



Farm Skills Assessment

“The shocking thing about farming in the U.S., is having to be good at everything.” -Jean Paul Courtens

This worksheet will help you identify the skills that will be important for your farm business. You will see that a small farm business that does its own marketing requires a lot of skills beyond production. This means that to be successful, you may need to work with someone else, or you may need to develop certain skills that you lack. It also means that you may already have some very helpful skills from previous jobs and life experiences that you may not have considered important. The following exercise will help you figure it all out.

Take a look at the questions listed on the following pages. These questions will help you identify your skills in the areas of:

- Production
- Business
- Marketing

The skills are further broken down into Practical, Management and Planning skill levels. All of these skills are equally valuable and potentially important for your farm business. Planning is not more important than practical experience.

Step 1. Identify your skills. Look at the first skill question, “Have you ever repaired and maintained tools?” and ask yourself:

- Have I ever used this skill? **AND**
- Do I feel confident in using this skill for my farm business?

If the answer is “YES”, check the box.

If the answer is “NO”, leave it empty.

Go through the rest of the skill questions on all three pages in the same way.

 for now, ignore the colored dots.

Step 2. Find your areas of strength. Each colored dot represents a skill area. First count the dots of each color next to the boxes that you checked. Then write that number under “Your Skills” next to the matching dot and skill area on the final sheet with the key.

Step 3. Identify your range of skill levels. Count the number of checked boxes under the Practical, Management & Planning levels on each sheet. Write this number in the corresponding box at the top of the page.

PRODUCTION

HAVE YOU EVER... / 43

PRACTICAL SKILLS / 18

MANAGEMENT SKILLS / 18

PLANNING SKILLS / 7

<p>repaired and maintained tools?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>repaired & maintained machinery or engines?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>set up an irrigation system?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>managed the health of farm animals?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>created a crop plan?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>operated a tractor?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>weeded crops by tractor?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>managed plant pests and diseases?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>managed pasture for farm animals?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>created a pest management plan?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>irrigated crops?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>built barns, fences or greenhouses?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>kept harvested crops fresh for market?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>chosen animals for purchase?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>created a post harvest handling plan?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>harvested crops?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>repaired barns, fences or greenhouses?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>monitored product safety?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>bred animals?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>created a rotational grazing system?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>planted seeds and transplants?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>fed and watered animals?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>monitored product quality?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>performed a water or soil test?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>created a soil fertility plan?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>managed pests or applied pesticides?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>slaughtered animals?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>implemented a conservation plan?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>managed soil fertility?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>creating a breeding plan?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>weeded by hand?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>collected animal products?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>organized equipment and supplies?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>kept production records?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>created a greenhouse plan?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>fertilized the soils?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>managed manure?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>kept equipment maintenance records?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>monitored weather?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<p>researched production information ?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>plowed and prepared the soil?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>managed a compost system?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>kept livestock records?</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	

BUSINESS

HAVE YOU EVER... / 31

PRACTICAL SKILLS / 8

balanced a checkbook or account?

opened a business bank account?

prepared taxes for a business?

paid bills?

applied for a loan?

collected payments?

applied for a grant?

searched for property?

MANAGEMENT SKILLS / 13

assigned tasks and supervised workers?

obtained licenses & permits?

purchased insurance?

established credit?

purchased supplies or equipment?

managed debt or repaid a loan?

Used computer software for business management?

recruited and hired workers?

trained workers?

established tasks and timelines?

set up a payroll?

tracked expenses and cash flow?

negotiated an agreement?

prepared financial statements and reports?

PLANNING SKILLS / 9

set goals or a mission and vision?

incorporated a business?

created a business plan?

created a budget?

set up a bookkeeping system?

evaluated profitability?

researched ag business regulations and laws?

set up a filing system?

reviewed and analyzed records?

MARKETING

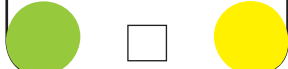
HAVE YOU EVER... / 24

PRACTICAL SKILLS / 13

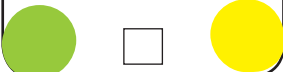
written an invoice?



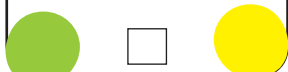
sold at farmers market?



negotiated a price?



attracted customers to store or stand?



delivered products to customers?



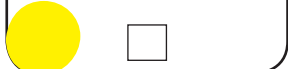
sold at a retail store or market?



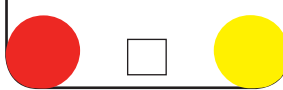
driven a truck?



interacted with customers?



created promotional materials?



created a mailing or email list?



set up a product display?



written a recipe?

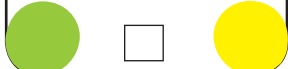


used social media for promotion?



MANAGEMENT SKILLS / 7

contacted buyers?



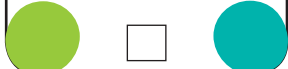
obtained sales supplies?



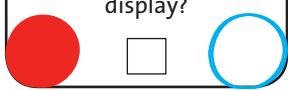
kept sales records?



set product prices?



designed a product display?



designed labels or packaging?



monitored market conditions?



PLANNING SKILLS / 4

conducted market research?



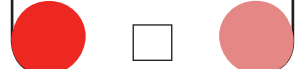
created a marketing strategy?



created value-added products?



developed new products?



Step 4. Identify the skills areas that are most important for your farm

business. You should now be able to see which skill areas and levels you can bring to a farm business. Look at the number of “Your skills” compared to the total skills in that area and put a star (*) next to your top 3-5 skills. Write these in the space below:

SKILL AREAS

<u> /30 </u>	BUSINESS	<u> /39 </u>	PRACTICAL
<u> /43 </u>	PRODUCTION	<u> /39 </u>	MANAGEMENT
<u> /24 </u>	MARKETING	<u> /20 </u>	PLANNING

- | | | | |
|------------------------|---|------------------------|---|
| <u> /11 </u> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> ANIMAL HUSBANDRY | <u> /4 </u> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> LABOR MANAGEMENT |
| <u> /8 </u> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> FOOD HANDLING | <u> /9 </u> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> SALES |
| <u> /3 </u> | <input type="radio"/> EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE | <u> /9 </u> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> RESEARCH |
| <u> /4 </u> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> EQUIPMENT USE | <u> /21 </u> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> COMMUNICATION |
| <u> /8 </u> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> SOIL CARE | <u> /6 </u> | <input type="radio"/> LEGAL |
| <u> /14 </u> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> VEGETABLE PRODUCTION | <u> /9 </u> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> DESIGN |
| <u> /2 </u> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> CONSTRUCTION | <u> /22 </u> | <input checked="" type="radio"/> FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT |
| <u> /21 </u> | <input type="radio"/> ORGANIZATION | | |

Skill areas I can bring to the farm: (list 3-5)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Skill areas I would like to develop: (list 3-5)

Now look at the skills without stars (*) and think about which are most important for the farm business that you would like to create. Are any of these exciting to you? Are you interested in developing any of these skills? Write these in the space to the right:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Skill areas I may need to rely on other

people for: (list 3-5) Are there any skills that seem important for your farm business, but also uninteresting to you? These are skills that you should get other people to help you with. Remember, what you dislike doing may be someone else’s favorite task.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____