

Farmer Competencies Tool—Farmer self-assessment

Farmer: _____ Staff Name: _____

Pre Date: _____ Post Date: _____

Introduction

Tell the participant that this is a self-assessment and an opportunity for us to look at a lot of different skills necessary to be a successful farmer. This is a chance for them to give themselves a grade for performance/knowledge in each of these categories. Remind them that a low grade is not a bad thing; on the contrary, it helps us know what you might want to focus on learning or skill building this year.

Steps

One, by one, show the participant the associated photo flashcard for each category and explain the category, giving examples of some of the associated skills. If you know the farmer is at the beginning level, you do not need to ask the intermediate skills. If you know they have already completed all the beginning skills, you do not use the beginning skills as an example. As you show the flashcard and give the example skills, ask the farmer to give themselves a note 0-4.

Response Key

0—I don't know anything; I never do this

1—I know a little bit but not much; I do this occasionally

2—I know a lot about this/ I do this a lot, but I still need some help

3—I can do this on my own; I do this all the time; I don't need any help




4—I know this so well I teach others how to do this





Example dialogue:





Staff: How about in the area of fencing? For example, knowing how to properly open and close the fence, making sure that your area of the fence is always clear and clean, knowing all the things that can cause the electric fence to not operate properly...As you think about all of these skills related to fencing, what number would you give yourself?




Participant: I would say a 3



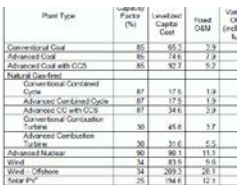


Staff: Ok, so that means that you can do it on your own without any help and you do these things all the time. Great! What about in the area of bed maintenance, making sure your beds are the right width and length, do they have an even surface and small grain size so it is good for planting, etc.




I. Farm Infrastructure	Beginning Skills	Intermediate Skills	Advanced Skills
<p>Irrigation (1)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water at the correct time, and right amount of water Proper use of drip irrigation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lines always correctly down the field Drip irrigation water is only running on beds you have crops in Plant right next to lines <p style="text-align: center;">Staff Farmer</p> <p>Pre _____ _____</p> <p>Post _____ _____</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Run the pump. Repair leaks in drip irrigation Know what stage to overhead water vs drip irrigate Understand water/food safety <p style="text-align: center;">Staff Farmer</p> <p>Pre _____ _____</p> <p>Post _____ _____</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design irrigation for a new plot <p style="text-align: center;">Staff Farmer</p> <p>Pre _____ _____</p> <p>Post _____ _____</p>
<p>Fencing (2)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open and close the electric fence properly Maintain fencing area along plot, keeping it free of vegetation. Know what will cause the fence to not work properly <p style="text-align: center;">Staff Farmer</p> <p>Pre _____ _____</p> <p>Post _____ _____</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Test the fencing for voltage Charge the energizer battery <p style="text-align: center;">Staff Farmer</p> <p>Pre _____ _____</p> <p>Post _____ _____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Staff Farmer</p> <p>Pre _____ _____</p> <p>Post _____ _____</p>
<p>Tools and Supplies (3)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take care of New Roots Farm tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep clean Return to shed Operate shed locks <p style="text-align: center;">Staff Farmer</p> <p>Pre _____ _____</p> <p>Post _____ _____</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operate lawn mower Operate weed whacker <p style="text-align: center;">Staff Farmer</p> <p>Pre _____ _____</p> <p>Post _____ _____</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide and manage own personal supplies/tools <p style="text-align: center;">Staff Farmer</p> <p>Pre _____ _____</p> <p>Post _____ _____</p>
<p>II. Production</p>	<p>Beginning Skills</p>	<p>Intermediate Skills</p>	<p>Advanced Skills</p>




<p>Seasons (1)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe what happens during seasons (temp., rain, pests) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know what crops can be grown during different seasons (Spring, Summer, Fall, Long-season) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice techniques for season extension
<p>Crop Planning/ Planning for Market (2)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estimate weekly anticipated yield for each crop Read a plot/bed map of plot and show where things will be planted Follow crop plan through the season 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand how to use days to maturity to predict when produce will be ready to harvest Know how long they will have to harvest something when it is ready (harvest window) Estimate anticipated yield per bed at beginning of season 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create planting and harvest calendar Order seeds from a catalogue Plan production to meet a weekly order for a restaurant or grocery store Create plot/bed map of where plants will go
<p>Bed Maintenance (3)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain beds- Proper size, width, soil texture Keep all areas around beds clean, free of trash and debris, and free of weeds Clean garden area at the end of the season 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estimate 1/2 a bed and 1/4 bed 	
<p>Soil Fertility (4)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use compost Use mulching Use cover crop between successions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can name plants in four different plant families (Brassica, Legume, Solanaceae, Other) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know how to take soil samples and understand what my soil needs




	<p>and at the end of the year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not plant to many successions in a year Know what to put in the compost pile and what to throw away in the trash can 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice crop rotation to make sure crops in the same family are not planted a year after each other 	
<p>Spacing and Succession (5)</p>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know and demonstrate proper planting spacing (seeding and transplants) for each crop growing Proper support material for each crop (trellising, stakes, row cover, etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thin plants when necessary Practice appropriate succession planting 	
	<p>Staff Farmer</p> <p>Pre _____</p> <p>Post _____</p>	<p>Staff Farmer</p> <p>Pre _____</p> <p>Post _____</p>	<p>Staff Farmer</p> <p>Pre _____</p> <p>Post _____</p>
<p>Pests and Disease (6)</p>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice pest management techniques (pest scouting/hand picking, homemade sprays) Know what to do when have diseased plants. Correct use of row cover 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify three plant common diseases and methods for preventing them Identify four common insect pests and methods for preventing them. Practice crop rotation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand and practice use of advanced techniques <ul style="list-style-type: none"> organic pesticides traps
	<p>Staff Farmer</p> <p>Pre _____</p> <p>Post _____</p>	<p>Staff Farmer</p> <p>Pre _____</p> <p>Post _____</p>	<p>Staff Farmer</p> <p>Pre _____</p> <p>Post _____</p>
<p>III. Harvest & Post Harvest</p>	<p>Beginning Skills</p>	<p>Intermediate Skills</p>	<p>Advanced Skills</p>

<p>Harvest (1)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harvest at the correct time when the crop is ready for harvesting • Harvest in the cool of the day and keep produce in shade, away from heat • Never put crops on the ground 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harvest independently and store in coolers • Bunch in field 	
<p>Market Preparation (2)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know which crops to wash and which not to wash • Know which crops to put in cooler and which to leave out • Properly grade produce (what to throw away and not send to market) • Make bunches in the correct sizes and weights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice food safety methods to keep food safe through harvest and preparation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase and manage own market supplies (bags, rubber bands, boxes)
<p>IV. Marketing</p>	<p>Beginning Skills</p>	<p>Intermediate Skills</p>	<p>Advanced Skills</p>
<p>Farm Stand and Restaurant Skills (1)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up farm stand (baskets, arrange produce, price cards, coolers) • Is friendly with customers at the market stand and speaks with them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know the varieties of each crop they grow • Bring produce to a restaurant/grocery store and offer it for a certain price. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a brochure/price list of the crops they are growing
<p>Pre _____ Post _____</p>	<p>Staff _____ Farmer _____ Pre _____ Post _____</p>	<p>Staff _____ Farmer _____ Pre _____ Post _____</p>	<p>Staff _____ Farmer _____ Pre _____ Post _____</p>

<p>Pricing and Money (2)</p>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know the prices of what is sold at market Write price tags Make correct change at the market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the scale and determine the price of vegetables Know the prices they would like to sell each of the crops they are growing (market and wholesale) Read and write a check 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operate the iPad register independently Identify and target appropriate markets for my products Take and process coupons, EBT, and credit cards at the market.
<p>V. Record Keeping</p>	<p>Beginning Skills</p>	<p>Intermediate Skills</p>	<p>Advanced Skills</p>
<p>Reading Charts (1)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know the difference between income, expenses and profit Read a table Read a crop planning/calendar sheet for their plot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read an invoice, knowing each part Identify income, expenses and profit for one of their crops previous season Read a bar graph Read a pie chart 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
<p>Record Keeping (2)</p>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write down all independent sales Keep track of all receipts of outside purchases through the season 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep track of sales in a record book Tell how much money in sales they made at the end of a market Keep track of mileage to farm Write an invoice for a restaurant or grocery store sale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep track of all sales by crop, totaling sales per crop Keep track of costs and revenue per bed
	<p>Pre _____ Farmer _____ Post _____</p>	<p>Pre _____ Farmer _____ Post _____</p>	<p>Pre _____ Farmer _____ Post _____</p>

VI. Business Planning	Beginning Skills	Intermediate Skills	Advanced Skills
 <p>Goal Setting (1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know what they need to improve on Write goals for themselves for the coming season Know how much money they want to make this year in sales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have goals for their business and participation for the season Have goals for their business over the long term 	
 <p>Financial Planning (2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know how much spent on farm this year Know how much money made this year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estimate season costs (bed rental, infrastructure fee, seed costs, trellising, fertilizer) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Estimate projected production value/sales per bed of each crop
 <p>Tax Planning (3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open Farm Bank Account 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a producer's certificate. Get EIN Register for Virginia Sales Tax number Do Schedule F with help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> File monthly online sales taxes independently Fill out Schedule F taxes using the information from my farm
<p>VII. Language and Numeracy</p>	<p>Beginning Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write numbers in native language 	<p>Intermediate Skills</p> <p>NA</p>	<p>Advanced Skills</p> <p>NA</p>

<p>Native Language Literacy (1)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read and write in native language <p>Staff Farmer</p> <p>Pre _____</p> <p>Post _____</p>	<p>Staff Farmer</p> <p>Pre _____</p> <p>Post _____</p>	<p>Staff Farmer</p> <p>Pre _____</p> <p>Post _____</p>
<p>Numeracy (2)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and count bills Read and write numbers 1-100 in native language Read and write numbers 1-10 in English Use a calculator <p>Staff Farmer</p> <p>Pre _____</p> <p>Post _____</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read and write all numbers in English <p>Staff Farmer</p> <p>Pre _____</p> <p>Post _____</p>	<p>NA</p> <p>Staff Farmer</p> <p>Pre _____</p> <p>Post _____</p>
<p>English Language (3)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce themselves and where they are from Say the name of each of the crops they are growing in English Recognize and say names of vegetables from a picture Tell a customer how much something costs. Months of the year Days of the week <p>Staff Farmer</p> <p>Pre _____</p> <p>Post _____</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell a customer how they could cook something Tell a visitor about their plot (what is growing, how long they have been farming, how many beds, etc.) Names of the tools and equipment used on the farm Write and recognize dates Read and write the name of vegetables <p>Staff Farmer</p> <p>Pre _____</p> <p>Post _____</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate with restaurant or store on the phone (to talk about orders, deliveries, etc.) Send Text to restaurant or store about availability of vegetables <p>Staff Farmer</p> <p>Pre _____</p> <p>Post _____</p>
<p>VIII. Transferable Skills</p>	<p>Beginning Skills</p>	<p>Intermediate Skills</p>	<p>Advanced Skills</p>

<p>Time (1)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reliable and punctual to meetings, always calling when will be late or absent Tell time (analogue clock/digital clock/when someone says a time) Read a calendar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep a schedule and write down appointments 	
<p>Responsibility (2)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accomplish assigned chores on farm Attend required meetings Help around the farm when needed (setting up, tearing down wash station, market stand, etc.) Ask questions to clarify things don't understand Know my address and phone number 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help other farmers who need help Phone is on all the time Never miss appointment with restaurants Respond promptly to text messages 	
	<p style="text-align: center;">Staff Farmer</p> <p>Pre _____</p> <p>Post _____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Staff Farmer</p> <p>Pre _____</p> <p>Post _____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Staff Farmer</p> <p>Pre _____</p> <p>Post _____</p>
<p>Innovation and Adaptation (3)</p> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses creative adaptation to solve problems in the field 	
	<p style="text-align: center;">Staff Farmer</p> <p>Pre _____</p> <p>Post _____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Staff Farmer</p> <p>Pre _____</p> <p>Post _____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Staff Farmer</p> <p>Pre _____</p> <p>Post _____</p>