

APPENDIX I

NEW FARMER SURVEY

Name: _____ Age: _____

Training program, apprenticeship, or other new farmer education: _____

Duration of training in years or months: _____

Farm address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Email: _____

1. How many years total have you been farming? _____

2. How long at your current location and how many acres do you farm? _____

3. Have you stayed in the same state where you were trained? If not, why not? _____

4. What basic crops and/or animals do you grow or raise? _____

5. Is your farm in a rural, suburban or urban setting? _____

6. How and where do you market your products? _____

7. Does the farm cover its own costs? _____

a. Do you pay yourself a salary? _____

b. Do other sources of income supplement your earnings, and if so, what percentage is the supplemental income? _____

8. How many paid employees do you have? _____

a. Are they seasonal, part-time or full-time? _____

b. Do you rely on interns or volunteer labor? _____

9. How did you get access to land? Do you own or lease it? _____

a. Would a program to help you find affordable land have been helpful? _____

b. If you lease the land, can you give a general description of the arrangement you have with the land owner? _____

10. What were the most valuable skills you acquired in your training program(s)? Please be as specific as possible, e.g. production practices, marketing, etc. _____

11. What were the program's shortcomings? _____

12. What additional skills or experiences would you have wanted to gain from the program? _____

13. How specifically would you change the program to improve it? _____

14. Additional Comments: _____

15. Rate the following areas of training by the level of importance you attach to them (1=not important, 2=somewhat important, 3=critical) and comment on the quality of your own program's preparation, if it included that component.

How important are these components for a farmer training program?	1-not important	2-somewhat important	3-critical	Comments-What is the quality of your own training program?
Production Practices:				
Nutrient and soil fertility management				
Weed and pest management				
How to source supplies and equipment				
Variety/breed selection				
Crop scheduling				
Tractor, equipment, and infrastructure management				
Animal/livestock husbandry				
Harvest and post-harvest handling				
Food safety				
Land Acquisition & Tenure:				
Successful models and case studies for acquiring a new farm				
Land linking between landowners and land seekers				
Assistance and legal arrangements for land purchases, leases, and rentals				
Marketing:				
Assessing and selecting market options				
Branding				
Identifying market niches				
Pricing				
Use of technology in marketing				
Writing a marketing plan				
Finding a farmer's market				

How important are these components for a farmer training program?	1-not important	2-somewhat important	3-critical	Comments-What is the quality of your own training program?
Self Employment and Labor: Requirements and regulations associated with farm employment				
Farm safety training				
Employee management				
Employee compensation strategies				
Finding and hiring the right employees				
Insurance issues and regulations				
Models for farms to pool labor and other resources				
Business Planning and Financial Management: Financial record keeping				
Writing a business plan				
Financing options				
Small grant opportunities				
Enterprise budgets				
Business structure options				
Development and use of software tools				
Managing debt, cooperative equipment sharing				
Access to affordable insurance				
Tax planning and preparation				
Risk management				

16. Rate the following areas of services by the level of importance you attach to them (1=not important, 2=somewhat important, 3=critical) and comment on whether or not you would like to participate or would benefit from these services.

How important are these components for a farmer training program?	1-not important	2-somewhat important	3-critical	Comments-would you participate?
Health insurance for trainees and graduates				
A fulltime versus a part time program				
Training at multiple farms versus just one location				
Placement on an incubator farm with housing and farm equipment				
Involvement in a pooled labor group to support each other with new farming projects like building a hoop house				
A stipend while training				
Mediation services for purchase of land and farms				
Financial start-up support or loan assistance for graduates				
Marketing				
Providing graduates with land to rent at low cost				
Pooled purchases of supplies or equipment for discounted rates				
Financial support with continuing education via workshops, farm visits and certifications				

17. What do you aspire to accomplish as a farmer or professional in the next ten years? _____

18. What advice would you give to new farmers coming into the field? _____

19. What in your experience is the single most important factor for predicting a successful transition from trainee to self-sufficient farming? _____

20. Other Comments: _____

APPENDIX II

DETAILED RESPONSES TO KEY SURVEY QUESTIONS

What were the most valuable skills you acquired in your training program(s)?

Networking with the host farmers and the mentee cohort.

To get paid for your work.

Growing Methods-Row Cover, Succession Planning, Greenhouse work.

Marketing-Getting product to market, learning what customers want, pricing, and set-up.

Financial-We were given all the financial information for the farm we worked at. That was very helpful in determining financial feasibility.

Production practices: how to plant/maintain new crops or manage crops differently and better.

Growing for Markets: learned about and importance of high value crops, timing for market to get best sales.

The most helpful aspect of the program for me was the experience of a full season on another farm with the opportunity to learn tricks of the trade throughout, as well as the opportunity to show up each week with tons of questions ranging from marketing to pricing to production to disease/pest management to business development.

Gaining a new network of farm folks and being able to continue to be involved (at events and farm visits) with the program is a huge asset.

Farming techniques, from primary and secondary tillage to compost management, irrigation practices (drip).

Day to day production tasks/jobs specific to my enterprise, record keeping, including templates, financing and financial management including templates, problem solving techniques and thinking critically about how to improve my management, production, and marketing.

Vineyard management, wine making, marketing, learning about other products to farm, how to use tents and high tunnels.

Learning to set-up, harvest for, and operate a farm stand at a farmer's market.

Learning a different farm's techniques and crop varieties.

Tractor operation and maintenance

Irrigation system set-up

Attitudes towards crop problems (figure out plan to prevent it in the future and do everything needed to facilitate the fix immediately).

Greenhouse management

Transplant treatment

Cover cropping

CSA marketing

Farmers Marketing

General positive attitude toward the this type of work.

Learning how to grow garlic, and other vegetables, identifying ways to increase productivity.

Understanding profitability potential, after a year, I understand the importance of consecutive planting.

Harvest procedures and different crops to plant, seed dinner in which we discussed varieties of seed to purchase or not to purchase. The most valuable experience, though, was having the opportunity to harvest and sell the produce at the market on our own. Experiencing the work of harvesting so much produce and taking it to the market, setting it up, selling it, was a very beneficial experience.

Production skills – seeding, greenhouse management, transplanting, weed management, harvest and post-harvest practices.

Marketing – we essentially took the marketing model of Waterpenny Farm where we interned and scaled it to our farm: a mixture of CSA and farmers markets – focusing on direct markets.

For the vegetables, pretty much everything I know I learned from Kimberton CSA.

Marketing of vegetables.

Greenhouse work

Succession Planting

Organic Growing Methods (i.e., row cover)

Seeing a startup CSA...through seeking members, the finances, the production skills.

Really, everything I learned is valuable. Seed starting, succession planting, efficient harvesting, selling, crop rotation, pest identification and control.

What were the program's shortcomings?

Difficult to attend classes, information provided not necessarily directly applicable, only on the farm one day a week, and I had a full time job so I had to leave the program early.

None for me, but I wanted to do this farming thing, and well, I would be even if I didn't do the program.

Pay

The classroom instruction in the winter was a great idea with a few good classes, but overall the classes could have been much better and more relevant.

Also, I would have liked to work more often alongside the other trainees (rather have different work days during the week).

It is hard to say; it wasn't a program, it was a job that I used to learn "on my own." Drew was there at all times to be able to answer any question I had so I would say it had no shortcomings.

One of the biggest shortcomings is not being able to apply the skills directly. It was not until I started the farm on my own did I realize what I actually needed to know. One benefit would be to participate in a training program while starting my own farm. I was able to participate in the Holistic Management training last year, during the winter after my first market year. I was somewhat disappointed in the training though, because the content was not geared towards what the trainees needed. It was more focused on teaching us about holistic management. Those are very useful skills but I think it would have helped the serious beginning farmers in the class to have the sessions more geared towards what we needed.

No shortcomings

The first year of the program was near flawless, aside from an overload of bureaucracy. The second year suffered from an unplanned season on a blueberry farm. The season ended very early and I was left having to make up for my lost time at a second farm which was not very convenient to me. It has been frustrating feeling like the emphasis of the program has become more about time counting and less about learning, more about the future of the program than the present state of the apprentices experience.

Business management

There were 6-8 classroom setting where a speaker discussed various topics, like peat management, cultivation, etc., very general info.

None

Focused only on production; There was no marketing aspect or financial aspect. Both of which would have been helpful.

I didn't get to learn/do tractor work.

It was not a formal program, so there were no formal expectations from my perspectives. So is difficult to answer. I wanted to learn, so I did.

Sometimes I was doing a lot of the same tasks week to week because I was always there on Mondays, so I never helped with harvesting. I think it would have been better to work different days of the week to get a better idea of all of the tasks that take place throughout the week.

Please describe how you accessed land for your farming business.

Found house for rent on Craigslist, on a 200-acre farm with space available for farming at no additional cost.

I was at a holiday party and met a woman who was retiring from a career. She had land and had been acquiring farming items and lived on the farm homesteading and selling some things here and there. Honey, she did a bunch of honey, and flowers and asparagus.

We found out about the land through a mutual friend. She used to be the landowner's gardener and she let us know of their desire to rent out land to small-scale vegetable growers.

Through word of mouth while working at last farm job. I met a landowner who was interested in leasing land to someone who would grow organic produce. I then also met the neighboring landowner (who had a house to rent) and ended up renting one acre from each landowner and renting a house on the land.

Was introduced to an institution that has land that they are planning on developing in the long term and were willing to lease to me for 10 years. Through a family friend who manages land for said institution, was able to draw up a lease that worked for both of us.

Gaining access to land was both easy and difficult. I was able to find land to lease relatively easily but the land was either unsuitable for the type of farming I wanted to do, too expensive, or would have required too much capital to build the infrastructure on the land. I started by finding a family on Craigslist that was willing to lease 1 acre of their 4-acre home site. Luckily it had access to a well and barn. However, there was no access to water for irrigation and I suffered this past year. Through word of mouth I was able to secure a more permanent land lease for next year with access to water, a pond, barn, and tillage equipment. It is difficult farming someone else's land as they have their hopes, ideas, and limitations but the benefit of not having to build infrastructure is critical to my farm start-up strategy; which was to do it slowly with relatively little investment/risk.

Family farm that I managed and then inherited.

I met Bobby Prigel through Winston Blick (owner of the restaurant I work for). Bobby was looking for someone to sharecrop the land and I was looking for land to farm.

This is my family's farm, owned by my Dad. I grew up on it.

Family farm, been growing hay for years, in which I have been involved with production, harvest, marketing, sales and delivery. After completing program, I decided to take a chance on growing vegetables and explore that market. Just used an acre or 2 of land, no rental agreements or anything.

We purchased our land and house in 2003 through a HUD first-time homeowners loan and with down-payment assistance from our respective families. We found the property through a realtor in Charlottesville.

Sarah had managed this farm before, so during our land search we approached the owners. They were open to the idea of us leasing some of the land for ourselves.

Mutual friend

We lease our land. This is still a very uncertain arrangement for us. We found it through a personal connection with the owners; I had previously managed the horse boarding operation on the farm, several years prior to us coming here.

It's a vacant city owned lot in our neighborhood that we started guerilla gardening and then received a formal lease from the city.

What do you aspire to accomplish as a farmer or professional in the next ten years?

Grow organic fruits and vegetables, raise laying hens and dairy for local restaurants and CSA, teach community classes, host interns and volunteers.

Be able to know what to grow, lean up my plantings.

Get a good price.

Have a really really, really, really good CSA.

To continue making a living and balance work in order to enjoy life.

To be successful - make farming a truly sustainable enterprise both financially and in quality of life. Establish infrastructure to make the farm more efficient. Figure out a plan to make enough income to have a business partner or full time farm employee. Be able to take a few days off during the season.

Generate enough income to equal that of a teacher.

Well, my visions for the farm change almost daily but the constant is always to enjoy the work, be financially successful, and fulfill a small, supportive niche in my community. More specifically, I hope to continue to lease the land I have now improving my skills in land management and business. I plan to develop my markets over these 5 years improving my visibility at markets and start a small CSA that could grow if needed. I also hope to bring 1 or 2 people on each season to help with the work and to learn. After 5 years, I am hoping to purchase a small farm home and reach the final scale that I can work on making more efficient.

I would like to have a profitable and successful farm business.

I hope to own and operate my own vegetable farm.

10 acres in vegetable production, marketing mostly retail, successful farm buy-out deal with my father, sustained lifestyle with work hours, and to be able to find stable affordable housing near-by.

I aspire to have a successful, profitable farm operation. I hope to lease a portion of our family farm, add other avenues of income and take advantage of interns and volunteers in establishing a profitable farm. I hope to also work in the establishment of other training programs and help other young people take the chance in farming. I would like to explore other niches in determining what I have the most interest in and the most profitable, which will hopefully be the same thing.

Continue to provide excellent, healthy food direct to the consumers in the area.

In ten years I plan to have a true, diversified farm that relies heavily on horsepower and lightly on petro-power. As a true diversified farm we will grow vegetables, beef, poultry. Our fields will provide hay and grains for our animals and mulches for our vegetables. Most of our inputs will come from within our farm, only outsourcing for what is absolutely necessary. In a sense, we aspire for the ideal biodynamic farm.

Gain a greater knowledge of growing vegetables, diversify with animals & fruit, and continue to be able to make a living.

Security, in land and money.

To eventually have a for profit farm that is self- sufficient (not have to have a second job) on land I own.

To start managing a farm of their own, I've learned more by just having to run a farm on my own. I think running a farm at the same time as going through the training program could be beneficial.

What advice would you give to new farmers coming into the field?

Learn about your ecosystem. Read and practice nutrient management, IPM, crop rotation, and interplanting.

Don't worry.

Plant fruit trees and perennials as soon as possible (if you do produce).

Take your time.

Stay flexible.

If you're not really that into this farming thing, don't do it.

It's a lot of work to start a farm. There are easier ways to make money, but you have to love it to do it. An overall enjoyment of cultivation is a good start!

Spend enough time learning on other farms before starting your own.

Work/apprentice/intern/volunteer at a few farms before embarking on your own.

Start small, pick a project for each season; don't try to do it all at once.

Don't go into debt at the beginning (or ever), only do what you can afford and the farm can pay for.

Land is the most difficult aspect of any venture. Organizations although helpful really don't get you where you need to be. Don't expect their help, however, take it if it is offered. I find that you can sometimes get lost within them so just rely on yourself and your network of contacts.

Do what feels right. I think it is important to get as much experience and learn as much as possible before starting on your own. But I also think some people thrive when thrown into the deep end. No two farmers need the same scenario to be successful, so beginner farmers need to do what feels right to them. To me, starting out with very little experience and starting small and taking little risk was not something I am proud of but, it's what felt right to me. Now, I am in a position where I feel more

confident to take on risk and scale up the farm. I am also in a position where I know what I need to learn and am more capable to learn.

Create a complete business plan before starting.

Never commute to your farm! Make sure you know your market before you put your seeds in the ground!

Work on a farm that looks like the picture of what you'd like to be doing, and that started with similar resources as you'd be able to muster. What you'd like your farm to look like is probably going to change, but the approach to farm development that you'll learn from someone who has been in your shoes is invaluable.

The first year is great for learning lessons, no matter how much you plan, you will need to adjust and decide what works best for you. Remember why you are doing what you do, you better enjoy hard work. Have fun!

Take advantage of a hands-on internship - there is nothing like actually doing the work in order to learn what it takes.

Direct marketing is vitally important. There are lots of opportunities for wholesaling out there, but wholesale prices will not sustain a small farm, I believe.

Make sure you keep at least enough records so you can evaluate your crops and markets and decide what to continue and what to change.

Make sure you give yourself time and space away from the farm. Burnout is a farm killer!"

I hear it and I forget; I see it and I remember; I do it and I understand.

You need to be an astute observer and a hard worker. And you need to understand the meaning of "good work."

Work at a place you want to model your own farm after and be ready to work really hard.

Just do it.

To start managing a farm on their own, I've learned more by just having to run a farm own my own. I think running a farm at the same time as going through the training program could be beneficial.

What in your experience is the single most important factor for predicting a successful transition from trainee to self-sufficient farming?

Motivation and dedication and a desire to work outside and love helping plants grow.

If the person isn't too much in a hurry.

Experience and money

Hard work and dedication to farming not just as a job, but as a lifestyle.

Financial support and land

Success in farming is not a personal choice. There are so many uncertainties and it's hard to measure success because of unique personal situations, personalities, and locations. However, a strict training experience that holds the trainees to extremely high standards is a key factor. Most farmers I meet have their own stories about the "task master farmer" they learned from. I think learning in an environment that is strict will teach beginner farmers good behaviors they will continue when on their own. Equally as important is the beginner farmers ability/realization that the farm is a business and it should be run as one. Beginner farmers should not be afraid to act as business people and get a fair price for their products.

Implementing a complete business plan.

Access to capital or the functional equivalent.

Mentoring from those in the biz that have faith you can succeed.

It takes someone who has a drive to own and operate, not just work. It takes management skills and business experience or knowledge. Just knowing how to plant, or grow won't make someone profitable or therefore self-sustaining. Everyone needs guidance on how to run a successful business. Patience is essential though; need to not give up easily.

Marketing knowledge. It doesn't matter if you have the best product in the world if you can't sell it.

Astute observational skills

Experience and resources (i.e., money)

The ability to live with insecurity in yourself and what you are doing and be able to carry on anyway.

Finding low cost land, getting into a good market where the farmer will actually make some money and having a network of support from other farmers.