better we actually know the material we have written (or has been written for us), the more likely it is to sound natural to our audiences.

Remember: We are storytellers. Even a radio program full of facts works better for listeners if we reveal those facts in a story. As you prepare, always read your copy out loud to yourself because ...



## WHAT WORKS IN PRINT DOESN'T ALWAYS WORK WHEN YOU HEAR IT.

If it does not sound conversational and natural, rewrite until it does. If you are writing for someone else, try to hear their voice in your head and imagine the way they might say what you want to write. We don't usually speak in structured sentences ... After writing your script, make sure that it can be easily said by using the "MOUTH EDIT". That means read your script to yourself out loud. If you can't read it out loud easily, then change it so you can.

It's a listening medium ...

- Write as you speak, in simple sentences
- It doesn't have to be grammatical
- Shorten words as we do in speech (ex: does not becomes doesn't)
- Test your script as you write
- If necessary, re-write to suit your own reading style
- Mark it up as you want to say it
- Practice it aloud
- Record and learn
- Use simple tenses where possible
- It's a conversation with a listener - not with your colleagues
- Write brief sentences using the "active" voice
- Minimize your use of adjectives, adverbs, pronouns and lists
- Don't overload the audience with technical terms.
- If there are technical terms take some time to break them down into simple terms
- If you have to use measurements give the number but also give a visual representation (ex: 1 teaspoon = 1 plastic coca cola bottle cap) Do this for all types of quantities and measurements
- Ensure that you are using the farming words used by your audience. For example, sometimes women use different words than men for the same thing.

We must write pictures.

The listener has to be with us in imagination. Unlike television, audio has no pictures, except those painted by the words the listener hears. Listeners will be more involved in the story if they can imagine the scene. Just like in a good novel, your key characters must also be described, painting rich, but accurate pictures with your words will keep your listeners interested in your story.





Paint word pictures: When you go to a village to talk about a maize disease, first of all, you should be the eyes of the listener. Describe the “big picture” as you enter the village – kids playing, elders sitting outside, and anything that distinguishes this particular village – a building, a river, a shop, a temple. Then “zoom in” and paint a word picture of the specific field and the farmer and the infected maize. This brings your listeners along beside you, and stimulates their interest. When doing this, think about the 5 senses and try to build a description that includes what you can see, hear, touch, smell and taste whenever they are appropriate. <sup>2</sup>

How you ask questions, describe events, share detailed information should reflect your audience. In what way do you and your guests need to speak to reach listeners? Simple language is always best. Have a conversation with the person you are interviewing and discuss what you need from them so that the interview goes smoothly.

## 5 – Information and Storytelling Interviews

### Information Interview

Information interviews should always address a set of basic issues:

- Farmers’ current knowledge and knowledge gaps
- Farmers’ current attitudes and beliefs, their origins and their impact
- Farmers’ current practices, their origins and their impact
- Opportunities and challenges in the wider context (cost, labour, gender, access to information, access to equipment and material, time, etc.)
- Actions farmers can take and how to take them
- Where farmers can turn for help

For a well balanced information interview, we need to ask a variety of questions. We want them to give us the facts and we also want them to explain and help us to understand their thinking.

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<sup>2</sup> Section 4 adapted from a learning module on Writing for radio and Writing for the ear written by David Mowbray for Farm Radio International.





Analysis, Comprehension	Knowledge, Recall
What	Who
Why	When
How	Where
Give examples	List
Compare	Define
Explain	Name
Distinguish between	How long

## Storytelling Interview

The most effective storytelling interviews feature “heroes” that your listeners will relate to and want to be like. These role models need to reflect key factors:

- Similarity (we have similar traits)
- Aspiration (we want to achieve like her)
- Identification (we understand each other)
- Competence (we can see that she is capable and gets better with time)
- Credibility (we believe her)
- Empathy (we become attached to her)

You also want to make sure that you follow a logical flow of information by including these 4 ingredients

- 1) The main character - Hero or protagonist - Most stories feature one main person. There may be other characters in a story, but they appear in supporting roles.
- 2) The problem - The main character faces a problem, a challenge or barrier or set-back, in his or her life or work, and the problem is identified and explained.
- 3) Agency - The main character takes action to overcome the problem, and the action is described in appropriate detail.
- 4) The resolution - Conclusion or final outcome - The solution to the problem is revealed, along with its impact on the life of the main character





## Gender equality

Gender equality should always be taken into consideration in any type of interview. Here are some areas where gender issues appear and should be discussed:

- Division of labour
- Decision making
- Access and control of resources
- Stereotypes
- etc.

Remember that in order to truly bring out the issues around these themes you have to do more than ask if there are any differences. You also have to ask **WHY** they exist and **HOW** they affect both women and men and **WHAT** can be done to move beyond the harmful behaviours that create inequalities to more positive ones.

## 6 – Tools

### Launch Checklist

- Your podcast has a name
- Each podcast episode has a name
- You have a short written description of your podcast to include on any online platforms
- You have decided which platforms to post on
- You have created a logo or other artwork for your podcast
- You have created an email associated to the podcast for listener feedback
- You have a communications plan to ensure people know about your podcast
- You have promoted the podcast before the launch

### Episode Checklist

- You have clear notes about each episode of the podcast that includes
  - The objective of the episode (what do you want people to DO after hearing the episode?)
  - the main topic
  - the guests names and contact information
  - Any editing or other technical info that might be relevant.
- All files are backed up and have clear titles
- Email or newsletter is ready to send

### Evaluation Questions

- You have listened and evaluated the podcast episode and it meets your quality standards
- How was the episode received by your audience?
- What did you struggle with when producing the podcast episode?
- What steps can you take to reduce or eliminate these struggles?



## 7- Other important things to consider

### Feature experts who respect farmers

Farmers like to hear from experts who can help them improve their farming. But some experts are more interested in selling grand schemes and products than in helping small-scale farmers work in sustainable ways. Of course there is a place for a discussion of grand schemes, but your regular agricultural experts should be people who deserve the respect of the farmers. And remember: many small-scale farmers are agricultural experts too! Use them

### Feature farmers solving their problems

Farmers face many problems and they usually must solve them with little outside help. Your program can give farmers courage to solve their problems. Give examples. Interview farmers who have tackled problems and have beaten them. (That is storytelling!) Assemble a panel of farmers and facilitate their discussion as they clarify a problem, discuss possible solutions and decide on a course of action.

### Avoid the “lead farmer” trap

Aid agencies love “lead farmers” – farmers who are always ready and willing to take up new practices. And radio stations interview those “lead farmers,” assuming that their experience will stimulate other farmers to act. It doesn’t always work that way. Ordinary farmers often see “lead farmers” as different from themselves – with better land, more labour, more tools, more connections, etc. And because “lead farmers” are considered different, their messages do not always inspire ordinary farmers. Your challenge is to find farmers whose conditions are similar to those of most of your listeners, and who have overcome the challenges that most farmers face, and who have taken up better practices. You want the listener to think: “If she can do it, I can do it!”



## 8 – Other FRI Resources

- Podcasts - <https://training.farmradio.fm/podcasts/>
- Basic recorder settings - <https://training.farmradio.fm/basic-recorder-settings/>
- Using audio editing software - <https://training.farmradio.fm/using-audio-editing-software-recommended-tutorials/>
- Interviewing experts: Best practices for broadcasters and experts - <https://training.farmradio.fm/how-to-interview-experts-best-practices-for-broadcasters-and-experts/>
- Audio editing - <https://training.farmradio.fm/audio-editing/>
- How to conduct an effective interview - <https://training.farmradio.fm/how-to-conduct-an-effective-interview/>
- How to serve women farmers well - <https://training.farmradio.fm/how-to-serve-your-women-farmers-well/>
- How to learn about your audience and what audience members need from your program - <https://training.farmradio.fm/how-to-learn-about-your-audience-and-what-audience-members-need-from-your-program/>

