MAINE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE RETREAT

The State of Beginning Farmers

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New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, Lowell, MA
WHY FOCUS ON BEGINNING FARMERS?

- Vilsack’s goal of 100,000 new farmers
- Average age of US farmers increasing: Estimated that 500,000 farmers will retire 2012-2030
- Need to feed a growing global population
- Unique challenges faced by beginning farmers
WHO ARE BEGINNING FARMERS?

“Those who have operated a farm or ranch for 10 years or less either as sole operator or with others who have operated a farm or ranch for 10 years or less.”
WHO ARE BEGINNING FARMERS?

- Younger, more diverse, and working second jobs

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Age</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>50.4</td>
<td>60.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>65 and older</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not White, not Hispanic</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work Off the Farm</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>59%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Farming is Primary Occupation</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>50%</td>
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WHO ARE BEGINNING FARMERS?

- Smaller farms, higher percentage of organic (only captures certified organic) and direct to consumer sales

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Farms</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Land in Farms</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>82%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government Payments</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>86%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Value of Land &amp; Buildings</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>81%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cropland Harvested</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>88%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organic Sales</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>73%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Direct to Consumer Sales</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>76%</td>
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</table>
WHO ARE BEGINNING FARMERS?

- Lots of animals and specialty crops, fewer grains

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**Percentage of Farms by North American Industry Classification System**

- Grains and Oilseed
- Specialty Crops
- Other Crops
- Cattle
- Dairy
- Hogs and Pigs
- Poultry and Eggs
- Sheeps and Goats
- Other Animals

**Operation Started**

- 2003-2007
- 1998-2002
- Before 1998

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**Farmer Participants and Their Products**

- Dairy: 118
- Grain: 109
- Floriculture: 122
- Fruit/Orchard: 258
- Livestock: 379
- Vegetable: 746
- Other: 197
WHO ARE BEGINNING FARMERS?

Distribution of commodity production by beginning farms, 2007

- Cash grains: 15%
- Cattle: 16%
- Dairy: 17%
- Hogs: 6%
- Poultry: 20%
- Other: 8%
- Cotton and rice: 3%
- Fruit and tree nut: 5%
- Nursery and vegetables: 10%

Source: ERS tabulations based on the 2007 Agricultural Resource Management Survey, NASS and ERS, USDA.
WHO ARE BEGINNING FARMERS?

- The numbers in Massachusetts

**Top 10 Beginning Farmer Industries in MA**

- Vegetable and melon farming
- Fruit and tree nut farming
- Sugar cane, hay, and other crops
- Beef cattle ranching and farming
- Dairy cattle and milk production
- Hog and pig farming
- Poultry and egg production
- Sheep and goat farming
- Aquaculture and other animal production

*Defined as farmers operating for less than 10 years.**

*A farm is defined as any place from which $1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the census year.*
1. Most didn’t grow up farming – must acquire production skills, technical/mechanical skills, business skills, and managerial skills elsewhere.
WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES FOR BEGINNING FARMERS?

2. Lack of access to capital and credit
   - Hard to save money
   - Traditional sources of ag credit sometime inappropriate or difficult to obtain

![Diagram](chart.png)

This is a 32-week position starting April 3, 2012. Compensation is $425/week (to be paid hourly), lots o’ veggies, and participation in Eastern Mass CRAFT workshops. There is on-farm housing available to rent if you wish to live on farm. Please visit: [http://www.thetrustees.org/places-to-visit/csas/powisset-farm-csa/](http://www.thetrustees.org/places-to-visit/csas/powisset-farm-csa/) for more info.
WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES FOR BEGINNING FARMERS?

3. Lack of access to land
4. High costs of student loan debt payment and health care
5. Direct to consumer marketing

Small farms rely on direct-to-consumer marketing channels more than do large farms.

- Roadside stands: Small farms 17%, Large farms 21%
- Farmers’ markets: Small farms 17%, Large farms 24%
- Onfarm stores: Small farms 8%, Large farms 15%
- CSAs¹: Small farms 5%, Large farms 24%
- Sales to grocers and restaurants: Small farms 34%, Large farms 16%
- Sales to regional distributors: Small farms 35%

¹CSAs are community-supported agriculture organizations that link consumers with local producers.

RESOURCES TO HELP BEGINNING FARMERS SUCCEED

- Government programs
  + BFRDP Funding
  + Individual Development Accts (2008 Farm Bill)
  + FSA Beginning Farmer Fund
- Micro-lenders
- Student Farms
- Incubator Programs

MOST VALUABLE PROGRAMS FOR YOUNG AND BEGINNING FARMERS, AS IDENTIFIED BY FARMERS*

1. Apprenticeships (74%)**
2. Local partnerships (55%)**
3. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) (49%)**
4. Land-linking programs (47%)**
5. Non-profit training and education (44%)**
6. College and University training and education (30%)**

* Farmer responses only. Additional farmer response data can be found in the Appendix.
** Percentages indicate number of farmer respondents that rated each program as the most important (farmers could select more than one choice).
THE NEW ENTRY MODEL

The mission of the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project (New Entry) is to assist people with limited resources who have an interest in small-scale commercial agriculture, to begin farming in Massachusetts. The broader goals of New Entry are to support the vitality and sustainability of the region's agriculture, to build long term economic self-reliance and food security among participants and their communities, and to expand access to high-quality, culturally appropriate foods in underserved areas through production of locally-grown foods.
Worksheet: Time Commitment for a New Agricultural Business
From “Exploring the Small Farm Dream,” The New England Small Farm Institute

1. How much time will you have each day to commit to a new business?

2. How much time could you devote to the business each week?

3. How many hours could be set aside each of these days?

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4. How does this vary depending on the time of year? Which months will you have the most and least time?
**Cash Flow Projection 2008**

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<td>Other Mileage</td>
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| **Total Expenses** |      |      |      |      |     |      |      |      |       |      |      |      |        |
|                    | $    | $    | $    | $    | $   | $    | $    | $    | $      | $    | $    | $    |        |

| **Net Monthly Balance** |      |      |      |      |     |      |      |      |       |      |      |      |        |
|                         | $    | $    | $    | $    | $   | $    | $    | $    | $      | $    | $    | $    |        |

| **Opening Balance** |      |      |      |      |     |      |      |      |       |      |      |      |        |
|                     | $    | $    | $    | $    | $   | $    | $    | $    | $      | $    | $    | $    |        |

| **Closing Balance** |      |      |      |      |     |      |      |      |       |      |      |      |        |
|                     | $    | $    | $    | $    | $   | $    | $    | $    | $      | $    | $    | $    |        |

*These numbers should be derived from your **Sales Forecast**

*These numbers should be derived from your **Expense Forecast**
THE NEW ENTRY MODEL

Incubator Farm Training Sites
THE NEW ENTRY MODEL

Practical Field Trainings
THE NEW ENTRY MODEL

World PEAS Marketing Cooperative
THE NEW ENTRY MODEL

Land Matching Service

Suitable Agricultural Land in Groton
Includes parcels with two or more acres of prime farmland soil that is in active agricultural, low density residential, or a transitional land use.
7/6/2011

Sources:
- MassGIS Groton Level II Parcel Data
- NRCS SSURGO soil survey (prime farmland, farmland of statewide importance, and farmland of unique importance)
- 2005 MassGIS land-use map (Agriculture, Very Low Density Residential, Brushland/Successional)
- MassGIS DEP Wetlands 2011
- USGS Color Ortho Imagery

Legend
- Suitable Land
- Parcel Boundaries

Contact: Sweavver@comteam.org
The New Entry Sustainable Farming Project
THE NEW ENTRY MODEL

Miscellaneous projects: Livestock/MPPU and BFAA
REMAINING GAPS IN SERVICE PROVISION

- Mechanical training
- Access to appropriate credit sources
- Access to larger tracts of land
- Assistance with laws, regulation, and certification
- Assistance with accounting/record keeping
- Advanced training curriculum for beginning farmers scaling-up
REMAINING GAPS IN SERVICE PROVISION

What are the biggest challenges you face in achieving success in agriculture or farming?

- Finding farm labor: 4%
- Family or other support: 3%
- Better market opportunities: 4%
- Technical assistance: 17%
- Hard to make a living farming: 17%
- Access to capital (loans or credit): 17%
- Finding the right farm location: 6%
- Money to buy a farm or expand production: 4%
- Availability of food processing or slaughter operations: 11%
- Money for farm operations: 10%
- Hands-on experience: 8%
- Farmland access: 24%
- Agricultural knowledge, education, or training: 25%

Percent of Farmer Who are Challenged by Each Topic

Total Number of Organizations Offering Services (Website Based)


www.apfo.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_File/issues.ppt
