



FARMING SKILLS EVALUATION

Animals

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. Cattle Skills	2011 Season				
	No exposure	Some exposure	Some exposure & some competency	Functional competency	Advanced competence
Applying ID tags	1	2	3	4	5
Castration	1	2	3	4	5
Breed Knowledge, breeding	1	2	3	4	5
Dehorning, hoof trimming	1	2	3	4	5
Medication (shots, worming)	1	2	3	4	5
Delivering calves	1	2	3	4	5
Milking cows	1	2	3	4	5
Handling/moving cattle	1	2	3	4	5
Restraining large animals	1	2	3	4	5
Behavioral knowledge/control for aggression, birthing, sickness	1	2	3	4	5
Shelter needs	1	2	3	4	5
Feeding/water	1	2	3	4	5
Rotational grazing	1	2	3	4	5
Manure handling	1	2	3	4	5
Fencing	1	2	3	4	5
Marketing	1	2	3	4	5

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2. Hog Skills	2011 Season				
	No exposure	Some exposure	Some exposure & some competency	Functional competency	Advanced competence
Breed knowledge, breeding	1	2	3	4	5
Flushing	1	2	3	4	5
Applying ID tags	1	2	3	4	5
Castration, ringing	1	2	3	4	5
Restraint for health care	1	2	3	4	5
Birthing of litters	1	2	3	4	5
Handling/moving hogs	1	2	3	4	5
Restraining large animals	1	2	3	4	5
Behavioral knowledge/control for aggression, birthing, sickness	1	2	3	4	5
Shelter needs	1	2	3	4	5
Feeding/water	1	2	3	4	5
Manure handling	1	2	3	4	5
Fencing	1	2	3	4	5
Marketing	1	2	3	4	5

3. Sheep Skills	No exposure	Some exposure	Some exposure & some competency	Advanced level competency	Full competency
	Breed knowledge, breeding	1	2	3	4
Flushing	1	2	3	4	5
Applying ID tags	1	2	3	4	5
Tagging (removal of wool around udder), docking (removal of tails)	1	2	3	4	5
Medication application (shots, worming)	1	2	3	4	5
Delivering multiple lambs	1	2	3	4	5
Shearing	1	2	3	4	5
Handling/moving sheep	1	2	3	4	5
Behavioral knowledge/control for aggression (rams), birthing, sickness	1	2	3	4	5
Shelter needs	1	2	3	4	5
Feeding/water	1	2	3	4	5
Rotational grazing	1	2	3	4	5
Manure handling	1	2	3	4	5
Fencing	1	2	3	4	5
Marketing	1	2	3	4	5

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4. Poultry Skills	2011 Season				
	No exposure	Some exposure	Some exposure & some competency	Functional competency	Advanced competence
Applying ID tags	1	2	3	4	5
Breed Knowledge, layers/broilers	1	2	3	4	5
Incubating & hatching eggs	1	2	3	4	5
Baby chick care	1	2	3	4	5
Layer management	1	2	3	4	5
Egg management	1	2	3	4	5
Broiler requirements	1	2	3	4	5
Meat processing options	1	2	3	4	5
Feed/nutrition requirements	1	2	3	4	5
Shelters	1	2	3	4	5
Fencing options	1	2	3	4	5
Predators	1	2	3	4	5
General health/diseases	1	2	3	4	5
Pasture rotation	1	2	3	4	5
Manure handling	1	2	3	4	5
Marketing	1	2	3	4	5

5. 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

6. Farm design/management					
	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

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6. Farm design/management (continued)	2011 Season				
	No exposure	Some exposure	Some exposure & some competency	Functional competency	Advanced competence
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

7. 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

8. Labor Management	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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