



PARTICIPATORY BENCHMARKING

INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE IN CHARLOTTESVILLE VA

Summary

This guide shows trainers and staff how to use the benchmarking/competency tool with participants to assess skills, knowledge, and performance through self- and staff-administered assessments. You may use the provided materials and tools, or you may develop your own criteria/competencies as needed for your program.

The need: This tool was developed for five main purposes: (1) To identify skills needed for participation and advancement in our program; (2) To give data-based criteria for designating participants at certain levels - with access to specific markets; (3) To shift evaluation from knowledge-based to skills- and performance-based; (4) To help develop more participant driven program learning through identification of participant priorities; and (5) To provide useable data for capturing progress in a program outside of economic gain.

Who made this guide?

Collaboration and Testing

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: This teaching resource was developed by Elizabeth Moore of International Rescue Committee, Charlottesville VA, in partnership with the Institute for Social and Economic Development (ISED Solutions). Refugee farmer training programs across the country provided feedback on this lesson, which is now integrated throughout the guide. From 2015 to 2017, ISED partnered with twelve refugee farmer training programs through a USDA BFRDP educational enhancement grant, to support the design and testing of new and shareable teaching resources for culturally and linguistically diverse farmers. To learn more about this project, or to access the whole list of newly developed teaching resources for refugee farmer training programs, see the [New American Resource Library at https://nesfp.org/new-american-resources](https://nesfp.org/new-american-resources). For more in-depth explanations of the teaching approaches and activities used in these materials, please see the '[Teaching Handbook: Refugee farmer training](#)'. While these resources were designed with refugee audiences in mind, they can be adapted and used in any farmer training or incubator setting.

VARIATION:

Throughout this guide, boxes (like this one) contain variations and adaptations that serve varying programs and farmers. They are suggestions and reflections from other programs based on how they made this workshop work for them.

TEACHING TIP:

Throughout this guide, boxes (like this one) contain teaching tips to help you better facilitate farmer learning. Most come from other programs who have tested and reflected on using this lesson.

DEVELOPER'S NOTE:

Throughout this guide, boxes (like this one) contain notes from this guide's developer that provide insight into how a lesson is typically taught at the developer's program.



ICONS: You will find the icons below throughout this guidebook. They are there so you are prepared for the activity and can get an idea of what it will bring at a glance.



SIGNS/CARDS



POWERPOINT



WORKSHEET



DISCUSSION



VOCABULARY



INDOOR



OUTDOOR



TALKING POINTS

WHAT TESTERS SAY: “This is engaging, self-directed and appropriate for refugee farmer groups. I learned interesting information about where some of our farmers are still stuck (in their learning and development) and to realized what areas we need to focus our education on. It was also affirming to me to see how incredibly far farmers have advanced over the years. This tool gave farmers a chance to discuss amongst themselves (and with me) how they had overcome obstacles, etc. Thanks for introducing us to this format - it can be adapted and applied to so many of our programs!”

- Kelly, *Transplanting Traditions Community Farm, Chapel Hill, NC*

“I believe that this will be a very valuable resource as our program continues to develop. The framework that it gives for assessment has already added value to how we are planning for this season.”

- Lauren, *Nashville Food Project, Nashville TN*

“The layout and steps are really clear. I like that it is phased to be seasonal and annual.”

- Robin, *Global Growers, Atlanta GA*

Table of Contents

Adaptable except where noted.

- 5 IS THIS GUIDE RIGHT FOR YOU**
 - Audience and Objectives
 - Resources needed

- 7 SUPPLEMENTARY RESOURCE GUIDE**
 - How to use these resources

- 10 GOAL-SETTING & BENCHMARKING / ACTIVITY 1 / 1 HOUR**
Introduction to goal-setting and Benchmarking Tool
 - Farmers set goals for the coming season and their program participation.

- 14 PRESEASON PARTICIPANT ASSESSMENT / ACTIVITY 2 / 1 HOUR**
One-on-one meeting
 - Staff and participant meet at beginning of season to assess participant's skills and competencies.

- 16 MIDSEASON CHECK-IN & ASSESSMENT / ACTIVITY 3 / 1 HOUR**
One-on-one meeting
 - Staff and participant meet to share about the participant's progress using competency areas.

- 18 POSTSEASON REVIEW & ASSESSMENT / ACTIVITY 4 / 1 HOUR**
One-on-one meeting
 - Staff and participant meet to reflect on the season, share mutual feedback, review goals and accomplishments, and review skills using the Benchmarking Tool.

Audience and Objectives

Adaptable except where noted.

OBJECTIVES: At the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- Identify areas of improvement and learning priorities.
- Receive feedback on their farming related skills.
- Understand what goals are and why they are important.
- Set three goals for themselves for this season.
- Strategize how they will accomplish these goals.
- Identify priority areas of focus for the season.
- Mid-season, review goals from the beginning of the season and mark as complete or adjust as needed.
- Identify how they have improved or skills they have mastered.
- Identify areas they need to work on for continued success.
- Post-season, review the past season and celebrate their progress.
- Formulate ideas for future growth in the program.

WHO: Refugee farmers and growers

LANGUAGE / LITERACY: Appropriate for all levels with interpreter

FARMING EXPERIENCE: Appropriate for all levels

PREREQUISITES: For staff:

It is helpful to know a baseline of some participant skills, but not required.

For participants:

Self-ranking with a scale can be useful prerequisite knowledge, but participants can usually pick this up quickly.

REGION / CLIMATE: Any region

PROGRAM STRUCTURE: Market gardening for farm stand and restaurant sales

SEASON: Periodically throughout the year

Preseason - March/April

Midseason - July

Postseason - October/November

Resources needed

Adaptable except where noted.

TIME: 4.5 - 5 Hours

Break into preseason, midseason and postseason sessions.

STAFF / INTERPRETERS: One staff member, and one interpreter if needed

TEACHING TIP:

A tester pointed out the usefulness of having the staff member who completes this with farmers be someone who does some teaching and knows the farmers well. "One of my favorite parts is that it is such a good feedback tool for staff who teach farmers, especially if they have been teaching them for awhile."

LOCATION: In field and classroom

SUPPLIES: Each farmer should receive:

- Goal-setting worksheet (one per farmer at each session)

Preseason meeting:

- Farmer assessment worksheet
- Flashcards of competency areas
- Skills Chart/Checklist

Midseason meeting:

- Staff midseason assessment spreadsheet

Postseason meeting:

- Farmer assessment worksheet
- Flashcards of competency areas
- Staff postseason assessment spreadsheet with notes

Supplementary Resource Guide

How to use these resources

Farmer Goals 2017 Season
Farmer Name: _____

Goal	Strategies	Accomplished?	
1.	1.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	2.		
	3.	Date: _____	
2.	1.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	2.		
	3.	Date: _____	
3.	1.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	2.		
	3.	Date: _____	
4.	1.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	2.		
	3.	Date: _____	
5.	1.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	2.		
	3.	Date: _____	

DOC. 1: FARMER GOALS WORKSHEET

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

DOC. 2: FARMER SELF-ASSESSMENT



DOC. 3: ASSESSMENT FLASHCARDS

NEW FOODS FARMER COMPETENCIES—INTERNAL EVALUATION
To be completed before one-on-one farmer check-ins
Farmer: _____
Date: _____ Staff Name: _____

Introduction
Staff can use this worksheet to evaluate farmer competencies at mid-season. This is a broad overview of areas, and does not include more detailed observations of specific skills within each category. All farmers should be evaluated at the same time.

Response Key
0=never does this, no knowledge
1=does this only sometimes, knows only a little about it
2=does this most of the time, knows a lot about it, but still needs some help
3=does this all of the time, knows all about it, does not need any help
4=teaches others this skill

COMPETENCY	Farmer 1	Farmer 2	Farmer 3	Farmer 4	Farmer 5	Farmer 6
Irrigation						
Fencing						
Tools and Supplies						
INFRASTRUCTURE SCORE						
Seasons: Planting on time						
Crop Planning: anticipated yield						
Crop Planning: Best Man						

DOC. 4: INTERNAL COMPETENCIES ASSESSMENT

	Run the Irrigation Pump	Design irrigation for new plot					
level 3							
	Fix Trip Tape		Test the Fence Voltage	Charge the Energizer Battery	Have and Use Own Supplies and tools	Operate the Weed Wacker	Operate the Lawn Mower
level 2							
	Water at the Correct Time	Water in the Right Place	Use Drip Tape Correctly	Open and Close the Fence Properly	Keep Fence Clean	Keep Fence Working Correctly	Take Care of NRF Tools
level 1							
	Irrigation		Fencing		Tools		

DOC. 5: SKILLS CHART

	2016		2017		2018	
	Pre L1-2	Post L2-2	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Irrigation						
Fencing						
Tools						
Seasons						
Crop Planning						
Bed Maintenance						
Soil Fertility						
Spacing and Succession						
Pests and Disease						
Harvest						
Market Preparation						
Farm Stand and Restaurant						
Pricing and Money						
Reading Charts						
Recordkeeping						
Goalsetting						
Financial Planning						
Tax Planning						
Numeracy						
English Language						
Time						
Responsibility						
Innovation						

DOC. 6: INTERNAL COMPETENCIES TRACKER

STEP 1: GOAL SETTING

*In-class activity at beginning of microproducer program
1 to 1.5 hours; staff and farmer*

Farmers set 3 goals for the year using the **Farmer Goals Worksheet (Document 1)**. (With advanced participants, you can also use this time to identify strategies to meet goals.) Activity 1 (optional) goes over this worksheet in more detail and suggests how it can be paired with the **Internal Competencies Assessment benchmarking tool (Document 4)**.

STEP 2: BENCHMARKING

*One-on-One meeting at end of microproducer program
1 hour; staff and farmer*

Using the **Competency and Goal Setting Flashcards (Document 3)**, ask each farmer to rank (0-4) their knowledge/practice in these areas. When you show the picture and category, give examples from the **Farmer Competencies Self-Assessment (Document 2)** to explain the types of skills. If you know a farmer is at a certain level, you can just read from that level of skills.



STEP 3: GOAL SETTING CARD SORT / PRIORITY RANKING

*One-on-One meeting at end of microproducer program
1 hour; staff and farmer*

Briefly review all of the categories they just assessed, laying out the **Competency and Goal Setting Flashcards (Document 3)**. Ask the farmer if there are one or two categories they would like to focus on this year that particularly interests them or are most important to them.

STEP 4: GOAL SETTING REVIEW

*One-on-One meeting at end of microproducer program
1 hour; staff and farmer*

Review the farmer goals from the beginning of the class and ask if there are any others they would like to add. Also add specific categories or skills they identified from the self-assessment.

STEP 5: GOAL SETTING

*This can be done conversationally during the same meeting. We have found it hard to find the time to go into more depth.
Staff and farmer*

Using the **Farmer Goals Worksheet (Document 1)**, discuss and fill out the strategies section for each goal. Have a conversation about how the farmer can set goals, how they will know if they accomplished them, and ways to accomplish them. Keep an internal copy and give a copy to the farmer.

STEP 6: FARMER GUIDED EDUCATION

*In field throughout the season
Staff*

Staff refer to the farmer identified goals throughout the season to fashion learning opportunities specific to what that farmer wants to accomplish.

STEP 7: FARMER SKILLS CHART / CHECKLIST

*In field throughout the season
Staff and farmer*

Throughout the season, farmers can use the **Skills Chart (Document 5)** to check off specific skills they have learned. This provides a visual for them, and a useful tool for staff to track participant progress on the **Internal Competencies Tracker (Document 6)**.



STEP 8: BENCHMARKING

In field throughout the season, before the midseason one-on-one Staff

Take field notes on the **Internal Competencies Assessment (Document 4)** throughout the season, as farmers demonstrate competencies.

STEP 9: GOAL CHECK IN

*Midseason one-on-one meeting
1 hour; staff and farmer*

Using the **Farmer Goals Worksheet (Document 1)**, check in with farmers to see how they are progressing towards their goals and whether they need support. Check off accomplished goals. Use the **Internal Competencies Assessment (Document 4)** to support the conversation and give examples.

STEP 10: GOAL SETTING

*Postseason one-on-one review meeting
2 hours; staff and farmer*

Review the **Farmer Goals Worksheet (Document 1)**. Ask farmers if they have accomplished the goals they set. If yes, ask how they were able to accomplish them. If no, ask what they and we could have done to help them. Do the **Farmer Competencies Self-Assessment (Document 2)** again. Update the **Skills Chart (Document 5)** and **Internal Competencies Tracker (Document 6)** with any changes in their self-assessment.

VARIATION:

Not all the tools in this suite need to be used to reap the benefits of the benchmarking approach. Testers mentioned how useful it was to only use the benchmarking tool, but have the option to learn about and possibly use other parts of this tool in the future.

DEVELOPER'S NOTE:

The actual competencies will most likely need to be adapted to suit the actual operations of your program more closely. Pictures and text can be changed in the 'editable' version of the **Farmer Benchmark Self-Assessment** tool.

VARIATION:

One tester sees this format of benchmarking applying very well to other areas of program evaluation and assessment (pre-/post-surveys), since the self-directed and engaging format "feels like a more culturally appropriate as well as empowering tool for evaluation."

Goal-Setting and Benchmarking Plan

1

TIME: 1 Hour

OVERVIEW:

This optional lesson introduces the concept of goal setting and why goals are important in life. It was designed to help farmers set goals for the coming season and their program participation, but could be adapted for longer term goals or other programs.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Photo of a soccer goal
- Printed written example of farmer goals
- Farmer Goal-Setting Worksheets
- Pens/Pencils

OBJECTIVES / LEARNING:

By the end of this activity, participants will:

- Know what goals are and why they are important.
- Practice using the word 'goal' in sentences about life and farming goals.
- Have set 1-3 goals for themselves for the coming season.
- For advanced farmers, strategize what they will need to do to accomplish these goals.

VOCABULARY

Long-term	Goal
Short-term	SMART Goal (advanced)

STEP 1: INTRODUCTION AND LIFE GOALS



- a. Tape a picture of a soccer goal on the board and write the word GOAL on the whiteboard. **Open discussion:** "Today we are going to talk about what goals are and the importance of having goals."
- b. **Ask:** "Some goals may be **big** goals and others may be **small** goals. What is an example of a small goal? What is an example of a big goal?"
 - "Some goals may be **short-term** - things you want to accomplish in the week or day - and other goals may be **long-term** - things that will take you many months or years to accomplish."
- c. **Ask:** "What are some examples of goals people might have in life?"
 - Become a citizen
 - Drink less soda
 - Buy a house
 - Graduate from High School
 - Eat more vegetables
 - Buy a car
 - Learn English
 - Get a certain job
- d. Ask farmers some of their life goals are. As people give examples of goals they have in life, write them on the board around the soccer goal.



- e. Using the examples of life goals, practice the conversational pattern, “Sancha, what is your goal?” ... “Ah, your goal is...” to work on incorporating the word GOAL into vocabulary and using sentences.
- f. **Discuss:** Talk about the importance of having goals. It helps us know where we want to go, and then think about how to get there. We are in this class because we want to learn and grow. We want to build skills. We want to be able to do things that we couldn’t do before. We want to be able to understand things we didn’t understand before. Having goals in this program can help you accomplish more.

STEP 2: FARMER GOALS



- a. Ask the class to give examples of farmer goals and tape these examples on the board. Examples could include:
 - Learn when to plant bitter melon in the United States
 - Increase production
 - Learn how to operate the lawn mower
 - Know how far apart to space tomatoes
 - Make \$1,000
 - Get experience selling food to customers at a market
 - Learn how to operate the cash register
 - Sell to restaurants
- b. As people say their goals and you write them on the board, categorize goals in skill areas, using competency category photos, or alternatively, tape the photos on the board, and have farmers categorize their goals themselves after collecting a few. (This latter option only works if you write the responses on paper which can then be moved around and taped where needed.)
- c. **Examples:**
 - PRODUCTION
 - Increase production
 - Manage pests better
 - Manage irrigation better
 - FARM MAINTENANCE
 - Learn how to run the pump
 - Learn how to use the lawn mower/weed wacker
 - MARKETING
 - Sell at a farmer’s market
 - Sell to restaurants
 - Make \$1,000 (or some other amount)
 - Learn how to write an invoice
 - Know how to use the register/make change
 - ENGLISH
 - Be able to tell customers about the vegetables
 - Be able to tell visitors about my farm
 - Be able to write price tags

- d. Write on the whiteboard the following two sentences:
 - What is your goal?
 - This year, my goal is _____.
- e. Ask farmers to choose one of the goals taped to the whiteboard and put it in the sentence. Repeat out loud the completed sentence with each farmer.

STEP 3: CREATING FARMER GOALS FOR THE SEASON

- a. Ask each farmer to think about what their goals for themselves are this year. Remind them that they could be things other than what is on the board. Ask if anyone in the class would be willing to share. **Ask:** “Who has a production goal for this year?” “Who has a marketing goal for this year?” “Do you have any goals for farm maintenance?”



- b. Hand out the farmer Goal-Setting Worksheet.
- c. Ask farmers to now prioritize 3 goals for this season.
- d. With help from others, they should write these three goals on the Goal-Setting Worksheet. Staff may need to help with farmers who have lower English ability. If participants are unable to think of 3 goals, have them write down as many as they do think of.

TEACHING TIP:

Farmers might also write in their native language, but an English version should be done as well for reference later in the season.

- e. For more advanced groups, have them fill out the second column, which has strategies for how they will accomplish their goal.
- f. Explain that the third column is a space to check off once they have accomplished the goal. There may be goals you accomplish right away, or there may be goals that you have for many seasons/years before you are able to accomplish it.

DEVELOPER’S NOTE:

This is an opportunity to assess which farmers are able to come up with goals. Keep these goals in farmer notebooks.

TEACHING TIP:

At Charlottesville IRC New Roots, we refer back to these goals throughout the season, during our midseason check-in as well as postseason evaluation meeting. This helps us tailor training towards what farmers want to work on and helps remind farmers of what they can do through the season to work on these goals.

STEP 4: CONNECT TO BENCHMARKING TOOL



- a. **Ask:** “How might you identify goals for a season?” Show farmers the benchmarking tool and explain the document’s purpose:
 1. To help farmers identify what they want to work on and areas they need to grow in.
 2. To help staff develop training that is relevant to them and will be responding to their needs and what they have identified as learning objectives.
 3. To help staff see who might have enough skills to have more independence and sell to certain markets.
- b. Remind farmers that it is not a bad thing to not know something or not have a skill in something. It is good, so we know what we can focus on to help them progress.
- c. Show farmers how to fill the tool out and what some of them have responded.
 - **Give example:** “Sancha said that she knows how to water her plants correctly. Would this be a goal for her to work on this year?” (No.)
 - “She says she does not know how to operate the lawn mower. Could this be a goal for her?” (Yes, if she wanted to learn, that could be a good goal.)
 - “Look at what you do not know, and think about what you want to know/learn. This is how this tool might be used to show where you can improve and areas to set goals in.”
 - Explain that you will be using the tool together throughout the season to help focus on specific things farmers would like to learn for themselves.
- d. Finish class by working with farmers on the benchmarking tool, continuing to fill it out for those who have not completed it, and reviewing it with those who have. Remind farmers that you will be using this tool together during one-on-one interviews at the beginning, middle, and end of the season.



OPTIONAL: ALTERNATIVES FOR ADVANCED GROUPS



- a. For more advanced groups, talk about SMART goals (**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant, and **T**ime-bound), thinking about how farmers might be able to track their progress or judge if they have accomplished it or not.
- b. For more advanced groups, you can categorize their farming goals into different categories that may reflect benchmarking categories (production, marketing, infrastructure, crop planning, English). Emphasize that there are many areas that make a good farmer and some people might want to focus on certain areas to grow in over others, and set goals in those areas.

Preseason: Participant Self-Assessment

2

TIME: 1 Hour

OVERVIEW:

Staff meet with the participant at the beginning of the season to complete a self-assessment gauging participant's skill level in various competency areas important for success and progress in the program.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Flashcards of competency categories
- Farmer Self-Assessment Worksheet

- Farm Goal Setting worksheet

OBJECTIVES / LEARNING:

By the end of this activity, **trainers** will know each participant's:

- Assessment of their skills.
- Self-identified priority areas for growth.

By the end of this activity, **participants** can:

- Identify priority areas for growth for the season.

STEP 1: EXPLAIN OBJECTIVES



Explain the purpose of the meeting and activity to the participant, which is:

- To understand how each farmer sees their skills in different areas of farming competencies;
- To help identify areas they might need to improve as a farmer; and
- To help staff structure training to meet educational priorities.

VARIATION:

Testers tried/suggested using a group format, which may take longer but has substantial benefits for peer-to-peer learning. One tester who did the benchmarking tool with four farmers said that it took about three hours to get through, but farmers were able to learn so much from the group process and each other.

STEP 2: EXPLAIN ACTIVITY

Explain how the activity will work, and do an example:

- "I will show you a card that represents an area of knowledge. I want you to give yourself a grade for that skill from 0-4."

STEP 3: EXPLAIN SCORING SYSTEM



Explain the scoring system:

0 = *I don't know anything about this / I never do it*

1 = *I only know a little about this / I do it rarely*

2 = *I know a lot about this / I do it often, but I still need help*

3 = *I know everything about this / I can do it on my own*

4 = *I know this so well I can teach others about it / I teach others about this*

DEVELOPER'S NOTE:

We structured our competencies as action skills rather than knowledge. Facilitators should ask questions in terms of knowledge or action skills depending on program needs.

TEACHING TIP:

You can simplify the English on the flashcards if you think farmers would benefit from that. Some examples might be:

1. 'Bed Maintenance' becomes 'Making Beds'
2. 'Innovation and Adaptation' becomes 'Ideas'
3. 'Numeracy' becomes 'Numbers,' etc.

VARIATION:

One tester noticed that farmers may be beginners in some categories, but advanced in others. This can be an opportunity for discussion, and can be eye-opening to staff.

TEACHING TIP:

The focus on skills as being demonstrable seems important, and one tester also wanted to have an opportunity to ask farmers about the 'why' behind certain activities. "For example, we adapted the tool to say, 'till in cover crop 3-4 weeks before planting,' and then I could ask farmers 'Why do we do this?' It was a great litmus test to see where farmers were in understanding important concepts, and created many good teaching moments."

Midseason: Check-In and Self-Assessment

3

TIME: 1 Hour

OVERVIEW:

At this one-on-one meeting, the staff and farmer are able to share about the participant's progress using the areas of competency. **Note: During this meeting, we also include opportunity for the participant to give feedback on staff and the program, but that is not included in this section as it does not relate to the benchmarking tool.*

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Internal Competencies Assessment
- Farmer Goal Setting Worksheet

OBJECTIVES / LEARNING:

By the end of this activity, participants can:

- Review their goals set at the beginning of the season and mark as complete or adjust if needed.
- Identify how they have improved or skills they have mastered.
- Identify areas they need to work on for continued success in the program.

STEP 1: EXPLAIN OBJECTIVES



Explain to the participant the purpose of the meeting, which is to:

- Check on how the farmer is doing this season;
- Give feedback on the farmer's progress and our program;
- Review the farmer's goals for the season; and
- Answer any questions.

DEVELOPER'S NOTE:

Throughout the season, staff members should take notes on participant skills in various areas. Prior to the midseason meetings, staff should complete the **Internal Benchmarking** document for all participants.

STEP 2: DISCUSS INTERNAL BENCHMARKING DOCUMENT



Using the **Internal Competencies** document and notes, discuss where the participant is at this point in the season, highlighting progress or skills learned, and areas they need to work on.

STEP 3: REVIEW GOALS

Review the participant's **Goal Setting Worksheet**. For each goal, ask if they have accomplished it, are working on it, or have not begun. If they have accomplished the goal, check it off and write the date. If they are working on it or have not begun, ask the participant what they would need to do to accomplish it by the end of the season.

TEACHING TIP:

If you do this with a group of farmers, several reviewers pointed out the opportunity for peer learning: "This tool gave them a chance to discuss amongst themselves (and with me) how they had overcome obstacles, etc."

TEACHING TIP:

One tester would add some additional pre-teaching of vocabulary words that came up throughout the different sections in testing: "When I teach this again I will go through and identify tricky vocab before each section - for example, we added 'work/life balance.' We also talked about efficiency in production, and discussed the word 'efficiency' and what it meant to farmers, etc."

Postseason: Season Review, Self- and Staff Assessments

4

TIME: 1.5 - 2 Hours

OVERVIEW:

At this one-on-one meeting, the staff and farmer will reflect on the season, share mutual feedback, review goals and accomplishments, and review skills with the benchmarking tool. **Note: During this meeting, we also include opportunity for the participant to give feedback on staff and the program, but that is not included in this section as it does not relate to the benchmarking tool.*

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Flashcards of competency categories
- Internal Competencies Tracker (for group)
- Internal Competencies Assessment (per farmer)
- Farmer Goal Setting worksheet

OBJECTIVES / LEARNING:

By the end of this activity, participants can:

- Review the past season, celebrate progress and formulate ideas for future growth if they hope to continue in the program.

STEP 1: EXPLAIN OBJECTIVES



Explain to the participant the purpose of the meeting, which is to:

- Review this season;
- Give feedback on the farmer's progress and our program;
- Review the farmer's goals for the season; and
- Answer any questions.

DEVELOPER'S NOTE:

Throughout the season, staff members should take notes on participant skills in various areas. Prior to the postseason meetings, staff should complete the **Internal Benchmarking** document for all participants.

STEP 2: FARMER SELF-ASSESSMENT



Complete the **Farmer Self-Assessment** activity as you did in the preseason meeting, but fill out responses in the "post" section of the document.

STEP 3: DISCUSS INTERNAL BENCHMARKING DOCUMENT



Using the **Internal Competencies Assessment Document** and notes, discuss how the participant did this season, highlighting progress or skills learned, and areas they need to work on.

STEP 4: REVIEW GOALS

Review the participant's **Goal Setting Worksheet**. For each goal, ask if they have accomplished it, are working on it, or did not begin. If they have accomplished the goal, check it off and write the date. If they are working on it or have not begun, ask the participant what they would need to do to accomplish it next year.

TEACHING TIP:

One tester really appreciated the opportunity to ask reflection questions at each benchmark. Even if farmers are past the beginning benchmarks, it can be affirming to go through and explain and check off the beginning and/or intermediate levels anyway. One tester said how nice it was for farmers to recognize what they had accomplished over the years.

DEVELOPER'S NOTE:

When piloting this, seemingly objective measures for the Internal Benchmarking Tool (i.e., using the 0-4 scale) felt a lot less objective. It was helpful to do all the farmer scores together, so staff could compare one farmer's performance to another. However, some categories were hard to answer for everything and everyone. We should also consider how well scores will transfer year to year, and how you adjust for levels captured in the self-assessment but not in the internal version.