

Building Farmers in the West

Program Evaluation Report



Fall 2012

Provided by
Kynda Curtis and Susan Slocum, Utah State University
and
Kellie Enns, Martha Sullins, and Dea Sloan, Colorado State University

Program Evaluation Committee

Kynda Curtis, Associate Professor and State Extension Specialist, Utah State University
Martha Sullins, Extension Specialist, Colorado State University
Jo Ann Warner, Associate Director, Western Center for Risk Management Education,
Washington State University

Table of Contents

Report Sections

1. Year 1 Programming Assessment Overview	1
2. Year 2 Programming Assessment Overview	10
3. Follow-up Phone Interview Assessment Summary	19
4. Participant Post and Follow-up Assessment Comments	27
5. Experiential Learning Assessment Overview	51

Appendices

A. Program Pre-Course Assessment	61
B. Program Post-Course Assessment	64
C. Program Follow-up Course Assessment	66
D. Follow-up Phone Interview Assessment	69
E. Experiential Learning Guide	70
F. Professional Development Plan – Experiential Learning Component	73
G. Mentorship Final Assessment – Mentee Version	76
H. Mentorship Final Assessment – Mentor Version	79

1. Year 1 Programming Assessment Overview

Provided by Kynda Curtis and Susan Slocum, Utah State University

Overview

The Building Farmers in the West workshops in year one took place in six locations across the West. The Utah workshop had the highest number of participants with 24 in attendance, followed by Idaho at 22 participants. Of the 102 total participants, the majority were either new farmers/ranchers (less than one year of experience) or intermediate farmers/ranchers (less than three years' experience). Only 13% of the participants were experienced farmers/ranchers (more than three-years' experience). On average, 48% of the participants completed a viable business plan for their operation during the workshop.

Table 1. Programming Overview

State	Number of Participants	New Farmer/ Rancher	Intermediate Farmer/ Rancher	Experienced Farmer/ Rancher	Avg Yrs Selling	Completed Business Plan (%)
Colorado	8	50%	38%	13%	3.75	50%
Idaho	22	41%	45%	14%	1.86	41%
New Mexico	15	53%	40%	7%	0.93	56%
Oregon	14	69%	31%	0%	0.46	71%
Utah	24	25%	50%	25%	2.50	46%
Washington	19	58%	21%	21%	0.53	26%
Total	102	49%	37%	13%	1.67	48%

Participants were requested to fill out a pre-course and post-course evaluation to assess changes in knowledge/skills, attitudes, and intended practice change. Nine months after the participants completed the workshop, they were asked to complete a follow-up evaluation in order to measure participant adoption of knowledge/skills, actual practices changes, and impacts to their operation and their communities both economically and socially.

1. Knowledge/Skills Change

The workshop participants were asked to rate their knowledge/skills on a scale from one to five with one representing "Not at All" and five "A Great Deal." The participants answered these questions on both the pre-course and post-course assessments. Table 2 shows that the areas with the most improvement were accessing local resources/technical support, developing business plans, and using effective merchandising at direct markets. These skills showed a percent change of 61%, 60%, and 60% respectively. The areas with the least improvement were maintaining financial records & budgeting, managing labor force and assessing seasonal labor requirements, and using cost-effective production strategies. These skills showed a percent

change of 25%, 35%, and 37% respectively. As labor management and production techniques were less common in the workshop curriculum, these results make intuitive sense. It was also noted that record-keeping and budgeting curriculum was the most cumbersome for participants and perhaps more time should be devoted to this topic in the future.

Table 2. Knowledge/Skill Assessment (Rating of 1 to 5)

	Avg Pre-Course	Avg Post-Course	Percentage Change (Pre to Post)	Avg Follow-up	Percentage Change (Pre to Follow-up)
Developing business plans	2.50	4.02	60%	3.90	56%
Maintaining financial records & budgeting	3.02	3.79	25%	3.94	30%
Using cost-effective production strategies	2.63	3.61	37%	3.58	36%
Targeting viable customers for each product	2.67	3.87	45%	3.68	38%
Using cost-effective promotional techniques	2.52	3.79	50%	3.42	35%
Pricing products & implementing pricing strategies	2.42	3.59	49%	3.42	42%
Using effective merchandising at direct markets	2.30	3.67	60%	3.74	63%
Showcasing product variety & abundance at direct	2.51	3.89	54%	3.84	53%
Assessing operation specific/applicable taxes	1.96	3.07	56%	3.26	66%
Managing labor force & assessing seasonal labor	2.25	3.03	35%	3.13	39%
Complying with regulatory issues	2.43	3.48	43%	3.58	48%
Accessing local resources/technical support	2.38	3.82	61%	3.94	66%

The participants were asked before and after the workshop if they knew where to obtain various products and services for their operation on a scale from one to five with one representing “Definitely Not” and five “Definitely Yes.” The most improvement was seen in business management support, marketing strategy advice, and capital/credit providers with a percent change in understanding of 50%, 46%, and 42% respectively (Table 3). The pre-course understanding was very high for many of the other areas, and as a result, the percent change in understanding was relatively low.

Table 3. Knowledge of Resources (Rating 1 to 5)

	Avg Pre-Course	Avg Post-Course	Percentage Change
Land (lease or purchase)	3.99	4.37	9%
Labor (permanent and/or seasonal)	3.35	3.78	13%
Water/irrigation system providers or supplies	3.64	4.17	14%
Capital/credit providers	2.74	3.88	42%
Tax planning advice	2.96	3.83	29%
Insect/disease/weed management advice	3.54	4.10	16%
Initial seed/plant/livestock suppliers	3.66	4.37	19%
Equipment (scale-appropriate)	3.46	4.02	16%
Production technical advice	3.16	4.05	28%
Marketing strategy advice	2.79	4.07	46%
Business management support	2.70	4.05	50%

Figure 1 illustrates the percentage change between the post-course evaluation and the follow-up evaluation which were both paired with the pre-course evaluation. Participants scored

relatively high in “Assessing Operation Specific/Applicable Taxes” which increased by 10%, followed by “Local Resources/Technical Support”, “Complying with Regulatory Issues”, and “Maintaining Financial Records & Budgeting” which all increased by five-percent. Furthermore, there was a marginal increase in “Managing Labor and Assessing Seasonal Labor Requirements” and “Using Effective Merchandising at Direct Markets”, which increased by four-percent and three-percent respectively. Interestingly, the reevaluation indicates that “Using Cost-Effective Promotion Techniques,” “Targeting viable customers,” and “Using Pricing Strategies,” decreased by seven to fifteen percent nine months after the course completion, perhaps implying that these skills may have been more difficult to apply that thought at course completion, or additional curriculum or fresher courses are needed in these areas. Participant knowledge of “Using Cost-Effective Production Strategies” only marginally decreased (1%) along with the knowledge of “Showcasing Product Variety and Abundance at Direct Markets.”

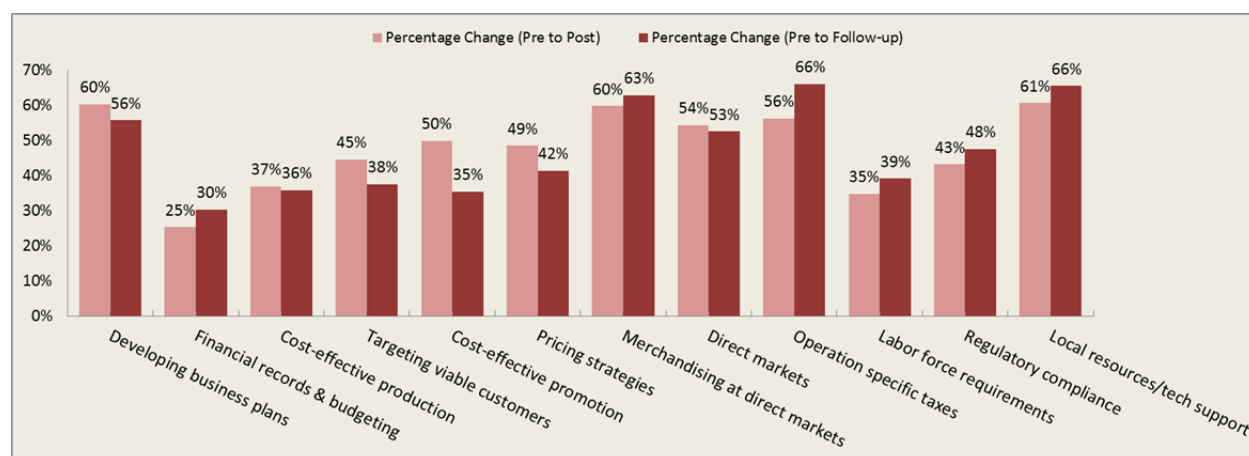


Figure 1. A comparison is between pre to post-course evaluation and pre-course to follow-up evaluation in knowledge and skill. The rating scale ranged from 1 meaning not at all, to 5, meaning a great deal.

2. Attitude Change

In both the pre and the post workshop evaluations participants were asked to rank their agreement with several attitude-type statements from one to five with one representing “Strongly Disagree” and five representing “Strongly Agree.” The statements with the greatest increase in agreement were concerning actions such as “I Follow a Financial Plan for my Operation Annually” (89%), “I Follow a Marketing Plan for my Operation Annually” (85%), and “I Currently Have a Business Plan for my Operation” (78%). The first two statements, shown in Table 4, received high agreement ratings in the pre-course assessment and thus the improvement was relatively low. Attitudes toward “The Need for a Business Plan” and “Understanding of the

Business Planning Process” were given the highest ratings in the post-course assessment at 4.56 and 4.54 respectively.

Table 4. Attitude Statements (Rating 1 to 5)

	Avg Pre-Course	Avg Post-Course	Percentage Change (Pre to Post)
A business plan should be developed prior to implementing crop/livestock production	4.32	4.56	6%
I understand the risks and opportunities associated with direct marketing/targeted wholesale marketing	3.44	4.28	25%
I understand the application & financial requirements for participation in agency (FSA, NRCS, etc.) programs	2.57	3.82	48%
I have previous experience developing business plans/ I understand the process of developing a business plan	2.82	4.54	61%
I currently have a business plan for my operation	2.28	4.05	78%
I follow a financial plan for my operation annually	2.27	4.30	89%
I follow a production plan for my operation annually	2.60	4.43	70%
I follow a marketing plan for my operation annually	2.38	4.39	85%

The follow-up evaluation results regarding attitudinal change are shown in Figure 2. While the majority of the participants indicated that they still have a business plan, those following a marketing plan and a financial plan dropped off significantly, as well as those following a production plan (38%, 37%, and 30% respectively). Although these results may be due to differences in response rates between the pre and follow-up evaluations, it may also indicate that the intended action or attitude towards the importance of these additional items above the basic business plan decreased. As the course heavily emphasized the development of business plans over other types of planning instruments, an intermediate or advanced curriculum could provide a more well-rounded planning approach.

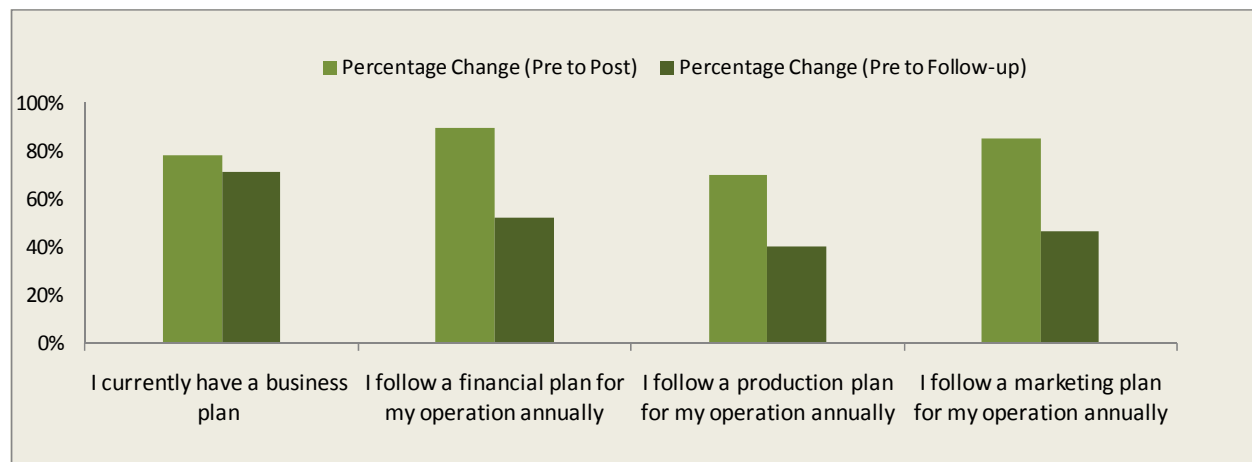


Figure 2. A comparison is between post workshop and follow-up evaluations in participant attitudes.

4. Practice Change

Before the workshop, the participants were asked which products they currently produced, and after the workshop, they were asked which products they planned to produce (Table 5). The largest percentage change was seen in the production of “Fruits” and “Herbs”, which increased by 24%. “Flowers” and “Vegetables” were a close second at 22% and 21% respectively. With the exception of “Meat/Animal Products”, participants showed interest in increasing the production of all agricultural products.

The participants were asked before the course where they sell or planned to sell their produce, and after the workshop, they were asked where they will sell their produce (Table 6). Farmers' markets had the highest percentage before and after the workshop. Farmers' markets also had the greatest increase at 35%, just slightly more than the increase in restaurants at 34%. Selling through a CSA program also gained in popularity with an increase of 26%.

Table 5. Items under Production

	Producing Pre-Course	Plan to Produce Post-Course	Percentage Change
Vegetables	48%	69%	22%
Flowers	13%	34%	21%
Herbs	21%	45%	24%
Fruit	25%	48%	24%
Eggs	23%	31%	8%
Meat/animal products	29%	27%	-1%
Dairy products	8%	11%	3%
Value-added products	13%	29%	16%
Other	18%	26%	8%

Table 6. Marketing Outlets Used

	Selling Pre-Course	Plan to Sell Post-Course	Percentage Change
Farmers' Market	41%	76%	35%
Farm/Road Stand	18%	34%	16%
Restaurant	11%	45%	34%
Individuals	36%	50%	14%
Wholesale	15%	27%	13%
CSA	10%	35%	26%
Other	6%	23%	17%

After the course, participants were asked to indicate their agreement with statements concerning their future as farmers/ranchers. Their answers were on a scale from one to five with one representing “Strongly Disagree” and five representing “Strongly Agree.” Those participants selecting “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” were considered to have answered “Yes.” Figure 3 shows

the percentage change between the post-course and the follow-up evaluations. The follow-up results show that “I Completed a Business Plan During this Course”, “I Now Have a Network of Farmers”, and “I plan to Continue Farming or Initiate My Farm” had a growth rate of eleven-percent, eight-percent, and six-percent respectively. Unfortunately, the drop off in “I use at least 80% of the Course Material” and “I use 40% of the Course Material” implies that usage of materials declined over time. For some participants this may indicate that they no longer need to focus on all of the materials, but are using a few sections more intensively. For others refresher workshops, follow-up webinars, or more advanced workshops, may keep participants involved in using course materials for a longer duration. Nine months after program completion, 97% of the participants plan to continue farming or start farming, 67% of the participants felt they could use at least 80% of the material, and 71% felt they could use at least 40% of the material presented in the workshop.

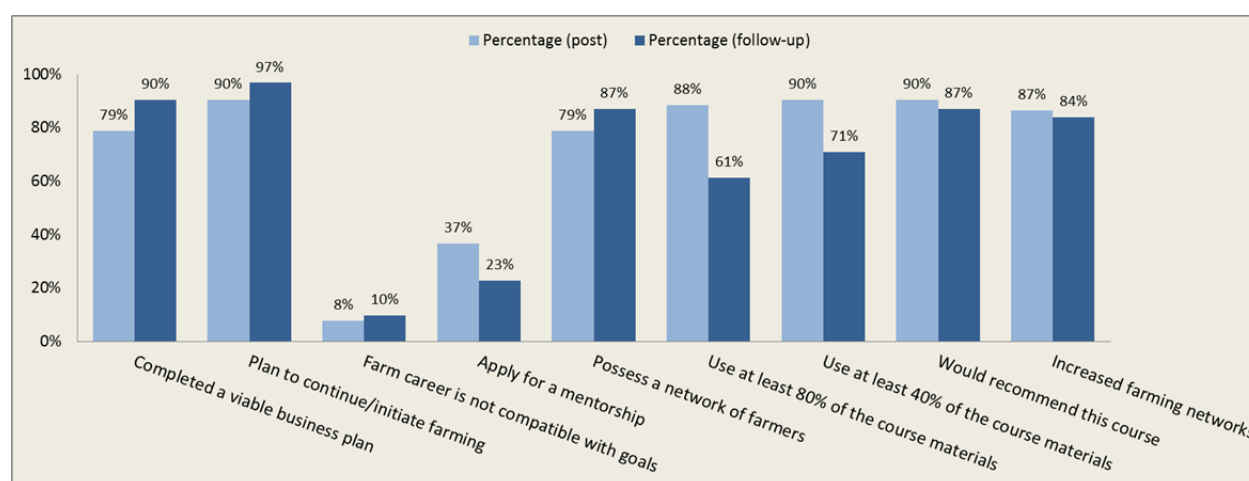


Figure 3. A comparison between the post workshop evaluation and the follow-up evaluation Note that both evaluations used the scale of 1 to 5 to find the average scale.

Nine months after the course participants provided information on the operational changes made at their farms (Table 7). Over seventy percent (74%) showed increases in their “Infrastructure and Equipment”, followed by the “Number of Customers” (71%), “Range of Product Varieties Grown” (58%), and “Variety of Marketing Outlets Used” (58%). Sixteen percent of the participants were using additional “Financing Amount/Options,” and indication that they may be taking advantage of more appropriate financing options or are more aware of these options. “Number of Employees” and “Land Area under Production” also increased, but to a lesser degree.

Table 7. Operational Changes

	Increase
Range of product varieties grown	58%
Number of farm enterprises (vegetables, livestock, flowers, etc.)	55%
Infrastructure and equipment (irrigation, tractor, greenhouse, etc.)	74%
Land area under production	48%
Number of employees	23%
Financing amount/options	16%
Customer base (number of customers)	71%
Variety of marketing outlets used (CSAs, farmers' markets, etc.)	58%

Note that participants evaluated the potential changes to their farming/ranching operations since attending this course. The scale is ranged from one to three (1= decrease, 2= no change, 3= increase).

5. Economic/Social Impacts

Table 8 shows the success of the Building Farmers in the West workshops by presenting the changes incurred through participation. Attending the workshop improved the participants' "Quality of Life" by 68%, helped participants achieve their goals (58%) and helped to "Improve the Farming Community" by 66%. Sixty-five percent reported that their farming operations have improved because of their attendance in the course. These results indicate that the program instilled information that the participants found to be helpful and valuable. These workshops were able to provide the majority of the participants with a network of farmers to work with (79%), and if the participants already had an established network of farmers, in most cases that network was increased (87%). Participants found that the value of the course outweighed the cost (86%) and about half claim their farming operations are more economically viable (49%). However, only 39% of the participants have improved their relations with employees/employers. A good measure of overall success for the program is the fact that 87% of the participants would recommend this course to other farmers/ranchers.

In general, participants expressed three important lessons that were disseminated throughout the program. First, they realized that hard work is required before beginning a new small farming enterprise if their investment is to be successful. Participants realized that tangible benefits may take some time to materialize and that gaining more knowledge helps to make their enterprise sustainable. Secondly, creating and expanding local farmer networks helps disseminate additional knowledge to new generations, including their own family and other young farmers. Finally, participants increased their appreciation for sound environmental practices in their operations.

Table 8. Impact Statements

	Percentage Yes
My farming operation is now more economically viable	49%
The quality of life on my farm has improved	68%
My farming operations are now more efficient	65%
My families goals are now easier to achieve	58%
Employee/employer relations on my farm have improved	39%
The value of attending this course was more than the cost of attendance (time, travel costs, etc.)	86%
I would recommend this course to other farmers or potential farmers	89%
I now have a network of farmers I can work with	79%
I increased my network of farming colleagues and can draw on them for information/resources	87%
The Building Farmers program has improved our farming community	66%

5. Conclusions

The first year of the Building Farmers in the West program was successful. Over 100 participants from six states participated in workshops. The information presented in this report was gathered through a three-tiered assessment process including a pre-course evaluation, a post-course evaluation, and a follow-up evaluation nine months after the participants had completed the course. The assessment evaluated changes in participants' knowledge/skills, attitudes, practices, as well as economic and social impacts.

Between the pre-course and post-course assessments, participants showed the most improvement in the knowledge of accessing local resources/technical support, developing business plans, and using effective merchandising at direct markets. They also showed an increase in the ability to access business management support, marketing strategy advice, and capital/credit providers. The areas with the least improvement in knowledge were maintaining financial records & budgeting, managing labor force & assessing seasonal labor requirements, and using cost-effective production strategies. The assessment of attitudinal changes showed that understanding the need for a business plan, as well as following a business plan and understanding the business plan process were highly rated. Consideration for increased direct marketing initiatives was a key change in participants' business practices. Increased interest in farmers' markets, selling to restaurants and creating/participating in CSA programs were the most popular direct marketing avenues. By the completion of the course, participants felt that they had improved their access to networks, had completed a business plan, and planned to continue their farm initiatives.

Attending the workshop improved the participants' quality of life, helped participants achieve their goals, and helped to improve their farming communities. Participants were

optimistic that their farm operations would improve because of their attendance in the course and felt that the value received for the course outweighed the cost of attendance.

In general, the participants felt the same nine months after the course as they did upon completion. Participants felt they still had a strong understanding of operational taxes, complying with regulatory issues, an understanding of accessing local resources and technical support and the maintenance of financial records and budgeting. The major changes include a decrease in confidence in using effective promotional strategies. Concrete results at the farm level from course participation included an increase in infrastructure and equipment, a larger customer base, an increase in the products produced on the farm, and an increase in the variety of marketing outlets used. However, there was smaller growth in the number of employees on the farm or improved relationships with employees, land area under production, and increased financing. The Building Farmers in the West program succeeded in expanding the knowledge base of its participants, particularly in the areas of marketing and business plan development and half of the participants reported that their farm operations were more viable nine months after the course completion.

2. Year 2 Programming Assessment Overview

Provided by Kynda Curtis and Susan Slocum, Utah State University

Overview

The Building Farmers in the West program conducted nine workshops in five states in its second year of programming. Five workshops were held in Colorado and one in each of the other states. The majority of the 159 total participants were new farmers/ranchers (less than a year of experience) at 41.2%. Less than half were experienced farmers/ranchers (more than three years' experience) and only 22% of the participants were intermediate farmers/ranchers (less than three-years-experience). On average, 69% of the participants completed a viable business plan for their operation during the workshop.

Participants were requested to fill out a pre-course and post-course evaluation to assess changes in knowledge/skills, attitudes, and intended practice change. Five to seven months after the participants completed the workshop, they were asked to complete a follow-up evaluation in order to measure participant adoption of knowledge/skills, actual practices changes, and impacts to their operation and their communities both economically and socially.

Table 1. Program Overview

State	Number of Participants	New Farmer/Rancher	Intermediate Farmer/Rancher	Experienced Farmer/Rancher	Avg Yrs Selling	Completed Business Plan (%)
Colorado	116	52.0%	32.7%	15.3%	0.76	76%
New Mexico	9	50.0%	25.0%	25.0%	0.88	72%
Oregon	9	29.0%	29.0%	43.0%	0.71	57%
Nevada	11	62.5%	12.5%	25.0%	0.50	80%
Utah	14	12.5%	12.5%	75.0%	0.75	60%
Total	159	41.2%	22.3%	36.7%	0.72	69%

Table 2. Colorado Programs Overview

Colorado	Number of Participants	New Farmer/Rancher	Intermediate Farmer/Rancher	Experienced Farmer/Rancher	Avg Yrs Selling	Completed Business Plan (%)
Salida	33	46.2%	15.4%	38.5%	0.73	58%
Boulder	24	52.4%	38.1%	9.5%	0.52	93%
Denver	25	38.5%	53.8%	7.7%	0.73	93%
Fort Collins	21	63.0%	26.0%	11.0%	1.00	88%
Durango	13	60.0%	30.0%	10.0%	0.80	50%
Total	116	52.0%	32.7%	15.3%	0.76	76%

1. Knowledge/Skills Change

The workshop participants were asked to rate their knowledge/skills on a scale from one to five with one representing “Not at All” and five “A Great Deal.” The participants answered these questions on both the pre-course and post-course assessments. The areas with the most

improvement, shown in Table 3, were accessing local resources/technical support (51%), complying with regulatory issues (50%), and assessing operation specific/applicable taxes (46%). The areas with the least improvement were maintaining financial records and budgeting (17%), using cost-effective production strategies (22%), and targeting viable customers for each product (30%). It should be noted that financial recording and budgeting and production techniques appeared to be the participants' primary concern, similar to the Year 1 assessments. In addition, marketing techniques were a concern, which implies that participants were insecure about their skills regarding targeting viable customers for their products.

Table 3. Knowledge/Skill Assessment (Rating of 1 to 5)

	Avg Pre-Course	Avg Post-Course	Percentage Change (Pre to Post)	Avg Follow-up	Percentage Change (Pre to Follow-up)
Developing business plans	3.05	4.28	41%	4.23	39%
Maintaining financial records & budgeting	3.31	4.05	22%	3.88	17%
Using cost-effective production strategies	2.85	3.84	35%	3.49	22%
Targeting viable customers for each product	3.02	4.12	36%	3.93	30%
Using cost-effective promotional techniques	2.74	3.87	41%	3.60	32%
Pricing products & implementing pricing strategies	2.57	3.73	45%	3.53	37%
Using effective merchandising at direct markets	2.53	3.80	50%	3.53	39%
Showcasing product variety & abundance at direct markets	2.71	4.13	52%	3.70	36%
Assessing operation specific/applicable taxes	2.05	3.33	62%	3.00	46%
Managing labor force & assessing seasonal labor requirements	2.45	3.44	40%	3.37	38%
Complying with regulatory issues	2.37	3.61	53%	3.56	50%
Accessing local resources/technical support	2.68	4.12	54%	4.05	51%

The participants were asked before and after the workshop if they knew where to obtain various products and services for their operation on a scale from one to five with one representing "Definitely Not" and five "Definitely Yes." The most improvement was seen in marketing strategy advice, business management support, and capital/credit providers with a percent change in understanding of 29% each. The pre-course understanding in the second year was high in several areas, such as land, irrigation, and seed/plant resources, and as a result, the percent change in understanding was relatively low in these areas.

Table 4. Knowledge of Resources (Rating of 1 to 5)

	Avg Pre-Course	Avg Post-Course	Percentage Change
Land (lease or purchase)	4.07	4.36	7%
Labor (permanent and/or seasonal)	3.54	3.94	11%
Water/irrigation system providers or supplies	3.86	4.29	11%
Capital/credit providers	3.03	3.90	29%
Tax planning advice	3.21	4.00	25%
Insect/disease/weed management advice	3.78	4.34	15%
Initial seed/plant/livestock suppliers	3.98	4.49	13%
Equipment (scale-appropriate)	3.59	4.10	14%
Production technical advice	3.36	4.16	24%
Marketing strategy advice	3.32	4.29	29%
Business management support	3.28	4.24	29%

Figure 1 illustrates the percentage change between the post-course evaluation and the follow-up evaluation in knowledge and skills, which were both paired with the pre-course evaluation. Participants scored relatively high in assessing operation specific/applicable taxes, accessing local resources and tech support, showcasing product variety and abundance at direct markets, and complying with regulatory issues. Participant knowledge and skill levels were maintained to a high degree between the post course and follow-up evaluations, with the exception of assessing taxes, using direct markets, and using cost effective production strategies, which decreased between 13-16 percent each. As the percentage changes for these categories were quite high for the post-course evaluations, the follow-up evaluation results may be more indicative of actual rather than perceived abilities of the respondents.

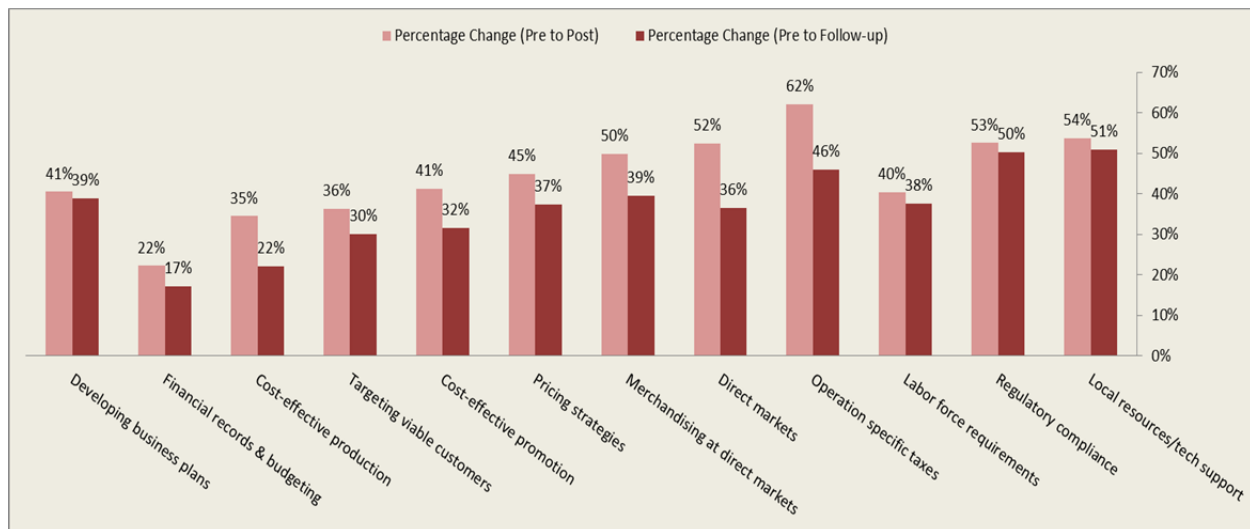


Figure 1. A comparison between pre to post-course evaluation and pre to follow-up evaluation in participant knowledge/skills. The rating scale ranged from 1 meaning not at all, to 5, meaning a great deal.

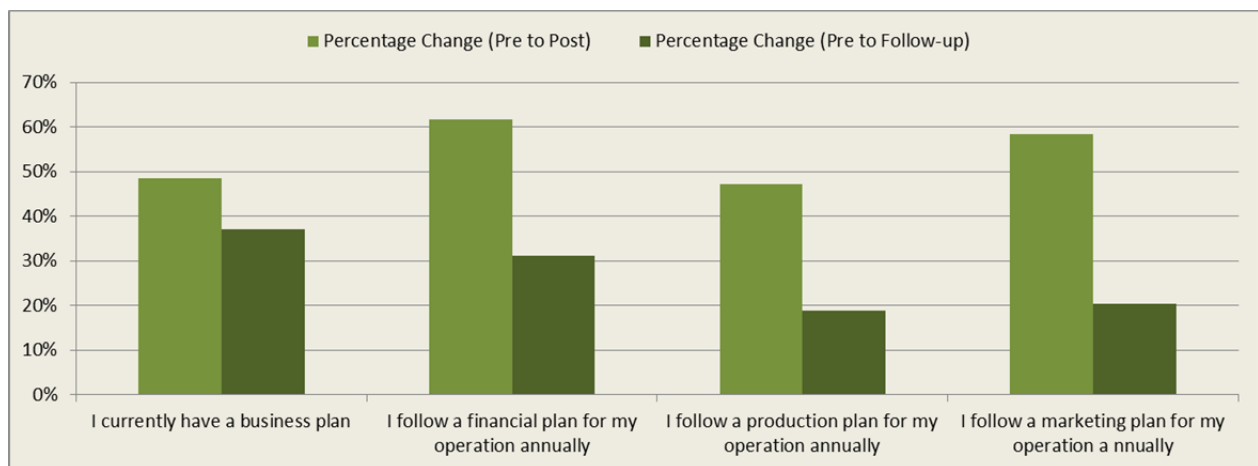
2. Attitude Change

In both the pre and post workshop evaluations participants were asked to rank their agreement with several attitude-type statements from one to five with one representing “Strongly Disagree” and five representing “Strongly Agree.” The statements with the greatest increase in agreement were the ones concerning actions such as “I Follow a Financial Plan for My Operation Annually” (62%), “I Follow a Marketing Plan for My Operation Annually” (58%), and “I Currently Have a Business Plan for My Operation” (49%). Attitudes toward the need for a business plan and understanding of the business planning process were given the highest ratings in the post-course assessment at 4.72 and 4.70 respectively.

Table 5. Attitude Statements (Rating of 1 to 5)

	Avg Pre-Course	Avg Post-Course	Percentage Change (Pre to Post)
A business plan should be developed prior to implementing	4.50	4.72	5%
I understand the risks and opportunities associated with direct	3.66	4.43	21%
I understand the application & financial requirements for participation in agency (FSA,NRCS, etc.) programs	2.83	3.77	33%
I have previous experience developing business plans/ I understand the process of developing a business plan	3.26	4.70	44%
I currently have a business plan for my operation	2.85	4.23	49%
I follow a financial plan for my operation annually	2.73	4.42	62%
I follow a production plan for my operation annually	3.10	4.56	47%
I follow a marketing plan for my operation annually	2.82	4.46	58%

The follow-up evaluation results regarding attitudinal change are shown in Figure 2. While the majority of the participants indicated that they still have a business plan, those following a marketing plan and a financial plan dropped off significantly, as well as those following a production plan (38%, 31%, and 28% respectively). Although these results may be due to differences in response rates between the pre and follow-up evaluations, it may also indicate that the intended action or attitude towards the importance of these additional items above the basic business plan decreased. These results are similar to those from year 1.

**Figure 2.** A comparison between post workshop and follow-up evaluations in participant attitudes.

3. Practice Change

Before the workshop, the participants were asked which products they currently produced, and after the workshop, they were asked which products they planned to produce (Table 6). The largest percentage change was seen in the production of “Herbs,” which increased

by 30%. “Flowers” and “Vegetables” were a close second at 27% and 25% respectively. With the exception of “Dairy Products,” participants showed interest in increasing the production of all products.

Table 6. Items under Production

	Producing Pre-Course (%)	Plan to Produce Post-Course (%)	Percentage Change
Vegetables	52%	77%	25%
Flowers	17%	44%	27%
Herbs	34%	63%	30%
Fruit	17%	35%	17%
Eggs	21%	39%	18%
Meat/animal products	19%	34%	15%
Dairy products	6%	8%	2%
Value-added products	18%	37%	19%
Other	10%	20%	10%

The participants were asked before the workshops the outlets they use or plan to use to sell their produce, and after the workshop, they were asked the same question (Table 7). Farmers' markets had the highest increase at 36%, just slightly more than the increase of CSA programs at 31%. Selling through a farm/road stand also gained in popularity with an increase of 31%.

Table 7. Marketing Outlets Used

	Selling Pre-Course (%)	Plan to Sell Post-Course (%)	Percentage Change
Farmers' Market	32%	68%	36%
Farm/Road Stand	13%	44%	31%
Restaurant	18%	46%	27%
Individuals	34%	61%	28%
Wholesale	14%	34%	19%
CSA	19%	50%	31%
Other	5%	25%	19%

After the workshops, participants were asked to indicate their agreement with statements concerning their future as farmers/ranchers. Their answers were on a scale from one to five with one representing “Strongly Disagree” and five representing “Strongly Agree.” Those participants selecting “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” were considered to have answered “Yes.” Figure 3 shows the percentage change between the post-course and the follow-up evaluations. The follow-up results show that “I Completed a Business Plan during this Course” and “I plan to Continue Farming or Initiate My Farm” had a growth rate of 12% and 5% respectively. Unfortunately, the drop off in “I use at least 80% of the Course Material” and “I use 40% of the Course Material” implies that usage of materials declined over time. For some participants this may indicate that they no longer need to focus on all of the materials, but are using a few sections more

intensively. For others refresher workshops, follow-up webinars, or more advanced workshops, may keep participants involved in using course materials for a longer duration. Likewise, “I Plan to Apply for a Mentorship with an Established Farm Operation” was a less popular learning strategy. This may be due to time constraints when operating a farm.

In the majority of the other categories, participant practice change/actions or intended actions remained relatively stable from the post to the follow-up evaluations. Five to seven months after program completion 95% of the participants are planning to continue farming or start farming, 90% of the participants increased their farming networks and 83% felt they could use at least 40% of the material presented in the workshop. One-hundred percent said they would recommend this course to others.

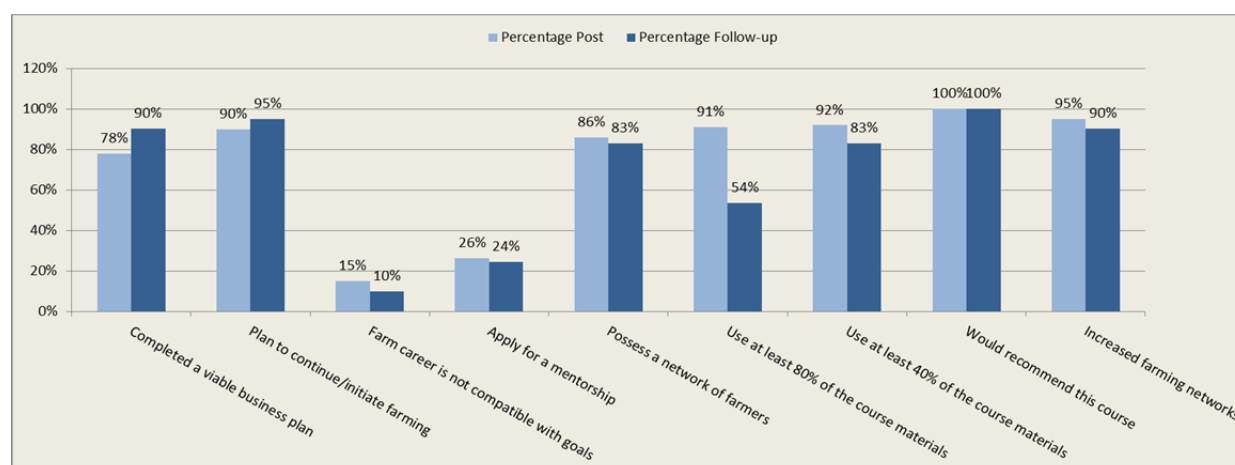


Figure 3. A comparison between the post workshop evaluation and the follow-up evaluation. Note that both evaluations used the scale of 1 to 5 to find the average scale.

Six months after the course participants provided information on the operational changes made at their farms (Table 8). Sixty percent showed increases in their “Infrastructure and Equipment,” followed by the “Range of Product Varieties Grown” (58%), “Customer Base” (58%), and “Variety of Marketing Outlets Used” (50%). The “Number of Employees” increased to a lesser degree (20%), and only 33% agreed that their “Financing Amount/Options” had increased.

Table 8. Operational Changes

	Increase
Range of product varieties grown	58%
Number of farm enterprises (vegetables, livestock, flowers, etc).	48%
Infrastructure and equipment (irrigation, tractor, greenhouse, etc.)	60%
Land area under production	50%
Number of employees	18%
Financing amount/options	33%
Customer base (number of customers)	58%
Variety of marketing outlets used (CSAs, farmers' markets, etc.)	50%

Note that participants evaluated the potential changes to their farming/ranching operations since attending this course. The scale ranged from one to three (1= decrease, 2= no change, 3= increase).

4. Economic/Social Impacts

Table 9 shows the success of the Building Farmers in the West workshops by presenting the changes incurred through participation. Attending the workshop improved the participants' "Quality of Life" by 48%, helped participants "Achieve their Family Goals" (65%) and helped to "Improve the Farming Community" by 85%. These results indicate that the program provided information that the participants found to be helpful and valuable. These workshops were able to provide the majority of the participants with a network of farmers to work with (83%), and if the participants already had an established network of farmers, in most cases that network was increased (90%). Participants found that the value of the course outweighed the cost (85%) and over half claim their farming operations are more economically viable (55%). However, only 38% of the participants have improved their relations with employees/employers. A good measure of overall success for the program is the fact that 100% of the participants would recommend this course to other farmers/ranchers.

In general, participants expressed two important lessons that were disseminated throughout the program. First, they were better able to understand the big picture and assess the steps involved in realizing their goals. They also claimed that the knowledge that other farmers were facing similar challenges gave them strength and support during the process. Secondly, by understanding the business plan process, participants felt they were better prepared to weather the difficult times and better able to conserve their resources during prosperous times.

Table 9. Impact Statements

	Percentage Yes
My farming operation is now more economically viable	55%
The quality of life on my farm has improved	48%
My farming operations are now more efficient	53%
My families goals are now easier to achieve	65%
Employee/employer relations on my farm have improved	38%
The value of attending this course was more than the cost of attendance (time, travel costs, etc.)	85%
I would recommend this course to other farmers or potential farmers	100%
I now have a network of farmers I can work with	83%
I increased my network of farming colleagues and can draw on them for information/resources	90%
The Building Farmers program has improved our farming community	85%

5. Conclusions

The second year of the Building Farmers in the West programming was indeed a success. Over 150 participants from five states participated in workshops. The information presented in this report was gathered through a three-tiered assessment process including a pre-course evaluation, a post-course evaluation, and a follow-up evaluation five to seven months after program completion. The assessment evaluated changes in participants' knowledge/skills, attitudes, practices, and the economic/social impacts.

Between the pre-course and post-course assessments, participants showed the most improvement in the knowledge of accessing operation specific/applicable taxes, accessing local resources/technical support, showcasing product variety and abundance at direct markets, and complying with regulatory issues. They also showed an increase in the ability to access market strategy advice, business management support, and capital/credit providers. The areas with the least improvement in knowledge were maintaining financial records and budgeting and using cost-effective production strategies. The assessment of attitudinal changes showed that following a financial plan, following a marketing plan and having a business plan were highly rated. Consideration for increased direct marketing initiatives was a key change in participants' business practices. Increased interest in farmers' markets, creating/participating in CSA programs and farm/road stands were the most popular direct marketing avenues. By the completion of the course, participants felt that they had improved their access to infrastructure and equipment, the range of product varieties grown, their customer base, and the variety of marketing outlets used.

Attending the workshop improved the participants' quality of life, helped participants achieve their goals, and helped to improve their farming communities. Participants were

optimistic that their farm operations would improve because of their attendance in the course and felt that the value received for the course outweighed the cost of attendance.

In general, the participants felt the same six months after the course as they did upon completion. Participants felt they still had a strong understanding of accessing local resources, regulatory compliance, operational taxes, and developing business plans. However, participants felt less confident with maintaining financial records and budgeting, using cost-effective production strategies, and targeting viable customers for each product. Concrete results at the farm level from course participation included an increase in infrastructure and equipment, a larger customer base, and an increase in the number of farm enterprises. However, there was smaller growth in the number of employees or improved relationships with employees and increased financing. The Building Farmers in the West program succeeded in expanding the knowledge base of its participants, particularly in the areas of marketing and business plan development and more than half of the participants reported that their farm operations were more economically viable and efficient five to seven months after course completion.

3. Phone Interview Follow-up Assessment Summary

Provided by Dea Sloan, Colorado State University

A phone follow-up evaluation of participants from the first year of programming was conducted in the spring of 2012. The total pool of participants for all states was 102, but since a number of couples took the building farmers courses together, the number of potential contacts was lower than the overall participant numbers. There was no current contact information for 39 attendees (37% overall). Most notable was Colorado, where the only contact info provided was email addresses. All were contacted by email several times, but only one response out of ten program attendees was received. Overall, there were 14 responses to the follow up phone survey, eight of which had answered the follow-up program assessment online (26% of previous responders) and an additional six who had not answered the online follow-up assessment (9% of non-responders). State specific numbers are included below:

Table 1. Assessment Contacts Overview

	Total Participants	Responses		DID NOT answer follow-up assessment				DID answer follow-up assessment			
		# of Responses	%	Total	Contact	No Contact Info	Not Reached	Total	Contact	No Contact Info	Not Reached
Colorado	10	1	10%	8	0	8	0	2	1	1	0
Idaho	21	2	10%	14	1	5	8	7	1		6
New Mexico	13	2	15%	7	1	4	2	6	1	3	2
Oregon	17	2	12%	9	1	2	5	5	1	2	2
Utah	24	5	21%	18	2	10	6	6	3		3
Washington	17	2	12%	12	1	2	9	5	2	1	2
Overall	102	14	14%	68	6	31	30	31	8	7	15

Suggestions

- Follow-up with course participants on a quarterly or semi-annual basis to continue to build community and to boost program outcomes. Program coordinators might also appreciate learning first-hand about positive outcomes and feedback.
- Provide a class list with contact details. When asked if their network of contacts, several people commented that it would've been helpful to have received a class list with contact details along with short biographical information so that people might be able to exchange information and skills after the class was completed.

- Set up classroom to enhance networking and conversation during meal portion of program. In some locations, the room was set up in classroom style and the only place to eat was at a table facing someone's back so there was little opportunity for conversation.

Comments

- A program graduate from Idaho volunteered the information that her family – which owned a multi-generational ag operation – had been able to use the values worksheet and other business strategy forms to kick start their succession planning conversations. She was quick to point out that they still had a ways to go in their planning process but she was pleasantly surprised that they'd been able to make forward progress.
- A younger participant who was working for a sheep operation while he was taking the class. His boss didn't even know he was taking the class until showing up to do a presentation. The two ended up forming a mentoring relationship outside of the program. He had successfully started a small operation as a side business to his regular job.

Responses

1. Sandra (UT)

Sandra and her husband have a family farm where they raise alfalfa and grass hay though it is not their primary source of income. Sandra took the BF class in order to explore a new marketing venture for their property, a pick-your-own raspberry operation.

Sandra found that the presenters in her program had good information and were very helpful, as was the program coordinator. However Sandra got “bogged down” during the process of writing her business plan and was not able to complete it during the BF program nor has she completed it since the program has finished. She identified marketing and financials as the two areas of the business plan that she found the most challenging. In terms of financials, she felt that it would've been helpful for her to have received spreadsheets during the BF program that she could customize to her business rather than just reviewing sample spreadsheets during the presentation.

Her marketing challenges were quite specific to a U-Pick operation such as how to price the product and whether they needed to have certified scale in order to sell their product by weight. Sandra didn't feel that she was able to expand her network of contacts or overall profitability as a result of attending the BF program though she said it would've been helpful to have had more networking supported as a result of the program.

2. Rhonda (UT)

For the past 12 years, Rhonda has owned and operated a 5-acre property in a urban area where she currently has a horse boarding business and raises chickens for eggs. In the past she has tried raising vegetables for sale and putting in an orchard though neither venture was successful. She

enrolled in the BF course to explore what it would take to turn her current operation into a profitable business.

For Rhonda, the BF course “saved her from jumping into a position that she would’ve regretted.” What she found in running the numbers during the class was that expanding to the point where she could make a profit would “push her over the edge” in terms of what she could manage as well as how large her operation had to be.

Nevertheless, she has continued to use the knowledge gained during the course to maintain a business plan for her horse-boarding business, which has turned out to be more lucrative than the egg operation, however she does not currently have a written production plan, marketing plan or formal record-keeping system.

Rhonda did not complete a mentorship through the program but rather took a discount on her farmer’s market fees. She went on at some length about her need to have a business mentor or coach who was familiar with her business as well as her specific values, goals and objectives.

Rhonda felt she had expanded her network of contacts somewhat through the Building Farmers course though she would have liked to have had a class list and contact information that included brief information about the class participant skills and interest as she thought there would have been some opportunities for continued mutual support.

3. Joyce (WA)

Joyce has had a small market farm for the past three years where she raises chicken for eggs and some vegetables, both of which she sells at the farmers’ market. She took the BF class as an ag entrepreneurship program. She found the class to be very helpful as she did not know before the class about running her farm as a business. The class also provided her with the tools she needed to explore retail and wholesale marketing opportunities beyond direct marketing.

She completed a business plan during the class but has not kept it up to date “in writing.” However, she has both her production plan and her record-keeping system in an access database and does keep those two elements up to date. (Her past experience includes database development.)

Joyce identified her biggest business risk as matching supply and demand with a perishable product. Over this past winter she was not able to sell all of her eggs and ended up donating them to a local food bank but during the summer she is not able to meet the demand for her eggs. She didn’t think that the BF course helped her to manage this risk.

The network of contacts she was able to build through the BF class was one of the best aspects of the course for Joyce and has proven to be valuable in the time since she completed the class. As a result of the contacts she made through the program she has continued to expand her business network in a way that has had positive impacts on her business through this season.

4. Kyle (OR)

Kyle has been employed in several different ag operations for at least the past few years and currently has a small side business of his own raising and direct marketing garlic and pastured poultry. He started his own operation as a direct result of the business planning that he did during the BF course.

Kyle said the biggest gain he realized from the class was confidence. Since completing the course he feels “empowered to take on questions [where he] would have otherwise been daunted by the practical steps” required to complete a task or objective. He now has the skills and abilities to “think through things and get them on paper.”

For this season, Kyle has a production plan, marketing plan and formal recordkeeping system in place. However, he mentioned he has not updated his business plan since completing the course because it was in AgPlan and he no longer has internet access. He feels his biggest business risks are the cost of land and capital as a start-up ag operation.

In terms of the mentorship program, when Kyle took the course he was working on a sheep ranch though his employer did not know Kyle was interested in expanding his business skills until the employer came in and did a class presentation. Once he learned Kyle was in the class, the employer stepped in as Kyle’s mentor.

While Kyle lives in a small farming community where many people already know each other, he said the class definitely helped him to build a richer network of contacts. He also felt that the class benefited the large community in that it has become a topic of conversation in the field and he has been able to pass on information and advocate for the class program.

The one area that Kyle felt would have benefited him more from the class was that even though he has gained “a lot of growth after the class” and he would have appreciated having more information and pre-work to do immediately after signing up for the class.

5. Jillian (ID)

Jillian is in her second year of a pasture-based dairy goat operation. She currently makes cheese several times a week for sale at farmers markets in Boise and Ketchum. The BF course allowed her to explore several different ventures including goat meat. The planning process also provided her with a number of ideas for diversifying her marketing channels which she continues to explore including CSA shares and retail and wholesale distribution.

She completed a business plan during the class prior to her first season and then spent the winter months revising and analyzing her plan as she reworked it for her second season. For this production season she has also developed a production plan and marketing plan. Her husband has been able to help her set up a record keeping system in Quicken along with spreadsheets for tracking the various aspects of her business.

In her opinion, the biggest business risks for her operation include: 1) finding reliable labor; 2) keeping her goats happy so that she was able to make enough cheese and 3) food safety issues

related to maintaining a clean environment for her cheese-making operations. She wasn't sure that the BF program provided her with the tools she needs to manage those risks.

Jillian was able to participate in a mentorship upon completion of the program with the owner of the property where she boards her goats. She said the relationship has worked out well though at times she would like to talk with someone who has a different perspective. Jillian has also kept in touch with a few people in her class to exchange information with and has also continued to work with her program coordinator when she has questions.

In terms of tools gained from the program Jillian said the computer programs and record keeping information has been able helpful. In addition she has found the marketing information to be good however she felt she could have used more information on "branding, niche marketing, building an online presence and various marketing channels." As the local market is small and competition is fierce, Jillian has began "stalking" an East Coast goat cheese company for marketing and pricing ideas.

During the conversation Jillian mentioned that her best tech upgrade during her second year of operation has been her smart phone as there is no computer in the barn. This season she has been able to keep in better touch with customers via email as well as keep production records during milking and cheesemaking without having to remember everything until she got home.

6. Anya (OR)

Anya took the BF course because she was exploring whether or not ag was the right fit for her. As a result of class she decided to pursue a different direction. Anya is currently teaching at Oregon State in a leadership and sustainability certificate program.

She mentioned that the information she received during the BF program has been very helpful and she has been able to pass on some of it to the students in the program she is involved with so her experiences with BF have continued to benefit her community. She has also continued to keep in touch with the network of contacts that she built through the program and made a point of mentioning that she felt they it had continued to be mutually beneficial.

7. John (WA)

John took the BF program as part of a series of courses on sustainable agriculture and in order to participate in an internship program at a local organic farm. Since taking the class he has not started an ag operation though it continues to be a possibility in his mid- to long-term goals (5+ years out).

John found the guest speakers to be highly informative and he mentioned that he particularly enjoyed the presentation from a farmers' market coordinator who was able to provide the class with a behind-the-scenes perspective on selling through a market.

John's class included a combination of dry land farmers, organic producers and others just starting to explore farming. He spoke highly of the instructor but in terms of knowledge gained he spoke mostly about the class experience and the exposure to a wide variety of stories and experts from across the spectrum of business and farming practices and philosophies. He

emphasized that he felt that the discussions that happened during class benefited the community as a whole because it served to further understanding and connections between the various farming philosophies.

8. Lisa (NM)

Lisa and her husband are in their fourth year of running a half-acre vegetable operation. They took the BF course after their second year of production and found it to be very valuable. Lisa spoke very highly of the course and said one of the best things about the program was that it focused on the business of doing farming which “really helped them get more organized.” The long-term planning component of the course was the most valuable part of the course for Lisa and her husband. As a result of that process they changed their marketing model from selling at a farmers market to selling through a broker and have continued to explore long-term plans on how to best utilize their space.

Labor management has turned out to be the biggest risk for their business and Lisa didn’t feel that the course was able to help her plan in advance for additional labor or the time management skills needed to successfully manage help when they do hire occasional labor.

Not only did the BFW course help Lisa and her husband expand their network of contacts but she felt that the materials have also benefitted the local community as she’s been able to share a lot of the information with other new farmers and has encouraged people to take the program. She and he husband have kept in contact with their program coordinator and have continued to take courses related to farming and farm management.

9. Tamara (UT)

Tamara operates a small farm and sells at farmers’ markets and through a CSA. She completed a business plan during the course, but has not kept it up-to-date since then. However she does have a production and marketing plan in place as well as a record-keeping system.

Labor management has been a challenge for Tamara’s business and she wishes she that someone would set up a resource to help her find employees. She has continued to network with a few of the people she met through the class and to keep in touch with her program coordinator as questions come up.

10. Dewar (CO)

Dewar has a small backyard operation, which he is slowly expanding into a business providing vegetable starts to home gardeners. He took the BF program in order to qualify for a mentorship as he feels he could use help with both the business and production sides of his operation. Dewar was able to complete a business plan during the program up to the point of being able to make a presentation to his class but he stressed several times during our conversation that the experience had not provided him with the information he needed to complete a detailed business plan. He felt he would have benefitted from a more structured program in order to guide participants through the business plan development process. He also emphasized that he would have appreciated more follow-up after the class was completed.

11. Susan (ID)

Susan is part of a multi-generational family farming business, however she took the BF program because she was interesting in exploring a new venture. Since taking the class she has started growing and selling raspberries and is very much “enjoying the farm to table experience.” Susan found BF to be a “hugely practical program” and even though she found the idea of presenting a business plan intimidating, the experience was highly motivating to finish her plan in order to be able to present it at the end of the class. She continues to use the tools provided during the BF program to enhance her operation’s profitability.

Susan was enthusiastic to share a secondary benefit of the program materials. She and her family have been able to use the values worksheets and other business strategy forms in order to make steps forward in talking about making the transition from one generation to the next. While the family has not completed those conversations, they have been able to make progress, which wasn’t the case without the BF program materials.

For the current growing season, Susan has a written business plan, a production plan, a marketing plan and a record-keeping system in place. She has also continued to keep in touch with the network of contacts she made during the BF program and finds it valuable to be in touch with other food-related business owners (in fact she partners with one of them to market her raspberries).

12. Isaac (NM)

Isaac took the class for “future reference” and completed an internship after the BF program and does not have immediate plans to start an ag operation though he is part of a spiritual organization that is working towards having a community farm. He has kept the info from the class and internship in a binder and will use them for future endeavors.

13. Jesse (UT)

Jesse has an operation raising chicken, beef and turkey as well as produce and hay, all of which he direct markets. He found the BF program extremely helpful as it was the first time he had put everything together into a business plan. He continues to keep his financial plan current as a way of maintaining the profitability of his operation.

One thing that Jesse particularly enjoyed about the program was that it gave him the opportunity to meet and interact with others involved in direct marketing. He and several of his classmates continue to meet and are discussing the possibility of starting a business collaboration at some point in the future.

One downside of the program for Jesse was that he felt he would’ve gotten more out of the program if it had been less academic and included “people successful in direct marketing.” He also mentioned that he felt that the presenters “knew how to do the finances but haven’t necessarily had to make it through with a small budget.” One example he cited was a presentation that included a cost analysis of high tunnels, he felt the “numbers were unlikely because they did not reflect the true labor requirements” of such an operation. However, Jesse felt the program had been a good experience and the information and contacts he gained during the program continue to help him in his business.

14. Kevin (UT)

Kevin has a small market farm operation that he works on his own without employees. The two most valuable aspects of the BF program for Kevin was the information on health and safety rules and regulations in terms of what can and can't be sold and value-added processing. He also found the tax information to be helpful though he felt it would've helped to have more in depth information on specific rules and regulations. He mentioned in particular that before taking the class he didn't know about self-employment taxes and he suspects that most other small farmers are unaware of that tax.

Kevin completed a written business plan during the program, but for the current season he does not have a written business plan, production plan or marketing plan. However the course helped him to develop a record-keeping system he continues to use, he finds it easier to track his income rather than his expenses.

In addition to building a larger network of contacts through the BF program, he also was able to access new land to farm through his class network, which has greatly benefited his operation this growing season. He has also continued to use the materials provided in the class as reference when issues come up.

4. Participant Post and Follow-up Assessment Comments

Year 1

Post Workshop Evaluation Comments:

If you have additional comments and/or suggestions for future courses, please provide them here.

It would be helpful to schedule coursework for wintertime.

This course allowed us to see where our strengths and weaknesses are. We have already started to implement procedures for better planning, gained substantially in networking with worthwhile colleagues, can better assess our potential and work gradually toward growth instead of trying to do it all right now. I wish we could take it annually to continually expand awareness, assess progress and evaluate failures.

This workshop has been worthwhile.

The workshop was interesting, but hard! It was good to network with other farmers to see how they handle their work.

Good course! And it was great having all the variety of speakers.

The class on taxes needs to be improved. The presentation was not effective.

This particular short course could have benefited from additional information on compliance with local ordinances and laws, specifically zoning and water. There were residents of at least 4 different counties in this session, so there could not have been a lot of detail provided on livestock or commercial zoning, however, there could have been links or contacts included for each county. Water is integral to agriculture and there was just no mention of it. Most participants appeared to have adequate irrigation water for pasture and seasonal crops, but there were some enterprises mentioned, specifically commercial greenhouses and dairies, which may be in violation of local zoning codes and/or may require additional water rights.

The financial statements section should be much, much more basic and should include clear learning objectives. Wilson Gray and the University of Idaho provided the course to our location 25 miles from Twin Falls, which I appreciated very much. This saved me alone 300 miles driving. The online resources were very good. Check with me in a year to see how my new enterprise is doing!

More focus and organization in presenting / critiquing our business plans at the end is needed. Otherwise they were pretty good and helpful class.

This class was immensely helpful, and has gotten me motivated to organize, plan and otherwise act to turn our farm into a profitable enterprise. Thank you.

Soil and water sampling are both topics I would like to see next time.

This course was great! It was worth driving to. It would be better if it could be approximately half the time. It is hard to sit for long periods.

Presentations by local farmers were invaluable. I would suggest more time for students' final presentations, questions, answers, suggestions. I would have greatly appreciated your input on my business plan. Thanks to all of you for your time and dedication to us new farmers.

Enjoyed this class and got a lot of great info and resources. I would have like more on marketing and a redo of the presentation that the young dark haired woman gave.

Need more time spent on assisting in the actual writing of the business plan. The course started from mostly passive receiving of information - to applying the concepts in the last two weeks. It may have worked better to alternate theory with practice.

For me, the course was difficult due to being scheduled in the evenings.

It's the nuts and bolts of business end of farming. I'd love to take the course again next year.

This was very helpful. It was great to make goals and put our ideas in words and actually organize the farm structure.

The financial focus was the most important but more exercise in hypothetical cash flow and cost of production and balance sheets would be helpful.

Good course. Thank you very much.

Having the course in winter would be better. Set aside time in class to work on business plan. Thank you! It is great to get such a strong foundation.

I enjoyed connecting with other farmers and was inspired by all of the different ideas. I especially liked the speakers that joined us and would like even more farmers speaking about what they do.

Thanks for the great start and continuing support. You are helping us young (and elder) farmers make a difference and have a stable income as well as lifestyle.

A few presentations could have been summarized more. Perhaps requiring segments of the business plan to be turned in periodically would help motivate some of us procrastinators.

I especially liked the things on specific applications like the high tunnels. I also found the lessons on sources of financing very useful.

There were a few sections that I did not understand. I would rather like to see a longer more detailed section in finances for taxes.

For "networking" it would have been nice to have a roster with everyone's name and contact information as well as a short description of their operation. That way we could have more potential in forming working relationships.

Thanks! I have really enjoyed this class and working with you.

Very well done! It contained a lot of info that has helped me very much and put it in motion to. I would suggest encouraging Idaho to participate in this and other programs.

More in depth information would have been wonderful.

This course was a good start for a business plan. I will take the time to review and build on the business plan and have contacted a farm consultant to coordinate with family members to build a plan to further our farm plans.

This class was great, I wish there was more time to apply the information under the course adviser, i.e. working in class.

Guest speakers from Moscow Farmers' Market were great.

Follow-up Evaluation Comments:

Have you experienced any other changes to your farming/ranching operation since attending this course?

I started a home-based micro-farming business in large part because of the knowledge and confidence gained from taking this course. I have had a LOT of very positive feedback from dozens of customers. However, I am losing money I did not have to lose. This first year, at least, it's more like an enormous service project.

I am a new farmer but my knowledge has increased greatly.

I still haven't found the time to implement all of the things I learned and tap into the resources I discovered in this course. However in the coming months and year I plan to do more. The course was very helpful and I especially valued the networking that took place among other attendees at the course.

Our family's strategic plan, aside from my small enterprise plan, was clarified. The assessment and planning tools are things we can use to help solve our generational transition problems.

The main change I saw was in the way I think about selling produce. The biggest help to me was learning about some of the rules and regulations that are in place for market vendors. Also,

knowing about the self-employment tax really helped me in getting my finances together and making sure that i saved enough for taxes.

I do have many more sources for help and advice, and more farmer resources also.

I applied and received a grant from USDA Western SARE. I developed a logo and marketing materials; label, rack card, business cards. I held an open house, drawing 150+ people. Sales have increased and I have a waiting list for product and for breeding stock.

My brother and I are currently using a business consultant to build a business plan and to plan where we want to be in five to ten years

I scaled up from a hobby to more of a farm business.

My partnerships with other farms have been one change for me since the course ended.

I am working towards partnering with an existing farm operation.

I have experienced general overall knowledge and learning from the other class participants was very valuable.

Please describe what you feel are the primary factors that contributed to the achievements made by yourself or others as a result of participating in this course.

Networking with professionals at universities, government agencies, non-profit organizations and with other growers greatly facilitated my ability to gain relevant knowledge and establish market outlets. Technical knowledge gave me the confidence to start my farming business while avoiding getting in trouble with government regulatory agencies. Encouragement by course presenters and participants provided the impetus for me to take the plunge and start a micro-farming business on a shoestring budget.

I have a business plan that I can update as life and my farm change. I know more about farming.

I gained a better knowledge of local markets and resources.

Our farm is quickly expanding on its own; however the course certainly helped me discover the resources that are available to me.

Our capstone course requirement of presenting our business plans to our classmates launched me to think seriously about the goal and to plan financially for it. I determined my new enterprise could be profitable. I also requested NRCS funding, but was not approved. I maintain contact with both classmates and presenters, and have received information and encouragement from them following the course.

The course was wide but not deep. More time developing a business plan was needed. Perhaps a pre-course survey is needed to differentiate needs of students.

I had a chance in this course to step-by step review the different aspects of my current operation and see new options for managing and changing it.

I always appreciate gaining in knowledge.

Applying production costs to evaluate pricing was a primary factor for gain.

I gained confidence in my product and my abilities, and was able to view my enterprise as a 'real' business. I was able to put into words my mission and goals. Increased confidence led to more media exposure which led to more sales. I attended a weekly farmers market with good results.

A better understanding of marketing techniques was a factor in my achievements.

Building a business plan through this course was a key factor in helping me lay out a plan to establish my goals in creating a new area of business within our farm.

By attending this class I have a clear understanding of things that I need to accomplish to bring success to my farming career.

The guest speakers were of a high value because they can tell you about their experiences. I can model some of what I do from their examples and avoid making the same mistakes they made.

Understanding the importance of record keeping and the use of crop specific budgets has been helpful.

Having specific goals helped get results. It was beneficial to come with questions or interests rather than looking for just a broad breath of information.

Hearing from experts; interacting with others involved in agriculture was beneficial to the success.

After taking the course, I was able to clarify what I was doing which helped me address problem areas and also to communicate to others better so they could fit in to the picture where necessary. I also gained important tools to address problem areas, for me specifically, and for the business end of the stick.

More awareness of planning helped with achieving success with this course

My business plan was a practice and hypothetical plan, as it was the basis for a possible new enterprise on an existing farm. The plan has not yet been implemented, but the course gave me the confidence that it is possible. A primary factor in this confidence was meeting the other young farmers and learning about their ideas and gaining from their enthusiasm. Also, having access to accounting spreadsheets gave me resources for the financial aspects of my enterprise.

Learning viable marketing strategies and how to create a business plan to guide operations and decision making was highly valuable to the success.

The instructor was enthusiastic and the participant's insights were great.

Information related to improving my marketing and the use of the internet in marketing farm products was very important to achieving success with this course.

Please describe the financial benefits to your operation, family, or community which have resulted from your participation in this course.

I have provided thousands of seedlings and tens of thousands of seeds to people at very reasonable prices. I have also provided hundreds of pounds of premium, fresh, very healthy produce at excellent prices. I have had real difficulty getting my produce to market. However, over the past couple of weeks my customer base is expanding rapidly by word of mouth. Hopefully in my second year I'll be able to make the business viable.

I am selling what I am growing this season to local people and restaurants and have ideas of next year's goals and products.

New procedures helped cut costs for my business from taking this course.

It's still a bit soon to tell I think. I've been so busy with the actual farm work in our summer growing season that I haven't had sufficient time to try to tap into many of the resources talked about in the course. I would certainly think that next year I will be able to answer that there have been financial benefits.

We have added a small-fruit enterprise to our family farm operation. I expect it to add about \$4000 gross to our income per year. Next year will be my first production year. I planned my new business so that its financial impact on our current operation was minimal, and have been able to use income from wages to invest in my first-year production.

I was better equipped with information which helped me to know what to expect when it comes to taxes and fees.

I was able to get a better handle on how taxes worked for my farm. I also got to see how I can make a budget and do my accounting thoroughly.

Our small community benefits from our Farmers Market. The vendors benefit by building jobs for themselves while building our community.

Our revenue is up so far this year despite a slow start in the spring. We altered our crop plan to fit better with the weather conditions we had this spring.

Since I have a clearer picture of my business through developing a business plan, I am more focused and goal driven. I have improved my stock and refined processes and pushed ahead with branding-marketing. This has resulted in more sales and more general interest in our product and stock, which will lead to even more sales.

The impacts are minimal at this time. Our enterprise is still growing and is intended to provide supplemental income only.

The financial benefits have been to help pay off my home and other expenses. This course has helped me to take an idea and not only make it happen, but help to make it more profitable.

At this time we are working to develop a five to ten year plan that will discuss expansion and equipment replacement.

My expenses were a lot higher than income for this first year. Hopefully, that will improve as we get more known for delicious food in the community. It is happening slowly but surely.

Our impacts include greater production efficiency, and less waste. As well as a better understanding of how to target crops to niche markets.

Since completing the course we have joined up with a family farm so much has changed. I'm not sure if any of the changes had anything to do with the class but I am glad to have a better understanding of the 'office' work when we started with a new group of people.

I am now able to see money as a tool with a means to an end that allows me to pursue my goals in a realistic fashion. It has helped me have the courage to buy a piece of property and create a business plan based on this land.

I have not seen any impacts at this time.

In my case, I better understand the existing business model of the farm on which I live. Also, I am confident that if I put my business plan into effect, the community and the farm will benefit from increased visitor traffic to our farm.

I feel that my operation has become more financially stable and profitable since taking this course because I now have a better understanding of finances, financing options, and how to keep records. This has allowed me to also make purchasing and operational decisions that have kept my income and investment dollars in the local economy and supporting fellow businesses with good practices and local focuses.

Not farming yet though the guest lecturers were extremely valuable.

My farm raised only hay when I enrolled. The class gave me a great framework for researching additional potential products and exploring the costs, energy and regulations governing additional products.

Please describe the social benefits (standard of living, environmental quality, etc.) to your operation, family, or community which have resulted from your participation in this course.

I am working too hard but that is ok, we eat well and people are coming to me for healthy food, locally.

I have seen our community pulling together to produce better food.

Again, I believe it is still a bit soon to see the full scope of the results.

I am showing the younger generation how to research, produce and market a new enterprise. Family interest in direct markets has increased. I have a small business which I will enjoy when I retire from my off-farm job. I am better connected to the local foods movement and to entrepreneurs who care about small scale farming. The University of Idaho personnel are very responsive to questions.

I was able to understand the value of great employees, consolidate my farm plots and make the whole farming operation more efficient so we had more time off.

We are gaining in knowledge as well as becoming more self-sustaining.

I was able to meet some new farmer friends to network with.

Being able to articulate my mission and goals has led to a more focused approach to my business, which means saving money on expenses, less waste, and striving to purchase quality stock. This means an overall improvement in the business and a happier farmer and family. Our community has become aware of us as a quality operation through our efforts and media exposure.

I now have a local network of other producers and friends

This course has introduced me to other farmers in the area and gave me the chance to see their perspective on farming and what has helped them.

I realize that I need to work more with outside sources and friends to have a quality life.

I love meeting more people in my community, having potlucks, having families and kids over to learn about farming. I can pass on to them what I have learned about how food is grown. Many of us get together to discuss saving farmland, GMO labeling, and increasing awareness about how food is grown.

It was nice to get to see what other young farmers in the area are doing. It was inspirational and great to bounce ideas off each other. I don't see any of them much anymore but when our paths cross we check in.

I am more fulfilled doing this kind of work that I love, being outside on the piece of land that I own with my friends, working hard but in a structured manner that is based on my ideas and my values. This course helped me define those values and put them into action.

Networking with other farmers has already brought social gain to our farm and connected us to farmers in the urban areas near us. One couple from the class has moved onto our farm to help out, too! Very cool!

In addition to a standard of living increase from increased profits, I have been able to devote more effort and resources to environmental practices that benefit the farm and my customers are happy to support. Examples are increased pollinator support, utilizing alternative transportation (bicycles) for deliveries, and practicing low-input methods.

I have gained respect for other types of farming.

I very much enjoyed meeting, getting to know and consult with a wide variety of farmers and educators whose knowledge I intend to continue to consult.

Year 2

Post Workshop Evaluation Comments:

If you have additional comments and/or suggestions for future courses, please provide them here.

A very beneficial course. Perhaps a two-week period before business plan presentation would be helpful. I increased my ability to evaluate and plan business aspects of my farming operations, gained some production and marketing ideas, and added to my network of resources (both production and business/marketing).

Need more time to learn financial record; budgeting, and food safety info. Thank you !! :)

The course was absolutely wonderful. One recommendation: If one or two applicants would have volunteered to have their Business Plan reviewed and critiqued in depth by the right people as part of the course I think it would have benefited everyone.

In the end the class structure was very good. It helped reign in some wild ideas at the beginning, then allowed us to learn from experts and those that have done similar plans, and finishing with the expectation of a business plan and presentation. The presentation motivated everyone to be real about their plans and to put some real work and thought into them and was a crucial final step.

More information regarding actual crop yields for the area, water usage per crops, etc. would be helpful. Also, the same type of info for livestock (i.e. How many bales of what kind of hay for a beef cow vs. a dairy cow, etc.)

I would have loved more on food safety. Great job Blake, I hope I can come again next year.

The insurance agent who presented information clearly did not understand that urban agriculture risks are lower than larger rural ventures. His information was only marginally helpful. Provide handouts in time for using them for homework for which they are addressing, i.e. week before homework is due. Most of the presenters were very helpful and stimulated new ways of thinking about urban farming.

Great course. It would have been great if Wyatt and Anne had more time to speak, but I learned a lot.

Blake Angelo's style was heroic, well-organized without being heavy. This course is so essential to the future of urban farming in Denver. Many props to Adrian Card for pioneering the model, which is a highly effective way to communicate key information to people to reduce the amount of valuable resources wasted on false starts. Everyone with a brain wants to farm, very few are successful for a surprisingly consistent set of reasons. This class is an inoculant against failure!

Time was obviously an issue with so many topics to cover in a short period of time. I would suggest stretching the course out and adding at least one or two additional classes (weeks).

Would love to see a 'continuing education' aspect of this course - even if it is just a monthly or quarterly roundtable where we can gather to discuss issues of interest.

Before participating in the Building Urban Farmers course this year, I took the Building Farmers class in Boulder with Adrian Card in fall 2009. That class was extremely helpful in developing a business plan and getting advice and expertise from experienced farmers, and I wanted to see if a class in Denver focused on urban farming would be more applicable to our enterprise. Overall, I found that the amount of detail in many of the presentations in this class was not what I had hoped--e.g., Jon talked a bit about their failure with the aquaponics project- which granted, was a valuable lesson- but said very little about their success with the multi-plot farm; Ilan gave some nice overviews of different marketing venues and strategies based on his time on rural farms but gave little to no information on his current urban projects with Ekar and City Harvest. Or, on the other hand, a presentation may have had a lot of useful info but lacked follow-through on sharing the data--e.g., Debbie had an amazing grasp of how to use Excel charts to streamline her planning, but unless she is able to share her charts and give a tutorial on how to use them, they are of no practical use to other producers. (I remember Anne Cure presenting to us in Boulder and providing paper copies of her data charts; that was very useful for later reference). I think a survey of each presentation at the end of each class would be invaluable for you to determine the types of presentations/information class participants are looking for. I also think you might consider creating separate sessions or even a separate class for nonprofit farming groups--it seems nonprofits were represented by 50-70% of the people in the room and some of the info disseminated by CSU folks on taxes, loans etc. just does not apply to a nonprofit organization. I'm glad I took the class, but I think there is room for improvement with the quality of the

presentations. Personally, the best opportunity provided to me by this class was the opportunity to network with other folks with similar projects in the city--we already have a follow-up meeting planned, which is fantastic. Thanks so much for putting this together, and I look forward to seeing how it evolves in the coming years!!

I enjoyed the course and found it to be well organized, and very informative. I am pleased with the way everything was put together. Thank you for being in Larimer County this year!

Wonderful class and wonderful people - thank you so much!

Very helpful to provide me with useful tools to get started on the right track and give some realistic perspective to this endeavor. I appreciated having the notebook materials printed and together at the very beginning. Great resources and great examples. Not sure what exactly to do next to connect the plan that I have built with a realistic application - should I lease land from the county or elsewhere?

Great class-very helpful information well worth the time and money even when we are very busy- so glad we came. Thanks!

This new class is great! Thanks so much!

I suggest the course be made a few weeks longer so that the business plan presentations can be done more in depth. Also an intermediate level course would be helpful. This course is perfect for those just beginning their enterprise, but I was familiar with at least half of the material already. For me, more depth on marketing and financial planning topics would have been helpful. I had been through land use regs, water laws, and setting up a business entity years ago. However, the contacts acquired from the class will prove to be extremely valuable.

I believe technical farming aspects are equally as important to the beginning farmer as writing a business plan. I would like to see 1/2 of the course on this or a separate class on this.

This was a fantastic course that put me in the environment to learn more about small scale agriculture and develop my farm business plan. I greatly appreciate the opportunity to develop a stronger network of colleagues and peers. I believe it is an essential part of starting a small scale local/independent farm based business. Thank you to all of the hard working professionals, volunteers, guests and speakers that made this course possible!

This is a very important course! Thank you very much!

I am interested in the advanced course idea with focuses on labor, technical production techniques, equipment, etc...

I really loved the class and felt like I gained a lot of valuable knowledge. I really like the exercises in the homework that made me apply them to the operation that I am considering. I would have liked another class on dairy and meat operations rather than just one day.

Farm visits, of course!

Great course. I was apprehensive when first approached by Blake, but the resources and contacts alone were worth it. I have a much better feel for what i have to do to make the plan work.

An incubator farm associated with the Building Farmers and Ranchers program would allow for more in-depth education and increase the opportunities of beginning farmers in Northern Colorado. Completion of the Building Farmers and Ranchers Program could be a pre-requisite for the incubatees. There is movement in Fort Collins in regards to an incubator farm, from Be Local Northern Colorado in particular. Conversations with local urban land owners have been started, opening up possibilities for future planning of a Northern Colorado incubator farm.

Greatly enjoyed the class and learned so much! Ready to take the next steps to research my business idea! Thanks.

Great class! Thanks so much for putting this together. All of the local expertise was excellent. Food was amazing.

Information given and homework assignments and presentations seemed to jump all over the place. I have a written assessment that I can email you after the class explaining more!

Great food! Thank you!

Investigate other rural occupational niches, logging, mining, recreation, agritourism. Explain regulatory requirements and 'How-to'.

Many of the questions do not apply well to my operation.

This course has propelled us to consider many things necessary to organize our ranching business. We will strive to write our business plan in the near future. We really liked the class and learned a lot.

Overall we enjoyed the course & the connections-thank you. A few thoughts; all of the initials in the materials were confusing; better time management with multiple speakers; could use a part of the dinner hour for other speakers, etc. or shorten slightly.

Awesome class. The amount of resources and quality of resources along with the structure of this class make it a bargain.

Maybe if there are more livestock growers, find some livestock business books/info to assist in business plan, enterprise budget and marketing.

I would like emphasis on viable business models. Might just be this group of people, but we had fewer full time farmers in class than we had hoped. Food was excellent. Meeting everyone and

socializing were great too. Class helped my thinking about my other business ventures. I would take the next course. Thank you.

Water issues discussed more. Thank you so much!

Great job Kurt Jones!

Most helpful was Daniel Carmona and I would like to have seen more of his spreadsheets and go over them in more detail. If I could have absorbed more of that part I would be very happy. I do understand that most of the other people in the class have a better understanding of what he was presenting, but perhaps they benefit more from seeing the calculations written out. For me the list of crops and yield per row, etc was very helpful.

When I get around to starting a farm business, I will feel much more confident and prepared. I think the timing worked well, though another time of year might work better - perhaps Jan-March. I could see room for more discussion of crop planning, selecting varieties for our climate, winter growing, financing, and small-scale equipment. We covered some of this, but I think it could be covered in more detail.

The site visits/field trips were the best part. Farmers need more exposure like this to area networks. Would like to learn more about season extension.

You should do more advertising to get more people involved. Best part was spreadsheet analysis for cash flow. Need more presentations from buyers for their needed products. Need more small discussion groups and possibly hands-on with local farmers.

I will use this knowledge to establish better records, financials, and greater profits. The food was great. Training, presentations, subjects - all were excellent.

The format was well thought of... variety of speakers on a variety of subjects. I think I would want a single farmer/producer in on all sessions taking the course and talking about their own experiences regarding each subject presented by each speaker. I would like to hear the same producer speak of insights from their farming/agricultural knowledge/experience which is relevant to the session's particular subject. Thank you for the opportunity to learn.

Daniel Carmona's presentations were incredibly helpful. The emphasis on record-keeping and the worksheets we received from both him and others was great. I guess I learned that I don't have to reinvent the wheel with regards to planning. I will keep better and more careful records and remember that somebody smarter than me has probably come up with a better way to do things. Help is out there if I seek it out.

Great class, I enjoyed it-we will continue to work on our business plan.

I liked all the visitors to the course. They were all interesting and engaging. I would've liked 1) better planning to meet our scheduling needs, ie-a class in the winter and 2) at that time a more members-intensive approach to the plan.

Great work; this was useful & informative, and fun.

Follow-up Evaluation Comments:

Have you experienced any other changes to your farming/ranching operation since attending this course?

My self-esteem as a farmer has increased as a result. It proved that a lot of endeavors were on track for helping me become a better farmer.

I don't currently farm, but I now have a business plan and am closer to getting started!

We have gone from owning a house with a modest yard to owning 40 acres, immediately growing and harvesting hay. We will offer tomatoes and peppers this year, and we have plans to increase our income annually with our own land. This course has been a huge part of these steps.

Going into the class we had an idea of what we wanted to do for our operation. After the class we had so much more knowledge and support that we are moving forward and starting our operation. This class was very insightful and is helping to turn our idea into a functioning operation.

This class was taken as a kick off point for our farming enterprise. It opened our eyes to other possibilities, the importance of tracking everything, and gave us the confidence to start trying.

Optimism - increased.

I am not sure if the changes are because of the class... but I did find it helpful to write my vision out in the form of a business plan. I've planned to keep expanding - and that is what I'm going to do.

I am currently not producing product for sale. I am in process of developing new land and resources for production

As an Extension Agent I assist and give advice to the local community gardening program. They have increased variety in their production but still lack in community support and volunteers working the garden. Potential products will be distributed to local organizations, senior programs, etc.

I am not a farmer on my own, I am a part of an initiative and this course has greatly helped me and the initiative. We have had a number amount of new hoop-housers this year and a number of

new gardeners this year. We are in the process of making plans. It has been a long process due to our funds, and that is mostly what is holding us back.

BETTER LAND USE

I wanted to note that my business is a farmers market. This year I began a few community gardens that are growing food to support the farmers market. Some of the previous questions are not reflective of the benefit I derived from the course.

Obtained a larger urban growing space that has the potential to be available for a number of years.

This is Spring Kite Farm's first season in operation, and the Building Farmers Program has helped my partner and I considerably in achieving success this first year. Both my partner and I have attended a total of 3 Building Farmers programs, and could benefit from additional programs as it constantly seems to improve from year to year. As a recommendation, combine the building farmers program with local farm incubator projects to offer land, water, and equipment to new farmers. This is what is happening in Fort Collins, in part, due to the Building Farmers and Ranchers program. I would have jumped at a farm incubator program last fall after attending the Building Farmers program, but one didn't exist locally. I, through my position at Be Local Northern Colorado, am gathering local stakeholders to lease city owned land to develop an incubator project, growing food with new farmers to benefit the Food Bank of Larimer County. This project is gaining momentum, and will be entering into the fundraising stage shortly, with plans to break ground this fall (in the spring at the latest). Funding from Building Farmers and Ranchers programs would help projects like this succeed, if only to show local collaborators the endorsement from a larger entity. Feel free to contact me with any additional questions about the Building Farmers and Ranchers program in Northern Colorado, or our Incubator/Food Bank Farm project. Thanks! Michael Baute: michael@belocalnc.org

I was able to find out about a grant for irrigation for 2014. Found out about Woofers.

More collaboration.

USDA Programs to enhance irrigation delivery has increased crop & field production dramatically since attending this course.

I applied for a NRCS high tunnel and was granted one! In the meanwhile we erected another high tunnel for extended production. Since we got it in late, it is not in full production this season, but looking forward to expanding next season. I am always looking for new ideas to expand.

We have purchased our farm and have started to prepare for our first planting season. We have laying hens currently and will continue to add both livestock and produce.

I have identified enterprise goals and where I want to expand and in which direction for expansion.

I have actually dramatically changed my overall goals in my farming operation - which means delaying my own farm's start-I still work in another operation. This is wonderful as I have used the tools of the course to narrow & rethink what is the ideal situation for my true goals. I am happy this change of direction happened before the operation began.

Networking opportunities with extension and other class members has increased my market coverage. I have also changed the way I keep my financial records to get better/more information out.

Many of the changes will take a while to implement, so this survey may not accurately reflect results.

Drought and cost of hay has forced me to sell out of the cattle market. Will wait for the markets to re-stabilize and the drought to go away.

Please describe what you feel are the primary factors that contributed to the achievements made by yourself or others as a result of participating in this course.

I have not hesitated in trying what i thought were better practices in assisting me to be a better, productive farmer.

Finding a network of other farmers to develop ideas with. Determining economic losses within established business plan. Determining economic gains to expand based on business plan

Understanding the business behind farming such as legal, health, safety, etc.

The thorough information given in this course has helped me understand what I need to have a successful business and an efficient farm.

Requiring the writing of a business plan and the farm visits were really key components to the success of the program.

This course allowed people dreaming of farming to interact with people who are farming and, in some cases, have been for some time. Those with dreams were able to see that other people were also dreaming, and that farming is not such an unattainable goal. Many people tell us that farming is too hard, but seeing that others have become successful helped us to realize that work is work, but if you love what you're doing, it can make all the difference.

The speakers were so informative and really helpful. The dinners were a great opportunity to meet people and make connections.

Learning how to create a realistic business plan.

Experiences of the farmers and others individuals that were brought in each week to share their success and failures. The drive to finish and present our business plan.

Visit to working farms and discussion with the class there.

I really appreciated the business heavy aspect of this course.

I think the main thing I took away from this class was a list of contacts that are all into farming. Also, it made me write out a business plan, which was long overdue.

This is a new farm. The number one factor is determination and hard work.

Better understanding of profit potential, a clear business plan, and new strategies for production

Guest speakers from local farms and finance talks

The course was very well organized.

I would have to say the business plan is a big thing. Not only for financials, but we also use it in getting the community involved. Also, there are other stuff we are working on such as getting educated on pricing, stuff we will need such as insurance, and records.

Business plan-both planning and execution.

My achievements include: greater understanding about forecasting yields; better handle on regulatory requirements for business, insurance, and food safety/handling.

Hearing what other farmers are doing.

I was able to hire one of the class advisors as a farm coach. Therefore, I could continue to address some of the material covered in the class over a longer period of time.

The network of local farmers that spoke at the program,

Built acquaintances with others in the same boat as me.

The interaction each participant had during the classroom phase, and the valuable information & hands on during the mentorship phase was immeasurable.

I wrote a business plan with my partner.

I believe that the Dream factor is deeply important in this course. The realization that other people share the same dream of hard work and long hours is a powerful thing. Those of us just beginning had the opportunity to see others who have succeeded.

Identification of realistic farming enterprise goals and the means of achieving those goals.

Diversity of instructors and backgrounds/experiences of the instructors, positive collaborative spirit of most participants among a diversity of ideas, ideals, and goals.

The business planning and financial records portion helped me to focus on individual enterprises. I want to gather all the information I can to make more informed decisions.

A better overall understanding of the big picture.

Business planning.

Helped me make the hard decision to sell out while beef prices are high during this drought by weighing the options to buy hay or not. And then to get back in when the market slows down and there are less severe droughts.

Networking with local growers and producers.

Contact with working farmers in our region who deal with the same unique issues as we do.

Please describe the financial benefits to your operation, family, or community which have resulted from your participation in this course.

I have been able to increase my take home pay, and show my son (Partner) that it is profitable to farm....

I was able to feel more stable/secure in my decision making processes based on what I learned in the class.

I have not experienced any financial benefits yet, as I do not have my own farming operation.

I don't yet farm, but I have a much better sense of the financial costs and benefits of any future operation after writing a business plan.

As stated, we have purchased a 40 acre farm in Wellington, CO and have begun to shape it into the image of our business plan. We are able to see many ways to create revenue with our land in the coming years.

We have not started our operation yet, but it gave us great information on how we can begin to finance and where we can look to help for financing.

We understand better how we can continue to grow slowly not taking on a lot of debt yet knowing that if and when we get to that point there are grants and loans that can be used that don't make financial growth sense.

Keep in mind the cost of labor to bring product to market. Picking the most lucrative market for the specific product.

I have an increased understanding of how business strategies and efficiency increase the ability to achieve goals on the farm.

I contacted some new vendors recommended by students in the class, and that led to some beneficial sales avenues.

Networking and contact with other farmers. Please note that before taking this farm I taught courses and counseled clients in business planning, so that part did not create changes for me.

Decided that farming enterprise was too expensive in terms of time spent relative to profit earned and learned how to increase efficiency.

I was able to complete an internship that would not have been financially possible otherwise.

We are a non-profit organization, and we are just getting started, so really I cannot answer this question.

Much better organized.

Benefits derived are knowledge-based rather than financial currently.

None yet. The financial investments this year will not allow a profit for at least another year.

I executed my plan to seek out new markets for my products.

Knowing how to put together an enterprise budget is priceless, but still need to develop the skills needed further.

Technical support for finding workers through woofers. Grants through NRCS.

Our community hoop house business is still in the beginning stages, however it is building interest in many families to eat healthy & grow their own food not only for subsistence but for profit as well.

We explored the possibilities of selling to caterers. We have sold some vegetables to local caterers. We have expanded our flower production and are creating a market there. We continue with our CSA and we have gained confidence that we are producing great food and should ask for a fair price for it.

As we are just starting, the benefit of all of the information is extremely helpful in the planning stages.

I am in the process of developing an income stream for the future and one that I can retire with.

Completely changed how I am approaching this long-term project & my goals through urban farming.

I am more focused and for next year will be able to use the information I gathered to make better decisions financially.

Perhaps a better chance at government programs, via a better business plan.

Record keeping and new marketing strategies have helped us to plan better and to market our products more efficiently and profitably.

Really no change other than no supplemental cost to stay alive that would have to eat up most of our profits from calve sales.

New outlets for sales.

Independent farm/vegetable/livestock operation is now a growing concern - This occurred after we took the course which gave us confidence to begin.

Please describe the social benefits (standard of living, environmental quality, etc.) to your operation, family, or community which have resulted from your participation in this course.

We are enjoying the new networks, increased income and better feelings about being a farmer!

Determining the economic thresholds for tasks such as weeding allows for clearer decision making for when to step away from the farm.

We started up a community farmers market and CSA for local families to directly benefit from our endeavors.... the response has been HUGE! There is a waiting list for CSA memberships and a flood of interest in the market for both buying and selling at it. Community members have made it a point to visit with us and thank us for our efforts. We receive constant requests for interviews / tours of our little farm. We're already talking about buying more land to expand our operations and petitioning other local garden-lovers to consider becoming backyard farmers to help meet the demand. Very rewarding for all the hard work put into it.

If I had my own operation I would imagine that some of the social benefits would be heightened.

I feel much more able to start a farm business after thinking through all of the components involved. Hopefully this operation would have positive impacts on the environment and community!

Our personal standard of living has improved hugely. Our family is happier and more relaxed, our over-all health has improved (losing fat & gaining muscle), and we spend far more time outside. Our dogs are happier, and we have realized personal, life-long dreams. Our friends bring their children to see the animals, our grandparents are excited about the horses, and we know our neighbors, something that took years in our old neighborhood. Our family bond has strengthened along with our community bond.

This course gave us the knowledge to push us forward in starting our operation. We hope to see a better standard of living for our family and to help build community relationships once we start.

Connected with other local farmers and have been in contact with them to see how their operations are doing or coming along.

We are growing our own food and we are forming a community of people that are interested in local healthy foods.

Community is more open to discussing farm problems.

Networking with other farmers and hearing the diverse ideas and opinions was invaluable.

Clearer understanding of the impact of local, organic produce on food systems.

I have networked with new farmers.

We have gotten more of the community involved with our organization.

Better family involvement.

Building relationships with both urban and rural farmers was very valuable.

Neighbors in the area of our farm are seeing the benefit of having food grown in their neighborhood.

Our operation is very accessible to the community. It fosters community, generates an awareness of where food comes from and promotes health for people in our neighborhood and beyond.

Just knowing other local farmers doing similar things helps a ton

Providing local organic veggies at LOV Gardens to 19 members this year and aiming for 40 next yr. My high hoop house is 1/2 in operation this year and full operation next year.

Overall healthier living, utilizing our own resources as ancestors once did is an overall feeling of satisfaction for many in our community. Thank You.

My daughter and I wrote the business plan and took the course together. She is now my partner!

My family jumped on board as I took this course! We all learned together the opportunities that wait for us in the future on our farm. Every idea we have can be achieved with time and work. Now that we have a farm, we eat together at the table more, and spend far more time outside. My husband can relax after a day at a stressful corporate job, even (especially) if it involves working on something farm-related. My daughter is proud of what we do, and I am happy to

wake each morning to feed my animals. Our friends are more involved in our lives since they all want to come help all the time!

Additional contacts were developed which will last a lifetime and I have realized which direction I must take for a realistic and profitable enterprise.

Much more efficient operation that will function much more easily - and with much more necessary structure - provide for & with the target community.

The networking opportunities with extension and other farmers was great.

Definitely an improvement in focus and optimism about potential for the future of the agribusiness.

Taking this course introduced us to like-minded producers and people interested in food production which in turn generates interest community wide in locally produced ag products.

Still doing what we always have so no real change other than less stress due to our evaluation of the market(s).

Networking with the local growers, creates a support group

We now have comfortable speaking acquaintances with other farms and farmers and compare notes often in passing.

5. Experiential Learning Program Assessment Overview

Provided by Kellie Enns and Martha Sullins, Colorado State University

Executive Summary

Background

As a part of the Building Farmers in the West (BFW) program, participants in the classroom program have had the option of pursuing additional experiential learning opportunities in the form of a mentorship or unpaid internship. This program creates opportunities for individuals to glean expertise from mentors who have successfully navigated unique production and marketing settings; however, there has been a relatively few Building Farmers in the West program participants that have taken part in the experience. Those that have participated in the mentorship/internship (both as mentor and as mentee/intern) realize the inherent value in the program and wish to see it continued. A total of 23 mentorships and two internships across five states were completed.

Table 1. Mentorship/internship Summary

City	State	Session	Number of Mentorships	Number of Internships
Longmont	CO	Spring /summer 2010	3	
Longmont	CO	Spring /summer 2011	3	
Longmont	CO	Spring /summer 2012	3	1
Durango	CO	Spring /summer 2011	1	1
Espanola	NM	Spring/summer 2012	5	
Ft. Collins	CO	Spring /summer 2012	3	
Sandy	UT	Spring/summer 2011	1	
Orem	UT	Spring/summer 2012	1	
Duck Valley	NV	Summer 2012	2	
Twin Falls	ID	Spring/summer 2011	1	
Total			23	2

Both mentorships and internships required the learner to develop a professional development plan as part of the application process that was used to help match them with a mentor who could best meet their professional development goals. Newly developed self-assessment instruments (described later) were piloted in the Boulder County mentorship program in 2012 as another method for reviewing strengths and weaknesses with learners and drawing out that learning during the mentorship.

In order to help program managers understand how to develop and administer experiential learning programs in their own regions, Experiential Learning Guide to help other BFW teams

and participants successfully recruit, advertise and execute mentorships and internships was created.

While some participants were ready immediately after taking the Building Farmers class, most needed an additional year of active farm work before they were ready for an internship, or one or more additional years of active farm management before they are ready for a mentorship. Note that administering the mentorship and internship programs requires an additional layer of responsibility and follow-up from the program managers, some of whom did not feel ready to take on this programming. This primarily involves recruiting mentors for mentorships and internships, vetting applicants for both programs, ensuring that those applying are a good match for the “teachers” at hand, and checking in periodically with both parties to make sure they are working well together throughout the season. This process has resulted in fewer experiential learning programs than initially foreseen, yet likely better overall pairings of newer farmers with their mentors or internship supervisors.

Methods

Mentee and intern participants were asked to complete a professional development plan early in the experience to assist and guide the mentor/intern coordinators. Mentees and interns were then placed with the mentors and intern coordinators. Post-experience assessments were conducted with mentors and experiential learning participants. Follow-up interviews were conducted with a sample of coordinators, mentors or intern supervisors, and participants in the spring of 2012. Utilizing a qualitative approach, and triangulation of the data, themes emerged from these interviews and were then used to provide recommendations regarding the BFW experiential learning program.

Findings

- 1) There is great value in an experiential learning program, but significant differences in how the program was administered and coordinated from region to region and state to state. Mentoring and experiential learning happened in both formal (structured programs) and informal (sharing within classes, building relationships outside of the class) manners. The internship experiences were not viewed to be as successful as the mentoring experiences.

- 2) There is tension between the degree of complexity needed and desired in the program (some desired easier application and a more flexible experience, others desire a more structured experience with discreet expectations to be met – a skills list and proficiency level).
- 3) There exists a significant burden on the coordinators of the program to insure adequate pairings of the mentor/mentee and to coordinate, collect data and validate an effective experiential learning program; a motivated coordinator was necessary for successful experiential learning.
- 4) Mentees within the program were unable to effectively utilize the mentorship as much as they would have liked due to the steep learning curve and the time commitments during the busy production season; while they received (or could have received) a great amount of personal attention, they were not at a confident level to even know the right questions to ask.
- 5) There exists, in some cases, a competitive tension in the program as mentors are providing guidance to individuals that may enter into the same competitive market as their own products; most however realized the inherent benefits of a mutually beneficial relationship.
- 6) There was a desire to have more production-focused classes as this may ease the pressure on the mentors to provide great inputs during the production season.
- 7) Building Farmers in the West creates secondary benefits in community development.

Recommendations

- 1) Determine the degree to which program should be emphasized and utilized. Train the coordinators to more effectively utilize the experiential learning model throughout the class and emphasize and market this as an integral part of the program.
- 2) Have all coordinators create a handbook of “best practices” to assist in effectively running the experiential learning program and to ease the time demands. This would include practices for marketing and promotion of the program, making pairings, practices for check in and supervision, and follow-up and evaluation of individuals.
- 3) While the professional development plans were instituted to create a more personal experience for the participants, the reality was that they were not utilized to a large extent. Therefore, a more standards skills assessment or alternatively, training on how to utilize a professional development plan should be conducted with both mentors/participants.

- 4) Create a tiered level of mentoring to allow for group/panel mentoring which would occur in longer, and more regular early and late in the growing season, with fewer meetings during the busy and intense time of the growing season. Individualized mentoring should be utilized in more informal setting and for those individuals which are in more advanced stages of the production/business start-up – in years two and beyond. This option could be considered for those that have gone through the classroom program in previous years.
- 5) Consider regional needs for the topics of the mentorships: while the class may have focused on business principals, many participants indicated that they needed more assistance in the production practices. Is there a way to more adequately link these together? More information and training on production may ease the burden of the mentors during a busy production time.
- 6) Create, when possible, follow-up experiences for mentors to help determine effective practices for working with new and inexperienced farmer

Final Report

Two objectives in the original grant address the experiential learning component of the Building Farmers in the West.

The first of these objectives is:

Organize and coordinate experiential learning programs in at least 3 regional sites and all sites in Colorado. Participants who complete the classroom program will qualify to apply for mentoring from experienced producers, or a cost-shared intern to work at the farmer/producer's operation (or with a production-oriented community organization). These learning experiences will be tied directly to goals established by participants in their business plans.

In responding to this objective, Building Farmers programs were initiated in many regional sites and in many sites in Colorado. Experiential learning programs were offered following many of the programs. Those interested in the experiential learning programs were asked to apply. Coordinators sought to find mentors/intern sites that would complement the needs of the program participants. Participants were asked to complete a Professional Development Plan to complement their business plans and which was intended to guide and direct their learning while

participating in the experiential learning programs. Significant coordination occurred on behalf of program coordinators and mentor and intern participants. The coordination included such items as organizing applications, providing direction to mentors and interns, providing guiding principles and format for the Professional Development Plans, and collecting evaluation data through evaluation forms.

Evaluate curriculum, program learning objectives, evaluation instruments used for classroom and experiential learning programs and post-program producer outcomes assessment.

Following the experiential learning programs, they were the evaluated in two significant ways:

- 1) Through end of program evaluation forms submitted by some mentor and mentee participants.
- 2) Through follow-up interviews conducted with coordinators, mentors, mentees and intern coordinators and interns.

Evaluation Results

Participants in the experiential learning programs were asked to complete end of program evaluations. The evaluation results revealed the advantages and disadvantages of the experiential learning for all participants. For example, it became clear early on that some mentees did not respect the time limits placed on the mentors' availability (generally 2 hours per month on average over 32 weeks). The mentors generally received high marks from the mentees on issues such as the mentor taking time to answer questions, encouraging them to try new techniques, and introducing them to new resources applicable to the mentees' operations. However, when both parties are in production agriculture, finding the time to regularly meet (by phone, email or in person) often became very challenging. Still, on the whole mentees appear pleased with the benefits and the access to higher level learning, especially for production issues. The mentors were generally pleased with the compensation they received and felt that it was a good learning experience for them, but often felt their mentees were unprepared for a mentorship.

Follow-up Interviews

In order to gain additional information from participants in the Building Farmers in the West Experiential Learning program, interviews were conducted with program coordinators, mentors, intern supervisors and participants. All BFW coordinators who conducted Building Farmers in the West programs in 2010-2011 were invited to participate via email recruitment. Additionally, supervisors and program participants were asked to participate via similar recruitment emails. Standard questions were asked of each of the groups. A total of 14 different interviews were conducted. Participants in the interviews represented all three groups (coordinators, supervisors, mentees/interns). Interviews were recorded and transcribed. Utilizing data triangulation, the transcriptions were coded according to emerging themes.

Findings

- 1. There is great value in an experiential learning program, but significant differences in how the program was administered and coordinated from region to region and state to state. Mentoring and experiential learning happened in both formal (structured programs) and informal (sharing within classes, building relationships outside of the class) manners. The internship experiences were not viewed to be as successful as the mentoring experiences.*

Many participants of the experiential learning program commented on the value of the experience. One participant noted: “Building Farmers program was just an extraordinary opportunity to convene our community of farmers in a way that they had never been connected before. And that, as a whole, the more that we got people in a room interacting we were getting that kind of mentorship throughout the whole model. And so this extra, on farm engagement step is just critical follow-through. It is the nail on the coffin, the thing that makes it more permanent and real.”

Participants revel in the value of experiential learning:

“There is no better learning opportunity than the hand’s on, in the field, where we move from the theoretical to the practical and the farmer can say ‘ok, I know that we talked about labor management, but we didn’t work on production management and I have an irrigation failure.’

There is just a whole another level of content ...the transfer of knowledge that can happen in a less formal environment where the off handed comment can be the one that saves you \$5000.”

Additionally, another participant commented:

“This program was exactly what I needed in order to develop a small scale agribusiness. The topics were relevant but there was also a high caliber of people in the group, beginning, intermediate and advanced farmers what extremely valuable. ...there were professionals in each week that supported people and told people what the agriculture was really like.”

While both mentorship and internship experiences provided great value, the internships, and particularly the expectations regarding compensation for interns (or lack thereof) for the mentors caused less affinity towards the internship experiences, though they were very limited in the number. While the internship experiences may be a more intermediate step in production, but the commitment is intensive and at times the interns were presented with tasks above their knowledge or ability level.

2. *There is tension between the degree of complexity needed and desired in the program (some desired easier application and a more flexible experience, others desire a more structured experience with discreet expectations to be met – a skills list and proficiency level).*

Administering experiential learning programs is extraordinarily challenging. Providing the participants with adequate resources while still allowing the individual desires of the participants can cause differing views on the amount of structure or support necessary.

One participant suggested:

“A simplified application process might help, and then maybe more clear expectations that this is the follow up to the programs – the obvious next step rather than an optional add-on. “

Consistently, another participant commented:

“I do another farmer/mentor program that has more built in accountability – this is the one downside that I can see. There isn’t much built in – it is all personal...There is not a lot built in that has built does quality evaluation in handling it.

In {other program} there is a built in skills list with three levels – do you really know propagation in a greenhouse, can you estimate seed quantities per row foot? Have you done it?

Do you have proficiency? So it actually builds up – like any job trade – you would have proficiencies that you could check off ...it is like a mini trade school. I found it really helpful. And it is helpful for the next guy down the line too...if you want to hire a field manager you want to make sure that he knows how to do post-harvest handling.”

“The need for more support was... If there was some kind of written materials or short training materials which would cover how to be a mentor to foster success of those that you were working with. Not everybody is a natural fit for mentoring, but that doesn’t mean that they wouldn’t do a good job of mentoring, especially if they knew things to do or things to watch out for.”

3. *There exists a significant burden on the coordinators of the program to insure adequate pairings of the mentor/mentee and to coordinate, collect data and validate an effective experiential learning program; a motivated coordinator was necessary for successful experiential learning.*

Strong experiential learning programs and this one in particular, is noted for the demand placed on coordinators of the programs. As the program coordinators in their respective areas, the coordinators had the responsibility to advertise, market, coordinate and match mentor pairs, communicate expectations, check in to make sure the program was successful and to collect data following the experiences. Certainly they may also have to deal with difficult situations, pairings that are not good matches. This burden was exemplified in the following comments:

“It is great to work with [coordinator] – a great initiative on his part. He brought together - it is challenging to bring farmers together because they don’t have time – and to coordinate all that. I was impressed by the way it was conducted.”

Consistently, one coordinator validated the significant burden to get individuals in the program:

“I hadn’t really conceptualized, unfortunately, this experiential learning as an integral part of the class. I know now, more than ever, do see it as fairly integrally linked to a full and well-rounded experience from the consumer’s perspective or the student’s perspective. But as we were going through the class I hadn’t been marketing as a really important and really even a viable opportunity for a lot of these producers as I just hadn’t...for one I just wasn’t aware of the financial situation and whether or not we would have access to capital to run the program and then the other side was I just really hadn’t understood...it was extremely valuable.”

Another participant indicated:

“...distance and knowing the local producers well enough to pair them up with a mentee is a barrier to this program running effectively. Knowing the producers well would allow you to not keep real close tables on the paring, but that is not always the case. It is a challenge to make sure that they stay on track in terms of what their goals might be.”

The coordinators have a significant burden to make all parties in happy. In internalizing this burden, one participant commented that the coordinator was very serious – while noting the need for doing so:

“The way that [coordinator] talked about it when they were telling people about it in the farming class...I understand why he talked about it so seriously, but it was almost off-putting.”

Finding ways to assist coordinators in developing adequate experiential learning programs would be beneficial. The mentor pairings are not always successful even with a significant application process.

“I don’t think that personality - wise my mentor and I really clicked very well.”

This perhaps indicates that skill level and personality should be considered in making the pairings.

4. *Mentees within the program were unable to effectively utilize the mentorship as much as they would have liked due to the steep learning curve and the time commitments during the busy production season; while they received (or could have received) a great amount of personal attention, they were not at a confident level to even know the right questions to ask.*

The steep learning curve of the program participants was the focus of many of the interviews.

“We signed up for the mentorship. I think we, honestly, probably got a little bit ahead of ourselves. My main experience was feeling mostly frustrated with myself; of not...I don't feel like we really utilized our mentor. We got some really good information out of him at the beginning of the season, stuff about irrigation, laying out irrigation on a smaller scale. Every time we met with him it was very useful, but it didn't...everything just, you know...rushing by and every couple of weeks I would think, 'I got to call.' And then another month would go by. And at some point you almost get too embarrassed to call...it's been too long.” Similarly, another commented:

“I was in the fire. I hardly had time to call my mentor except if it felt like a life-threatening moment.”

In a similar fashion, participants indicated that they simply were not far enough into the production of their own farms to utilize the mentor effectively.

“Part of my reluctance [to utilize the mentor] was I didn't want to waste his time. I didn't want to be bothering him for little stuff. And so, I definitely feel like, I mean we definitely got wonderful stuff out of him and it is absolutely no reflection on the but I just feel like we were totally not in a place to fully utilize it on our own, as it were.”

Mentors and coordinators also indicated that there existed different levels of knowledge of mentees where they could adequately provide assistance.

“The last mentee that we had wasn't as effective because the person wasn't ready yet. He wasn't ready to take advantage of it. He was still formulating a lot of ideas, which is fine, but I don't think that utilized our time [effectively]. But we still have a relationship with him, and are happy to give advice as he moves forward.”

“We did advertise the mentorship experience but had no applications. I have spent a lot of time contemplating why folks may or may not have been interested, because I had initially, some pretty good feedback about peoples desires to participate, but I think, for one, we have a lot of folks that are in the first few years of business planning and some of them felt like now was an inappropriate time for them to engage in a mentorship and they would prefer to wait another year when they had a little more knowledge. They felt overburdened by the number of questions and thought 'we don't even know where to start.’”

5. *There exists, in some cases, a competitive tension in the program as mentors are providing guidance to individuals that may enter into the same competitive market as their own products; most however realized the inherent benefits of a mutually beneficial relationship.*

Both the mentors and mentees commented that they appreciated new individuals embarking on the agriculture industry and desiring to be involved in production.

“It can be hard to envision at times, it goes in both directions – it is a different type of relationship. [A mutually beneficial relationship] can be a challenge because some of these are competitors, or potential competitors. While this hasn’t entered into the conversations, I can see that in a world where there are relatively few farmers markets or fewer direct market opportunities.”

“It is set up, unfortunately, in our culture at the moment; we think we are competing with each other. I have to go to my market and sell lettuce, and someone else is at the market selling lettuce a little cheaper...so the program can build some kind of cooperation among farmers. And that’s surely needed.”

And finally, one coordinator noted:

“The mentor program was utilized last fall. One of the people on the advisory group has a grass fed lamb and sheep dairy operation and she acted as a mentor to one of the people that took the class. That person has dairy goats and is also interested, they are both interested in making products rather than selling milk. So the person with the sheep dairy has a parlor and has been making cheese. The person with the dairy goats has a fairly small number to start with, maybe 8 or 10 goats and it has expanded....anyway they developed a mentorship last fall and the person with dairy goats was utilizing the parlor form the off-season of the sheep and utilizing the milk from both to make cheese and other products. The mentee was learning more about the dairy side of the operation and the mentor was looking at different products to expand the operation. It was a mutually beneficial operation and they are still continuing in that now.”

While there are many times when the relationships are beneficial, the pairing should be carefully managed and the program sufficiently utilized to minimize potential competitors within similar markets.

6. *There was a desire to have more production focused classes as this may ease the pressure on the mentors to provide great inputs during the production season.*

7. *Building Farmers in the West creates secondary benefits in community development*

“So I think some of it is alternative to the content ... it is like we have in the class when you have the nice dinner beforehand, community development opportunities – and it is so hard to say what those outcomes might be. But for one, there is a certain sense of camaraderie that is just essential and I think in the small and direct, niche markets anyway. There are a certain amount of folks that seem to feel isolated and so by providing them an opportunity to collaborate with colleagues is far less isolating and it can be really inspiring in a job where the up sides are not many. Coming out there is a lot of community based inertia.”

“It was nice, it was a personal connection, I put in way more hours that I was supposed to put in, and they bugged me and we got to be friends, and that sort of stuff. That is the nice part of that.” Many comments suggest that there are secondary benefits to the Building Farmers Programs, noticeably the ability to expand and develop community. While not necessarily an objective of this program, these benefits provide lasting and positive impacts.

Appendices

Building Farmers in the West: Pre-Course Assessment

1. Name _____ Course Location (City/State) _____

2. I am registering for this course as a:

- ☐ New Farmer/Rancher: Less than 1/4 acre farm or 100 acre ranch and/or less than 1 year farming/ranching and/or intern/apprentice level experience.
- ☐ Intermediate Farmer/Rancher: Production/marketing manager or primary operator, greater than 1/4 acre farm or 100 acre ranch with less than 3 years' experience.
- ☐ Experienced Farmer/Rancher: Production/marketing manager or primary operator, greater than 1/4 acre farm or 100 acre ranch with more than 3 years' experience.

3. Please check all that apply for your current/proposed operation.

Products	Products I currently produce	Products I would like to produce	I have a business plan for this product	Direct Markets	I currently sell my products at:	I would like to sell my products at:
Vegetables	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Farmers' Market	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flowers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Herbs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Restaurant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fruit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Individuals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eggs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wholesale	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meat/animal products	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Supported Ag. (CSA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dairy products	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Value-added products	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of years selling? _____		

4. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. *(Please check only one response)*

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Unsure	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A business plan should be developed prior to implementing crop/livestock production	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand the risks and opportunities associated with direct marketing/targeted wholesale marketing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand the application & financial requirements for participation in agency (FSA,NRCS, etc.) programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have previous experience developing business plans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I currently have a business plan for my operation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I follow a financial plan for my operation annually	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I follow a production plan for my operation annually	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I follow a marketing plan for my operation annually	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. To what extent do you understand the following subjects? *(Please check only one response)*

	A Great Deal	Considerably	Moderately	Slightly	Not at all
Developing business plans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintaining financial records & budgeting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using cost-effective production strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Targeting viable customers for each product	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using cost-effective promotional techniques	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pricing products & implementing pricing strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using effective merchandising at direct markets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Showcasing product variety & abundance at direct markets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assessing operation specific/applicable taxes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Managing labor force & assessing seasonal labor requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Complying with regulatory issues (food safety, zoning, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accessing local resources/technical support (agency, Extension, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Do you know how/where to obtain the following for your current/proposed operation? *(Please check only one response)*

	Definitely Yes	Probably Yes	Unsure	Probably Not	Definitely Not
Land (lease or purchase)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Labor (permanent and/or seasonal)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water/irrigation system providers or supplies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Capital/credit providers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tax planning advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Insect/disease/weed management advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initial seed/plant/livestock suppliers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equipment (scale-appropriate)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Production technical advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marketing strategy advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business management support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. To what extent do the following enhance your learning? *(Please check only one response)*

	A Great Deal	Considerably	Moderately	Slightly	Not at all
Participating in small group discussions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listening to lectures/talks from experts/experienced farmers & ranchers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attending panel discussions with experts/experienced farmers & ranchers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Completing in-field/hands-on practice and/or internship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Completing project/reading assignments at home/work	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Completing project/reading assignments during class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. If you have additional comments, questions, and/or suggestions for course planning and delivery please note them here.

Thank you for your time!

Building Farmers in the West: Post-Course Assessment

1. Name _____ Course Location (City/State) _____

2. Please check all that apply for your current/proposed operation.

Products	Products I will produce	Direct Markets	Markets I plan to use
Vegetables	<input type="checkbox"/>	Farmers' Market	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flowers	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stand	<input type="checkbox"/>
Herbs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Restaurant	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fruit	<input type="checkbox"/>	Individual	<input type="checkbox"/>
Eggs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wholesale	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meat/animal products	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Supported Ag. (CSA)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dairy products	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
Value-added products	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>		

3. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. *(Please check only one response)*

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Unsure	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
A business plan should be developed prior to implementing crop/livestock production	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand the risks and opportunities associated with direct marketing/targeted wholesale marketing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand the application & financial requirements for participation in agency (FSA,NRCS, etc.) programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand the process of developing a business plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I currently have a business plan for my operation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I will follow a financial plan for my operation annually	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I will follow a production plan for my operation annually	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I will follow a marketing plan for my operation annually	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. To what extent do you understand the following subjects? *(Please check only one response)*

	A Great Deal	Considerably	Moderately	Slightly	Not at all
Developing business plans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintaining financial records & budgeting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using cost-effective production strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Targeting viable customers for each product	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using cost-effective promotional techniques	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pricing products & implementing pricing strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using effective merchandising at direct markets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Showcasing product variety & abundance at markets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Assessing operation specific/applicable taxes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Managing labor force & assessing seasonal labor requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Complying with regulatory issues (food safety, zoning, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accessing local resources/technical support (agency, Extension, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Do you know how/where to obtain the following for your current/proposed operation? *(Please check only one response)*

	Definitely Yes	Probably Yes	Unsure	Probably Not	Definitely Not
Land (lease or purchase)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Labor (permanent and/or seasonal)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Water/irrigation system providers or supplies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Capital/credit providers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tax planning advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Insect/disease/weed management advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Initial seed/plant/livestock suppliers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equipment (scale-appropriate)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Production technical advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marketing strategy advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business management support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. *(Please check only one response)*

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Unsure	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I completed a viable business plan during this course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If currently farming, I plan to continue farming, or if not currently farming, I plan to initiate my farm enterprise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A farm career is not compatible with my long-term goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I plan to apply for a mentorship with an established farm operator (if available)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I now have a network of farmers I can work with	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel I can use at least 80% of the materials from this course in my farm enterprise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel I can use at least 40% of the materials from this course in my farm enterprise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would recommend this course to other farmers or potential farmers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I increased my network of farming colleagues and can draw on them for information/resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. If you have additional comments and/or suggestions for future courses please note them here.

Building Farmers in the West: Follow-up Course Assessment

1. Name _____ Course Location (City/State) _____

2. To what extent do you understand the following subjects? *(Please check only one response)*

	A Great Deal	Considerably	Moderately	Slightly	Not at all
Developing business plans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintaining financial records & budgeting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using cost-effective production strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Targeting viable customers for each product	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using cost-effective promotional techniques	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pricing products & implementing pricing strategies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using effective merchandising at direct markets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Showcasing product variety & abundance at markets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assessing operation specific/applicable taxes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Managing labor force & assessing seasonal labor requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Complying with regulatory issues (food safety, zoning, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accessing local resources/technical support (agency, Extension, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. *(Please check only one response)*

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Unsure	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I completed a viable business plan during this course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If currently farming, I plan to continue farming, or if not currently farming, I plan to initiate my farm enterprise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A farm career is not compatible with my long-term goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I completed a mentorship with an established farm operator (if available)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I network often with other farmers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I use at least 80% of the materials from this course in my farm enterprise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I use at least 40% of the materials from this course in my farm enterprise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would recommend this course to other farmers or potential farmers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I increased my network of farming colleagues and can draw on them for information/resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. *(Please check only one response)*

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Unsure	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I currently have a business plan for my operation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I follow a financial plan for my operation annually	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I follow a production plan for my operation annually	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I follow a marketing plan for my operation annually	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I implemented/ adopted new production practices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I established a new market for one or more of my products	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I improved my business management practices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I improved/adopted record-keeping and budgeting practices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I use local resources/technical support (agency, Extension, etc.) for my farming operation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I applied for a government (FSA, NRCS, etc.) loan and/or grant program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. *(Please check only one response)*

	Strongly Agree	Moderately Agree	Unsure	Moderately Disagree	Strongly Disagree
My farming operation is now more economically viable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The quality of life on my farm has improved	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My farming operations are now more efficient	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My families goals are now easier to achieve	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employee/employer relations on my farm have improved	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The value of attending this course was more than the cost of attendance (time, travel costs, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would recommend this course to other farmers or potential farmers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Building Farmers program has improved our farming community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Please evaluate the following potential changes to your farming/ranching operation since attending this course. *(Please check only one response)*

	Increase	No Change	Decrease
Range of product varieties grown	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Number of farm enterprises (vegetables, livestock, flowers, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Infrastructure and equipment (irrigation, tractor, greenhouse, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Land area under production	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Number of employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financing amount/options	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Customer base (number of customers)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Variety of marketing outlets used (CSAs, farmers' markets, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Please describe what you feel are the primary factors that contributed to the achievements made by yourself or others as a result of participating in this course.

8. Please describe the financial benefits to your operation, family, or community which have resulted from your participation in this course.

9. Please describe the social benefits (standard of living, environmental quality, etc.) to your operation, family, or community which have resulted from your participation in this course.

Thank you for your time in filling out this evaluation and for your participation in this course!

Follow-up Phone Interview Assessment

Name: _____ Date: _____

State and program location: _____

Initial question:

Q1: Are you still operating (or actively planning to establish) your agricultural business? If not, why not?

A. Knowledge:

Q2: What part of the business plan do you feel you are better able to develop effectively this season because of lessons you learned through the Building Farmers program?

Q3: What is the biggest business risk your ag operation faces today?

Q4: Has the Building Farmers program helped you manage this risk? If so, how?

B. Actions:

Q5: Have you modified your business enterprise (new product, new service, new marketing channel, legal or organizational change) for the current season because of knowledge or plans you made through Building Farmers?

Q6: Have you established a new business, government or community relationship that has impacted your business enterprise this season?

Q7: Do you currently have a fully completed or partially developed:

- Business plan
- Production plan
- Marketing plan
- Recordkeeping system

Q8: Have you participated in a mentorship through the Building Farmers program? If not, why not?

C. Conditions:

Q9: Do you feel you have a larger or richer network to use in your enterprise's planning and operations?

Q10: How has your access to markets and overall profitability changed as a result of attending the Building Farmers program?

Q11: How have your community, employees, etc. benefited from your attendance in the Building Farmers program?

Experiential Learning Guide

Terms used:

Mentor: experienced farmer teacher

Mentee: works on their farm and has periodic contact with mentor

Mentorship: relationship between mentor and mentee

Intern: works on mentor's farm

Internship: relationship between mentor and intern

High Functioning Mentor Attributes¹ **For Mentorship¹**

- ☐ Has good communication skills
- ☐ Is an exceptional producer and can have considered how to convey their knowledge and skills to a beginner.
- ☐ Understands that each beginning farmer learns differently and some know more or less regarding various topics.
- ☐ Will vary their teaching approach to best fit the learning style and knowledge of the beginning farmer.
- ☐ Understands why they engage in various business and production strategies and can explain their reasoning from a systems perspective.
- ☐ Establishes clear boundaries for their personal time and respect those of the beginning farmer.
- ☐ Gives appropriate constructive criticism balanced with positive affirmation for the beginning farmer.
- ☐ Entertains a wide variety of questions from the beginning farmer but will establish proprietary boundaries based on their comfort level to maintain their competitive advantage in the marketplace.
- ☐ Values teaching, learning and more farmers in the community and marketplace.
- ☐ Encourages networking and continuing education through appropriate resources

Additional mentors characteristics needed for Internship

- ☐ Is OK with the economic losses that will come from the mistakes of interns
- ☐ Holds interns to a performance standard appropriate to their knowledge and skills but not of the same standard as the mentor
- ☐ Keeps their cool in stressful situations and allows those to be teachable moments
- ☐ Inspires through example and motivates work teams to accomplish tasks
- ☐ Allows time for communication regarding intern performance

¹ The On-Farm Mentor's Guide: Practical Approaches to Teaching on the Farm. New England Small Farm Institute. Miranda Smith. Belchertown, MA. 2006

- ❑ Delegates tasks appropriate to intern skill level
- ❑ Avoids exploitive use of intern effort by considering the educational component and mixing work and responsibilities

Expectations and Responsibilities

Specific mentorship considerations

Mentors

- ❑ *2 hours/month average (15 min/ week minimum) of contact time February thru October via phone, email, and farm visits (1st farm visit in February)*
- ❑ Listen to ideas and provide feedback
- ❑ Provide insights into “behind the scenes” issues
- ❑ Discuss big picture items and practical tasks as deemed appropriate by the mentor
- ❑ Offer resources, contacts, general advising on business structure, and tools to find answers
- ❑ *Complete mid-season and end of season evaluations*

Mentees (*note also from mentor list*)

- ❑ Respect mentor’s busy schedule and find appropriate times for communication
- ❑ Work through **checklist of topics** to discuss with mentor
- ❑ Are prepared to do lots of homework, figuring, planning and leg work as a self-directed, independent learner to minimize the efforts and time for the mentor
- ❑ Make use of this opportunity by engaging the program early and often – **15 min per week minimum**

Specific internship considerations

Mentors

- ❑ *Establish a clear work schedule with intern for 20 hours per week of work minimum*
- ❑ Have an orientation period for one to two weeks where intern is acclimated to the culture, operating procedures, and safety requirements of the farm
- ❑ Commit to explaining the specifics of each task and how these tasks fit into the bigger picture of sustainability at their farm
- ❑ *Complete mid-season and end of season evaluations*

Interns (*note also from mentor list*)

- ❑ Commit to the Six P's: prompt, prepared, produce, polite, positive mental attitude, and participate
- ❑ Understand that payment is in the form of the knowledge shared by the mentor and the experience of working closely in a successful farm business
- ❑ Follow all requirements of the Building Farmers internship program
- ❑ Conform to any additional requirements determined by the mentor

Teaching Strategies for Internships²

- ❑ Understand the learning style of individual interns: most people are a mix of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic/tactile and will learn best through one or two. Experiential learning will have a strong focus on kinesthetic by its nature. Lecture format (auditory) is not the best for other learning styles.
- ❑ Plan ahead for instruction however informal and have backup plans in case the particular tasks are not doable in the moment
- ❑ Learner motivation is key to their learning. Help them understand why they want to learn particular skills and concepts.
- ❑ Invite learner questions as they will reinforce their motivation and deepen their understanding of the skill or concept.
- ❑ After motivation, show and/or explain to the intern the proper way to do the task, allow them to perform the task, observe their performance, give them constructive feedback on their performance, and work with them through ongoing performances to further refine their skills.
- ❑ This is a brief summary of a few key concepts discussed in depth in the book cited here. Program coordinators and mentors are encouraged to learn more.

Mentor compensation

- ❑ Mentorship mentors are paid \$625 for the season in monthly payments (\$25/hr x 25 hours, vegetable market farm season is Feb – Oct)
- ❑ Internship mentors are paid \$1,875 for the season in monthly payments (\$25/hr x 75 hours, vegetable market farm season is Feb – Oct)

Mentee and Intern application process

- ❑ Must have certificate of completion from Building Farmers Program (must have presented a business plan with numbers, not just narrative)
- ❑ Applications due in December or early Jan for review by advisory committee and/or mentor pool by mid-Jan and matching of mentors with mentee or intern by mid-January for start of experiential learning by February 1 (some internships may start as late as April 1).

² The On-Farm Mentor's Guide: Practical Approaches to Teaching on the Farm. New England Small Farm Institute. Miranda Smith. Belchertown, MA. 2006

Professional Development Plan for Building Farmers in the West

Experiential Learning Component

~Mentorship~

This form should be completed by the mentee. A copy of the form should be provided to: your mentor (and other mentors in your local program if applicable) and to your mentorship coordinator. The form will help your mentor and the coordinator better understand your goals, knowledge and skills and how to best assist you during your mentorship experience.

Name: _____ **Mentor Site:** _____

Date: _____ **Mentor:** _____

Goal A:

Check all performance criteria that apply

Goal A most closely aligns with which of the following categories (check all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Business planning <input type="checkbox"/> Production: planning, seed/seed stock supply, season extension <input type="checkbox"/> Production: seeding, transplanting <input type="checkbox"/> Production: soil fertility, soil health, pest management <input type="checkbox"/> Irrigation systems, soil moisture management <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse, row cover, plasticulture <input type="checkbox"/> Labor procurement & management	<input type="checkbox"/> Equipment: use, purchase, modification <input type="checkbox"/> Post-harvest handling <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing, pricing & merchandising <input type="checkbox"/> Recordkeeping, budgeting <input type="checkbox"/> Regulations: food safety, food processing, taxes, Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) <input type="checkbox"/> Financing <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
--	---

Action Steps:

List below any steps that you might take during your mentorship experience to accomplish the goal above:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Assessment:

How will you know if you have accomplished the goal?

What are the measurable or observable results? (example: I have implemented effective post-harvest handling processes on my farm that have reduced product damage and loss during harvest.)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Goal B:

Check all performance criteria that apply

Goal B most closely aligns with which of the following categories (check all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Business planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Equipment: use, purchase, modification
<input type="checkbox"/> Production: planning, seed/seed stock supply, season extension	<input type="checkbox"/> Post-harvest handling
<input type="checkbox"/> Production: seeding, transplanting	<input type="checkbox"/> Marketing, pricing & merchandising
<input type="checkbox"/> Production: soil fertility, soil health, pest management	<input type="checkbox"/> Recordkeeping, budgeting
<input type="checkbox"/> Irrigation systems, soil moisture management	<input type="checkbox"/> Regulations: food safety, food processing, taxes, Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)
<input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse, row cover, plasticulture	<input type="checkbox"/> Financing
<input type="checkbox"/> Labor procurement & management	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

Action Steps:

List below any steps that you might take during your mentorship experience to accomplish the goal above:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Assessment:

How will you know if you have accomplished the goal?

What are the measurable or observable results? (example: I have implemented effective post-harvest handling processes on my farm that have reduced product damage and loss during harvest.)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Goal C:

Check all performance criteria that apply

Goal C most closely aligns with which of the following categories (check all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/>	Business planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	Equipment: use, purchase, modification
<input type="checkbox"/>	Production: planning, seed/seed stock supply, season extension	<input type="checkbox"/>	Post-harvest handling
<input type="checkbox"/>	Production: seeding, transplanting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Marketing, pricing & merchandising
<input type="checkbox"/>	Production: soil fertility, soil health, pest management	<input type="checkbox"/>	Recordkeeping, budgeting
<input type="checkbox"/>	Irrigation systems, soil moisture management	<input type="checkbox"/>	Regulations: food safety, food processing, taxes, Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Greenhouse, row cover, plasticulture	<input type="checkbox"/>	Financing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Labor procurement & management	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____

Action Steps:

List below any steps that you might take during your mentorship experience to accomplish the goal above:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Assessment:

How will you know if you have accomplished the goal?

What are the measurable or observable results? (example: I have implemented effective post-harvest handling processes on my farm that have reduced product damage and loss during harvest.)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Mentorship Final Assessment – Mentee Version

1. How often did you have contact with your mentor?

- ☐ had no contact (please indicate why below)
- ☐ less than 1 time per month ☐ 30 minutes per week
- ☐ 1-2 times per month ☐ about 1 hour per week
- ☐ 15 minutes per week ☐ more than 1 hour per week

⇒ If you had no contact with your mentor during the 2010 season, please explain why:

2. Estimate the total hours of contact you had with your mentor throughout the 2010 mentorship program

_____ total hours

3. Estimate the total contact hours with your mentor by the type of contact:

_____ Hours by phone

_____ Hours by email

_____ Hours spent visiting my farm

_____ Hours spent at another location

4. For your own needs, was this level of contact with your mentor:

- ☐ too much ☐ just right ☐ too little

5. Please rate the amount of knowledge you gained in each of the following areas:

	A great learning opportunity for me	Significant knowledge gained	Moderate knowledge gained	Little knowledge gained	No knowledge gained	Does not apply to my situation
Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Soil fertility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	A great learning opportunity for me	Significant knowledge gained	Moderate knowledge gained	Little knowledge gained	No knowledge gained	Does not apply to my situation
Irrigation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Weed control	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Insect control	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pest control	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Farm equipment, appropriate implements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Labor management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Post-harvest product handling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Customer/member/buyer relations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Merchandising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

6. Please rate the following based on your experiences as a mentee in this program:

	Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
I gained practical, hands-on experience in production agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I learned about new resources applicable to my operation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The mentorship period from March to October 2010 was appropriate for my planning, production and harvest periods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My mentor took time to answer my questions when I asked	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My mentor encouraged me to try new techniques	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall, I benefited from participating in this program as a mentee	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would recommend this mentorship program to other beginning farmers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Please evaluate how the knowledge and skills you learned during this mentorship may influence your future farming plans:

I plan on:	Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
Developing or updating my business plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Changing or adopting new production practices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exploring new marketing outlets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improving my business management practices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improving or adopting new record-keeping/accounting practices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increasing my networking with other producers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reducing my use of purchased off-farm inputs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Postponing any changes to my market farm enterprise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No longer operating my market farm enterprise or pursuing such an enterprise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Mentorship Final Assessment – Mentor Version

1. How often did you have contact with your mentee?

- ☐ had no contact (please indicate why below)
☐ less than 1 time per month ☐ 30 minutes per week
☐ 1-2 times per month ☐ about 1 hour per week
☐ 15 minutes per week ☐ more than 1 hour per week

⇒ If you had no contact with your mentee during the 2010 season, please explain why:

2. Estimate the total hours of contact you had with your mentee throughout the 2010 mentorship program

_____ total hours

3. Estimate the total contact hours with your mentee by the type of contact:

_____ Hours by phone
 _____ Hours by email
 _____ Hours spent visiting my farm
 _____ Hours spent at another location

4. For your mentee's needs, did you feel this level of contact with your mentee was:

- ☐ too much ☐ just right ☐ too little

5. Please rate the following based on your experiences as a mentor in this program:

	Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
I enjoyed sharing my knowledge of farming with my mentee	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I gained a new perspective on my own farming operation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mentoring took much more time than I had anticipated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The mentorship program's goals and expectations were clearly explained to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The mentorship period from March to October 2010 was appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The compensation I received through the program was commensurate to the services I provided to my mentee	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Overall, I benefited from participating in this program as a mentor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following:

I feel like my mentee:	Strongly agree	Moderately agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Moderately disagree	Strongly disagree
Gained skills and knowledge from our mentorship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Used our time well	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Respected my time and availability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was open to discussing alternative ways of resolving his/her farm-related problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>