

On-Farm Mentor Self-Evaluation Questionnaire

Experienced mentors developed this questionnaire as a professional development tool – not as an examination! Its purpose is to encourage farmers who currently host trainees on their farms to conduct a thoughtful, private evaluation of their programs, program settings and personal skills. The questionnaire is also a useful resource for farmers who are considering mentoring.

Place a “✓” in the box that most accurately represents your response to each question, with 1= strongly agree and 5= strongly disagree. Then total the number of checks you have made in each column. Note: as used in this document, the word “trainee” denotes those who are temporarily housed on your farm to perform labor and receive a broad agricultural educational experience.

Farming Profile:

I have been farming for _____ years.

I have had the following training in agriculture:

_____ grew up on a farm.

_____ served on a farm as an apprentice.

_____ worked on a farm as a farm worker.

_____ have had some academic/professional training.

_____ other (describe).

My primary reason for on-farm mentoring is:

Comments and other important aspects of my farming profile:

I. Farming Knowledge and Skills Self-Assessment

Agree → Disagree

1	2	3	4	5	
					Other farmers often ask me for advice.
					I produce healthy crops and/or healthy animals.
					I have a fertility plan and conduct regular soil tests, etc.
					I participate in on-farm research projects.
					I have improved in one or more important areas over the last year, or over the past five years. (Make a note of these areas.)
					I keep up with current research relevant to my farm.
					I have access to appropriate technology for the scale/type of my farm operation.
					I am conscientious about maintaining and repairing equipment.
					All in all, I feel confident about my technical farming skills.

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Total

II. Farm Management Knowledge and Skills Self-Assessment

Agree → Disagree

1	2	3	4	5	
					I have a business plan. A whole farm plan. A marketing plan.
					I am conscientious about keeping good records.
					I am an effective time manager.
					Paperwork and routine jobs are done in a timely fashion.
					I am rarely behind in one or more areas.
					I am an effective personnel manager.
					The rate of my employee turnover is ok.
					I provide proper employee compensation and adhere to the terms of employee agreements or contracts.
					I provide employees and others with a clear work schedule.
					I manage my farm business in compliance with state local and federal regulations.
					My farm has a good safety record.
					The general appearance of my farm reflects good management.
					I carry necessary insurance in sufficient amounts.
					My farm is achieving annual increases in sales.
					My farm does business based on fair contracts.
					I have evidence that my customers are well satisfied. If, for example, my farm is a CSA, the rate of membership turnover is acceptable.
					My farm serves a diversity of markets
					I can effectively manage and/or am free from debt.
					If I rent or lease farmland, I have a good relationship with the owners.
					All in all, I feel confident about my farm management skills.

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Total

III. Teaching/Training Knowledge and Skills Self-Assessment

Agree → Disagree

1	2	3	4	5	
					I have conducted a self-assessment to determine topic areas of personal unfamiliarity/weakness, and I regularly ask another farmer or subject matter expert to teach or provide training in this material.
					I use sound teaching/training methodology.
					I provide comprehensive task analyses and lesson plans.
					I have a good understanding of different learning styles, and of the needs and interests of “adult learners.”
					I prepare learning exercises and/or reading assignments to augment in-class or on-field instruction
					I have a systematic approach to teaching hands-on skills.
					I am able to communicate effectively, and clearly articulate ideas.
					I am teaching at an appropriate level or stage of expertise.
					All in all, I feel confident about my teaching knowledge and skills.

Total

IV. Mentoring Knowledge and Skills Self-Assessment

Agree → Disagree

1	2	3	4	5	
					I regularly offer encouragement to trainees.
					I foster a positive approach to learning.
					I have strong social skills.
					I am an inspirational mentor.
					I have the ability to clearly communicate expectations.
					I promote teamwork.
					I balance criticism with praise.
					I am reflective.
					I have the ability to assess trainee readiness.
					I am accepting of mistakes.
					I am able to turn production problems into learning opportunities.
					I am able to turn “mistakes” into learning opportunities.
					I can accept economic losses as a part of the process of trainees’ learning.
					I am willing to learn from trainees.
					I welcome questions.
					My program reflects willingness to set aside time to check-in and/or debrief.
					I am willing to acknowledge my own biases.
					I am willing to ask for help from peers.
					I am effective in managing my own stress.
					I have a procedure for trainees to air grievances or concerns.
					I have a procedure for dealing with problems between trainees.

					I have a procedure for firing trainees.
					I offer support to trainees after they leave my farm.
					All in all, I feel confident about my mentoring skills.

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Total