

Preparation: Farming Experience & Skills | Self-assessment

Successfully operating a farm business requires knowledge, skills, and expertise. Before you start your land search, it is important to be prepared with experience in many of the skills listed below. Rate the amount of experience you have for each skill relevant to your business in the second column (if someone else on your team has that skill, feel free to record their name here). In the note section following each category, write down the skills you are interested in developing further, as well as the ones you may be able to get help with from other people in your network. Check the farming experience & skills resources section on the website to review possible opportunities for developing farming and business skills/knowledge.

Farming and Business Skills/Knowledge	Rating (1-3) 1 - no experience, 3 - experienced
Production <ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Preparing a crop production plan2. Maintaining production records3. Seeding, planting, and harvesting4. Managing soil fertility5. Managing pests, weeds, diseases6. Irrigation7. Following food safety practices and maintaining quality during harvest and post-harvest8. Maintaining/repairing tools & equipment9. Maintaining/repairing infrastructure10. Operating equipment safely11. Animal Husbandry<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Managing pasturesb. Feeding/watering animalsc. Monitoring/treating animal health problemsd. Managing manure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1.2.3.4.5.6.7.8.9.10.11a.11b.11c.11d.
For those that you rated 1 or 2, what is your plan for learning those skills?	

<p>Financial Management</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintaining Financial Records <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Sales b. Expenses 2. Maintaining a bookkeeping system <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Paying bills and taxes b. Managing debt c. Tracking account payments d. Monitoring cash flow e. Running payroll 3. Understanding and managing finances through financial statements <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Balance Sheet b. Cash Flow c. Farm Budget d. Income Statement or Profit and Loss Statement 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1a. 1b. 2a. 2b. 2c. 2d. 2e. 3a. 3b. 3c. 3d.
<p>For those that you rated 1 or 2, what is your plan for learning those skills?</p>	
<p>Markets and Marketing</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Selling farm products or services 2. Identifying markets for your product that are reliable now and in the future 3. Communicating with current customers/buyers 4. Building a strong market through promotion and outreach <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Creating promotional materials b. Designing webpage, engaging with social media 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4a. 4b.
<p>For those that you rated 1 or 2, what is your plan for learning those skills?</p>	

<p>Management</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Managing personnel (training, scheduling, resolving conflict) 2. Obtaining farm business insurance 3. Registering your business with the State and federal government 4. Completing a business plan 5. Managing and updating your business plan with an annual report 6. Writing grants and/or fundraising 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.
<p>For those that you rated 1 or 2, what is your plan for learning those skills?</p>	