



Vermont New Farmer Network & Full Service New Farmer Programming

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March 8, 2013



United States Department of Agriculture
National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Supported by the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA, Grant # 2011-49400-30500. Find more resources and programs for beginning farmers and ranchers at www.Start2Farm.gov, a component of the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program



COMMUNITY



4-H & YOUTH



ENVIRONMENT



AGRICULTURE



FOOD



UNIVERSITY OF
VERMONT

EXTENSION

C U L T I V A T I N G H E A L T H Y C O M M U N I T I E S

Overview

- About the VT New Farmer Project
- Components of our approach
 - Classroom, field, mentoring, coaching
- How we assess participants' needs & progress
- Strengths & challenges of our approach
- Questions & for more information

VT New Farmer Network Overview

- Connecting new farmers with the right service/resources at the right time via:
 - Education
 - Technical assistance
 - Coaching
 - Mentoring



VT New Farmer Network Goals

- Accelerate aspiring farmers' progress from start-up to operating a profitable, sustainable business;
- Help post-start-up beginning farmers scale up to earn at least 51% of household income from farming
- Increase the long-term effectiveness of the service provider network in addressing new farmer needs.



Structure & Approach

- Multi-organizational, collaborative;
- Builds on 10+ yrs of inter-organizational collaboration;
- Statewide, also serving adjacent NY & NH counties;
- Whole farm orientation;
- Multiple delivery methods.





New Farmer Network

7 Organizational Partners

- Association of Africans Living in VT
- Intervale Center
- Northeast Organic Farming Association of VT (NOFA-VT)
- Rutland Area Farm and Food Link
- Student Conservation Association
- Vital Communities
- **University of Vermont (UVM)**
 - 6 faculty
 - 2 grad students
 - 3 staff
 - 2 independent contractors





New Farmer Network Approach

Whole farm Orientation

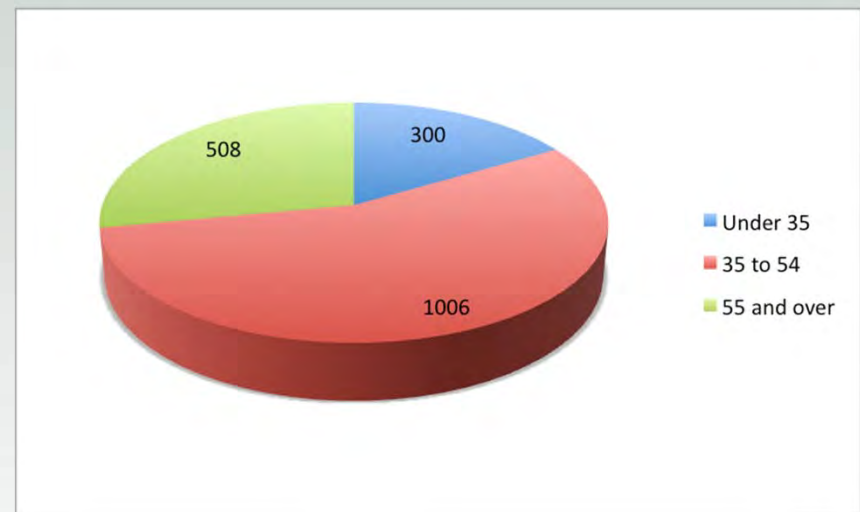
- **Goals & Decision-Making**
- Production
 - Across multiple enterprises
- Marketing
 - Direct, institutional, wholesale
 - Value added
 - Regulator issues
- Business management
 - Financial, human resource & legal
- Access to land
 - Secure tenure
 - Alternative arrangements



Our Audiences

- Apprentices
- Farm workers
- Homesteaders/hobby farmers
- Chosen first career
- “Career changers”
- Retiring to farming
- Supplementary income
- Immigrant & refugee farmers
- “Junior generation” from existing farm businesses

Age of Beginning farmers in VT



Vermont has more new farmers over the age of 55 than under 35

Delivery Methods



Multiple delivery methods

- Education
 - Classes/courses
 - Workshops
 - Webinars
- Technical Assistance
 - One-on-one
- Coaching
- Mentoring
- In person and via distance technology and online tools

New Farmer Project : University of Vermont - Mozilla Firefox

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New Farmer Project : University of Verm... +

www.uvm.edu/newfarmer/

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VERMONT NEW FARMER PROJECT

CULTIVATING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES EXTENSION

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Information, Education and Technical Assistance for
Vermont's Beginning Farmers

Welcome! In finding this site, you've found your access point to all the organizations, services, and educational opportunities for Vermont's new and aspiring farmers. We strive to keep our information current, comprehensive and easy to use.












Assessing Participant Needs & Progress

**New Farmer Business Assessment**
Vermont New Farmer Network
<http://www.uvm.edu/newfarmer>
newfarmer@uvm.edu 802-223-2389

Farm Name _____
Coach _____
Date _____



The radar chart assesses participant needs and progress across five main categories, each with five sub-factors. The scale ranges from 0 to 10.

Category	Sub-factor	Score (0-10)
Access to Markets	Confirmed Markets	10
	Regulations	10
	Market Assessment	10
	Networks	10
	Mentors	10
Production Skills	Management Experience	10
	Field Experience	10
	Access to Markets and Services	10
	Infrastructure	10
	Adequate Soils	10
Access to Land	Secure Land Tenure	10
	Record Keeping Skills	10
	Business Plan	10
	Credit History	10
	Savings	10
Goals & Decision Making	Decision Making Skills	10
	SMART Goals	10
	Guiding Values	10
	Access to Capital	10
	Business Plan	10



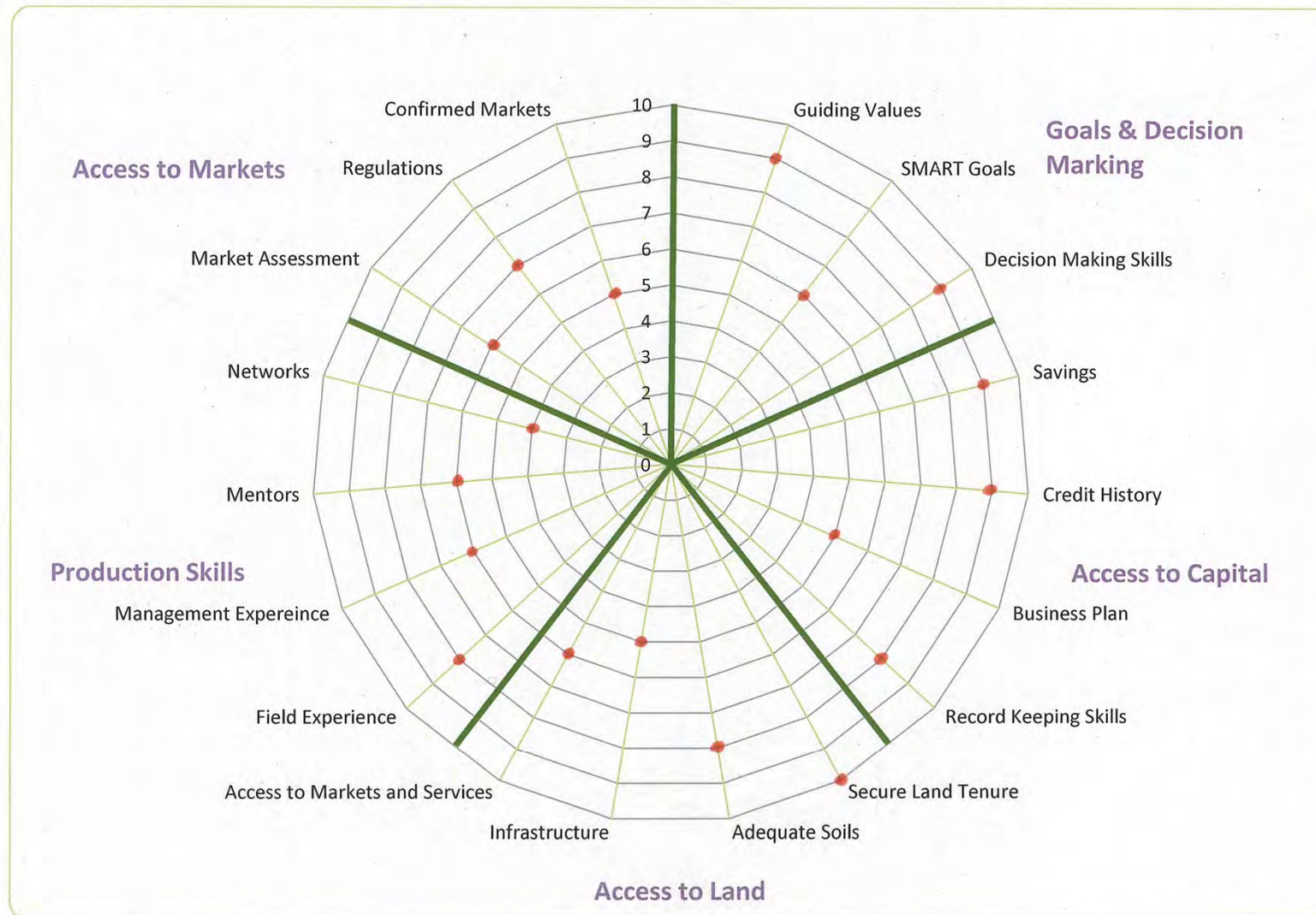
New Farmer Business Assessment

Vermont New Farmer Network

<http://www.uvm.edu/newfarmer>

newfarmer@uvm.edu 802-223-2389

Farm Name Pollyway Farm
Coach Jessie
Date 3-6-13





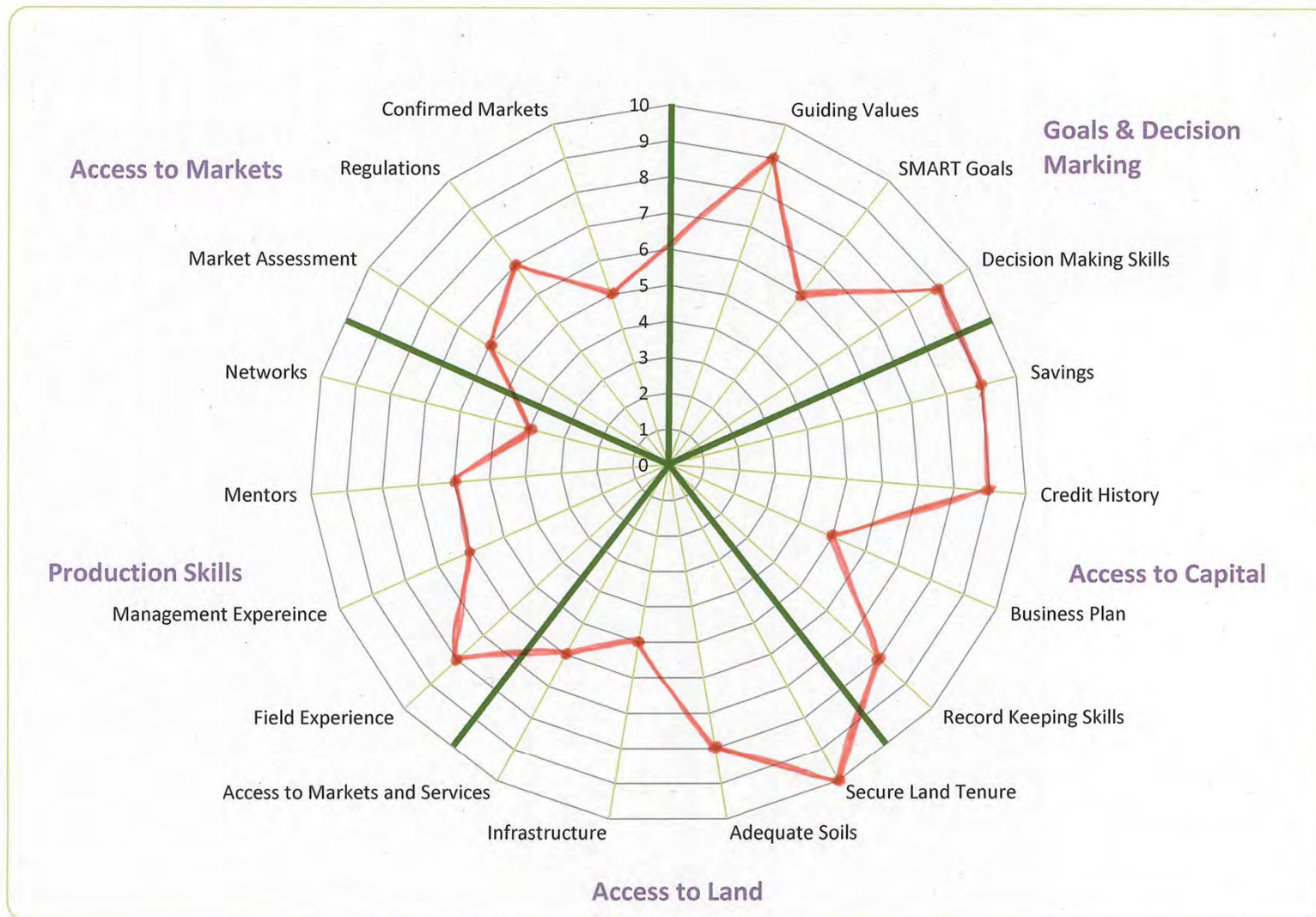
New Farmer Business Assessment

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newfarmer@uvm.edu 802-223-2389

Farm Name Pollywag Farm
Coach Jessie
Date 3-6-13



Business Planning & Access to Capital and Credit

Objective:

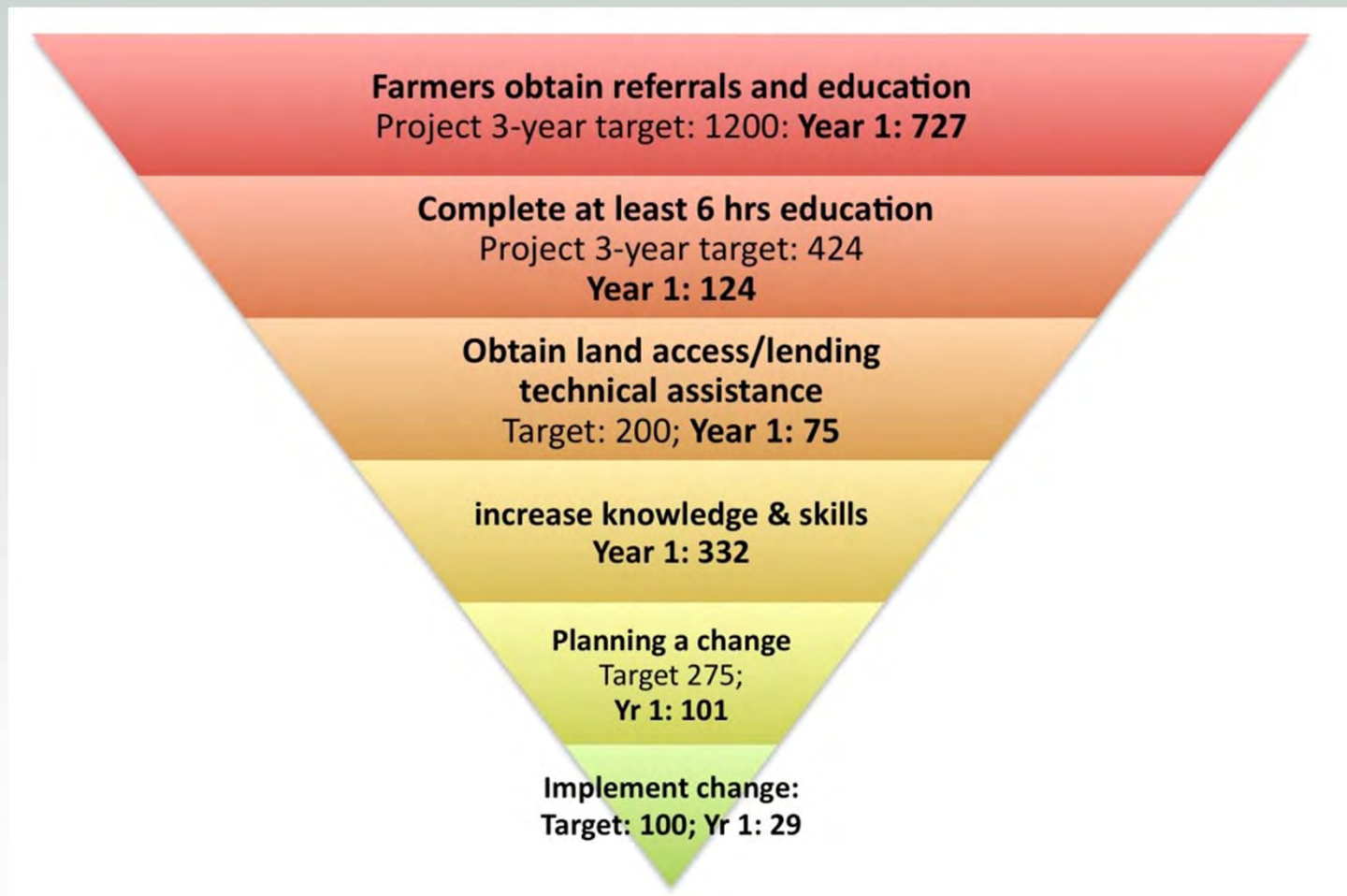
Action Step(s)	Educational Opportunities	Target Date	Completed (Date)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Review online resources<input type="checkbox"/> Growing Places<input type="checkbox"/> Building a Sustainable Business Introduction to Ag Financial Basics<input type="checkbox"/> Whole Farm Planning for Beginning Women Farmers<input type="checkbox"/> Intervale Success on Farms<input type="checkbox"/> Consult with an ag lender<input type="checkbox"/> Consult with a farm business advisor<input type="checkbox"/> VT Community Action Coalition programs (low-income requirements)<input type="checkbox"/> View webinars		
Resources:			



Metrics

- Over the three-year project:
 - **474 beginning farmers obtain coaching**
 - **275** beginning farmers write farm development plan.
 - **185** complete elements of their plans
 - **165** report improvements in farm operation/management
 - **65** farmers report increases in sales/profitability.

Year 1 Progress toward Targets



Strengths & Challenges

Strengths

- Meets people where they're at:
 - Responsive to diversity within our audience;
- Considers skills & resources;
- Helps new farmers prioritize;
- Encourages people to take responsibility for their learning;
- Responsive to dynamic process of skill and resource acquisition
 - Address weak links;
 - Respond to changing conditions;
- Increased collective capacity to serve beginning farmers.

Challenges

- Relative assessments
- Requires ongoing and high level of service provider professional development:
 - Knowledge of resources and opportunities;
 - Avoiding enabling/fixing;
 - Coordination and collaboration skills;
- Helping farmers understand the dynamic process of skill and resource acquisition

Your thoughts:

- Strengths
- Challenges
- Additional Opportunities
- Obstacles



UVM Extension

New Farmer Project

<http://www.uvm.edu/newfarmer>

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