**Do’s:**

* **Be flexible for the date/time of your tour.** Members of Congress maintain busy schedules. Demonstrating respect to the Congressional scheduler and their workload goes a long way.
* **Do your homework.** Read the Member’s bio, any relevant committees, and scour their official social media page to identify key messages, values, and priorities. Ask your Congressional staff if there is anything in particular that the member would like to better understand. Adapt your presentation points accordingly.
* **Connect with IFPA** early to identify relevant policy issues of the day that would impact your company and any pertinent information about that member/staffer.
* **Write a briefing memo.** A week out from your event, provide a one page memo to Congressional staff with key information that will get the member up to speed on your company. Include:
  + Background on your company
  + Key individuals on tour, a brief bio, and their photo (include links to LinkedIn pages. It saves staffers the step of having to find you and connect.)
  + Any key messages (asks) that you will cover. This helps the Member prepare for a conversation, rather than just a presentation.
* **Sell it to your staff.** Many of your team members may be unfamiliar with the political process or what this visit means. Use this opportunity to build up your team. Let them know what an honor it is that they’ve been selected for a tour, and explain that this is something to be proud of. This will instill confidence in your team and pave the way for a positive interaction.
* **Gather %, $ and #s** For example, include the total number of employees in the field/processing as well as the # employees in offices, amount of payroll, taxes, the products your company produces, where the Congressmen can personally purchase them, amount of and local expenditures for materials and services beyond agriculture you support by being in business (example bag manufactures, marketing firms, banks or equipment companies). These are all great facts to weave into the tour discussion.

**Don’ts**

* **Try to do everything on your first visit.** Your objective is to establish yourself as a trustworthy and reputable resource to the office both now and in the future.
* **Invite more than one Representative/Senator**
* **Invite the press the first time out**
* **Stray away from your key topics.** Master the art of pivoting back to your key points. Now is not the time to weigh in on your political opinion or try and persuade the member on a non-relevant topic (ex. Making your elementary school a national historic site.)
* **Make up the answer** You’ll likely be asked something that you don’t know the answer too. That’s ok! Let the staff member know that you’ll look into it and get back with them. Do not come up with an answer on the fly, especially if it is not factual.
* **Ignore Employees** Be sure to introduce employees, they are the legislator’s constituents too and the backbone to your company