

Exploring the Small Farm Dream:

Worksheet #4 -- Farming & Business Skills Assessment

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How would you rate your skills in the following areas? Use a scale of 1 to 5.

1. Very experienced. I am confident that I can handle all aspects of this part of my farm.
2. Comfortable. I have experience or training in all or most of the aspects of this part of farming.
3. Moderate. I have experience or familiarity with most of the relevant skills.
4. Somewhat familiar. I have experience or knowledge relating to some of the necessary skills, but not most.
5. No experience. This aspect of running a farm business is completely new to me.
- X. Not applicable (for example: experience with livestock is not needed if you do not plan to raise animals).

KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS	Rating (1-5)
1. Whole Farm Planning	
Goal setting	
Market research	
Acquiring land (e.g., rent, lease, purchase)	
Developing production, marketing & financial plans	
Researching legal requirements	
Mapping & developing a land use plan	
2. Business Start-Up	
Choosing a legal structure	
Obtaining credit or capital	
Obtaining permits, licenses & insurance	
Setting up bookkeeping & record-keeping systems	
3. Business Management	
Collecting payments	
Bookkeeping; paying bills & taxes	
Monitoring cash flow	
Making quick decisions	
Record keeping (e.g., financial, production, sales)	
Managing debt	
4. Pursuing Further Education & Training	
Keeping up with the latest production & marketing trends	
Keeping up with the latest management trends	
Attending conferences, courses & workshops	
Apprenticing or finding a farmer-mentor	
Reading agricultural books, magazines & catalogs	
5. Maintaining Family & Community Relations	
Making time for yourself & your family	
Building relationships with your neighbors	
Participating in community & agricultural organizations	

Worksheet #4 -- Farming & Business Skills Assessment (page 2)

KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

Rating (1-5)

KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS	Rating (1-5)
6. Managing Farm Labor	
Preparing seasonal labor & farm safety plans	
Training & supervising workers	
Complying with state & federal labor regulations	
7. Managing Tools, Equipment & Supplies	
Fabricating new tools & equipment	
Maintaining & repairing tools & equipment	
8. Managing Farm Infrastructure	
Building infrastructure (e.g., barns, greenhouses, fences)	
Maintaining & repairing infrastructure	
9. Managing Production	
Managing soil fertility	
Managing pests, weeds & diseases	
Responding to unpredicted weather (e.g., drought, hail, hurricane)	
Implementing conservation practices	
10. Raising Livestock	
Managing pastures	
Feeding & watering animals	
Monitoring & treating animal health problems	
Milking, slaughtering & other harvest and processing tasks	
Managing manure	
11. Raising Crops	
Preparing a crop production plan	
Operating equipment & implements safely	
Seeding, planting & harvesting	
Post-harvest handling & storage	
12. Marketing	
Choosing marketing strategies	
Developing promotional materials; advertising	
Monitoring competition & market conditions	
Adapting quickly to sudden changes	
Selling farm products & services	
13. Annual Farm Business Review & Re-planning	
Preparing financial statements & tax forms	
Reviewing & analyzing records	
Revising whole farm plan	