



LAND
STEWARDSHIP
PROJECT

FARMING SKILLS EVALUATION

Vegetables

Goal: The Farming Skills Evaluation is used by farmers and prospective farmers to assess competence areas in farming. Keep in mind that these skills will be obtained over a series of years.

Two uses for the trainee:

- (1) Take a seasonal survey of your exposure and competence in the given skill areas.
- (2) Use the seasonal survey to fill out a Growing Season Learning Plan to help narrow your focus for a given year.

Two uses for the farmer/advisor:

- (1) Request that the beginning farmer take the Farming Skills Evaluation before their seasonal work on the farm. The farmer/advisor may also help the trainee to determine priorities for the Growing Season Learning.
- (2) Farmers may wish to highlight certain areas on the Farming Skills Evaluation that are strengths on their farm.

Please evaluate your level of competency in each of the areas listed below. This will help you to clarify areas where you need additional training or experience. Please evaluate all of the areas listed, even if you have no experience or there has been no change in your skill level. Keep in mind that beginning farmers don't need to learn everything at once.

1. Fertility and soil management	2011 Season				
	No exposure	Some exposure	Some exposure & some competency	Functional competency	Advanced competence
Core Competencies					
Planning soil building crops	1	2	3	4	5
Planting and managing soil building crops	1	2	3	4	5
Understanding the basics of soil health	1	2	3	4	5
Crop incorporation	1	2	3	4	5
Organic matter management	1	2	3	4	5
Understanding soil testing	1	2	3	4	5
Managing off farm inputs (ie. Compost, fertilizers, minerals)	1	2	3	4	5
Additional competencies					
Fundamentals of composting	1	2	3	4	5
Hand built compost	1	2	3	4	5
Manure windrows	1	2	3	4	5
Living mulch systems	1	2	3	4	5
Foliar feeding	1	2	3	4	5
Compost and plant-based teas	1	2	3	4	5
Vermiculture	1	2	3	4	5

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2. Bed/Field Preparation	2011 Season				
	No exposure	Some exposure	Some exposure & some competency	Functional competency	Advanced competence
Core Competencies					
Primary tillage/incorporating organic matter	1	2	3	4	5
Secondary tillage/seed bed preparation	1	2	3	4	5
Tractor/implement use	1	2	3	4	5
Rototiller use	1	2	3	4	5
Additional competencies					
Raised beds	1	2	3	4	5
Plastic mulch	1	2	3	4	5

3. Plant Care & Culture	No exposure	Some exposure	Some exposure & some competency	Functional competency	Advanced competence
	Core Competencies				
Vegetable crop planning	1	2	3	4	5
Cultivar selection	1	2	3	4	5
Understanding cultural needs of crops	1	2	3	4	5
Direct Seeding	1	2	3	4	5
Transplanting	1	2	3	4	5
Crop rotations	1	2	3	4	5
Spacing considerations	1	2	3	4	5
Succession planting	1	2	3	4	5
Basic concepts of plant botany	1	2	3	4	5
Additional competencies					
Climate control/shading	1	2	3	4	5
Support structures for plants	1	2	3	4	5
Pollinating	1	2	3	4	5
Grafting, pruning & training	1	2	3	4	5

4. Weed Management	No exposure	Some exposure	Some exposure & some competency	Functional competency	Advanced competence
	Core Competencies				
Weed identification	1	2	3	4	5
Understanding culture of weeds	1	2	3	4	5
Hand tool cultivation	1	2	3	4	5
Mechanical cultivation	1	2	3	4	5
Reducing seed bank	1	2	3	4	5
Mowing	1	2	3	4	5
Additional competencies					
Flame weeding	1	2	3	4	5
Inter cropping	1	2	3	4	5
Stale bed making	1	2	3	4	5
Natural and plastic mulching	1	2	3	4	5

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5. Pest and Disease Management	2011 Season				
	No exposure	Some exposure	Some exposure & some competency	Functional competency	Advanced competence
Core Competencies					
Designing healthy crop rotations	1	2	3	4	5
Pest identification	1	2	3	4	5
Application of pest control inputs	1	2	3	4	5
Disease scouting and monitoring	1	2	3	4	5
Pest scouting and monitoring	1	2	3	4	5
Additional Competencies					
Beneficial insects	1	2	3	4	5
Beneficial insect habitat	1	2	3	4	5
Designing bio diverse systems	1	2	3	4	5
Trap cropping	1	2	3	4	5
Barrier pest control	1	2	3	4	5

6. Greenhouse Management	No exposure	Some exposure	Some exposure & some competency	Functional competency	Advanced competence
	Core competencies				
Planning seeding schedule	1	2	3	4	5
Understanding planting media	1	2	3	4	5
Fertility in greenhouse	1	2	3	4	5
Germination techniques	1	2	3	4	5
Direct seeding techniques	1	2	3	4	5
Transplanting	1	2	3	4	5
Judging water needs - watering	1	2	3	4	5
Hardening off	1	2	3	4	5
Pest/disease management in greenhouse	1	2	3	4	5
Heating and venting a greenhouse	1	2	3	4	5
Additional competencies					
Building a greenhouse	1	2	3	4	5
Making soil mixes	1	2	3	4	5
Outdoor seed beds	1	2	3	4	5
In soil greenhouse growing	1	2	3	4	5

7. Irrigation	No exposure	Some exposure	Some exposure & some competency	Functional competency	Advanced competence
	Core Competencies				
Determining moisture needs	1	2	3	4	5
Understanding irrigation systems	1	2	3	4	5
Planning irrigation systems	1	2	3	4	5
Water source and quality	1	2	3	4	5
Irrigation management and scheduling	1	2	3	4	5
System maintenance	1	2	3	4	5
Winter preparation	1	2	3	4	5
Additional competencies					
Soil moisture testing	1	2	3	4	5

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8. Harvest	2011 Season				
	No exposure	Some exposure	Some exposure & some competency	Functional competency	Advanced competence
Core Competencies					
Judging readiness for harvest	1	2	3	4	5
Harvesting techniques and tools	1	2	3	4	5
Managing field heat	1	2	3	4	5
Additional competencies					
Forecasting maturity and yield	1	2	3	4	5
Collecting and processing seed	1	2	3	4	5

9. Post-Harvest	No exposure	Some exposure	Some exposure & some competency	Functional competency	Advanced competence
	Core Competencies				
Receiving	1	2	3	4	5
Cooling	1	2	3	4	5
Cleaning	1	2	3	4	5
Drying	1	2	3	4	5
Packing	1	2	3	4	5
Labeling	1	2	3	4	5
Dry and cold storage	1	2	3	4	5
Quality control	1	2	3	4	5
Sanitation	1	2	3	4	5
Delivery	1	2	3	4	5
Designing efficient pack area and equipment	1	2	3	4	5

10. Equipment Use	No exposure	Some exposure	Some exposure & some competency	Functional competency	Advanced competence
	Core Competencies				
Hand tool use and maintenance	1	2	3	4	5
Sourcing equipment	1	2	3	4	5
Tractor safety/emergency procedure	1	2	3	4	5
Other power equipment safety/emergency procedures	1	2	3	4	5
Basic tractor operation	1	2	3	4	5
Routine maintenance	1	2	3	4	5
Determining equipment needs	1	2	3	4	5
Additional competencies					
Equipment repair	1	2	3	4	5

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11. Farm design/management	2011 Season				
	No exposure	Some exposure	Some exposure & some competency	Functional competency	Advanced competence
Core Competencies					
Assessing and purchasing farm land	1	2	3	4	5
Creating an annual budget	1	2	3	4	5
Production record keeping	1	2	3	4	5
Financial record keeping	1	2	3	4	5
Business organization (e.g., LLC, sole proprietorship, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Legal considerations	1	2	3	4	5
Insurance	1	2	3	4	5
Determining cost of production	1	2	3	4	5
Writing a business plan	1	2	3	4	5
Field and waterway layout	1	2	3	4	5
Buffer zones	1	2	3	4	5
Organic certification	1	2	3	4	5
Additional competencies					
Holistic farm management	1	2	3	4	5
Biodynamic certification	1	2	3	4	5
Computer literacy	1	2	3	4	5
Woodlot management	1	2	3	4	5
Prairie management	1	2	3	4	5

12. Marketing					
	No exposure	Some exposure	Some exposure & some competency	Functional competency	Advanced competence
Core Competencies					
Identifying and developing markets	1	2	3	4	5
Naming your farm for image	1	2	3	4	5
Determining your niche	1	2	3	4	5
Customer service/outreach	1	2	3	4	5
Invoicing	1	2	3	4	5
Pricing	1	2	3	4	5
Additional competencies					
Newsletter	1	2	3	4	5
Branding	1	2	3	4	5
Signature crop	1	2	3	4	5
Online presence	1	2	3	4	5

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13. Labor Management	2011 Season				
	No exposure	Some exposure	Some exposure & some competency	Functional competency	Advanced competence
Core Competencies					
Determining needs	1	2	3	4	5
Interviewing	1	2	3	4	5
Determining compensation	1	2	3	4	5
Payroll taxes	1	2	3	4	5
Workers compensation	1	2	3	4	5
Employer legal responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5
Delegating tasks	1	2	3	4	5
Evaluation and feedback	1	2	3	4	5
Training	1	2	3	4	5
Legal aspects of volunteers and interns	1	2	3	4	5
Teaching commitment to interns	1	2	3	4	5
Additional Competencies					
Job descriptions	1	2	3	4	5

This document is a product of the Farm Beginnings® Collaborative.

The Farm Beginnings® Collaborative is a national alliance of independent regional groups of farmers and farmer-training support organizations working together to promote Farm Beginnings, a farmer training model that is community based, rooted in sustainable principles, and farmer led.

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