What is this user’s guide?
This guide can be used to assist trainers who want to make good farm record keeping practices accessible to farmers with limited English or low-literacy skills. It covers the reasons and benefits of keeping good records for planning and planting, including compliance with food safety requirements. It explains what kinds of information need to be recorded and provides recommendations for when and how to collect that information. Tools which allow farmers with low-literacy skills to keep good records of on-farm activities are provided.
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WHY IS THIS TRAINING NEEDED:

Students will learn techniques for keeping records of their crop planning and crop planting. These records can then be used as part of a trace-back-system to help identify factors in their crop plans that might contribute to a crop’s success or to low crop yields or outbreaks of foodborne illness. This kind of record keeping is required for farmers who are covered by the Produce Safety Rule in the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA).

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.
NEW VOCABULARY:  • Record keeping
    • Trace back system
    • Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)

OBJECTIVES:  By the end of this session, farmers will be able to:
    • Explain how records can be useful for identifying factors that contribute to success and underperformance of crop yields.
    • Explain how records can reduce risk and identify causes if there is an outbreak of foodborne illness.
    • Name ways that records can improve their farm business and reduce risk.
    • List what details they should include in their records
    • Explain what is the best time to record information (i.e. right away)
    • Name a safe, accessible place for storing their farm records.
    • Explain the reason that record keeping is required for some farmers.

PROOF OF LEARNING:  I will know that farmers have achieved learning objectives because:
    • Students keep records which include when, what, where, and who did farm activities.
    • Students demonstrate that crop activities can be traced using their records.
    • Students store their crop records in a way that makes the records easy to find and use.
5 IS THIS GUIDE RIGHT FOR YOU
   • Audience and Objectives
   • Resources needed

7 ICEBREAKER / ACTIVITY 1 / 10 MINUTES
   • Students will participate in an activity asking them to recall a meal that they ate 7 days prior.

8 WHY KEEP RECORDS? / ACTIVITY 2 / 15 MINUTES
   • Using a slide show to prompt discussion, students look at several examples of everyday record keeping: an organized way to document their activities. Through discussion, students learn how record keeping can help them understand and improve their crop yields, locate and fix problems, and access loans and other assistance for their farm business.

12 HOW TO KEEP RECORDS / ACTIVITY 3 / 15 MINUTES
   • Using a slide show to prompt discussion, students learn what information to include in their farm records, the importance of recording information promptly. Participants think about how and where to keep their records safe and accessible.

14 PRACTICE KEEPING RECORDS / ACTIVITY 4 / 15 MINUTES
   • Using a simple farm map, flash cards, and blank record keeping forms, groups of students simulate a crop planting sequence while recording their activities. They then share what they have recorded. The farmers use their planting records to trace harvested crops back to their source.
Audience

WHO: Refugee farmers and growers

LANGUAGE: Limited to Moderate English Speaking

LITERACY: Some literacy, in English or other language, is recommended for record keeping, but forms which rely on symbols/pictures can be used by low- or non-literate farmers.

FARMING EXPERIENCE: Beginner to advanced
Participants should have some experience or knowledge of farming or gardening, but this doesn’t have to be experience in the US.

PREREQUISITE KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED/USEFUL:
- Familiarity with reasons for food safety practices:
  - Regulatory and/or certification compliance
  - Protection of customers from food borne illness.

EXPLICIT SKILLS which may need to be pre-taught, or integrated into the lesson:
- Students need to be able to interpret and use simple farm maps.

REGION / CLIMATE: This module is adaptable to all regions and climates.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE: CSA and Wholesale Aggregation

SEASON: Ideally, this is done during the seasonal/Winter break in production so that farmers can use it to prepare and plan for their next growing season.
TIME: 60 minutes
(70 minutes if additional information is included)

STAFF / INTERPRETERS: 3 staff: 2 staff plus interpreter(s)
• It is suggested that in addition to the lead facilitator, another staff person be present to assist with activities and help respond to students’ needs.
• It is suggested that a language interpreter be used to ensure that farmers understand all of the complexities involved.

LOCATION: Classroom

RESOURCES AND MATERIALS NEEDED TO CONDUCT THE SESSIONS:

Each farmer should receive:
• Sample record keeping forms

Additional materials and resources include:
• Slideshow: ‘Record Keeping for Food Safe Crop Planning and Planting’
• Slide show: “Best ways to do Record Keeping”
• Pens
• Sample record keeping forms
• Date cards
• Crops flash cards
• Flash cards for inputs like fertilizer and water.
• Sample farm map
LESSON STEPS:

As they arrive to the class, students will be prompted to recall what they had for a meal 7 days prior. Ask them to recount as much detail about the meal as they can. Additional prompts can include: Where was the meal eaten? Who prepared the meal? How many others were present for the meal?

As the students respond, assure them that it is acceptable to not be able to remember all of the details. For those who do remember, prompt them to recall details of a meal they ate 30 days ago.

This activity will demonstrate that without records of an event, especially of a routine sort, it can be difficult or impossible to recall details.
LESSON STEPS: (Slideshow/discussion)

Explain: The Food Safety Modernization Act, (FSMA or Food Safety) is a law that requires farmers to follow rules which keep the food they grow clean and safe for their customers.

Foodborne sickness is a very serious problem. In the United States, every year:

- 45,000,000+ people get sick,
- 120,000+ people get sick enough to go to the hospital, and
- 3,000 people die from eating food that was spoiled or dirty when they bought it.

TIME: 15 Minutes

OVERVIEW:
Using a slide show to prompt discussion, students look at several examples of everyday record keeping: an organized way to document their activities. Through discussion, students learn how record keeping can help them understand and improve their crop yields, locate and fix problems, and access loans and other assistance for their farm business.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
• Slideshow: ‘Record Keeping for Food Safe Crop Planning and Planting’
• Props or pictures: Check book ledger, attendance sheets, store receipts, diary/journal, a camera, other record keeping devices

OBJECTIVES / LEARNING:
By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:
• Give at least two examples of how records can be useful for identifying factors that contribute to success and underperformance
• Explain how records can reduce risk and identify causes if there is an outbreak of food-borne illness.
• Name ways that records can improve their farm business and reduce risk.

NEW VOCABULARY
Trace Back System
Food Safety
LESSON STEPS, CONT.: Farmers can save lives by following Food Safety rules about how to handle produce from the time it is planted until it is sold to customers. This lesson explains how to keep good records that will show that you, as a farmer, are following the Food Safety rules.

Describe what records are. The main point should be to highlight that they are an organized way of documenting an activity.

Give some examples of types of records, such as the ledger in a checkbook, or a diary, or marking a child’s growth on a doorsill. Invite the group to name other kinds of records that they might already be keeping.

- What are some things you are already keeping records for?
- Where do you write them?
- What do they show about the thing you are recording?
  - Do they show how things change? Grew? Got smaller?
  - Do they show how long something took?
  - Are there other things they can show?

Give an example of the teacher’s own record keeping, perhaps about the class itself. Say why it is being done, perhaps for purposes of grant funding to make the class possible.

Describe the reasons record keeping is good for a farmer when they are doing their crop planning and planting.

- Describe how records help keep track of things that worked
  - If crop yields increase
  - If some crops sold well
LESSON STEPS, CONT.:

- Describe how records help keep track of things that can be improved
  - If something bad happens to the crops
  - If some crops didn’t sell well

- Describe ways that records can be important for business reasons
  - Easier to get insurance or a loan
  - Easier to get government assistance
  - Required by customers before they buy from a farmer
  - Required by certifications that need record keeping
  - As part of a farm safety plan that needs record keeping

- Records make it easier to prove you did what you say you did

- Records can help see what went wrong if customers complain about the crop

Explain how the records are important for a trace back system (students will get practice in this later in the module).

Describe an example scenario:

- People who ate the same dish at the same restaurant get sick.
  - The farmer sells produce to that restaurant.
    - The farmer’s records show that their vegetables were part of that dish.
      - The records show exactly where the problem is so the farmer can fix it.
LESSON STEPS, CONT.:

- Or, the farmer’s records show that their vegetables were not a part of that dish
  - The records show that the farmer is not responsible for people getting sick.

Lead a discussion about how record keeping can show how things change based on conditions. Use examples of the same crops in different fields, and how yield might be different based on the planting location. Ask for experiences the students have had.

- What are some other things that records for crop planning and planting can show?
  - Can you describe things that were good that they can show?
  - Can you describe things that need to be improved that they can show?

Re-emphasize how it is important to have a trace back system for the crops.

- It can help keep food safe.
  - If there is an outbreak of foodborne illness it can find where the outbreak started
  - It can also protect farmers because they can prove they did what they said they did
TIME: 15 Minutes

OBJECTIVES:
By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:
- List what details they should include in their farm records
- Explain what the best time is to record information (i.e. right away)
- Name a safe, accessible place for storing their farm records.

MATERIALS NEEDED:
- Slide show: “Best ways to do Record Keeping”

OVERVIEW:
Using a slide show to prompt discussion, students learn what information to include in their farm records and the importance of recording information promptly. Participants think about how and where to keep their records safe and accessible.

VOCABULARY
When | What
Where | Who

LESSON STEPS:

Discussion: Let’s learn about the best ways to do record keeping, and then practice doing it.

- **When:** There are always a couple of important things to write down when keeping records. The first important thing is the date. Always write this. Sometimes you might also want to write the time of day. Know exactly when something happened is always important to keeping records.

- **What:** The next important thing is to write what you are keeping the record of. If you are planning or planting crops, this will mean that you write the name of the crop. This always needs to be written in the record.
LESSON STEPS, CONT.:

- **Where**: Another important thing to write is where. Again, if you are keeping records for crops planning and planting this means that you write down which field or part of the farm where the crop is being planted. This is always important to include in your record keeping, especially as part of the Trace Back System that we talked about earlier.

- **Who**: It is also very important to write down who. When you record information about your crop planning and planting this will mean that you write down the name of the person who planted each crop. You can think of your record keeping like writing a story, and we also want to know who is the hero of the story. So, always write the person’s name, even if you’re the person. You can be the hero!

- You can put other details in your records, too. You might want to write what the water source will be for the crops. Or, if you will use fertilizer. Or, if you will be doing crop rotation. These extra details will help when you try to decide what worked best and what needs to change to make things work better.

- **Where** do you think you should put your records?

Review:
Engage participants in conversation about when to make records and where to keep them.

- **When** do you think you should do your record keeping?
  - What are ways that make it easiest to remember?
  - You can write in any language.
  - Photographs taken with a cell phone can be part of good record keeping

- **Where** do you think you should put your records?
  - A dry/lock box at the farm?
  - In your car or office?

Emphasize

1. That it’s better to do the record keeping right away. The longer you wait the easier it will be to forget details. Remember how hard it was to remember details about meals you ate in the past, and
2. To store the records where they are easy to retrieve so that entries are made consistently.
**LESSON STEPS:**

Divide students into groups. Give each student a date card. Give each group a farm map. Give each group crop flash cards.

Explain that group members must decide where each student will plant their crop in the map. Then, taking turns, each student will plant their crops on the map. As a student takes their turn, the date card for that student will indicate the day of the planting. Give students input cards and ask them to similarly take turns, using their date cards to indicate the implementation of the input (note the students do not have to put the crop card and input card in the same place. Each student is to make records of the whole group’s plantings on the record keeping forms.
LESSON STEPS, CONT.:

Ask students to report back on their records.

- Who feels that their record keeping shows everything that happened?
  - Tell the group about each part of what you wrote.
  - Was there anything that you could have missed?
  - Did you write the things as they happened? Or wait until after?

- Let’s ask another person.
  - Tell the group about each part of what you wrote.
  - Was there anything that you could have missed?
  - Did you write the things as they happened? Or wait until after?

Demonstrate how records can be used to trace crops back to the fields by doing a role-play. Reiterate that this is a trace back system.

Role-play scenarios:

1) Sick restaurant customers:
   - Roles: restaurant owner, farmer

   - Restaurant owner complains that dishes made with bok choy on a certain date (taken from random date card) made customers sick.

   - How does the farmer respond?
     - Did the farmer plant bok choy which could have been harvested and sold by that date?
     - Where was the bok choy planted?
     - What amendments were used
     - Who planted the bok choy?

2) Wholesale customer complains about products
   - Roles: wholesale customer, farmer

   - Wholesale customer complains that the peppers the farmer delivered on a certain date (taken from random date card) are the wrong kind.

   - How does the farmer respond?
     - Did the farmer plant peppers which could have been harvested and sold by that date?
     - What are the places the peppers were planted?
     - What kind of pepper was planted in each place
     - Who planted the peppers?
LESSON STEPS, CONT.:

Ask students if they can think of other ways that the records can prove they did what they said they did. Emphasize that good record keeping is the best way to make this kind of trace back system.

TEACHING TIP:

I like that there are two examples of the role play. As a facilitator, I’d probably add questions (When, Where, What and Who) to a flip chart or dry erase board to prompt farmers to answer questions about the trace back system.

-Lauren