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# Developing a Strategic Plan for Regional Farm Incubation

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Hines Chapel Incubator Farm

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Prepared by Piedmont Conservation  
Council, Inc.

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## Section 1: Executive Summary

The purpose of this document is to provide a descriptive analysis of the strategic planning process for a regional incubator farm project in the Piedmont Triad region. The strategic planning process will include such elements as analysis of existing incubator farm programs nationwide, needs assessment and stakeholder development, mission and vision development, core program considerations, standard practices, network development, land transition, business plan development, and an overview of pertinent literature on the subject. The planning process will be described with the intent to provide a blueprint for development of similar projects in the region with the purpose of creating a new generation of farmers to maintain a strong and vibrant local agriculture economy.

The North Carolina agricultural industry contributes approximately \$70 billion to the state's economy annually utilizing 8.6 million of the state's 31 million acres to produce food and fibers.<sup>1</sup> The proposed Hines Chapel Incubator Farm (HCIF) is among a network of emerging incubator programs across the state seeking to address the gap in training and access to land and capital among beginning farmers. The proposed HCIF location is in Guilford County, where the average working farmer is 59.6 years of age<sup>2</sup>. In order to maintain resilient and sustainable communities in the Piedmont, it is imperative to build a new generation of family farms to strengthen an emerging locally-based sustainable food production system that is accessible and affordable.

This plan is based on a thorough evaluation of the needs of the Piedmont region and North Carolina as a whole. The proposed incubator is a strategic solution intended to fill a niche in the process of developing new, viable farm businesses. It compliments many other impressive efforts in the region to educate and train beginning farmers but provides a unique service to new farm businesses by providing a setting for business launch that reasonably reduces risk and provides specific training and professional development services to increase the chances of long-term business success.

### 1.1 Introduction to Incubator Farms

Business incubators seek to assist entrepreneurs in establishing their own, independent business startups by helping them access resources that can otherwise be difficult to obtain in the early stages of business growth.<sup>3</sup> While the offerings of specific incubator farms differs across the country, the overall purpose remains to minimize barriers to entry for beginning farmers and provide professional development to increase the likelihood of success.<sup>4</sup> Common barriers to entry

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ncagr.gov/stats/general/overview.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ncagr.gov/stats/codata/guilford.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> [http://nbia.org/resource\\_library/fag/index.php#1](http://nbia.org/resource_library/fag/index.php#1)

<sup>4</sup> Agudelo Winther, E., & Overton, M. (2013). The Farm Incubator Toolkit. New Entry Sustainable Farming Project. Retrieved: <http://nesfp.org/node/216>.

for beginning farmers are fairly consistent nationwide, most notably access to land and capital.<sup>5</sup> Although there are many various types of farmer training programs being launched across the country, including North Carolina, incubators are unique in that they are land-based and offer close and intensive support for business launch including a combination of shared infrastructure, equipment, storage and processing facilities, and professional development.

Other types of land-based training initiatives have also grown in popularity and sparked tight networks for professional development and marketing including internships, apprenticeships, and other types of experiential learning. What separates farm incubators is that the incubator “client” is not working for an existing business, rather is launching an independent business utilizing the available resources of the incubator at a sometimes reduced cost. Their incomes are not acquired through employment, but through the products that they grow themselves within their independent business’s allocated space at the incubator site.<sup>6</sup>

## 1.2 The Case for Incubator Farms

According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture Preliminary Report released in February 2014, there are just over 2.1 million farms in the United States, a decrease of over 100,000 farms since the 2007 Census. The average age of a working farmer (all scales of production) is 58.3 years.<sup>7</sup> Farmers over the age of 55 control more than half of US Farmland.<sup>8</sup> The 2007 Census of Agriculture states that 91% of all farms in the United States are classified as “small farms” (defined as having less than \$250,000 in annual products), and that 30% of small farm operators are over the age of 65 years old.<sup>9</sup>

North Carolina is one of the nine states listed in the 2007 Census of Agriculture that contributes to 50% of the total value of agricultural products in the United States.<sup>10</sup> This state has a rich agricultural heritage but a combination of factors is making times tough for the family farm and the nature of farming is evolving rapidly. Nationwide there is a shortage of new and beginning farmers due to multiple issues including lack of access to capital, land, and training.<sup>11</sup> USDA estimates that

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<sup>5</sup> Shute, Lindsay Lusher. *Building a Future with Farmers: Challenges Faced by Young, American Farmers and a National Strategy to Help Them Succeed*, Tivoli, NY: National Young Farmers Coalition, November 2011.

<sup>6</sup> Lelekacs, J., & Morris, M. (2013). *Incubator Farms for North Carolina: A White Paper*.  
<http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu/whatwedo/foodsystems/newfarmers/incubator-farms-for-nc.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Preliminary\\_Report/Full\\_Report.pdf](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Preliminary_Report/Full_Report.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Mishra, Ashok, Christine Wilson, and Robert Williams. “Factors affecting financial performance of new and beginning farmers.” *Agricultural Finance Review*, 69(2): 160-179.

<sup>9</sup>

[http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Online\\_Highlights/Fact\\_Sheets/Farm\\_Numbers/small\\_farm.pdf](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Online_Highlights/Fact_Sheets/Farm_Numbers/small_farm.pdf)

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[http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Online\\_Highlights/Fact\\_Sheets/Economics/economics.pdf](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Online_Highlights/Fact_Sheets/Economics/economics.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Shute, Lindsay Lusher. *Building a Future with Farmers: Challenges Faced by Young, American Farmers and a National Strategy to Help Them Succeed*, Tivoli, NY: National Young Farmers Coalition, November 2011.

70% of farmland will change hands in the next two decades<sup>12</sup> and indicators show that fewer new farmers are in a position of inheriting land and other necessities to carry on a family farming tradition.<sup>13</sup>

The National Incubator Farm Training Initiative recognizes a multitude of factors that are contributing to the growth of farm incubation projects in the US including an aging farmer population, increased consumer demand for local food, lack of access to resources for new and beginning farmers, and more.<sup>14</sup> Incubators are a unique economic development tool that, when implemented properly, can have a dramatic impact on the success of new businesses. Historically 87% of graduates from incubation programs (across all industries) were still in business after 5 years after completion of the program compared to the typically dismal number of startup failures.<sup>15</sup> It is estimated that 55% of startup business (across all industries) fail by the 5<sup>th</sup> year.<sup>16</sup> The exact success rate of incubator farms is unknown, but business incubation as a whole is a proven tool at advancing the success rate of startups.

### 1.3 Common Traits of Incubator Farms

Incubator farms vary throughout the country and even within North Carolina depending on geography, local markets, demographics, urban proximity, and a host of other factors. As previously stated, there are common traits to most incubators including a central purpose to remove the barriers to entry for new farm businesses.

#### ***Management Structure***

It is most common for incubator farms to be structured as 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations. In most cases, incubator farms are either operated under the umbrella of an existing nonprofit, or to pursue their own 501(c)(3) status upon initiation. In fact, of the 50 nationwide respondents in a survey distributed to 65 known operational incubator programs by the National Incubator Farm Training Initiative, 68% were organized as nonprofit organizations.<sup>17</sup> This management structure is conducive to the goals of a typical incubator as an organization operating in the interest of the public good through delivery of training and economic development. The tax exempt status offers

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<sup>12</sup> United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). 2008. *Family Farm Forum, April*. Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES).

<sup>13</sup> Agudelo Winther, E., & Overton, M. (2013). The Farm Incubator Toolkit. New Entry Sustainable Farming Project. Retrieved: <http://nesfp.org/node/216>.

<sup>14</sup> Agudelo Winther, E., & Overton, M. (2013). The Farm Incubator Toolkit. New Entry Sustainable Farming Project. Retrieved: <http://nesfp.org/node/216>.

<sup>15</sup> University of Michigan, National Business Incubation Association, Ohio University, and Southern Technology Council. *Business Incubation Works: The Results of the Impact of Incubator Investments Study*. Athens, Ohio: NBIA Publications, 1997.

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.forbes.com/sites/ilyapozin/2012/11/28/how-to-avoid-being-a-startup-failure/>

<sup>17</sup> Agudelo Winther, E., & Overton, M. (2013). The Farm Incubator Toolkit. New Entry Sustainable Farming Project. Retrieved: <http://nesfp.org/node/216>.

obvious advantages but also carries with it strict compliance requirements which can be reviewed in detail on the IRS website: <http://www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits/Charitable-Organizations>.

There are incubators in existence operating as for-profit businesses or under some form of partnership, but this is much less common. The particular circumstances of your needs assessment should dictate how you set up your incubator. Also consider who major project drivers and committed stakeholders are as well as what your common goals are for the program.

### ***Funding***

There are a variety of funding options available for incubator farms. The key considerations for funding your program should be aligning the mission and goals with relevant funding sources. In many cases, the first essential component is land acquisition. While there may be funding available for land purchases or easements through federal programs, state or local government, or foundations, it is wise to first survey the community your incubator will service and consider alternative options such as donated land, long-term leases, or partnerships with entities that share your values and may already own available property. It is common for many incubator programs to utilize diverse funding streams in order to diversify programmatic features and manage risks. Funding options for your incubator will be discussed in more depth in Section 2.8.

### ***Resources and Services Offered***

Although there are variations on what is offered by incubator farms, there are some common features in the resources and services offered such as:

- Land – typically available for rent in small increments at reduced or graduated cost
- Equipment – shared equipment offered at low fees for use among incubator clients
- Infrastructure – access to electricity, water supply, storage, post-harvest facilities, etc.
- Training – formal and informal group and one-on-one training and technical assistance
- Market Access – assistance in finding and accessing markets or collaborative marketing
- Capital – many incubators feature assistance developing needed tools to access capital
- Transition – incubators typically assist in finding suitable off-site land access for transition upon the conclusion of a client’s tenure

### ***Production Philosophy***

The production philosophy and practices taught and applied on incubator farms vary, but to tend to focus on sustainable practices and/or organic farming techniques. There are several examples of incubator farms applying varying philosophies and even for individual clients within a given

incubator to differ in their production approach, as Lelekacs and Morris outline in their work.<sup>18</sup> This can be a complex issue as in many cases client plots are in close proximity and can potentially impact one another. A conventional plot set up adjacent to an organic plot with minimal buffer may adversely affect the organic client's ability to achieve certification or market their product as organically grown, for example. In some cases entire incubator sites have been certified organic, and the management must oversee each client's activities and ensure sufficient recordkeeping to maintain compliance. In other cases a site may not be comprehensively certified, but individual clients may seek certification for their plots. Other sites may not require any particular philosophy but will offer relevant training in order to equip clients with the knowledge to apply particular practices upon transition. This is all set up in a case-by-case basis tailored to the overall needs of the client pool and the local markets for particular classes of products.

### ***Location***

Incubator farms are currently in operation in 32 states and 2 Canadian provinces according to a survey conducted by the National Incubator Farm Training Initiative in 2013.<sup>19</sup> The survey also indicates a concentration of programs in development in the southeast US. These incubators vary between urban, suburban, and rural locations. The distinctions between characteristics of rural vs. urban or suburban incubators are fairly obvious, but what may be of more significance are the potential opportunities that these different settings can provide. This topic will be explored further in Section 2.4.

## **1.4 About this Report**

This report explains the concept of incubator farms and their significance to the Piedmont region. It will outline in detail the basic process for planning and establishing a successful incubator farm and will give specific examples of successful programs in other parts of the country. The report will go into detail about such procedures as identifying need, developing a stakeholder network, developing educational opportunities, and planning the logistics and management of your incubator.

A spotlight will be the development of the Hines Chapel Incubator Farm, a project of the Piedmont Conservation Council, currently under development in Guilford County.

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<sup>18</sup> Lelekacs, J., & Morris, M. (2013). Incubator Farms for North Carolina: A White Paper. <http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu/whatwedo/foodsystems/newfarmers/incubator-farms-for-nc.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> Agudelo Winther, E., & Overton, M. (2013). The Farm Incubator Toolkit. New Entry Sustainable Farming Project. Retrieved: <http://nesfp.org/node/216>.

## Section 2: Incubator Farm Development

### 2.1 Identify the Need

#### *Why is needs identification important?*

It is critical when beginning any business, project, or other venture to first determine the existence of a need within your community or target demographic for your products or services. Clearly identifying the need will serve to answer many important questions about what you are trying to accomplish, including:

- Does our anticipated program serve a justifiable purpose?
- Does this program address a real issue within the community?
- Is the purpose of our program in line with our core mission? If so, does our mission serve to make a real impact in our community?
- Will lenders and/or sponsors be willing to support this cause?

This is typically executed through development of a thorough needs assessment and/or feasibility study. Commonly, it is encouraged that nonprofit organizations undertaking new projects must identify a public service that addresses a community need that aligns with a local, state, regional, or national initiative, or that an underrepresented grassroots need has been identified and meets a qualified purpose. Educational programs typically seek to address a gap in knowledge within a particular demographic. Needs assessments for training and education initiatives may include a number of components, but should provide the answers to the following questions<sup>20</sup>:

- How can education and training **impact** you audience?
- What **approach** will be most effective?
- Do you have **awareness** of existing programs and gaps in knowledge?
- What information do you have about the current situation that will help you identify and document **outcomes**?
- What is the **demand** for future programs or products?
- How will your program gain **credibility**?

#### *How do I conduct a Needs Assessment?*

Prior to collecting data it is critical to clearly state the objectives and identify the target audience for your needs assessment. This will assist in determining the best methods for your study. A needs assessment for a project that aims to close the gap in training or knowledge for a targeted audience should carefully assess the current situation as well as what potential solutions the audience may be interested in. It is futile to propose solutions if your solutions do not appeal to your audience.

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<sup>20</sup> McCawley, Paul F. (August 2009). Methods for Conducting an Educational Needs Assessment. University of Idaho Extension. Retrieved: <file:///E:/PCC/PART%20Strategic%20Plan/Needs%20assessment/BUL0870.pdf>

There are a variety of methods for collecting data for your needs assessment, and the right approach will vary on the objectives and audience. Four common methods include surveys, interviews, focus groups, and working groups. The following draws heavily from McCawley's *Methods for Conducting an Educational Needs Assessment* (2009). McCawley states that while the number of participants engaged may vary according to a particular project's scope, the key is to achieve a high rate of respondents among those sampled. Rates less than 100% may introduce bias, but rates less than 50% begin to compromise statistical integrity. Keeping the rate of responses above 75% is recommended.<sup>21</sup>

Surveys can be conducted through written questionnaires or orally. Each method presents advantages and disadvantages, but regardless of method it is critical to carefully identify your audience, establish clear goals, and try to limit open-ended questions that may be more difficult or time-consuming to analyze. It is also encouraged to pilot test your questions to determine how easily they are understood and how open to interpretation they may be.

Interviews are inexpensive and can serve to develop a rapport between the interviewer and stakeholders, which can be incredibly useful as a project unfolds. One must be careful, however, to be mindful of their own bias during interviews and to stay on task, not allowing the conversation to meander. Interviews are also time-consuming, so it is important to be organized and stay on task while also making your subject feel comfortable to share their thoughts. It may be helpful to record interviews in order to make data collection easier. The interviewer may be too consumed with taking notes, making them seem disengaged or rushed.

Focus groups are great tools to judge attitudes and beliefs, and commonly can be used as follow-ups for surveys. They tend to focus on a limited number of stakeholders in a group setting. They are very useful in gaining open-ended views, gathering shared views, and collecting fresh ideas from stakeholders. An open conversation within a focus group can allow subjects to feed off of one another's comments and come up with spontaneous suggestions or ideas.

Working groups are great long-term tools that often may result in gaining group opinions plus a product. They may be useful for strengthening an organization's credibility among stakeholders by developing relationships, building consensus over the long-term and utilizing that consensus to develop actionable project processes, and assembling qualitative data that does not need to represent a larger audience.

### ***What is the wider need for incubator farms and how do you focus locally?***

Beginning farmers across the U.S. lack access capital, land, and established marketplaces for their products. The number of beginning farmers has declined as more than half the farmland across the

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<sup>21</sup> McCawley, Paul F. (August 2009). *Methods for Conducting an Educational Needs Assessment*. University of Idaho Extension. Retrieved: <file:///E:/PCC/PART%20Strategic%20Plan/Needs%20assessment/BUL0870.pdf>

U.S. is controlled by farmers over the age of 55.<sup>22</sup> USDA estimates that 70% of farmland will change hands in the next two decades<sup>23</sup> and indicators show that fewer new farmers are in a position of inheriting land and other necessities to carry on a family farming tradition.<sup>24</sup>

Many sources of information are readily available to access statistics on farmland, farmer ages, and other information that makes the case for assisting beginning farmers. The Census of Agriculture statistics can be accessed through the USDA and state agriculture departments, along with other critical information to help build the case. Locally, it is important to understand how this wider case for beginning farmer facilitation is relevant to your community. Many counties in North Carolina and nationally have developed Farmland Protection Plans which contain useful local data about agriculture in your community, local trends, and plans for action. More information about farmland protection in many communities across the U.S. and links to local reports and programs can be found on sites such as the American Farmland Trust (<http://www.farmland.org/default.asp>) and Farmland Information Center (<http://www.farmlandinfo.org/>). Accessing this information is the first step in understanding your local situation and how a farm incubator may help to meet agricultural goals in your community. This will set the stage for identifying and engaging stakeholders locally to continue the process.

## 2.2 Identify Stakeholders

### ***Why are identifying and recruiting key stakeholders important?***

Incubator farms serve to increase the number of successful farmers in a region through building and strengthening community networks that serve the entire regional food system. Identifying and recruiting a broad, engaged set of key stakeholders is an important process to undertake in the beginning stage of any incubator farm project. These stakeholders—and the organizations or groups that they represent—will be part of the project as it moves from the ideation stage to implementation, and in an ongoing capacity as the incubator farm matures. These key stakeholders are invested in the success of the incubator farm, and serve to connect the project leaders with other community and broader resources (e.g. financial, material, and local knowledge), to speak on behalf of the project to the wider community, and to help facilitate the recruitment of potential farmers, mentors, and other project participants.

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<sup>22</sup> Mishra, Ashok, Christine Wilson, and Robert Williams. "Factors affecting financial performance of new and beginning farmers." *Agricultural Finance Review*, 69(2): 160-179.

<sup>23</sup> United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). 2008. *Family Farm Forum, April*. Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES).

<sup>24</sup> Agudelo Winther, E., & Overton, M. (2013). *The Farm Incubator Toolkit*. New Entry Sustainable Farming Project. Retrieved: <http://nesfp.org/node/216>.

### ***What is a “key stakeholder?”***

“Key stakeholder” is a broad term used to refer to individuals and organizations within the community that have a “stake” in a positive outcome for the incubator farm. Sometimes, these stakeholders are obvious: Cooperative Extension Agents, agriculture teachers from a local college, and established farmers. Others may be less obvious, but no less helpful: local chefs, representatives from farm service agencies or banks, city or county officials, and civic clubs. Key stakeholders are sometimes referred to as “partners.” The ideal key stakeholder will have:

- A stated interest in the positive outcome of the incubator project,
- Willingness to give resources (time, their network, knowledge, or material resources),
- A shared value that is compatible with that of the incubator farm’s goals,
- The ability to remain in contact with the incubator farm staff throughout the project ideation, implementation, and ongoing management.

Some incubator farms have found success in regularly engaging their full team of leaders and key stakeholders through monthly meetings and regular updates. Others have chosen to identify an “inner circle” of stakeholders that have the ability and interest level needed to participate on an ongoing basis (often called a “leadership team”), and a broader group of key stakeholders that are informed through regular updates and infrequent meetings, yet are available to be called on for their particular services or expertise. Either way, it is of utmost importance to identify and engage all key stakeholders during the initial visioning process to ensure that everyone is on the same path.

### ***How do I identify what types of stakeholders the incubator project needs?***

Input from diverse stakeholders has been identified as a key success strategy for local food projects. Consider your vision and needs as you seek out stakeholders, and make note of potential connections that contribute the success of your project’s goals.

A list of potential community resources prepared as a resource through the *Bringing New Farmers to the Table*<sup>25</sup> project is provided in the appendix. This list ought not to be considered exhaustive. Base your list on the vision for your incubator farm project and the resources that you have within your community.

Additional strategies for identifying incubator farm project key stakeholders include:

- A brainstorming session with the leadership team. Start by identifying the types of resources that you need, but do not currently have.
- A broadly focused brainstorming session can be overwhelming, especially at the beginning of a stakeholder identification process. It may help to think about the resources that are needed in terms of categories:

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu/whatwedo/foodsystems/beginningfarmers.html>

- Funding (locally-sourced funding, or resources that can be leveraged through local organizations)
- Farming assistance (use of tractors, land-clearing equipment, bush-hogs.)
- Farmer training (teachers, specialists, etc.)
- Land access (people who may have land, or organizations that may be able to hold land in trust, or professionals that can assist with lease agreements, real estate needs, etc.)
- Connections to the broader food system (grocers, chefs, institutional buyers)
- Researchers and Evaluators (people with the skills to help evaluate the program throughout all stages, to ensure the project is on the right track toward meeting objectives and accomplishing goals, as well as to assist with obtaining grants.)
- Other categories that your team identifies.

Thinking more broadly about the concept of community resources, the Community Capitals Framework provides a model of seven ways of describing community assets (with potential committee members in parentheses)<sup>26</sup>:

1. Natural capital: Representatives of parks and rec, watershed, nature groups, and those who use the resources; farmers, ranchers, and others who make a living off the land and their customers and suppliers.
2. Built capital: Representatives from telecommunications systems, utilities, industrial parks, main street, business locations, etc.
3. Financial capital: Representatives of infrastructure development groups, banks, endowments, community foundations, and funding agencies.
4. Social capital: Representatives of clubs and organizations, people with links to outside resources, people who know many in the community.
5. Human capital: Facilitators, educators (K-12), trainers, representatives of agricultural and other service agencies and their customers, economic developer and partners.
6. Cultural capital: Representatives of cultural and religious groups, representatives of museums and historical associations and their support base.
7. Political capital: Elected and appointed officials and those with whom they work, congressional staff, representatives of political groups.

The Community-Based Food System Assessment and Planning facilitator's guidebook<sup>27</sup> suggests a method of using these seven categories to brainstorm members of your community networks that

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<sup>26</sup> Flora, C. B., & Flora, J. L. (2013). *Rural communities legacy and change*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press. Westview Press.

<sup>27</sup> Bargainer, M. C., Eley, M., Fogel, J., Jakes, S., Peery, S., Prohn, S., Sandberg, N., Smutko, S. (2011). *Community-Based Food System Assessment and Planning*. Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education. Retrieved from <http://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/3108/3108-9029/3108-9029.pdf>

may be good candidates for key stakeholders. Note: It is strongly recommended that incubator farms look at their efforts as instigating holistic, systemic impacts, and therefore requiring the involvement of a broad and diverse set of stakeholders. However, each incubator farm steering committee should ultimately determine which categories are important to their efforts, and how best to engage their communities.

***Methods to assess and recruit potential key stakeholders for your incubator farm***

The National Incubator Farm Training Initiative (NIFTI) has produced a helpful “Partner Landscape Worksheet” to help identify the roles, scope, and resources that potential partners can fulfill. It may be a useful starting point to help assess potential key stakeholders.

**NIFTI Partner Landscape Worksheet<sup>28</sup>**

Partner (or potential partner)	Type of Partner (i.e. program development, delivery, support, policy and direction, sustainability)	Ethics/Goal Alignment (strong, moderate, challenging, disparate)	Touchpoint (how and when will you work with this partner, in what venue)	Resources that can be leveraged  (i.e. funding, volunteers, land access, research/evaluation)

Identifying the stakeholders that you would like to be involved in the incubator farm project does not necessarily mean they’ll rally to the cause right away. Have resources available that explain what an incubator farm is, and examples of successful projects, but be strategic about when you engage with potential stakeholders. Sometimes it is advisable to have at least a few details worked out before requesting support from high-level stakeholders. Information provided throughout this incubator farm resource will be helpful in describing what goes into the creation of an incubator farm project, and the following list of web resources provide a baseline of information.

<sup>28</sup> From: <http://nifti.wikispaces.com/file/view/Strategic+Partnerships+Worksheet.pdf>

Examples of NC Incubator Farms

<http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu/whatwedo/foodsystems/incubatorfarmresources2a.html>

Incubator Farms for North Carolina: A White Paper

<http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu/whatwedo/foodsystems/newfarmers/incubator-farms-for-nc.pdf>

National Incubator Farm Training Initiative (NIFTI)

<http://nesfp.nutrition.tufts.edu/food-systems/national-incubator-farm-training-initiative>

Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association (ALBA)

<http://www.albafarmers.org/>

### ***Common pitfalls of key stakeholder engagement, and how to avoid them***

Not engaging key stakeholders soon enough in the visioning process. One of the biggest benefits of engaging key stakeholders is to ensure that incubator farm efforts are not duplicating an already-existing project and that the new effort is not overlooking a prime opportunity within the region. Engaging key stakeholders early in the process serves to capture this local knowledge as early as possible in the visioning process. Furthermore, stakeholders feel that they have much more of a “stake” in the project if their input is taken into consideration during the visioning process. Remember, identifying key stakeholders is only the first part of the process; retaining their interest, attention, and involvement is an ongoing effort. Engaging the stakeholders early in the process can help ensure this long-term success.

- A. **Not building partnerships with the existing farm community early in the project process.** Incubator Farms are a new phenomenon, and as such, can occasionally be met with suspicion and even contempt by local residents who are unfamiliar with the people or concepts involved. Engaging a diverse group of key stakeholders early on in the process will provide the project with a knowledgeable set of community leaders who can speak enthusiastically about the incubator farm to cautious community members, thereby preventing community conflict that can slow down progress later in the project timeline.
- B. **Having a “supply-only” key stakeholder group.** While it is certainly important to have stakeholders with small-farming know-how, it is important to utilize broader community knowledge in order to situate the incubator farm into the regional food system and to help generate long-term sustainability. Ensure that key stakeholders represent all aspect of the food system: buyers, chefs, financiers, educators, economic developers, etc.
- C. **Losing the interest and participation of key stakeholders.** Everyone’s busy, and in all likelihood, the stakeholders that your committee has identified are some of the busiest, most networked people in your community. It’s a good idea to be as upfront as possible when you approach potential key stakeholders about the time commitment that you anticipate their involvement will entail. Additionally, regular updates and predictable meeting times and places will go a long way in ensuring their ongoing participation. Finally, work to engage their continued participation and interest by attentive listening and responsiveness to their ideas, and incorporate those ideas as much as possible where they fit within the stated goals and visions of your project.

## 2.3 Defining the Mission and Vision

### *Why a visioning process is important*

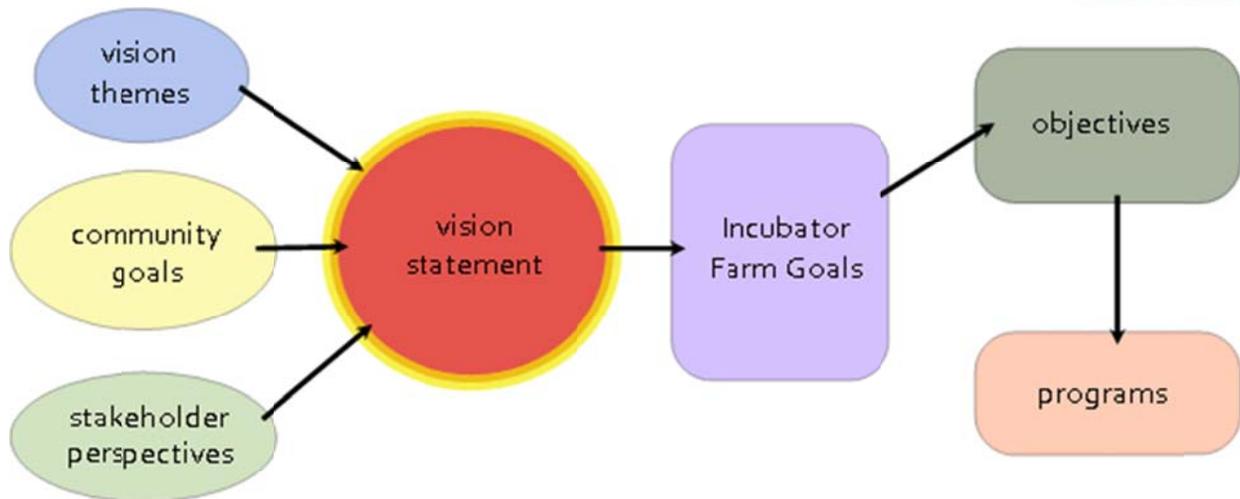
Much like the food system itself, incubator farm projects rely on a broad and diverse set of participants and stakeholders to creating a sustainable program that is integrated into the fabric of the community. While this diversity brings great strength to the project, it also brings the need to conduct a collaborative visioning process to ensure that there is unity and understanding among the leadership team and all stakeholders.

### *Four main goals of a visioning process:*

Create a baseline of understanding. All stakeholders should be brought up to speed and have a similar understanding of the scope and possibilities of the incubator farm project.

1. Develop a working knowledge base of the unique perspectives and resources that each stakeholder brings to the project. Get to know one another!
2. Produce a written (and graphic, if possible) vision statement for the incubator farm project. This vision statement will be used to guide future decisions regarding goals, strategies, and programs.
3. Generate unity. By the end of the meeting, all stakeholders should have a unified sense of the vision and goals of the incubator farm project.

Often, incubator projects are conceived of by a small number of “activators” who have a passion and/or specialized know how. It can be tempting to move forward quickly, motivated by sheer enthusiasm or by deadline of an attractive grant, or both. A visioning process serves not only to ground the existing group with an overall vision that can be easily communicated before detailed decisions are made, but also to identify additional stakeholders early on, garnering their participation, perspectives, resources, and new ideas. It may seem overwhelming, at first, to invite 20 or more new people together with the small group of organizers that may have been having informal conversations for a period of time. Know that doing so, in an organized manner, will serve only to strengthen the project over the long course of development, implementation, management, and continued growth. Gathering a large number and diversity of stakeholders early on provides the best possible input for the vision of the project, while detailed decision-making is typically carried out by a smaller number of those stakeholders who have the time and interest to participate at a more active level.



***Description of possible processes***

A visioning process can take many forms. Some processes are more text-based, while others have a graphic component. Some groups choose to utilize an outside facilitator. This is especially useful if you feel like your group lacks facilitation experience or if everyone would like to participate. Sometimes it’s difficult for the facilitator to step out of the organizing role and contribute a new idea or perspective, either because it takes so much focus to facilitate, or there is a fear of appearing partial.

Graphic visioning processes are the most common, and can be a useful way of organizing the thoughts of a large group. The Grove<sup>29</sup>, a consortium of facilitation consultants, almost exclusively uses visual and graphic facilitation methods. Ahha!<sup>30</sup> is another for-profit consultant that provides facilitation materials and guides that are helpful when using a graphic method. Idea Connect<sup>31</sup> is a third resource that may be helpful.

***Sample methodology***

As illustrated above, there are many possibilities for visioning processes. One possibility is outlined below, complete with an agenda, instructions, and everything needed for a facilitator to conduct a farm incubator visioning process.

<sup>29</sup> The Grove Consultants International <http://www.grove.com>

<sup>30</sup> Ahha! <http://experienceahha.com/>

<sup>31</sup> Idea Connect <http://beideconnect.com/>

***Pre-meeting considerations:***

- Select a location for the meeting that is central and familiar. The meeting room should allow for flexibility of use (i.e. have tables and chairs that can be moved around).
- Invite all key stakeholders at least three weeks in advance, or more if engaging executives or government officials. Follow up with personal invitations and contact to ensure attendance.
- Allocate four hours for the meeting. The visioning process is unlike a regular, action-oriented meeting, and can take a fair amount of time.
- A successful visioning session will include 12-20 stakeholders from diverse areas of interest and participation, although other factors to consider are how well invitees already know one another, their experience and comfort in speaking in front of large groups, and their familiarity with the incubator farm project.
- Pay attention to the needs of your stakeholders when planning a meeting date and time. Evenings are generally better for farmers, as are slower growing seasons.
- Arrange for drinks and snacks at the meeting. If the budget allows, a “working lunch” can also be a great way to build rapport among stakeholders.
- It may help to refer to the meeting as a “workshop,” “community input session,” or “charrette” to better convey the tone of the content. A four-hour workshop, or “afternoon workshop” sounds more appealing than a three-hour meeting.
- Designate at least one person to be the note-taker. Ideally, one note-taker works with the facilitator by writing responses on large format paper for everyone in the meeting to see as the process unfolds, and one note-taker types more detailed notes on a laptop.
- Place pens and pads of paper at each table so that participants can take notes as they are led. A bowl of peppermints on each table is a nice touch, too.
- Items to gather:
  - Pens and paper
  - Post-it notes
  - Large sheets of drawing paper/flipcharts on easels if possible (either post-it note type, or have tape)
  - Broad-tipped markers
  - Snacks and drinks
  - Comfortable chairs
  - Table

***At the meeting***

**1. Gathering and introductions.**

This may be the first time that many of your key stakeholders are meeting each other. Have name tags available and encourage their use. Consider starting the meeting with a short, engaging “ice breaker” activity to introduce members to one another. At the very least, this should allow stakeholders to state their name, their

**SAMPLE AGENDA**

1. Gathering and introductions (30)
2. Review the agenda (5)
3. Short presentation on Farm Incubators (15)
4. ‘This I believe’ exercise (20)
5. Articulating vision themes (60)  
     \*\*ten minute stretch break\*\*
6. Developing a shared vision (30)  
     \*\*ten minute stretch break\*\*
7. Crafting the vision statement (45)
8. Parking lot items (10)
9. Next steps (25)

organizational affiliation, and why they are interested in the success of an incubator farm.

## 2. Review the agenda.

Have an agenda posted in the meeting room in large print that remains in the same location throughout the workshop. Some people find it helpful to also have a time associated with each segment of the agenda, so that they are aware of the pace of the workshop. The facilitator should go over the agenda at the beginning of the meeting with a fair amount of detail, and solicit participant agreement that the stated agenda is the way that the meeting will proceed.

A visual “parking lot” can be helpful. Workshops often veer off course when participants raise a concern or idea that is not germane to the discussion at hand. A good facilitator will note the item by acknowledging the participant’s concern, referring to the agreed upon agenda, then writing that item in large print near the agenda (the “parking lot”), assuring the participant that the item will not be neglected -- it will be addressed either at the appropriate time in the agenda, or at the end of the meeting.

## 3. Short presentation on Farm Incubators.

As outlined above, the first goal of this process is to bring everyone to the same level of understanding. A short presentation on incubator farms (their history, local conditions that instigated the interest in creating one in your area, examples of successful programs, etc.) will help achieve this, and allow time for questions from participants. However, be careful to ensure that this presentation and question session doesn’t jump right into participants expressing their hopes and dreams for the incubator farm project. The focus is solely informational.

## 4. ‘This I believe’ exercise.

Often, participants will either begin the visioning process too narrowly (naming specific projects or programs that they would like to see integrated), or they will be stymied by the open-ended nature of a visioning process. The “This I Believe” exercise is a short, engaging, and insightful way for participants to begin to think more creatively about the project and overall vision.

Instructions: The goal is to elicit perspectives on farming, the food system, farm incubators, etc., and to see that there exists a range of perspectives on each topic. It also serves to jump-start the creativity of your key stakeholders and leadership team. Ask participants to sit in a circle. The facilitator says, “This I believe about \_\_\_\_.” (See suggested topics below.) As led, participants share a 5 second or less word or short statement about the topic. When they share, ask that they stand, and remain standing until everyone has shared. Once everyone is standing, the facilitator asks everyone to sit down, and repeats the exercise with another topic. Each round should take about 1 to 2 minutes, and the facilitator should be prepared with 10-15 topics. This should be a rapid-fire

exercise, with each participant standing to share quickly and in rapid succession. Encouraging people to stand as soon as they have an idea, instead of in the order that they are seated, will help keep the pace brisk. Have a note-taker (or two) at the head of the room to write down what is said.

Suggested topics:

Farming  
The name of your county/town/region  
Incubators  
Farm businesses  
The food system  
Local food  
Land access  
New farmers

## 5. Articulating vision themes.

Utilizing what everyone has learned in the preceding exercise, ask participants to think creatively about the goals of the incubator farm project. Start by initiating a creativity-boosting exercise: prompt participants to think 10 years out, and imagine what life will look like. Start with the participant's personal perspective, and expand outward to their organization, community, and region. Without soliciting verbal responses, utilize variations on the following questions:

- How old will you be in 10 years?
- If you know any farmers, will they be farming in 10 years?
- Knowing that economic projections predict population growth in nearly every NC county, imagine what your community will look like—
  - Will there be more restaurants?
  - More grocery stores?
  - Larger school populations?
  - More development?
  - Less farmland?
- If there is a large city or town nearby, what effects will the growth of that market have on your community?

Ask participants to keep what they've imagined in the forefront of their mind; remind them that we're setting a long-term vision for the incubator farm project—they should be thinking ambitiously about the farming and economic situations 5-10 years down the road. Then, begin to solicit short statements of their visions. Have each participant write 3-8 visions that they have for the future of the food and farming system in their community, each vision on an individual post-it note. This is a brainstorming exercise, so the facilitator should discourage too much discussion among participants at this point. In order to cultivate an atmosphere of safe and creative sharing, remind participants that the next step is to consider the visions that have been put forward and see what themes emerge, but first you'd like to get as many ideas down on paper as possible.

To help explain this exercise to the participants gathered and to ensure that they're all responding to the same question, you may want to use some variation on the question below, and even post in large print at the front of the room so that it can be referenced.

**“This project will be successful in five years if....” (characteristic of the incubator farm, or of the wider community food and farming system)**

## 6. Developing a shared vision.

As the participants are writing their visions (which should take around 5-10 minutes) have them place their post-it notes on a blank wall that has ample access for all. At this point, the facilitator (or several volunteers from the group) should begin organizing the post-it notes into common “themes”: grouping the participants suggested visions into common areas of effect.

Soliciting ideas for project vision themes this way helps to “level the playing field” between participants that are more introverted and those that are extroverted, and those that are accustomed to visioning exercise and other organizational development methods. A major goal of the stakeholder meeting is to include a broad swath of community participants, and create a process by which people can participate through writing short statements down on paper as opposed to having to speak up in a group of strangers. This method can help ensure that you're getting input from everyone.



*Post-it notes can be used to facilitate the grouping of proposed goals into themes.*

The facilitator (or several volunteers from the group) should continue grouping the vision theme ideas into common areas until she can suggest 3-5 general “vision themes.” These should be tested with the participants, and space allowed for the participants to make suggestions—either out loud or by moving the post-it notes on the wall, depending on how many stakeholders are in attendance.

Example visioning themes (from the Hines Chapel Incubator Farm Project):

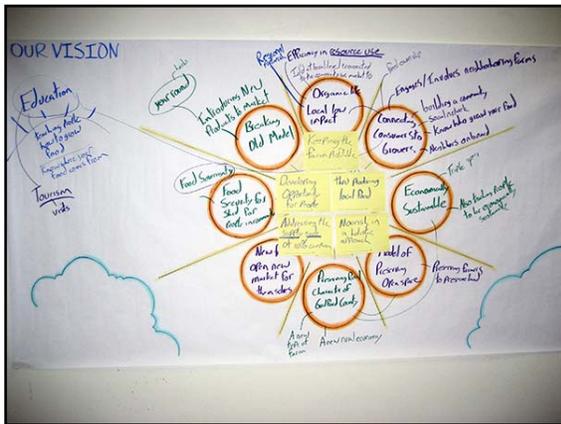
- Keeping farms profitable
- Developing opportunity for people through producing local food
- Addressing the supply side of the NC 10% Campaign
- Nourishing a holistic approach

These 3-5 well-articulated visioning themes that will serve as the centerpiece for the next segment: crafting the vision statement. Once there is consensus on the vision themes of your farm incubator

project, the note taker should write them in large print prominently where they can be seen for the remainder of the meeting.

## 7. Crafting the vision statement

Definition of a vision statement: “Vision is the ultimate outcome of your work. It is not solely dependent on your organization’s efforts, but it is the change/impact you are working to achieve. It should be: Inspirational, motivational, navigational, move people toward the future and be easily understood and positive.”<sup>32</sup>



Note takers should write clearly in large format on a white board (if available) or on large sheets of drawing paper.

The vision statement is different than a mission statement in that the vision reflects what the future will look like because of what you do every day, while the mission statement reflects what you do best every day.

The vision statement that you craft will be used to provide a consistent focus over time and across many community platforms. It is written not only for the stakeholders to remember what they’re all working toward, but also for the wider community, for grant proposals, and to solicit participation and resources from potential partners by capturing the “big picture” and inspiring people and communities to action.

In a facilitated vision-crafting session, it is imperative that everyone’s voice is heard. Pay special attention to the dynamics of the room—are there a few people that are speaking frequently, and others who have not said a word? If your group is on the larger side (10+ people) it is beneficial to divide participants into smaller groups of 3 or 4. Try to discourage “cliques” by asking participants to count off instead of self-organizing, where the temptation is great to gravitate toward one’s friends and colleagues. Ask each group to reflect on the post-it notes, which are at this point organized into thematic areas, and craft a vision statement collectively that they think best captures the themes present. Allow 3-5 minutes for this exercise.

Reconvene the entire group, and ask a representative from each group to slowly read their vision statement. The facilitator (or note taker) will write each statement in large print at the front of the room. Once they are all displayed, ask for a few minutes of silent reflection from the group before taking further suggestions for statements.

One vision statement may become clear to everyone present—in which case, congratulations! More likely, a few participants are going to suggest ways that their statements presented could be

<sup>32</sup> from Resourceful Communities <http://www.conservationfund.org/our-conservation-strategy/major-programs/resourceful-communities-program/>

combined or tweaked. The note taker should do her best to record what is being said and the facilitator should do her best to moderate the conversation so that everyone who desires to speak feels empowered to do so, and so that the conversation is productive.

A note on consensus: It is of utmost importance that the final vision statement be reached by consensus. Do not allow for a decision between two or more vision statements to be decided by a vote or show of hands. The purpose of this workshop and the crafting of a vision statement is to build a community of support. Combining the different perspectives, ideas, and individual goals of the stakeholders present will not be easy, but once you've reached a consensus-based decision, you will have a stronger group of stakeholders who each have a deeper understanding of each other and the long-term vision of the incubator farm. Voting invariably leaves individuals feeling unheard or like their ideas are less than valuable to the group. It is quite an accomplishment to create a vision statement with a diverse group of people, and participants will feel so much more energized knowing that they've avoided shortcuts and that everyone is an equal part of this new group effort.

It's advisable to take a short collective break here to celebrate what the stakeholders have accomplished. Do something fun and inclusive to mark the occasion. Crafting a vision statement can be an exhausting process, and acknowledging this accomplishment in a fun way that re-centers the group will go a long way in determining how likely the stakeholders are to show up at future meetings.

## 8. Parking lot items.

Another way to ensure that all stakeholders feel heard, and that everyone remains engaged with the development process moving forward, is to make good on your promise of revisiting the "parking lot" that you've (hopefully) used throughout the meeting to keep the current conversation on track. Now is the time to address any questions, small discussions, or concerns that were raised earlier. It's highly likely that the items in this list will not be able to be addressed in the moment—they'll either require information that is not at hand, or pose the need for a discussion that is more than a couple of minutes. If so, be clear about what future actions will be taken by the organizers to satisfy all the items in the parking lot.

## 9. Next steps

The most important next step is to make sure you utilize your vision statement! Your team has worked hard to craft this statement, but it will quickly fade from memory if it is not revisited regularly. Broadcast it widely—on your website, in your newsletter, in the header or footer of correspondence, and be sure to have it posted during future meetings.

Another important step is to document the work that has been done today. While crafting the vision statement was the end goal, the other comments and contributions from the meeting are also important to catalog and revisit periodically. The note taker and facilitator should work together to catalog the day's work into a document that will be sent to all attending stakeholders as well as be

made available to future participants to help bring them up to speed as to the groundwork of the vision statement and of your incubator farm project.

Since you have a broad group of stakeholders present, take a moment to plant the seed of future needs and participation by conducting a quick community resource asset mapping exercise<sup>33</sup>. This can also lead into naming a few organizing committees: land acquisition, farmer liaisons, business development, and others. Ask that the stakeholders present take an active role in helping to find new participants and resources by identifying other people they know that should be participating, but weren't there at the visioning meeting.

Set a time and purpose for the next meeting—further identification of community resources, business plan development, identifying objectives and short term goals, among other possible items. Recognize that not all of the stakeholders present will feel inclined or have ability to participate in every future meeting. Instead, allow for their participation by scheduling quarterly or biannual meetings and ensuring that you can keep them apprised of progress through regular newsletters or communications.

## 2.4 Site Selection

### *Urban Incubators*

Incubators in urban areas should follow some of the same basic guidelines for establishment as rural areas, but there will be significant distinctions in terms of available land, zoning, ability to integrate livestock into the operation, and access to consumers. These will typically, but not always, be focused on smaller plot sizes and smaller-scale production. Some considerations of both threats and opportunities that may be unique to establishing incubators in urban areas include:

#### A. Potential threats

- Is the potential for nuisance conflicts between farmers and residential or commercial properties greater?
- Are there city ordinances limiting the types of production (e.g. livestock)?
- Will it be necessary to apply for re-zoning of the property?
- How limited are the options for available property?
- Are there any properties with existing infrastructure suitable for farming?
- Are there potential soil quality or contamination issues on available properties?

#### B. Potential opportunities

- Are there nearby mass - marketing opportunities that could reduce transport costs?
- Are there funds available for neighborhood improvement projects?

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<sup>33</sup> For community resource mapping, refer to the worksheets provided in the appendix, and also available in: Bargainer, M. C., Eley, M., Fogel, J., Jakes, S., Peery, S., Prohn, S., Sandberg, N., Smutko, S. (2011). Community-Based Food System Assessment and Planning. Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education. [http://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/3108/3108-9029/3108-9029\\_pdf.pdf](http://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/3108/3108-9029/3108-9029_pdf.pdf)

- Is there a target population within the urban environment that could become a reliable niche clientele for the incubator?
- Are there more opportunities for onsite or local residence for clients?
- Will increased public exposure enhance marketing and branding opportunities?
- Do you have a more substantial pool of local volunteers through urban community organizations?

### ***Suburban Incubators***

Incubator programs located in suburban areas may enjoy the “best of both worlds” when it comes to balancing proximity to marketplace and safety from public overexposure. However, there are still inherent risks that must be considered when choosing a suburban location. Here is a brief list of considerations when considering a suburban location:

- A. Is the cost of renting or purchasing land going to be less conducive to your plans?
- B. Review the future land development plans for your area to make sure future development will not hamper your efforts? Could future development be an asset to your clients?
- C. Will suburban neighborhoods be more open to a community-based farm or will it be considered a nuisance?
- D. Are there affordable housing options for clients in your demographic?

### ***Rural Incubators***

Rural incubators also come with distinct considerations and characteristics to an extent. An incubator startup may be more likely to find a site that was traditionally agriculture, is zoned appropriately, and has existing infrastructure that may reduce startup costs. Also, the potential threat for nuisance complaints is lower if you have onsite compost, livestock, or noisy machinery. There is also greater potential for incubator clients who transition out of the program to find a site for their own business that more closely resembles the site they have transitioned from. Those advantages aside, there are a few distinct disadvantages to some rural locations that should be weighed:

- A. How far from the site are the best markets and how will that impact transport costs for the clients?
- B. Is there enough potential site traffic to involve community members, volunteers, or host a market?
- C. What options exist for affordable client housing in the area? If few exist, how far will clients have to travel to maintain their plots and will they be reliable?

## 2.5 Developing the Educational Component

The educational component of an incubator farm may be multi-faceted and tailored to suit the client-base and local needs of the farming community. Education on an incubator is not simply limited to classroom learning; it typically takes many forms and covers a lot of topic areas. The key component of the incubator farmer's education and training is the experiential learning that comes with starting a small business in a semi-controlled environment. Through hands-on mentorship and access to the many resources that typical incubators set up, the incubator farmers should be able to learn many of the skills they need to be successful and put those skills to the test in real time. Along with land access and entry to markets, education is one of the key offerings of an incubator farm.

As with the many other aspects of beginning an incubator project, it is critical to understand the audience and its needs to make the educational component relevant and helpful. This is something that should be considered during the Needs Assessment phase of your planning. For example, surveys or focus groups may help you identify what stage of growth your primary audience represents. If you plan to serve immigrant populations for whom English is a 2<sup>nd</sup> language, the need for language appropriate training may be an important consideration. Your audience may be seasonal migrant farm laborers who already have production skills but need much more focus on financial management and marketing. These issues should be clearly understood prior to developing your educational programming so the incubator is not wasting time and resources on unnecessary education nor is it missing opportunities for addressing critical training areas among your demographic.

Understanding your demographic will also be essential before selecting an incubator manager or mentor farmers. For example, if your incubator is serving an immigrant or refugee population, you will want a manager who can communicate effectively with the clients and is knowledgeable of cultural issues and language barriers facing that population. If you are serving a demographic with little or no farming background you may need to plan for a full-time incubator/farm manager so that they can be readily available to assist in the early stages of the clients' production. If your clients' are mostly planning to grow organically, you will need a farm manager with organic production experience and may need to focus training on organic standards and certification. If you have a client-base that is largely planning to grow for wholesalers there will be a need to provide intense training on food safety and GAP certification.

The NIFTI Farm Incubator Toolkit outlines a variety of potential educational formats that can be utilized<sup>34</sup>:

- Classroom based learning
- Field trainings
- Online workshops
- Mentorship
- Peer-based learning

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<sup>34</sup> Agudelo Winther, E., & Overton, M. (2013). The Farm Incubator Toolkit. New Entry Sustainable Farming Project. Retrieved: <http://nesfp.org/node/216>.

- One-on-one technical assistance
- Training/demonstration farm

It is wise to begin engaging with potential educators and trainers early in the development process for any incubator farm. The individuals may be key for developing the project in such a way that is conducive to incorporating diverse training opportunities. For example, you may want to contact cooperative extension, land-grant universities and other educational institutions, conservation professionals, and local farmers, and figure out who your primary education and training providers will be and what role each of them can play in training your incubator clients. It is possible that mutual goals can be met through the educational component, resulting in lower costs for the incubator. Many local extension specialists or other professionals may be looking for more opportunities to expand existing educational programs and the incubator could serve to help them meet these goals, resulting in free or reduced costs for the educational component. Involving these key individuals early in the process will help to identify if any such opportunities exist. If not, it will need to be incorporated in the funding plan for the incubator very early.

It is highly recommended that some type of education or training be utilized as a pre-requisite for entry into the incubator program. This will serve two purposes: (1) the pre-requisite can serve as a screening process to evaluate which participants are the best fit for the incubator, and (2) prospective incubator farmers will come into the incubator with sufficient knowledge and increased chances for success. Farming is much more complicated than simply learning to grow crops. A successful farmer must also be able to market wisely, manage time and personnel, have adequate financial management skills, and utilize a host of other skills such as small engine repair, carpentry, pest management, etc. The more diverse a farmer's skill set, the less need exists for that farmer to outsource skills at a cost. Many incubator programs require applicants to submit business plans. A pre-requisite course may serve to assist farmers in developing these plans, therefore providing an even playing field for applicant evaluation.

Typically, incubator farms will include some of the following components in their education and training services:

- Enterprise budgeting
- Marketing
- Crop production
- Soil management
- Integrated pest management
- Financial management
- Business planning
- Food safety
- Accessing capital (loan programs, alternative means of capital, etc.)
- Whole farm planning

It may not be practical for an incubator to offer education and training on all of the core components of running a small farm business. The types of enterprises may vary among your

incubator farmers and there are many opportunities to earn income through farming, therefore it is virtually impossible to cover every conceivable need. For this reason, a critical aspect of managing your incubator will be understanding what opportunities for training and education already exist in or near your community (or online) and either creating a database of these opportunities for your clients' information, or developing relationships and creating pipelines to get your clients access to these opportunities.

In the Piedmont, there are already a variety of offerings when it comes to beginning farmer training. Local organizations such as Carolina Farm Stewardship Association may have training opportunities in any given year, as well as local educational institutions such as Central Carolina Community College, Guilford Technical Community College, North Carolina A&T State University, etc. It may also be useful to note whether or not a nearby college or library carries an adequate supply of agriculture-related books and informational resources. Many farmers may be independent learners and will want to do independent study in addition to the training offered at the incubator. If such resources are not available through partnership, it may be wise to budget for a beginning farmer library (See sample Book Order List – Appendix B).

## 2.6 Identifying & Marketing to Potential Incubator Participants

### *Why marketing is important*

When it is time to start actively marketing to potential new farmers who will participate in your Incubator Farm project, conveying all necessary information in a clear and concise manner is of the utmost importance. Think of the marketing brochure as the only chance to communicate with farmers—it should contain all necessary information (dates, location, contact information) while also capturing the enthusiasm and energy that your leadership team and stakeholders have cultivated through the visioning process and project development.

### *Checklist of important elements*

- Name of your incubator farm project
- Physical location of the farm (with map if possible)
- Date (even if just the current year)
- Key benefits of participation in the farm incubator
- Your vision statement
- Background or definitions (who is a beginning farmer, what is an incubator farm, etc.)
- Partners that are involved
- Contact information:
  - Name and title of a contact person
  - Phone number

- Email address
- Incubator farm website
- Mailing address
- Any associated Twitter, Facebook, or other social media addresses
- Application deadline
- Several key facts about your Incubator farm (size, number of participants, aspects of coursework, length of program, etc.).
- Statement of why their participation will be invaluable. (Ex: “Having a supportive and low-risk place to learn and test new farming techniques and marketing strategies helps new farmers become more successful and financially sustainable for the long-term.”)

***Key Points to Remember***

- The brochure should be in color, and attractive enough to grab attention, yet not so “busy” with text and images that it becomes difficult to read.
- If you are including an application, or any sort of detachable, mail-in section on the brochure, ensure that the reverse side does not contain any pertinent information that the farmer will need in the future, such as contact information, address, or key dates.
- It is a good idea to use the back panel of the brochure as a mailing-ready space: include your return address, and leave space for a stamp and a recipient mailing label. However, there is space to add in images, and other text, such as your vision statement.
- Pay attention to the location and amount of space that you are giving to items on the brochure: more space or prominent locations convey importance, and can be used to highlight the desired aspects of your project.
- Your brochure should look professional. Use full-color and high-quality printing, and have multiple people review it for spelling and grammatical errors.

(Example Brochure on following page)

## For More Information

Complete the following statement of interest, and send to:

Acme Incubator Farm  
3756 Penatauk Road  
Blainesville, NC 29473

Or complete online at:

[www.acmeincubatorfarm.org](http://www.acmeincubatorfarm.org)

.....  
Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Are you interested in the August 2014 season?

yes

no, I am interested in a future year

### Contact Information

Ethel Everitt, Program Coordinator

**Phone:** (919)175-3782

**Email:** [info@acmeincubatorfarm.org](mailto:info@acmeincubatorfarm.org)

**Website:** [www.acmeincubatorfarm.org](http://www.acmeincubatorfarm.org)

**Mailing:** Acme Incubator Farm  
3756 Penatauk Road  
Blainesville, NC 29473

Vision: A Blainesville region abundant with small farms, healthy land, and locally and honestly produced foods available to all.



## Acme Incubator Farm



protecting the future of farming...  
*...one new farmer at a time*

**Current opportunities  
for new and beginning  
farmers in the Blainesford  
County area!**

Participating farmers receive:

1/4-1/2 acre of prepared farmland,  
expert instruction in current vegetable  
production and handling methods,  
education in business and marketing  
strategies for farmers,  
and many other benefits!

**3756 Penatauk Road  
Blainesville, NC**



### Outside Back Flap

This is the second panel that the viewer sees when opening the brochure. Since you are trying to recruit farmers for participation, this is a great place for contact information and how to take action, such as an application, and web address.

### Outside Middle Panel

This can be left for mailing labels. Use your project's logo, and include other pertinent information such as your vision statement, or a call to new farmers to participate. However, don't make this panel too busy.

### Outside Front Cover

This needs to be attention grabbing and should present the project name, key benefits, location, and brief goals. It should entice a new farmer to open the brochure and read more.

### what is an incubator farm?

According to the Center for Environmental Farming Systems, an incubator farm is "one or more parcels of land where one or multiple producers are farming and marketing farm products through their own new farm business enterprise, often with organizational access to training / technical assistance opportunities on farm business and production practices." For more information, see:

<http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu/whatwedo/foodsystems/incubatorfarmproject.html>

### what is a new or beginning farmer?

The USDA defines a new or beginning farmer as one who has been operating a farm or ranch for 10 years or less. The Acme Incubator Farm aims to assist anyone who is in the beginning stages of starting a new farm enterprise. This may be someone who has farmed a commodity crop for years, or been involved in animal husbandry, but is new to fruit and vegetable production.



## Acme Incubator Farm

protecting the future of farming...  
...one new farmer at a time



### AIF At a Glance

- 18 slots currently available for new or beginning farmers in the first farmer group.
- Enrollment includes the lease of 1/4 acre of prepared farmland.
- The two-year program (with option for extension) allows you to learn from multiple growing seasons.
- The program provides a required class meeting (once a month in the evening) where various topics are covered:
  - farm business planning
  - soil management
  - produce handling safety best practices
  - marketing strategies
  - Many, many more
- Connect and learn from other emerging farmers in the area.
- Have access to farm tools and learn their appropriate use and maintenance requirements.

Having a supportive and low-cost place to learn and test new farming techniques and marketing strategies helps new farmers become successful and financially sustainable for the long-term.

Applications due by  
August 1, 2014

Visit our website to apply and  
for current information:  
[www.acmeincubatorfarm.org](http://www.acmeincubatorfarm.org).

### Incubator Farm Partners



...and many dedicated individuals!

### Inside Front Cover

This is the first panel that a farmer will read when opening the brochure. Think about the farmers in your area, and what general, primary questions they may have. This example panel anticipates that the farmer would like to know what an incubator farm is, if they qualify as a beginning farmer, and where this specific farm is located.

### Inside Middle Panel

This panel can contain the bulk of the information specific to the project. Give basic information: how big is your farm, how many farmers will be involved, what is included in the program, what is the benefit of participating. Be sure to clearly articulate what those benefits are!

### Inside Back Flap

Because your incubator farm is a collaborative effort across a diverse set of community stakeholders, highlight the partners involved. This also helps the potential farmer understand that the incubator farm is about more than learning horticulture techniques: financial and marketing aspects are well represented.

## 2.7 Determining Marketing Outlets

In addition to marketing to potential incubator clients, it is also critical to begin considering how those clients will market their products early in the planning process. Gaining access to markets is another key barrier that many new and beginning farmers face. It is common for incubators to incorporate market access into their programming to some extent. Following are several examples of marketing outlets that can be utilized and collaborative marketing opportunities for consideration. Some of the following information is pulled from the NIFTI Farm Incubator Toolkit.<sup>35</sup>

### ***On-site Markets***

One opportunity to provide market access for your incubator clients is to enable on-farm sales. Clients can sell directly to consumers on the incubator's property either independently or collaboratively. There are several key considerations to developing on-farm sales that will need to be evaluated in the early planning stages:

1. **Regulation:** Are on-farm sales permitted in your area? This commonly will depend on how your property is zoned. Typically agriculturally zoned properties are permitted to utilize on-farm sales in the form of a market or farm stand.
2. **Site Traffic:** Do you have sufficient traffic to support on-farm sales? Consider location and nearby populations. Will consumers have to travel far to access your site and will that kind of support be consistent? Do you have the ability to create visible advertisement to generate on-site traffic?
3. **Competition:** Are there many other farm stands in your area? Will these established farm stands help drive traffic to you or will they take business away? Are local farmers supportive of your incubator or will they see your on-farm sales as unfair competition? It is important to weigh these options when planning. Utilizing on-farm sales for minimal income may not be worthwhile if it creates a negative buzz among the farming community in your area, turning potential supporters and resources into opponents.

### ***Farmers Markets***

Farmers Markets are excellent venues for incubator farmers to try out their salesmanship and get consumer feedback. They are also very time consuming and can be tough to access. The incubator may have an opportunity to get a collaborative market space in individual markets, although there needs to be sufficient planning on how to brand the product and how to allocate sales to individual farmers, as well as how to staff a collaborative market booth.

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<sup>35</sup> Agudelo Winther, E., & Overton, M. (2013). The Farm Incubator Toolkit. New Entry Sustainable Farming Project. Retrieved: <http://nesfp.org/node/216>.

### ***Community-Supported Agriculture***

CSA's are excellent venues for selling produce for a variety of reasons. CSA's that sell on-farm pickups can reduce staff time and there are possibilities to set up a multi-farm CSA as long as there will not be redundancy in product offerings. This will take a lot of planning on crop production sequence for multiple farmers. Another distinct advantage of the CSA model is that typically the CSA customers, or "members", pay up front for the season so the income is guaranteed. There should be adequate quality assurance to retain members over multiple seasons. CSA customers are typically very loyal if they feel they are getting a good value and good quality produce.

### ***Wholesale Opportunities***

Small-scale producers often do not meet the needs of wholesale or institutional buyers on their own. The advantage of an incubator is the ability to combine produce from multiple farmers to fill orders. If successful, selling to wholesale buyers, institutions, or restaurants may be an opportunity to teach beginning farmers valuable skills such as relationship building, account management, and food safety. Contrarily, quality assurance will be a critical undertaking as wholesale relationships rely on consistency and quality of the product. Consider the potential possibility of incubator farmers having the ability to continue their relationship with wholesale buyers after transitioning on their own land.

## **2.8 Funding Sources**

There are national initiatives that have available funding for incubator programs such as programs within the United States Department of Agriculture (Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, Farmers' Market Promotional Program, Community Food Projects, etc.).<sup>36</sup> While these grants are excellent resources and have been successful in supporting beginning farmer development, the application process can be time consuming and complex for a smaller, low-resource organization. There may be slightly less formidable alternatives within your state. North Carolina has a range of potential grant funding sources such as the NC Tobacco Trust Fund, NC Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services Specialty Crop Block Grant, and more. Local sources of funding such as family foundations, community foundations, corporate sponsors, and private donors should also be researched. Plenty of online resources are available to do a quick and easy search to find suitable matches for your program and locale. Charity Navigator<sup>37</sup> and Foundation Center<sup>38</sup> are two great sources with plenty of information available for free and access to enhanced features with a subscription.

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<sup>36</sup> To learn more about available USDA grants for agricultural programs, visit the "Know Your Farmer Know Your Food" website at: [http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=KYF\\_GRANTS](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=KYF_GRANTS).

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.charitynavigator.org>

<sup>38</sup> <http://foundationcenter.org/>

According to Winther, federal grants are the primary funding sources for many incubators.<sup>39</sup> While there are a wide variety of grant opportunities out there for incubators, there is increasing competition therefore you must make every effort count by engaging individuals to write grants who know how to effectively identify appropriate grant opportunities and develop strong proposals. Another key consideration is grant management. Managing grants is a serious undertaking. There is no such thing as “free money”. Your ability to effectively manage a grant, submit high quality reports, and ensure that you meet your goals and deliverables is essential to future grant funding opportunities. When writing a grant, make sure that ample time is included in the request to fund a project manager who will not only handle reporting, but will stay on top of making sure that deliverables are met and outcomes and outputs are appropriately documented.

While grant funding remains a primary source of incubator funding, it is critical to plan for the long term. It will be much easier to make the case for startup funding but creating a case for long-term support and operational funding may be more challenging. Develop a smart business plan that incorporated a variety of funding mechanisms for your incubator and work with your stakeholders to identify income generating opportunities. For more information on grant funding and resources see Appendix C and D.

## 2.9 Evaluation and Assessment

### *Why Evaluation and Assessment are Important*

Conducting credible and targeted evaluation and assessment protocols throughout the life cycle of your incubator farm project serves multiple purposes:

- Improving the project and programs to achieve stated goals;
- Meeting the needs and goals of current and future participants;
- Obtaining stakeholder support;
- Communicating successes to the public;
- Documenting project efficacy to garner additional funding;
- Recruiting new farmer participants.

While anecdotal success stories are helpful to bring texture and life to marketing materials and improve staff morale, effective evaluation and assessment strategies carry more credibility and can articulate specific areas for improvement, help to focus your organization’s efforts on your strengths, and identify areas where you may seek additional support, knowledge, and partnerships.

The purposes outlined above provide a glimpse into the variety of audiences and purposes to which evaluation and assessment methods can speak. However, when developing your own methods, be clear about the intended audience: the framing of the evaluation question and the methods used

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<sup>39</sup> Agudelo Winther, E., & Overton, M. (2013). The Farm Incubator Toolkit. New Entry Sustainable Farming Project. Retrieved: <http://nesfp.org/node/216>.

will vary depending on the end user of the information. For example, evaluating the success of farmer participants for the purpose of new farmer recruitment may lead you to collect information on the self-assessed success of farmers who have gone through the program—*did the incubator farm program help them meet the goals they set out to achieve?* However, if you are evaluating the success of farmer participants for the purpose of obtaining grant funding from an economic development agency concerned with job creation, you’ll want to gather information on farm income generated, and full time equivalent positions created by former farmer participants—*did the program generate new jobs in the county and did farm income increase?*

The results of any evaluation and assessment program should serve to inform and improve your incubator farm project. Just as it is necessary to utilize and refer to your vision statement regularly, the results of an evaluation or assessment program are only useful if they affect policies and generate new ways of understanding your project, and lead to new ways of running your program.

***Opportunities to Evaluate and Assess***

(What questions need to be answered, what stories need to be told?)

There are many opportunities to incorporate useful mechanisms for assessment and evaluation throughout your incubator farm project.

- 1) Internal Evaluation (Is the program meeting its goals?)
  - a) Is there financial sustainability?
  - b) Are the goals outlined in your vision statement being addressed?
  - c) Are staff supported, and opportunities for professional development made available?
  - d) Other, self-identified goals of your program—target population served, food security of neighborhood increased, etc.
- 2) Evaluation of farmer participants (Is the program meeting the farmer’s goals?)
  - a) Before they start the program, are potential farmer participants qualified to begin the training; do they possess a baseline level of knowledge about farming?
  - b) During the program, are farmer participants progressing, learning the necessary skills? Are there skills besides farming that they should learn? (Ex. Leadership development, teaching, community organizing, etc.)
- 3) External Evaluation (Does your program graduate farmer participants that are still farming 3, 5 or 8 years after leaving the program?)
  - a) This involves tracking participants well after graduation.
  - b) How do you define success? (Participants that work in other aspects of the food system may also be considered “successful.”)

Well-considered and executed evaluation and assessment activities present opportunities to *add to* the quality of your project and program through their implementation. Figure 1 below shows a traditional methodology of a “feedback loop”: a program is enacted or performed, an evaluation is conducted, changes are made, and the improved program is performed.

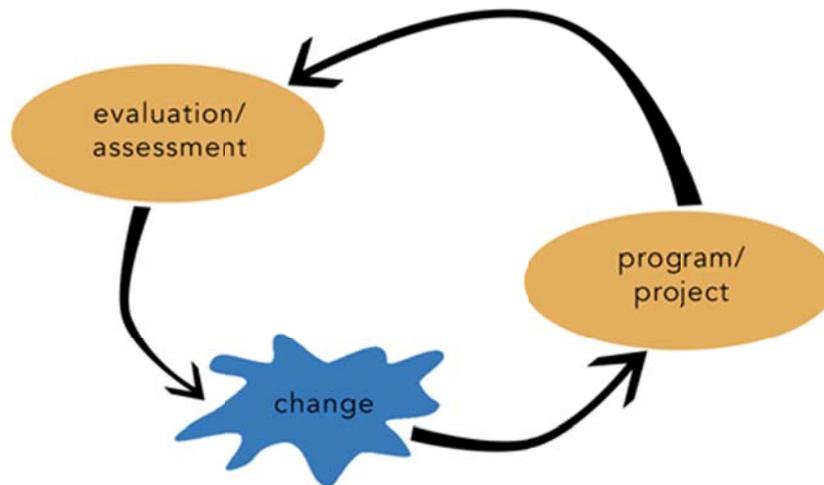
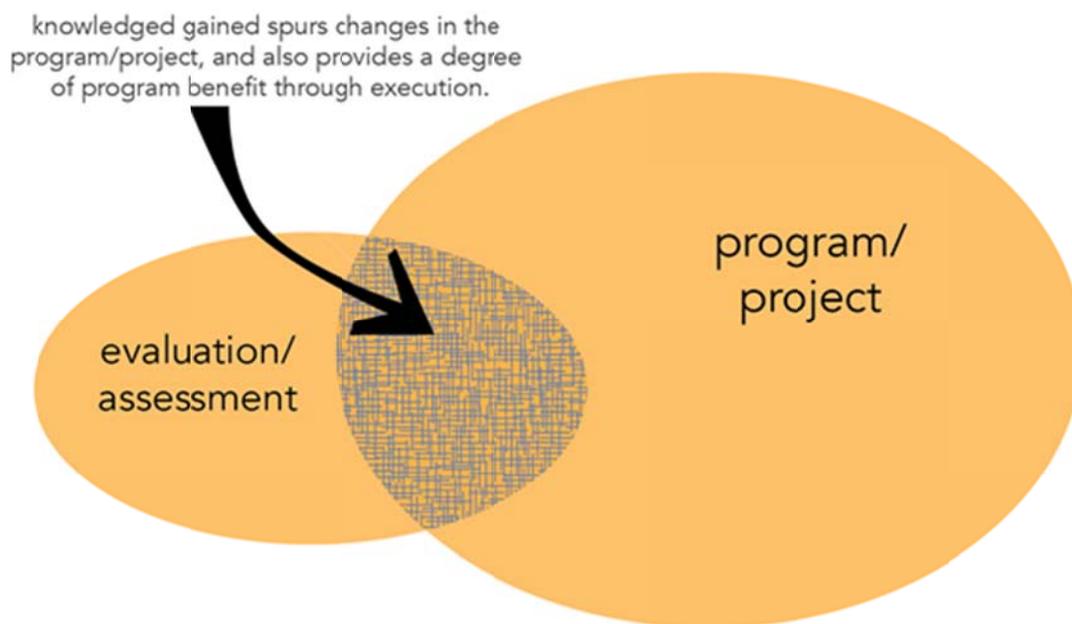


Figure 1: Traditional methods of evaluation and assessment involve efforts separate from the program and project being evaluated. In some projects this is useful; an evaluation is completed after a program, changes are made, and the program is run again.

This can be a useful way to conduct and utilize evaluations and assessments of your incubator project and programs. However, most existing farm incubator projects utilize minimal or no evaluation or assessment practices, citing the lack of time and resources as a primary obstacle<sup>40</sup>. Therefore, it is best to conceive of methods that are *integrated* into your program and provide some amount of understanding or new knowledge to participants and staff through the process of collecting the information, instead of only after the information has been gathered and synthesized. (Figure 2)



<sup>40</sup> E. Agudelo-Winther, personal communication, Nov. 13, 2013

Figure 2 Consider the implementation of an evaluation or assessment strategy that is integrated into the program or project. In addition to serving an assessment role, the evaluation tool can add value directly to the project or program.

One example of this integration of evaluation into program and practice is the use of detailed self-assessments for current farmer participants. The participants are asked to review and fill out a detailed checklist of the skills needed to be a successful farmer (see example of New England Small Scale “Sustainable” Farmer Skill Self-Assessment Tool and other examples on their website: <http://www.smallfarm.org>). As the farmer completes the checklist, denoting where she’d like more training, and what her priorities are, she learns more about what skills are necessary to have as a successful, new farmer. The staff’s responsibility at that point is simply to archive and organize participant responses for future reflection by the farmer participants as well as the program coordinator.

### ***Methods of Evaluation and Assessment (Strategies)***

Start with developing an *evaluation question*—what is the story you want to tell? Do you want to tell a story of developing new small, organic farmers? Or a story of refugees in your community that used the farm skills they know to develop sustainable businesses in their adopted community? Maybe the story is one of land preservation—how the incubator farm has an impact on regional farmland preservation by creating new working small farmers.

Once you have the evaluation question specified, consider the audience with whom you’d like to articulate the results—is it the general public, who may respond more to qualitative (narrative) data, or is it a major funder, who desires quantitative data that is standard to their foundation’s requirements. With the evaluation question and the audience defined, selecting the most appropriate evaluation and assessment method is much easier.

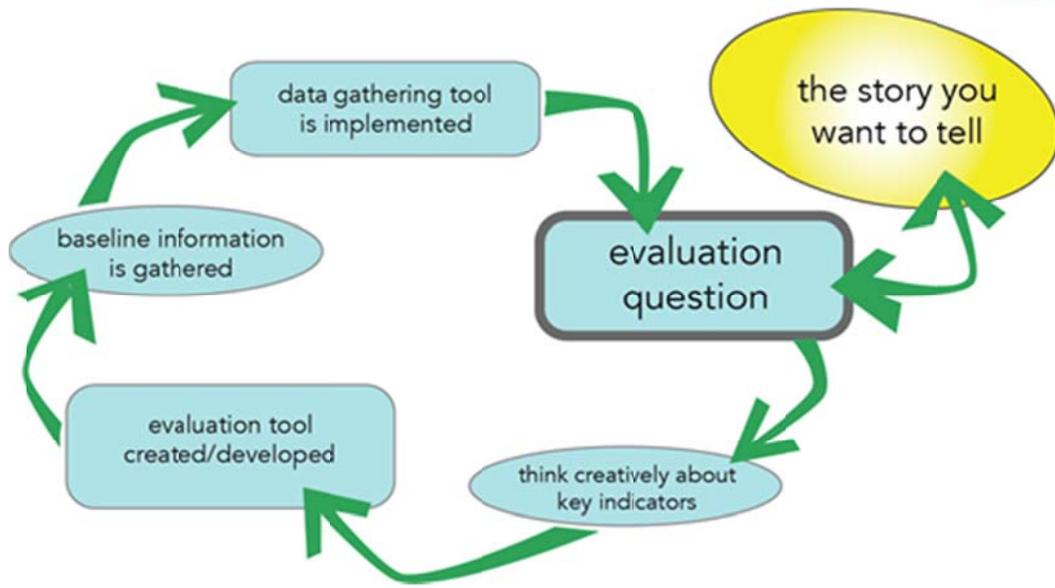


Figure 3: The basic components of an evaluation method. The story you want to tell informs the evaluation question, which is part of an iterative process of information gathering and analysis. Start by discerning the story you want to tell, and then create the evaluation question. Once the assessment process is complete, you will have a coherent "story."

One strategy for measuring the success of your incubator farm project is to measure "outputs" of the program. These are largely easily quantifiable elements, and include things such as the number of farmers graduated from the program, tonnage of food produced, acreage under cultivation, number of participants in training or outreach programs, food donated to local food security agencies, etc. This strategy is an *accounting* of things produced by your incubator farm project.

Another strategy is to measure ultimate impacts as short-, mid-, and long-term *changes in knowledge, attitudes, skills, , aspirations (KASA), and behavior* as a result of your project, which are harder to quantify, and also more difficult to directly correlate with the efforts of your project. Nevertheless, strategies that measure changes in behavior and knowledge are often much more informative, descriptive, and useful to crafting a successful incubator farm project.

Short-term changes in behavior and knowledge are somewhat easier to measure, and are more reliably attributed to the program. For example, a farmer participant who previously did not know how to write a farm business plan now has these skills, and one who didn't know much about integrated pest management now has enough knowledge to utilize those methods in her production.

Mid- and long-term changes are harder to attribute to the program (and therefore to measure) because there are many external factors that can influence the outcome. For example, the long-term success of a farmer running his or her own farm business depends not only on the knowledge gained during their participation in a farm incubator training program, but also on:

- Propensity for entrepreneurship,
- Family obligations and needs,

- Financial factors: access to credit and capital,
- Availability of land,
- Health,
- Motivation,
- Many other factors.

These are not always aspects that the incubator farm program can address, but nevertheless have an impact on the mid- and long-term outcomes for farmer participants. However, an accurate and objective assessment of the long-term success of farmer participants may reveal new opportunities for programs within your incubator farm project.

### ***Setting the baseline or standard for control***

There is not a great deal of information or data on the success of new farmers that begin *without* the assistance of an incubator farm project—this would be the best baseline data. However, there is not much data about small business success in general, either. Recent research shows that new businesses (across industries) have a success rate of 44% after 5 years of operation, while new businesses that received support through an incubator training program have a success rate of 87% after the same time period<sup>41</sup>. The Small Business Development Center at the University of Tennessee reports that specific to the agricultural industry, the success rate of new businesses after 4 years is 56%<sup>42</sup>.

Depending on the specific aspects that you'd like to evaluate, many methods exist to obtain baseline data. For *internal* organizational evaluations, baseline financial data can be achieved by appropriate and detailed accounting. It is highly advisable to employ the expertise of a professional accountant from the beginning of your incubator farm project to ensure that all the necessary information is being tracked. A good professional will help set up bookkeeping methods that will not only help your organization come tax filing time, but also help to track and assess spending and income throughout the year.

Evaluating the success of programmatic goals that were outlined in your vision or mission statement may be vaguer than the quantifiable financial evaluation strategies mentioned above, but it is still possible to gather baseline data for these aspects. For example, if one of your project's goals is to create opportunities for supplemental income generation among socially disadvantaged populations, one way to generate baseline data is by assessing the current supplemental income from farming generated by soon-to-be participants. This could take the form of a short survey or a series of questions on the initial application. Three examples of different strategies are presented below:

*The New Entry farmer training program<sup>43</sup> in Massachusetts has used short (27 question) surveys given at the first class meeting to determine the baseline of farming knowledge that*

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<sup>41</sup> <http://www.businessnewsdaily.com/272-incubators-increase-small-business-success.html>

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.statisticbrain.com/startup-failure-by-industry/>

<sup>43</sup> <http://nesfp.org/node/14>

participants have. Eva Agudelo-Winther, a coordinator and trainer at New Entry, warned that sometimes this method produces a “negative dip” as the course progresses: students don’t know how much they don’t know until they start learning<sup>44</sup>. This method works best in a classroom setting.

Agudelo-Winther also uses a “checklist” of skills that farmers need to succeed. Farmer participants can check off skills that they possess prior to, during, and after a program. The list also serves as an overview of the broad skills that farmers need to acquire. The New England Small Farmers Institute (NESFI) has produced Occupational Profile materials that can be used by project staff or farmer participants<sup>45</sup>. Their worksheet, *Farming and Business Skills Assessment*, is a simplified version that shows the broad skill sets that could be evaluated. This document, the corresponding detailed self-assessments and other tools provide greater detail and can be found on the NESFI website<sup>46</sup>.

The Agricultural and Land-Based Training Association (ALBA) has produced a very helpful annual farmer survey that is utilized in tracking the progress of farmers post-graduation<sup>47</sup>. This instrument is designed as an interview script, and not as a survey for the farmer to fill out herself. It provides a framework for ALBA to track how many of their participants are currently farming, and at what scale.

### **Common Evaluation Tools**

Surveys, questionnaires, and self-assessments are viable methods for evaluating and assessing certain aspects of your farm incubator project. Staff satisfaction, professional development, and farmer knowledge gained are three of the most applicable aspects where you can utilize these evaluation instruments.

Other forms of evaluation and assessment include tracking indicators to determine change within a system without specifically asking about that change through a survey or direct questionnaire. This method of assessment works best for evaluating eco-system services or changes within the food system.

For example, monitoring the soil health at the incubator farm can be an indicator of the adoption and successful utilization (or not) of sustainable farming techniques. Similarly, the degree of weed infestations within individual plots can be an indicator of the corresponding farmer’s ability to manage their weed population. However, note that there are situations where a farmer “inherits” a plot with a substantial weed bank. In that case, solid baseline information on weed populations and continued monitoring will result in a more accurate assessment of the farmer’s performance.

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<sup>44</sup> E. Agudelo-Winther, personal communication, Nov. 13, 2013

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[http://www.smallfarm.org/main/for\\_service\\_providers/tools\\_and\\_resources\\_for\\_working\\_with\\_new\\_farmers/nefi\\_tools\\_and\\_resources/dacum\\_occupational\\_profile/](http://www.smallfarm.org/main/for_service_providers/tools_and_resources_for_working_with_new_farmers/nefi_tools_and_resources/dacum_occupational_profile/)

<sup>46</sup>[http://www.smallfarm.org/main/for\\_service\\_providers/tools\\_and\\_resources\\_for\\_working\\_with\\_new\\_farmers/nefi\\_tools\\_and\\_resources/dacum\\_occupational\\_profile/](http://www.smallfarm.org/main/for_service_providers/tools_and_resources_for_working_with_new_farmers/nefi_tools_and_resources/dacum_occupational_profile/)

<sup>47</sup> <http://start2farm.gov/sites/default/files/9%20-%20Annual%20Farmer%20Survey%20Interview.pdf>

Community impact assessments are helpful when your incubator farm project has goals that extend beyond the incubator farm and farmer participant and into the community. For example, some incubator farm projects aim to alleviate food insecurity in their community. Assessing the impact of the incubator farm project on community food insecurity can be tricky because many other external factors are at play. Consider a simple yearly survey of agencies that your project interacts with—ask them to review your performance, noting key benefits or places of improvement.

### ***Key Considerations***

Success may not always take the form that you and your stakeholders initially think it will. For example, some existing incubator farm projects are finding that a fair number of farmer participants actually do not go on to operate farm businesses upon graduation, and instead find their niche in some other aspect of the food system—marketing, aggregating, purchasing on behalf of an institution, teaching farming techniques to community gardeners, etc. Farmer participants who do not graduate and start or continue a farm business do not necessarily represent a failure of your farm incubator program. There are many external factors that influence the mid- or long-range success of farmers: access to capital and credit, the availability of land, family obligations, and propensity for entrepreneurship, among others. Tracking the farmer participants for a number of years after they graduate the program can be useful to generate feedback about how the program has helped them in their chosen path, as well as to assess the externalized factors. It may be that some of these factors spark a new programmatic opportunity for your leadership team to consider as a new part of your project.

Other important key considerations for evaluation and assessment practices include:

- Evaluation and assessment protocols should be ongoing, not one-time activities. Strongly integrated evaluation mechanisms will allow you to track progress and changes over time.
- Don't forget to conduct pre-program evaluations and assessments. Solid baseline information is needed in order to truly evaluate progress.
- While evaluating the progress and success of your participating farmers is a definite area of focus, remember to also continually evaluate other aspects of your incubator farm project, such as:
  - Staff satisfaction
  - Partner and stakeholder engagement
  - Fiscal policies
  - Community perception and engagement
  - Land and environmental health assessments
  - Many other aspects
- It is important to be able to tell the story of your project in qualitative as well as quantitative ways. Ensure that your evaluation and assessment mechanisms gather both types of data. Quotes from participants can be very effective for sharing impacts with the community.
- Creativity is called for when determining key indicators for evaluation questions. Good key indicators have the following characteristics:
  - They are easily accessible. (Gathering information for key indicators should not require extensive new protocols.)

- They are controlled. (Key indicators should be directly tied to what you are trying to discern, and any other mitigating factors should be limited, or at least accounted for.)
- They respond to the evaluation question you are asking. (For example, a key indicator for the production quantity of participant farmers would be the ‘amount of produce per crop variety produced in a season.’ Using a key indicator of the ‘amount of produce sold at market’ would not be a good indicator—while the data would be much easier to collect, there are numerous other factors that can influence the amount of produce sold, including the marketer’s ability, consumer knowledge, and price.

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## Section 3: Scope of Incubator Farm Project

### 3.1 Key Standard Practices

#### *Variety in Incubator Farms*

Every incubator farm is unique—considerations of land availability, local economy, access to markets, and types of agricultural methods practiced are just a few of the variables that determine the particular nature of any one incubator farm project. However, even within this variety, there are some practices that are standard among many incubator farms that have developed collectively and independently. The National Incubator Farm Training Initiative (NIFTI) of the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project has compiled a toolkit where many of these considerations are explained in great detail. The following information draws heavily from the NIFTI Farm Incubator Toolkit<sup>48</sup>, and is provided as an overview of some of the main aspects of developing and managing an Incubator Farm project. The general standard practices outlined should be used as a starting point for discussion among your leadership team, and not taken as hard-and-fast rules to abide by.

According to research compiled by Agudelo-Winther & Overton (2013) for the Toolkit, most incubator farms work to provide five categories of benefits to new farmers: land, infrastructure, knowledge, markets, and capital. These benefits take many forms, depending on the needs of the community, the needs of the participating farmers, and the capacity of the incubator farm organization.

#### *Nationally-recognized farm incubator programs:*

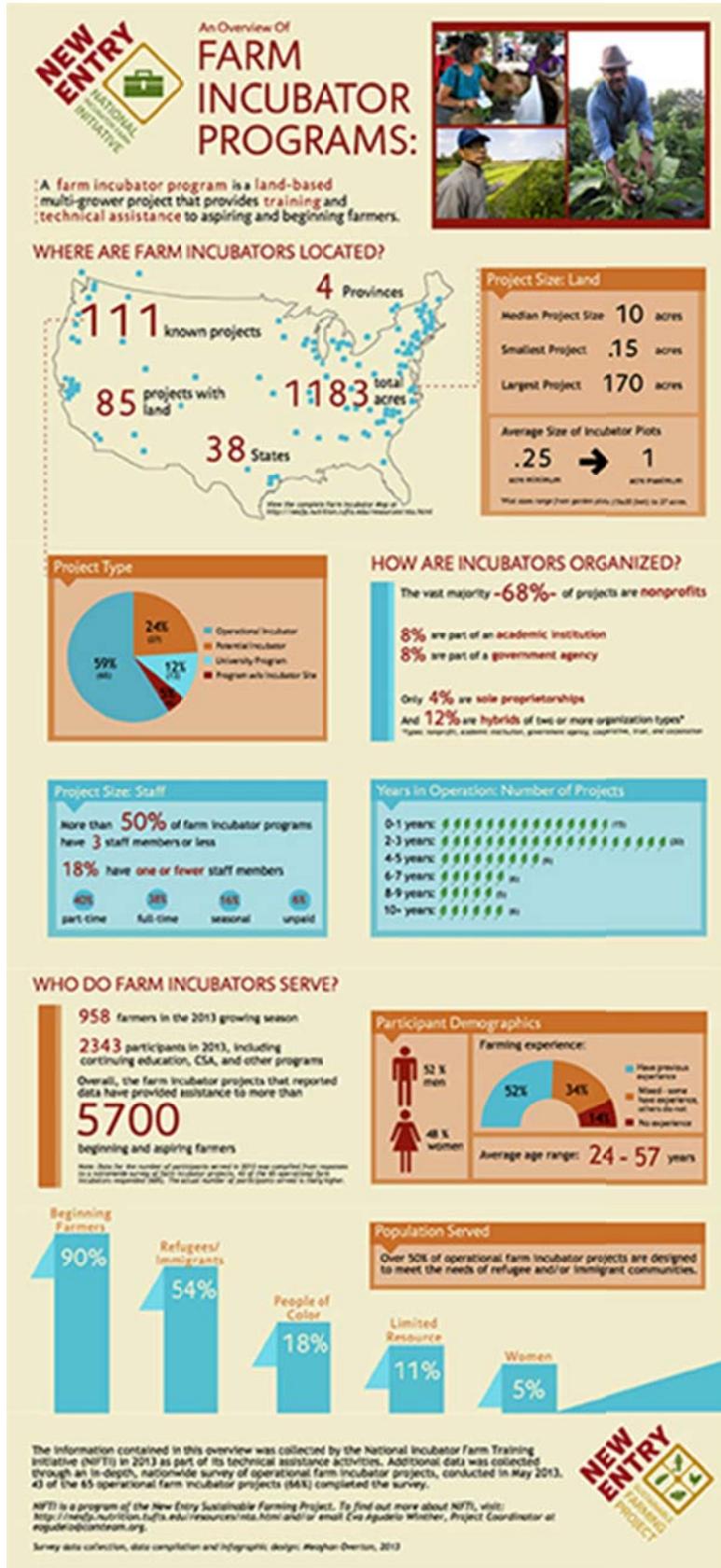
The following three programs have each been operating for over a decade, and provide well-documented insights into many aspects of starting and managing an incubator farm.

- The Intervale Center: Burlington, VT [www.intervale.org/](http://www.intervale.org/)
- The New Entry Sustainable Farming Project: Lowell, MA [www.nesfp.org/](http://www.nesfp.org/)
- The Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association: Salinas, CA [www.albafarmers.org](http://www.albafarmers.org)

New Entry produced an info-graphic in 2013 that details many aspects of incubator farms in the United States—their size, populations served, and organizational structure among other aspects. This graphic summarizes the results of a national incubator farm survey that revealed emerging trends among current and potential projects.

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<sup>48</sup> Agudelo Winther, E., & Overton, M. (2013). The Farm Incubator Toolkit. New Entry Sustainable Farming Project. Retrieved: <http://nesfp.org/node/216>.



Incubator farms differ widely based on their geographic location. Successful projects have been started in urban areas, catering to new farmers that intend to grow high-value crops on intensively cultivated land, utilize permaculture or bio-intensive growing methods, irrigate with rainwater collected from nearby structures, and often integrate non-produce production schemes (such as aquaculture and honey production) in their practices to make up for the higher land rents. Rural farm incubators draw new farmers that typically (but not always) farm using more traditional methods: soil prep and cultivation with tractors, row cropping, and irrigation supplied by a well or nearby pond. Conversely, many rural farm incubator programs also utilize intensive production techniques, and some urban incubator farms can be less intensive than their location would suggest. However, according to Agudelo-Winther & Overton, most incubator farms teach and utilize organic and/or sustainable practices regardless of where they fall on the urban-rural spectrum.

The types of market outlets available represent another potential difference between rural and urban incubator farms: urban farmers generally have the opportunity to market their products directly to nearby restaurants, farmers' markets, and other direct-to-consumer markets. Because of their proximity to higher-value markets—and more markets in general—they can be more responsive to delivery times and more demanding in their pricing. Rural incubator farms often must rely on existing or new aggregation and distribution systems to get their products to a market, although many are still able to travel to a nearby farmers' market, grocer, restaurant, or institution. Because of the distance to higher-end markets and the likelihood that fewer outlets exist, rural farm incubators find that aggregation and distribution are often two areas of interest to participating farmers.

### ***Prerequisites for Farmer Applicants***

Incubator farms vary widely in their application requirements for beginning farmer participants, although many have found that at least a preliminary degree of individual research, consideration of the realities of becoming a small farmer, and documented access to the basic resources necessary to start a farm business are useful in selecting farmer participants that have the basic capacity for long-term success. The local economic and social conditions of your region, combined with the specific values and vision for your incubator farm project, will be factors in determining which prerequisites you require.

You may also decide to include certain eligibility requirements for participating in the incubator farm. Eligibility is most often a function of projects that have specific goals and objectives beyond training new farmers. For example, a project with the goal of training international refugees in sustainable income generating projects will either require that participants be refugees, or state clearly the refugees will be given preference during the application process. Low-resource individuals, women, and recently incarcerated persons are other examples of defined eligibility requirements.

Some incubator farm projects may decide that participant farmers must own, or have sustained access, to farmland where they can move their business after completion of the program. Lack of access to farmland is often cited as one of the most common reasons that beginning farmers

discontinue farming, and ensuring that your participant farmers have reasonably secure access to land before they begin the program can help in focusing your organization's efforts on farmers who are most likely to experience long-term success. However, many incubator farm projects are also working toward solving the land-access issue, and therefore would not use farmland access as prerequisite, instead focusing course attention on selecting and obtaining farmland.

Experience with gardening at a large scale is occasionally used by some existing projects as a prerequisite. The Elma C. Lomax Incubator Farm in Cabarrus County maintains an on-site community garden, where prospective incubator farm participants with limited horticultural experience are encouraged to grow for a year prior to applying to the program. This allows the potential applicant to "test" their desire to farm, and also gives them a chance to learn informally from others farming on-site and gain a better understanding of the workings of the incubator farm.

Requiring the completion of a preliminary business plan is another common prerequisite for participant farmers. A business plan would include a statement of the farmer's experience, an accurate accounting of their expected expenses and receipts, and a realistic plan for acquiring start-up capital, land access, and market outlets. Providing interested beginning farmers with a business plan template specific to farming would help to standardize the expectations for applying, as well as contribute to a general understanding of the planning that is required for starting a farm business.

The Elma C. Lomax Incubator Farm mentioned above requires the completion of an online initial training program for a minimal fee to build foundational knowledge<sup>49</sup>. The course ensures that all applicants have a base level of understanding of the requirements of commercial vegetable farming and realistic expectations of what is possible to accomplish through participation in the incubator farm program.

### ***Relationship with aggregators and existing markets***

Some farm incubator projects have integrated programs to help facilitate the sale of farm products grown at the farm, or grown by associated farmers or graduates of the program. Maverick Farms' Farm Incubator and Grower program (FIG) in Valle Crucis, NC is a good example of an integrated program: The organizers realized early on in the development of their farm incubator project that the lack of local markets for sustainable produce was one of the largest obstacles to success for new and beginning farmers. They established the High Country CSA to provide a consistent and reliable year-round outlet for the farm products of local farms. As they developed farmers through the FIG program, the established and successful CSA was there to provide a market for the new farmers<sup>50</sup>.

The Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association (ALBA) in Salinas, CA started a produce distributor (ALBA Organics) in 2002 to "support the sales and training needs of beginning farmers as an essential component to their development and success as entrepreneurs."<sup>51</sup> They have developed the project into a successful and competitive distributor that not only provides an outlet

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<sup>49</sup> <http://lomaxfarm.org/lomax/about-the-farm/online-initial-training-program/>

<sup>50</sup> <http://maverickfarms.com/>

<sup>51</sup> [http://www.albafarmers.org/alba\\_organics.html](http://www.albafarmers.org/alba_organics.html)

for incubator farm produce and marketing experience for beginning farmers, but also brings in needed revenue to continue to support projects.

Not all incubator farm projects have established independent aggregation and distribution outlets like the two described above. Some partner with existing local aggregators, or simply sell at a local farmers market or on-site with a small farm stand. The needs and opportunities present in your regional food system as well as your project goals and vision statement will help in discerning the right direction for your incubator farm.

### ***Business Structure and Staffing***

Successful incubator farms have clear structures and consistent staff that can tend to the regular needs of the project. High administrative capacity from the inception of the farm project will ensure that the incubator farm project can focus on programming and on the needs of the participants. A solid visioning process that includes a diversified set of stakeholders early in the life of your project will lay a solid foundation for the organizational structure. However, your leadership team also needs to consider the pros and cons of different organizational structures. According to NIFTI's incubator farm survey, 68% of farm incubator projects are organized as a non-profit, while only 4% were sole-proprietorships. 8% are academic institutions or government agencies and the remaining 12% were a hybrid of the above<sup>52</sup>.

Consider the current and future needs of your project: Do the populations you wish to serve require specialized communication skills? (i.e. a foreign language or understanding of low-literacy communication.) Do your financing needs or leadership structure lend itself to partnering with a local university or government agency? Would you like for some administrative roles to be filled by farmer participants as part of their education and training?

Roles and responsibilities at incubator farm projects are quite variable, and respond to the particular needs and values of your project. According to research by Lelekacs & Morris, incubator farm staffs have widely varying responsibilities, including "recruiting, training, and leading workshops, writing and reviewing funding proposals, managing the farm budget, and managing relationships with existing farmers and other community stakeholders."<sup>53</sup> Additionally, they add that these same staff members are also relied upon to provide traditional farming duties such as equipment and infrastructure maintenance.

Staffing an incubator farm project is often an unexpected challenge for new projects that had previously relied solely upon sporadic volunteer labor. The enthusiasm of the original leadership team may wane over time, or an individual that your team had anticipated including as a vital part of the staff may move or take other employment. Initial funding for starting an incubator project dissipates over time, and staffing is often one of the largest items on the budget. Interns and

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<sup>52</sup> Agudelo Winther, E., & Overton, M. (2013). The Farm Incubator Toolkit. New Entry Sustainable Farming Project. Retrieved: <http://nesfp.org/node/216>.

<sup>53</sup> Lelekacs, J., & Morris, M. (2013). Incubator Farms for North Carolina: A White Paper. <http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu/whatwedo/foodsystems/newfarmers/incubator-farms-for-nc.pdf>

volunteers can be an asset to an organization, but should not totally replace staff—these temporary workers, although unpaid, are not “free” to your organization. They take time to manage and direct, and require someone to ensure continuity of services and the preservation of institutional knowledge as interns and volunteers come and go.

Most incubator farms surveyed by NIFTI rely at least in part on volunteer or participant labor: 52.7% operated with limited staff (two or three staff members), and 18.2% had one or fewer. Of these, roughly half were full time, and half were part-time positions. Yet only 6% of the positions were unpaid<sup>54</sup>.

Unanticipated costs can place a huge stress on a beginning incubator farm. It is best to thoroughly consider all possible sources of expense during initial developmental stages and to plan accordingly. In the *Farm Incubator Toolkit*, NIFTI provides an excellent list of typical administrative costs associated with an incubator farm project. Note that these are exclusive of the costs of infrastructure and running the program—which can be unexpectedly costly in their own right—and instead simply reflect the administration of an organization.

- Salaries
- Professional development (conferences)
- Office supplies
- Mileage
- Phone/fax
- Rent
- Utilities/internet
- Computers
- Software
- database software
- website publishing
- file storage
- email management
- graphic design and editing software
- financial management/accounting
- postage
- consultants and paid interns
- annual audits/accounting services

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<sup>54</sup> Agudelo Winther, E., & Overton, M. (2013). *The Farm Incubator Toolkit*. New Entry Sustainable Farming Project. Retrieved: <http://nesfp.org/node/216>.

As discussed above, incubator farm projects utilize a diversity of structures and staff resources to implement their programs. Lelekacs & Morris<sup>55</sup> provide current management structures and staffing for six currently operating incubator farm projects:

Incubator Farm	Management Structure	Farm/Management Staff
ALBA (Agriculture and Land-Based Training Program), Salinas and Las Lomas, CA	501(c)3 Non-profit	8 program and leadership staff
Elma C. Lomax Incubator Farm, Cabarrus County, NC	501(c)3 Non-profit	Part-time Farm Superintendent (county staff); two Cooperative Extension Agents provide training/technical assistance.
Intervale Center, Burlington, VT	501(c)3 Non-profit	15 employees (FT/PT)
New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, Lowell, MA	A partnership project between Tufts University and Community Teamwork, Inc. (501(c)3)	9 employees (FT/PT/Seasonal)
Onslow County Incubator Farm, Onslow County, NC	A partnership Program of Onslow County Farmers' Market – a 501(c)3 and Onslow County Cooperative Extension	1 program staff person, PT
PLANT@Breeze Farm Enterprise Incubator, Orange County, NC	Program of Orange County Cooperative Extension and Orange County Economic Development - Planning Committee - Friends of Breeze is a 501(c)3 that receives tax deductible contributions.	Part-time Orange County Ag. Economic Development Coordinator; two Cooperative Extension staff support the farm as a portion of their duties. PT farmer liaison/farm manager.

### ***Evaluation and Assessment***

Continual assessment and evaluation of the incubator farm project is necessary to create a flexible and responsive program that responds to the needs of your community. While crafting and adhering to a strong and meaningful vision statement is necessary to provide long-term direction and consistency for the organization, evaluation and assessment of your programs, of the project, and of the farmers themselves will help the effort to continually build and improve upon the work you are doing.

Making time and resources available for evaluation and assessment has been a struggle for many incubator farm projects. Typically, it is an administrative task that is done only in hindsight, and only when needed for funding purposes. However, approaching evaluation and assessment with this perspective misses many opportunities for organizational development and growth through the knowledge gained from well-executed evaluation mechanisms. Thoughtfully considering evaluation and assessment mechanisms from the beginning of your project development will ensure that they are well integrated, and it will be easier to ensure the timely and consistent completion of assessments.

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<sup>55</sup> Lelekacs, J., & Morris, M. (2013). Incubator Farms for North Carolina: A White Paper. <http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu/whatwedo/foodsystems/newfarmers/incubator-farms-for-nc.pdf>

Refer to the NIFTI *Farm Incubator Toolkit*<sup>56</sup> and the section on Evaluation and Assessment Mechanisms within this document for more information on evaluating all aspects of your incubator farm project.

### ***Financing***

Gathering the funds to develop and initiate an incubator farm project can be difficult, and ensuring that there is a sustainable source of financing over time to ensure the long-term functioning of the project is equally important. Thinking of the funds required in two stages has been helpful to many projects—initial start-up (capital) costs, and ongoing organizational and facility support costs. There is no standard financial strategy among incubator farms, although many have found success in utilizing a combination of grant sources, fee-for-service programs, farmer participant fees, and farm-product sales.

Some trends were documented by NIFTI through their research for the *Farm Incubator Toolkit* regarding the source of incubator farm funding: Out of a 78.4% response rate from incubator farms across the United States, NIFTI found that “the majority of incubator projects (54.9%) indicated that federal grant programs (e.g. the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) or the Refugee Agricultural Partners Program (RAPP)) were the most important source of funding for [the farm incubator] projects.”

Many incubator farms rely on participant farmer fees to cover at least a portion of their ongoing expenses, although the percentage contribution to the overall budget varies widely. Aside from generating revenue, many farm projects find that collecting fees for participation is important to ensure that new farmers understand and get accustomed to the costs and expenses they will incur when they graduate from the incubator farm program and are establishing independent farms. Expenses such as contract tractor service, or tractor expense depreciation on a purchased tractor; electricity for irrigation and cold storage, greenhouses, or other infrastructure; land rents; fence and path maintenance; among many other expenses are important to become aware of as a beginning farmer.

For more detailed information about incubator farm project financing, refer to Section 3 of the NIFTI *Farm Incubator Toolkit*<sup>57</sup>.

### ***Participant Focus***

NIFTI’s recent survey of US Incubator projects found that 53.8% aim to serve refugee and immigrant communities, while others mainly focus their efforts on serving socially disadvantaged

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<sup>56</sup> Agudelo Winther, E., & Overton, M. (2013). The Farm Incubator Toolkit. New Entry Sustainable Farming Project. Retrieved: <http://nesfp.org/node/216>.

<sup>57</sup> Agudelo Winther, E., & Overton, M. (2013). The Farm Incubator Toolkit. New Entry Sustainable Farming Project. Retrieved: <http://nesfp.org/node/216>.

and limited resource farmers<sup>58</sup>. Nearly all were focused on serving beginning farmers as defined by the USDA<sup>59</sup>. Most incubator farm projects reported that their participants had some level of farming experience. Some projects require that participants have a baseline level of understanding and knowledge about the profession, while others are open to individuals interested in farming for the first time. Much like a new company would define a “target market,” ensure that your leadership team has come to clarity about the new farmers you hope to attract to the program. While there can be significant grant funding available to help certain populations (new immigrants and social disadvantaged farmers), take care to discern the needs of your community and the strengths and abilities of your organization when defining your participant focus. ‘Because there was money for it’ is not a great way to choose a participant focus.

### ***Support and Programming Offered***

Most incubator farms provide horticultural education, farm business training, farm planning, and current food safety handling training as a basic offering. Other programming foci to consider: land transition, farm financing, specialty crops training, specialized marketing education, and value-added processing and packing. This focus on “whole farm planning”—where the focus is not solely on production but includes the incubation of holistic businesses—is a theme among most incubator farm projects.

Transition strategies are another aspect of farmer training that many incubator farm projects are finding it necessary to address. Many mainstream agricultural lenders require a three-year history of farmer operation experience, production history, and Schedule F documentation (IRS form: Profit or Loss from Farming) in order to qualify for a line of credit that would allow for the purchase of land<sup>60</sup>. Considerations of your local and regional food system, partner agencies that may be able to assist farmers in transitioning (i.e. land trusts), and the cost of arable land are all factors that will help your leadership team develop a strategy and program around new farmer transitioning.

### ***Physical Infrastructure***

Some incubator projects are enacted on small plots of urban land, while many provide ¼ acre each for at least 10 farmers. In addition to the land, other infrastructure includes: access to irrigation, secure storage areas for equipment, produce cleaning and packing areas, cold storage, and hoop houses. Depending on the goals of the project and of the participating farmers, others provide additional infrastructure for other endeavors such as beekeeping, hothouses, aquaculture,

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<sup>58</sup> Agudelo Winther, E., & Overton, M. (2013). The Farm Incubator Toolkit. New Entry Sustainable Farming Project. Retrieved: <http://nesfp.org/node/216>.

<sup>59</sup> The USDA defines beginning farmers and ranchers as “those who have operated a farm or ranch for 10 years or less either as a sole operator or with others who have operated a farm or ranch for 10 years or less.” From: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/eib-economic-information-bulletin/eib53.aspx#.UoKLbpRgb7U>.

<sup>60</sup> Lelekacs, J., & Morris, M. (2013). Incubator Farms for North Carolina: A White Paper. <http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu/whatwedo/foodsystems/newfarmers/incubator-farms-for-nc.pdf>

vermicomposting, etc. All farms will require at a minimum fencing, irrigation, and appropriately maintained paths. The following table, from Lelekacs & Morris<sup>61</sup> shows the land and infrastructure of several existing incubator projects.

Incubator Farm	Facilities/Infrastructure	Land Tenure
ALBA (Agriculture and Land Based Training Program), Salinas and Las Lomas, CA	Tractors and various implements, resource center, classrooms, maintenance workshop, produce cooler, distribution facility.	Rural Development Center (RDC) 110-acre organic farm. Farm Training and Research Center – 195-acre farm (60 acres in cultivation). Ownership: ALBA.
Elma C. Lomax Incubator Farm, Cabarrus County, NC	Greenhouse, high tunnel, post-harvest shed, walk-in cooler, tractor, irrigation hookups, security and deer fencing, tools in secure shed, office, classroom, and restroom.	Using 8 acres of 30.6 total acres. Ownership: Cabarrus County.
Intervale Center, Burlington, VT	Vegetable washing stations, coolers, tractors, hand tools, two greenhouses, multiple well water access points.	~350 acres managed by Intervale Center. Ownership: City of Burlington, Intervale Center, and private landowners.
New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, Lowell, MA	Hoop houses, storage sheds, irrigation, small equipment and tools, produce wash stations, electric fencing, walk-behind tractors, walk-in cooler.	Using ~25-30 acres (as of 2011). Ownership: Privately held leased land.
Onslow County Incubator Farm, Onslow County, NC	Hoop house, storage shed, irrigation, walk-in cooler, tractor service.	Using 10 acres Ownership: Privately held – 10-year lease.
PLANT@Breeze Farm Enterprise Incubator, Orange County, NC	BCS with rototiller and plow, mowers, small bush hog tractor (on loan), hand tools, irrigation system, two hoop houses, walk-in cooler, post-harvest wash area.	Using 5 acres of 269 total acres (99 acres open). Ownership: NC State University.
Raft Swamp Farms, Hoke County, NC	Greenhouse, hand tools, farm library, tractors, electricity, irrigation system.	~200 total acres (70 acres open). Ownership: Privately held.

**Resources for further information:**

- National Incubator Farm Training Initiative (New Entry Sustainable Farming Project)  
<http://nesfp.nutrition.tufts.edu/food-systems/national-incubator-farm-training-initiative>
  - Online resource library and in-depth webinars
  - Technical Assistance
  - National data gathering
- Bringing New Farmers to the Table (project of the Center for Environmental Farming Systems)  
<http://www.ncnewfarmers.org>

<sup>61</sup> Lelekacs, J., & Morris, M. (2013). Incubator Farms for North Carolina: A White Paper.  
<http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu/whatwedo/foodsystems/newfarmers/incubator-farms-for-nc.pdf>

- NC-specific information and resources
  - New Farmer Toolbox
- Intervale Center (Vermont)  
<http://www.intervale.org/>
  - Farm incubator as well as other programs
  - Farm business development expertise
- Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association (ALBA)  
<http://www.albafarmers.org/>
  - Working Incubator Farm in Monterey, CA
  - Marketing and economic development focus

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## Section 4: Developing Networks

### 4.1 Models of Marketing & Distribution

Whole farm planning, where farmer participants are trained in all aspects of farm business has long been the driving force behind farm incubator programming. Successful farmers must wear many hats; extensive knowledge of production, safe handling practices, marketing, accounting and bookkeeping, and the requisite coordination of these factors are all necessary factors for success. Since the goal is to create new farm businesses that are able to remain profitable long after their active participation in the incubator program, this attention to all aspects of farm business training is indeed a good goal for your farm incubator project. Along this line, some existing incubator farm projects have found it useful to incorporate distribution and marketing programs into their programmatic structure to achieve both farmer training and, in some cases, to generate sustained revenues for the incubator project. The farmers gain experience (and build their professional reputations) in selling to a variety of market outlets, through an established channel that serves to build community rapport and involvement. Furthermore, while the existence of an “in-house” marketing and distribution operation serves an educational purpose, allowing farmers to easily plug into an existing outlet also frees up time for them to focus on other aspects of whole farm planning, rather than developing a market outlet from scratch.

Four examples of existing distribution and marketing programs created by farm incubator projects are detailed below. Key areas of difference between the four examples, and questions for consideration are presented in concluding remarks.

#### ***ALBA (ALBA Organics)***

Salinas, CA

[http://www.albafarmers.org/alba\\_organics.html](http://www.albafarmers.org/alba_organics.html)

Although ALBA’s efforts in farmer organizing, education, and training began more than 40 years ago, ALBA Organics, a licensed produce distributor, was founded in 2002 to “support the sales and training needs of beginning farmers as an essential component to their development and success as entrepreneurs<sup>62</sup>.” The ALBA Organics program is an essential part of their farmer training program, specifically providing the new farmers with “vital technical assistance on crop planning, field production, post-harvest handling/packing, as well as the marketing for distribution to a variety of customers<sup>63</sup>.” They have an on-farm cooler, an off-site warehouse and distribution facility, and other delivery infrastructure to assist in these efforts. The specific training that they provide

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<sup>62</sup> [http://www.albafarmers.org/alba\\_organics.html](http://www.albafarmers.org/alba_organics.html)

<sup>63</sup> [http://www.albafarmers.org/alba\\_organics.html](http://www.albafarmers.org/alba_organics.html)

includes “marketing education for farmers on packing and sales for wholesale and retail distribution, including food safety and quality control.”<sup>64</sup> Additionally, ALBA Organics includes in its mission statement the values of organic production techniques, supporting small-scale and limited-resource farmers, and economic success and sustainable livelihoods for farmers.

ALBA Organics is a separate business entity from the ALBA incubator program, and sells mainly wholesale fresh produce to schools, universities, institutions, and retail and restaurant establishments. ALBA utilizes produce grown by small-scale farmers associated with their program; some are currently farming on incubator farmland, while others have “graduated” yet continue to utilize this market outlet.

### ***Intervale Center (Intervale Food Hub)***

Burlington, VT

<http://intervalefoodhub.com/>

The Intervale Food Hub is an online market that aggregates and sells produce and farm products from local (defined as Vermont-grown) produce from a variety of producers. It is owned by the Intervale Center, a 20+ year old non-profit dedicated to “strengthening community food systems through training, education, market development and social enterprise<sup>65</sup>.” After significant market research and assessment, the Intervale Food Hub was formed in 2007 with the goal of allowing farms to “share supply management and distribution functions while preserving the identity of their farm to consumers” among other goals<sup>66</sup>.

From their vision statement, other goals include:

- Supporting the use of sustainable and ecological production methods,
- Cultivating the local economy,
- Providing convenient, year-round delivery,
- Strengthening the relationship between the farmer and the public,
- Creating stable markets with fair prices,
- Educating, training, and supporting Vermont’s farmers

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<sup>64</sup> [http://www.albafarmers.org/alba\\_organics.html](http://www.albafarmers.org/alba_organics.html)

<sup>65</sup> <http://intervalefoodhub.com/>

<sup>66</sup> <http://foodshedguide.org/cases/intervale-food-hub>

Through the multi-farm ‘CSA’ approach that they employ, The Intervale Food Hub offers local food “subscriptions”—weekly deliveries of seasonal produce and farm products— as well as an online retail marketplace where customers can order items “a la carte.”

The *National Good Food Network* has created an informative case study of the development of the Intervale Food Hub, available at this location: <http://foodshedguide.org/cases/intervale-food-hub>.

### ***New Entry Sustainable Farming Project (World PEAS Food Hub)***

<http://nesfp.nutrition.tufts.edu/world-peas-food-hub>

World PEAS Food Hub began as a cooperative in 2005 through the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, with the goal of assisting beginning, immigrant, and refugee farmers establish farm business and to increase access of healthy, locally grown, and culturally appropriate foods. Because of their intention of working with a farmer population that does not generally have the language skills, time, volume, or transportation to seek out and create their own marketing opportunities, New Entry sought to assist in the creation of a cooperative that would combine the farm products grown in a manner that effectively and efficiently connects with local consumers. In 2013, World PEAS acquired a warehouse space, and now aggregates produce from over 30 farmers for sale to 450 CSA shareholders, in addition to community food assistance outlets, schools, institutions, and SNAP-eligible residents of their Lowell community<sup>67</sup>.

The World PEAS Food Hub serves as a market outlet for their producers, as well as a way to provide “producer-oriented” technical assistance to farmers, fulfilling a primary goal of the New Entry Incubator Farm.

### ***Maverick Farms FIG (High Country CSA)***

<http://highcountrycsa.org/>

Maverick Farms is a 501(c)3 non-profit founded in 2004 with a mission of “educating the community on the environmental and social benefits of small-scale farming.” The organizers were exploring the possibility of a Farm Incubator and Grower (FIG) program shortly after they organized, but soon realized there were no reasonably consistent and reliable market outlets for new farmers in the area. With that concern, Maverick Farms started its first CSA in 2005 with 10 subscribers. This effort expanded to become the High Country CSA in 2009 with 50 shares sold throughout the community, and drew on the produce and farm products from multiple local farmers. In 2011 the High Country CSA began an online, year-round “a la carte” multi-farm retail

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<sup>67</sup> <http://nesfp.nutrition.tufts.edu/world-peas-food-hub>

market outlet, and has since expanded further<sup>68</sup>. With this market outlet for local produce well established, Maverick Farms returned their attention to the creation of the FIG program, and began accepting applications for participating farmers in 2012<sup>69</sup>.

While the High Country CSA began as an effort to aggregate and market farm products grown by new and beginning farmers, their strategy is unique in that they maintain an explicit goal of bridging the experience and perspectives of both new farmers, and multi-generation established farmers.

### ***Conclusion and Key Considerations***

The preceding four examples of incubator-farm-associated distribution and marketing activities demonstrate the diversity of approaches that exist to achieve training, market opportunity and revenue-generating goals. Key considerations to take into account when discerning options for your incubator farm are:

- Business structures differ based on the structure of the “parent” organization as well as the goals of the market outlet. ALBA Organics is a stand-alone company organized by the ALBA farmer training program, while Intervale Food Hub, World PEAS, and High Country CSA are programs of their corresponding incubator farm projects.
- Some projects have found success with online CSA or direct market sales, while others focus more on wholesale sales to institutions. What is best for your project will depend on the interests and capacities of the farmers you work with, as well as local market conditions.
- Most distribution and marketing projects associated with incubator farms began well after the establishment of the incubator farm. However, the model that Maverick Farms used—establishing a reliable market before training new farmers is a great strategy, especially if your project is in an area without existing, consistent outlets for the sale of locally produced food.

## **4.2 Lomax and Lowe’s Foods: A Case Study**

One common theme among incubator farm projects is the inclusion of education and support for the *business* side of farming. The role of incubator farms is to create and support new farm businesses that will experience long-term success. Therefore, ensuring that farmers understand and gain experience in selling to a variety of market outlets is an important facet of the programmatic offerings of an incubator farm project. The example outlined in this section highlights the process that one such incubator farm utilized in fulfilling that mission.

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<sup>68</sup> J. Walker (2012) unpublished research

<sup>69</sup> emailed press release, January 8, 2012

A beginning farmer participant at an incubator farm in rural North Carolina had been having success selling at local farmers' markets and was interested in expanding to larger sales outlets. After attending a Retail Ready workshop presented by NC State University Cooperative Extension, the farmer was inspired to begin the process of selling to a large, regional grocery store. At the Retail Ready workshop, he learned that a particular grocer had a store just ten minutes from the incubator farm and was interested in purchasing local produce from small farmers in the area. The grocer was also engaged in discussions with NC State through the NC Growing Together program about facilitating purchases from local producers. The farmer contacted the Locally Grown Accounts Representative at the grocer's headquarters, and she connected him with the produce manager at his local store.

The farmer learned that the process was fairly straightforward: he would need to purchase additional insurance and register as a vendor with the grocery store. (The grocer requires a \$1 million general aggregate policy and a \$1 million product liability policy at a minimum.) The farmer felt that being part of the incubator farm helped to quickly connect him with the resources and knowledge that he required to accomplish those tasks, even though sales and marketing systems were not already in place as a function of the incubator farm itself.

Another benefit of participating in the incubator farm was that the farmer was able to easily and informally aggregate the produce of other farmers. This allowed him to fill out orders where his harvest was thin, while also creating opportunities for his fellow farmer participants to generate sales revenue and learn first-hand how the process works. Having a greater quantity of produce also allowed the farmer to be more competitive with other, larger vendors that service the local store. And because they farmed at the same physical location, aggregation and packing were much simpler. Infrastructure at the incubator farm was also a great benefit; their farm includes a walk-in cooler and post-harvest cleaning and packing facilities, making sorting and packing much easier and professional than it may have been for new farmers working independently without these resources.

The biggest learning curve that the farmer reported was learning how to estimate how much produce he would have ready for harvest when orders were due. It takes a fair amount of experience with each crop to build confidence in estimating, and farming at an incubator farm was a huge asset in this regard; the new farmers learn from one another and can easily share this highly localized information. Training in succession planning and harvest estimation are two aspects of new farmer education that all incubators should consider formalizing in training programs for aggregation and marketing.

Because this particular incubator farm is owned and partially funded by the County government, the farmer and the incubator farm project team both felt like it would be best for the farmer, rather than incubator staff, to take the leadership role in organizing the sales. This allowed the farmer to utilize the knowledge and resources provided by the incubator farm while building his farm business and farm brand within institutional outlets.

From the produce manager's perspective in this example, he has been extremely happy with the quality and shelf-life of the produce the incubator farmer delivered. He felt like the price point was

similar to the larger distributor he normally purchases product from, but found that the local farmer's products were far superior in quality.

Like any small beginning farmer, this new farmer has concerns about staying on the radar of the produce manager. It takes a very proactive farmer to make and complete regular institutional sales; it will always be easier for produce managers to rely on one or two national food distributors who have a much wider product menu and nearly unlimited quantities that can be delivered within an incredibly short time frame. However, there is much interest and enthusiasm on the part of grocery stores and other institutions for purchasing locally grown produce from small farmers, so it is well worth the effort to develop and utilize a consistent marketing strategy. Maintaining high quality, meeting production promises, and staying in communication with the produce manager are three important aspects of successful marketing of small farm products to grocery stores and institutions, and incubator farm programming and training can serve a much needed role in building the capacities of new farmers in achieving in these areas.

Other incubator farms, such as New Entry and ALBA, have taken a differing approach, formalizing sales and distribution channels through established brands and distribution systems. These programs allow the participant farmers to begin selling immediately through established channels, and in many cases remain suppliers even after they "graduate" from the farmer training program. There are many benefits to both methods, and your project team should think through your vision to see what provides the best programmatic strategy to your incubator farm.

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## Section 5: Land Transition

Access to land has been discussed as a barrier to entry for new and beginning farmers around the country and in North Carolina. Once incubator farmers complete their tenure at the incubator they must move on. This requires them to acquire property, typically either by purchasing or leasing existing farmland. The land transition component is approached in many different ways and to different degrees by incubators nationwide. One of the most accessible models for land transition is New Entry's Farmland Matching Program.<sup>70</sup> It involved developing relationships with area farmers and providing them with a central organization to contact when they have farmland available. New Entry offers this program outside of their incubator, but preference is given to incubator farmers.

The New Entry Farmland Matching Program not only provides technical assistance to landowners and land-seekers, but also provides assistance to evaluate potential farmland, help land seekers access funding and USDA resources, and includes a substantial amount of outreach. The devil is in the details, and specifics will vary for any incubator farm, but the critical takeaway is for an incubator to devote a substantial amount of effort toward developing relationships around the area to identify farmland and to prioritize assisting new farmers in accessing resources they need to acquire land in some form. It is important to market your program heavily and make sure your visibility is consistent and your reputation is intact.

Cash rent data for counties within the Piedmont Together area showing prices for rental of irrigated, non-irrigated, and pasture land can be found in Appendix E. It is important for incubator clients to know and understand the costs of land prior to reaching this phase of incubation. This includes understanding associated costs such as developing infrastructure, tax obligations, etc. This should all be emphasized early during the business planning phase of the educational component.

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<sup>70</sup> <http://nesfp.nutrition.tufts.edu/farmland>

## Section 6: Case Study: Hines Chapel Incubator Farm

### ***Project Summary***

The Piedmont Conservation Council is developing an incubator farm on the Hines Chapel Preserve in McLeansville, NC. This incubator will address a widely recognized need across the Piedmont and across the United States to reduce the barriers of entry for farm ownership among beginning farmers. Business incubation is a common practice across many sectors of the economy, and in recent years has been rapidly evolving within the small-scale farming industry. Successful programs across the country are beginning to tap into local, state, and national initiatives to grow their incubation programs and to develop networks to share standard practices and success stories.

North Carolina has a long and rich heritage of family farms, but in recent decades the pressure and risks have increased and the market for small farmers has changed rapidly. From development pressure due to urbanization to the rising costs of inputs and decreased profitability, many farms are no longer staying in the family. The average age of the North Carolina farmer is 57 according to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, up from 56 in 2002.<sup>71</sup>

There are numerous indicators that the local food movement has led to a dramatic rise in opportunity for small-scale producers, but there is a noticeable training gap as many newcomers to farming are not second and third – generation farmers like their predecessors. Incubator farms seek to fill that gap and help remove some of the primary obstacles for new farmers such as access to land and capital. The Hines Chapel Incubator Farm is one example of this emerging network of incubators. It will service the Piedmont region through a centralized location in Guilford County. Many valuable partners and collaborators are stepping up to the table to help plan and implement this incubator farm, and to find a way to compliment other statewide efforts to develop both the supply and the demand for local food.

In January 2014 the Guilford County Board of Commissioners voted to give permission to the Piedmont Conservation Council to enter into a lease with Guilford County for the purpose of developing and operating a farm incubator on a small portion of the 450 acre Hines Chapel Preserve.

This vote by the Board of Commissioners was the result of several years of project planning and development by a group of stakeholders from Guilford, Alamance, and Rockingham counties. The initial recommendation to develop this incubator farm made in the *2020 Guilford County Farmland Protection Plan: Preserving the Agricultural Economy* and similar needs were also recognized in Farmland Protection Plans developed for neighboring counties such as Rockingham and Alamance. These recommendations were the result of a number of trends including decreases in the number of family farms, rising demand for local produce including fruits & vegetables, rise in the average

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<sup>71</sup> <http://www.ncagr.gov/stats/census/highlights.htm>.

age of farmers, the threat of agricultural land being converted and developed, and a number of other trends highlighting the need to facilitate a new generation of farmers.<sup>72</sup>

The mission for Hines Chapel Incubator Farm (HCIF) is to establish a regional incubator farm for training in the arts, sciences, and business of growing and selling food and other agricultural products. This mission was established in the early planning stages of the incubator's development and focuses on the establishment of a farm incubator as a resource to new and beginning farmers (clients) in the region. It is intentionally inclusive to any viable agricultural products in order to encourage product diversification and income diversification for clients.

A kick-off meeting was held on September 13, 2012 (APPENDIX A – Business Plan) at Hines Chapel, located adjacent to the Hines Chapel Preserve. It was facilitated by the Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS) and Fountainworks through the CEFS *Bringing New Farmers to the Table*<sup>73</sup> project. A group of 21 attendees was present including representatives from the community, Piedmont Conservation Council, the Center for Environmental Farming Systems, Elon University, local Soil & Water Conservation Districts, NC Agricultural & Technical State University, the Guilford County Open Space Committee, and more. The primary purpose of this meeting was to bring together stakeholders to establish the vision and objectives for the project as well as identify local resources that could be utilized. The secondary purpose of the kickoff meeting was to identify individuals with diverse skill sets and backgrounds who would be willing to commit to serving on a steering committee to conduct more detailed planning, maintain project momentum, and guide the development process, as well as to provide continued oversight once the incubator is established.

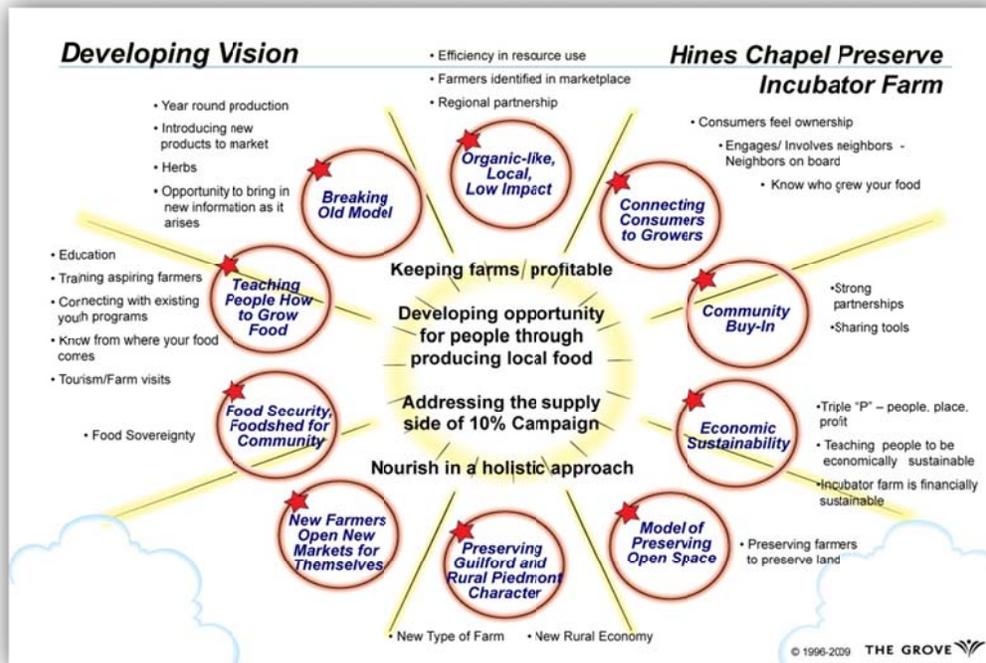
The following mandala (Figure 1) represents the vision themes identified that day, which have since been revised slightly by the project steering committee that was established in the kickoff meeting.

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<sup>72</sup> <http://www.piedmontconservation.org/caswellfpp>.

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu/whatwedo/foodsystems/incubatorfarmproject.html>

Figure 4



As shown in Figure 1, the primary vision themes of the incubator development project are:

- Keeping farms profitable
- Developing opportunity for people through producing local food
- Addressing the supply side of the 10% Campaign
- Nourish in a holistic approach

Additional sub-themes were adopted such as breaking the “old model” of agriculture, providing a model of preserving open space, preserving the rural character of the region, developing community buy-in, fostering economic sustainability, etc. Another visioning characteristic of note which was not included as part of the adopted vision but remains critical to the incubator’s development and implementation is to focus the intensified *training* on beginning farmers who do not have the resources for an initial land purchase, while incorporating components of *education* that could be available to the broader farming community or to the general public. This strategy is intended to develop and maintain a stronger community connection for the incubator and emphasize the need for education and outreach on both the supply side and demand side of local food. One core component of the intended consumer education is to define “local” as regional rather than allowing it to be defined impractically by county boundaries.

The kickoff meeting in 2012 also served to establish goals & objectives for the incubator upon development. The following goals were established as necessary to achieve in a 3-5 year timeframe:

1. New farmers are growing on the land at Hines Chapel Preserve

2. Provide a professional training program for new farmers
3. Enable new farmers to sell food/agricultural products in the region
4. The planning group expanded on the incubator's goals by establishing the following 5-7 year goals recognized as highly important in order to maintain programmatic credibility, client recruitment, stakeholder commitment, and financial viability:
5. Transition new farm businesses to independent farmland
6. Establish a multi-use purpose to the farmland (e.g. potential research opportunities and/or sub-lease of additional fields)

A full version of the draft Hines Chapel Incubator Farm Business Plan can be found in Appendix F. In addition to the above information on the project, a detailed marketing plan and management plan as well as projected budgets for the first two years of operation can be found in the draft HCIF Business Plan.

### ***Next Steps for Hines Chapel Incubator Farm***

The Hines Chapel Incubator Farm is currently still in the planning stages and is scheduled (pending funding) to begin operation in 2015. There are a number of steps that must be taken over the next year in order to prepare the incubator for launch, including some of the following:

1. Continue survey work with potential incubator farmers (ongoing through summer 2014)
2. Identify target demographic for programming (summer 2014)
3. Finalize lease with Guilford County (May 2014)
4. Develop and finalize land lease packets for incubator clients (summer 2014)
5. Develop media/publicity plan (May 2014)
6. Begin official client recruitment (June 2014)
7. Finalize pre-requisite training plan for prospective clients (July 2014)
8. Secure funding for site development and staffing for first 2 years of operation (ongoing through September 2014)
9. Identify farm manager (October 2014)
10. Finalize education/training curriculum (October 2014)
11. Complete necessary infrastructure development (January 2015)

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## Section 9: Literature Review

Regional food systems in Piedmont communities are a dynamic and evolving area for generating economic growth and creating livable, resilient communities; and incubator farms are at the nexus of effecting actionable change through generating and supporting new farmers.

While many food system development projects look to small-scale farming and direct-retail sales at farmers' markets for incremental growth, the potential for sustained, integrated, and positive growth is much, much larger. The 2010 State Action Guide produced by the Center for Environmental Farming Systems identified major areas of focus for the continued development of a robust local food system North Carolina. Among those issues identified, the development of new aggregation and processing capacities for small-scale producers, the preservation of arable farmland, and the recruitment and training of new farmers were highlighted as significant areas of focus. Attention should also be given to the continued development of institutional buying programs and consumer marketing efforts to ensure that demand for locally produced food remains high.

The following literature provides useful background information for understanding the larger context of food system development so that the opportunities of incubator farms can be better understood.

### ***General Food System Literature***

Conner, D. S., Knudson, W. A., Hamm, M. W., & Peterson, H. C. (2008). The Food System as an Economic Driver: Strategies and Applications for Michigan. *Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition*, 3(4), 371–383.

*An exploration of quantifying the economic and jobs impact of strengthening a local food system.*

Curtis, J., Creamer, N., & Thraves, T. E. (April, 2010). From farm to fork: A guide to building North Carolina's sustainable local food economy, Center for Environmental Farming Systems, Raleigh, NC. Retrieved from: <http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu/resources/stateactionguide2010.pdf>

*Statewide action guide created through a two-year "Farm to Fork" initiative, gathering knowledge and perspective of more than 1,000 food system participants across the state. The action guide details the knowledge gained and articulates action items and strategies for creating a more robust local food system in the state.*

Dunning, R. (2013, August). Research-Based Support and Extension Outreach for Local Food Systems. Center for Environmental Farming Systems.

*Collection of key findings and research related to support and extension outreach for local food systems—the economic, health, and environmental benefits of local food systems.*

McCullum, C., Desjardins, E., Kraak, V. I., Ladipo, P., & Costello, H. (2005). Evidence-based strategies to build community food security. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, 105(2), 278–283.

*General, evidence-based research on food systems change, and the stages of change in building local, sustainable food systems. Focus on community food security.*

Mount, P. (2012). Growing local food: scale and local food systems governance. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 29(1), 107–121.

*Discusses the issues and opportunities present in scaling up local food systems, and their governance and management. Describes how scale affects the perception and legitimacy of the local food system, and contributes to optimism around the development of regional food hubs.*

Skertich, R. L., Johnson, D. E. A., & Comfort, L. K. (2013). A Bad Time for Disaster Economic Stress and Disaster Resilience. *Administration & Society*, 45(2), 145–166.

*Not specific to food, but a useful discussion of the potential of interagency cooperation in the creation of distributed systems that work toward building “whole communities” and economic resiliency.*

Williams, J. (2012). Authenticity and Success in Marketing “Local” in Retail Grocery Settings. Center for Environmental Farming Systems. [http://www.ncgrowingtogether.org/?page\\_id=412](http://www.ncgrowingtogether.org/?page_id=412)

*Thorough examination of local foods retailing operations—lessons learned, key findings, and annotated literature review specific to retail operations.*

### ***Aggregation and Processing***

Block, D., Thompson, M., Euken, J., Liquori, T., Fear, F., & Baldwin, S. (2008). Engagement for transformation: Value webs for local food system development. *Agriculture & Human Values*, 25(3), 379–388.

*Community partnerships in the “value web”— examples of University/community partnerships that contribute to local food system development.*

Bloom, J. D., & Hinrichs, C. C. (2011). Moving local food through conventional food system infrastructure: Value chain framework comparisons and insights. *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems*, 26(01), 13–23.

*Two case studies are presented that detail the food distribution networks of local food systems—rural and urban—with a focus on “scaling up”, ownership models, and the technical aspects of distribution and processing.*

Day-Farnsworth, L., McCown, B., Miller, M., & Pfeiffer, A. (2009, December). Scaling Up: Meeting the Demand for Local Food. UW-Extension Ag Innovation Center UW-Madison Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems.

*Report detailing the research results from interviewing 11 local food entrepreneurs about the bottlenecks and other obstacles they face in moving large amounts of local food into mainstream markets.*

Feagan, R. (2007). The place of food: mapping out the “local” in local food systems. *Progress in Human Geography*, 31(1), 23–42.

*Research pertaining to current consumer definitions of “local food” to better understand regional aggregation and processing opportunities and possibilities.*

Hinrichs, C. C. (2003). The practice and politics of food system localization. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 19(1), 33–45.

*Provides closer scrutiny of the idea of “local food” for the purposes of understanding the tension between defensiveness and diversity in efforts to localize a food system.*

Lev, L., Brewer, L., & Stephenson, G. (2003, December). How Do Farmers’ Markets Affect Neighboring Businesses? Oregon State University Extension Service.

*Slightly dated report that documents the “spill-over” effects of farmers’ market shoppers on nearby business. They found that for every dollar spent at a farmers market, \$0.60 was spent at a local business.*

Marsden, T., Banks, J., & Bristow, G. (2000). Food Supply Chain Approaches: Exploring their Role in Rural Development. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 40(4), 424–438.

*Research provides framework for understanding “short” or “alternative” food supply chains in the broader discussion of rural economic development.*

### **Farmland Preservation**

Clancy, K., & Ruhf, K. (2010). Is local enough? Some arguments for regional food systems. *Choices*, 25(1), 123–135.

*Discusses the need for regional planning approach to food system development, and presents the case that local and regional are not synonymous. Provides an articulated vision of regionalism for food system development that situates farmland preservation in a larger context.*

Gatrell, J. D., Reid, N., & Ross, P. (2011). Local food systems, deserts, and maps: The spatial dynamics and policy implications of food geography. *Applied Geography*, 31(4), 1195–1196.

*This introduction to the Applied Geography journal focuses on understanding the spatial/geographic issues within the food system and provides an overview of the associated disciplines, current research, and issues being addressed by contemporary researchers.*

Brodt, S., Feenstra, G., Kozloff, R., Klonsky, K., & Tourte, L. (2006). Farmer-Community Connections and the Future of Ecological Agriculture in California. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 23(1), 75–88.

*Draws links between the promotion and acceptance of sustainable and ecological farming practices and farmland preservation efforts, among other food system aspects.*

Duram, L., & Oberholtzer, L. (2010). A geographic approach to place and natural resource use in local food systems. *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems*, 25(Special Issue 02), 99–108.  
doi:10.1017/S1742170510000104

*Research pertaining to the limited-resource aspects of farming and food systems: place and geography of local food.*

Mariola, M. J. (2005). Losing ground: Farmland preservation, economic utilitarianism, and the erosion of the agrarian ideal. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 22(2), 209–223.

*The author presents a critique of farmland preservation tactics based on historical research into the origins of the movement and argues that instead of relying on utilitarian justifications, preservationists should incorporate agrarian ethics in order to maintain both integrity and effectiveness.*

### ***Recruitment and Training of New Farmers***

Agudelo Winther, E., & Overton, M. (2013). The Farm Incubator Toolkit. New Entry Sustainable Farming Project. Retrieved from <http://nesfp.org/node/216>

*A current and thorough document detailing many aspects of starting and managing an incubator farm program.*

Bendfeldt, E. S., Walker, M., Bunn, T., Martin, L., & Barrow, M. (2011, May). A Community-Based Food System: Building Health, Wealth, Connection, and Capacity as the Foundation of Our Economic Future. Virginia Cooperative Extension.

*Understanding incubator farms in the context of larger food system efforts. This document provides a thorough overview of the community-development process of building a local or regional food system.*

Ewert, B. M. (2012). Understanding Incubator Farms. Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. Retrieved from [http://etd.lib.umt.edu/theses/available/etd-06192012-135554/unrestricted/Ewert\\_Brianna\\_thesis.pdf](http://etd.lib.umt.edu/theses/available/etd-06192012-135554/unrestricted/Ewert_Brianna_thesis.pdf)

*Graduate thesis that presents a comprehensive set of case studies for understanding different characteristics of incubator farms, farmer training, and project development.*

Goddeeris, L. (2012). Cultivating Thriving Communities Through Food Systems. *Public Management* (00333611), 94(5), 24.

*The role of local governments in supporting local and regional food systems—the need for significant community partnerships and a culture of community involvement.*

Kilpatrick, S., & Johns, S. (2003). How farmers learn: Different approaches to change. *The Journal of Agricultural Education and Extension*, 9(4), 151–164.

*The author presents the benefits associated with several different methods of farmer learning, education, and information exchange. The professionalization of farming is examined, specifically in the context of change and information sharing.*

Lelekacs, Joanna Massey, O’Sullivan, John, Morris, Mike, and Creamer, Nancy. Incubator Farms as Beginning Farmer Support. *Journal of Extension*. In Press as of September 2013.

*Examination of the opportunities present in the continued development of incubator farms as a response to barriers experienced by new and beginning farmers, and Extension’s possible role in supporting their design and development.*

Lelekacs, J., & Morris, M. (2013). Incubator Farms for North Carolina: A White Paper. <http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu/whatwedo/foodsystems/newfarmers/incubator-farms-for-nc.pdf>

*Thorough overview of existing incubator farms, with a focus on opportunities and possibilities for North Carolina. Contains detailed information regarding the organizational structure and physical infrastructure of incubator farms.*

Mailfert, K. (2007). New Farmers and Networks: How Beginning Farmers Build Social Connections in France. *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie*, 98(1), 21–31.

*An examination of how new farmers build social connections. (Note: examples used for research are in France.) Although not specific to incubator programs, the article documents the need for building sustained social connections between new farmers and the existing agricultural community.*

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## Section 10: Conclusion and Recommendation(s)

There are a number of steps that could be taken across the Piedmont Triad to facilitate further development of beginning farmer training initiatives and develop more incubator programs. Hines Chapel Incubator Farm will be a launching point for assessing the current need and demographics of the population to be served by such programming. This incubator could serve as a catalyst for recruiting more beginning farmers to participate in farm incubators across the region. Other steps could be taken to make the current environment more conducive to beginning farmer success as well:

1. Goal 1: Facilitate identification of beginning farmers and connect them to appropriate programming for assistance:
  - a. Action Item 1: Develop regional database of beginning farmer business development services offered in the Piedmont.
  - b. Action Item 2: Create an online hub for beginning farmer communication with service providers that can match participants with appropriate and accessible programming.
2. Goal 2: Connect beginning farmers with capital:
  - a. Action Item 1: Support regional informational roundtables between beginning farmers and loan providers or local food investors to educate beginning farmers on steps needed to acquire sufficient funding for startup.
  - b. Action Item 2: Highlight ongoing financial training opportunities on database created through Goal 1.
3. Goal 3: Facilitate connection for beginning farmers and available land:
  - a. Action Item 1: Hold roundtable with key organizations providing beginning farmer training and identify organization to lead effort of connecting beginning farmers to land.
  - b. Action Item 2: Provide support for point-organization to develop regional connections with landowners and beginning farmers to begin process of land matching.
  - c. Action 3: Provide support for host online database to display profiles of available land and potential buyers/renters for agricultural use.
  - d. Action 4: Facilitate semi-annual networking events for landowners and beginning farmers.

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U.S. Department of Agriculture. “2007 Census of Agriculture: Economics.” 30 January 2012 <[http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Online\\_Highlights/Fact\\_Sheets/Economics/economics.pdf](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Online_Highlights/Fact_Sheets/Economics/economics.pdf)>.

U.S. Department of Agriculture. “Know Your Farmer Know Your Food: Grants, Loans, and Support.” 28 June 2013 <[http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=KYF\\_GRANTS](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=KYF_GRANTS)>.

## **INCUBATORS, NON-PROFITS, AND BEGINNING FARMER RESOURCES**

Agricultural and Land-Based Training Association: <<http://www.albafarmers.org/>>.

Center for Environmental Farming Systems. <<http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu/>>.

Llewellyn, Dave. “Starting a Small Farm Incubator”. Cornell Small Farms Program. 4 July 2011 <<http://smallfarms.cornell.edu/2011/07/04/starting-a-farm-incubator/>>.

Farley Center Farm Incubator. Linda & Gene Farley Center for Peace, Justice and Sustainability. <<http://www.farleycenter.org/index.php/farm-incubator/intro-to-farm-incubator>>.

Field Guide to the New American Foodshed: <<http://foodshedguide.org/>>.

Dirt Works Incubator Farm. Lowcountry Local First. <<http://lowcountrylocalfirst.org/initiatives/eat-local/farmer-education-outreach/growing-new-farmers/incubator-farm>>.

Headwaters Farm Incubator Program. East Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District. <<http://emswcd.org/farm-incubator/>>.

Intervale Center: <<http://www.intervale.org>>.

Intervale Food Hub: <<http://www.intervalefoodhub.com>>.

North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services: Agricultural Development & Farmland Preservation Trust Fund. <<http://www.ncadfp.org/>>.

New Entry Sustainable Farming Project: <<http://nesfp.nutrition.tufts.edu/>>.

Piedmont Conservation Council, Inc.: <<http://www.piedmontconservation.org>>.

PLANT @ Breeze Farm Enterprise Incubator. Orange County, NC. <<http://www.orangecountyfarms.org/PLANTatBreeze.asp>>.

Start2Farm: <<http://start.farm.gov/>>.

The Groundswell Farm Enterprise Incubator. Groundswell Center for Local Food and Farming. <[http://www.groundswellcenter.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=106&Itemid=105](http://www.groundswellcenter.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=106&Itemid=105)>.

## APPENDIX A:

Suggestions of Food System Project Stakeholders – Provided by the  
Center for Environmental Farming Systems

## Suggestions of Food System Project Stakeholders to include in Project Planning

*Note: This is a list developed from stakeholders involved in successful local food projects including, and other than, incubator farms, and is not exhaustive. Base your list on the vision for your incubator farm project. Brainstorm other stakeholders with your Leadership Team.*

- Agricultural Service Providers
  - Cooperative Extension / Advisory Board members
  - Farm Service Agency staff / Advisory Board members
  - Master Gardeners
  - Natural Resource Conservation Service
  - Soil and Water Conservation District / Advisory Board members
- Community Leaders / Elected Officials / Government Offices
  - City Manager
  - County Manager
  - State Legislators
  - Mayor
  - County/City Commissioners or Council members
  - Planning Department / Planning Commission members
  - Tourism Department
  - Public Health Department
  - Environment/Sustainability Office
  - Workforce Development Office
  - Parks and Recreation
  - Economic Development
  - Procurement Departments
- Community Groups
  - Chamber of Commerce
  - Civic clubs (e.g. Rotary, Kiwanis)
  - Food Bank
  - Faith-based organizations
  - Farmworker advocates (e.g. Student Action for Farmworkers)
  - Local Land Trust
- Educational Institutions
  - Local High Schools (FFA)
  - Community Colleges
    - w/agriculture education courses/curriculum
    - w/Small Business Centers
  - Institutions of Higher Education
- Funders / Potential Funders / Financiers
  - Community Foundations
  - Farm credit agencies/Banks
  - Local Philanthropic institutions
- Local / Regional Farmers
  - Existing farmers in the community\*\*
  - Participant farmers (those who will use the incubator farm space)\*\*

- Health
  - County Health Department
  - Health practitioners
  - Local Hospital
- Gardening Groups
  - Community Gardens
  - Gardeners
  - Garden Clubs
- Local Food Groups
  - Farmers markets
  - Food Hubs/Food Aggregators/Produce marketing groups
  - Produce marketing cooperatives
- Local Businesses
  - Banks
  - Chefs
  - Grocery stores
  - Hardware / Home Improvement Store
  - Planners/Architects/Landscape Architects
- Media
  - Television stations
  - Radio stations
  - Newspapers
- Individuals
  - Include citizens from diverse ethnic backgrounds and ages

*This document was prepared as a resource through the [Bringing New Farmers to the Table](#) project. This project is supported by the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, grant number #2010-49400-21733.*

## APPENDIX B:

Sample Book Order List for Beginning Farmer Library – Florida  
West Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc.

CFIA Building an Entrepreneurial Beginner Farmer Resource Library

FLORIDA WEST COAST RESOURCE CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, INC: Book Order List for Beginning Farmer Library, USDA-NIFA BFRDP Project 2010-49400-21800							
Libraries and Topics	Title	Author	ISBN	New Price	Used Price	Price	Ordered
<b>Library I: Research and Technology</b>							
Regulatory/Laws	Small Scale Organics: A Guidebook for the Non-certified Organic Grower	George Kuepper	Free Download, nofany.org	0	0	0.00	2
	Safety & Health for Production Ag						1
Technology	Drip & Micro Irrigation						1
	Irrigation Systems Installation & Maintenance						1
	Field Hydraulics						1
	Troubleshooting Irrigation Controller Systems						1
Research	the Organic Farming Manual	Ann Larkin Hansen	978-1-60342-479-0 No. 62479	\$39.95	19.09		1
	Principles of Agribusiness Management [Hardcover		1577665406	\$44.39	44		1
	The New Organic Grower: A Master's Manual of Tools and Techniques for the Home and Market Gardener	Coleman, E.	093003175X				1
	Small Farms are Real Farms: Sustaining People through Agriculture	J. Ikerd	1601730063	\$20			

CFIA Building an Entrepreneurial Beginner Farmer Resource Library

Infrastructure	Chicken Coops	Judy Pangman	978-1-58017-627-9 No. 67627	\$29.95			
	How to Build Animal Housing	Carol Ekarius	978-1-58017-527-2 No. 67527	\$24.95		17.46	1
	How to Build Small Barns & Outbuildings	Monte Burch	978-0-88266-773-7 No. 66773	18.95		13.03	1
	Renovating Barns	Nick Engler	978-1-58017-216-5 No. 67216	\$24.95			
	Fences for Pature & Garden	Gail Damerow	978-0-88266-753-9 No. 66753	\$16.95	10.53		
	How to Build Your Own Greenhouse	Roger Mashall	978-1-58017-647-7		15.86		1
	From Tinkering to Torquing, A Beginner's Guide to Tractors and Tools	Roger Welsch	760320829	\$19.75	13.97	15.86	1
	Watering Systems for Lawn and Garden	R.Dodgge Woodson	978-0-88266-906-9 No. 66906	18.95	6.50		
	American Electricians Handbook		978-0071494625	60.32	56.97	60.32	1
	Electricians Pocket Manual		978-0071458870	\$15.40	12.84	12.84	
	Basic Plumbing		978-0934041997	21.78	21.89	21.78	1
	Water Storage		978-0964343368	\$13.57	12.56	13.57	1
<b>Library II: Crop &amp; Livestock Management</b>							
Crop Management							

CFIA Building an Entrepreneurial Beginner Farmer Resource Library

	Organic Farmer's Business Handbook: A complete guide to Managing finances, crops and staff	Richard Wiswall/Chelsea Green Books	1603581421	\$22.49	21.69		1
	Becoming a Biodynamic Farmer or Gardener	Malcolm and Susan Gardener			\$120		
	Growing Chinese Vegetables in Your Backyard	Geri Harrington	98-1-60342-140-9 No. 62140	\$16.95			
	Carrots Love Tomatoes	Louise Riotte	978-1-58017-027-7 No. 67027	\$10.17		10.17	1
	Fruits and Berries for the Home gArden	Lewis Hill	978-0-88266-763-8 No. 66763	\$18.95	11.89		
	Deerproofing Your Yard & Garden	Rhonda Massingham Hart	978-158017-585-2 No. 67585	\$14.95	6.68	6.68	1
	Homegrown Herbs	Tammi Hartung	978-1-60342-73-6	\$19.95			
	Square Foot Gardening: A New Way to Garden in Less Space with Less Work	Mel Bartholomew	1591862027	\$65.99	29.84		
	How to Grow More Vegetables Than You Ever Thought Possible on Less Land Than You Can Imagine	J. Jeavons	1580087965	\$14.10	12.45		
	The Self-Sufficient Gardener	J. Seymour	756628989	\$14.08	12.46		
	Vegetable Gardening in Florida	J. Stephens	813016746				1
	Organic Vegetable: Enterprise Manual						1
	The New Organic Grower	Elliot Coleman					1
	Crop Rotation on an Organic Farm: A planing manual	2 Copies					1
	Postharvest Handling of Fruit and Vegetables						Free Downl
	Intro to Agroecology	Paul Wojtkowski	9.78156E+12	\$109.95			1
Plant Science	The Complete Guide to Saving Seeds	Robert Gough & Cheryl Moore-Gough	978-1-60342-574-2 No. 62574	\$24.95			

CFIA Building an Entrepreneurial Beginner Farmer Resource Library

	The Pruning Answer Book	Lewis Hill and Penelope O'Sullivan	978-1-60342-710-4 No. 62710	\$14.95	9.6		
	Saving Seeds	Marc Rogers	978-088266-634-1 No. 66634	\$10.17	9.76	10.17	1
	Secrets of Plant Propagation	Lewis Hill	978-088266-370-8	\$19.95	13.62	13.62	1
	Bug Book	Barbara Pleasant	978-0-88266-609-6	\$14.95	5.83	5.83	1
	Weed Book	Barbara Pleasant	978-0-88266-921-2	\$14.95	4.99	5.88	1
	Guide to Plant Diseases	Barbara Pleasant	978-0-88266-274-9	\$14.95	6.31	5.86	1
	Ecological Management of Ag Weeds		9780521037877	\$105.00	90.16	90.16	1
	Handbook of Sustainable Weed Management		9781604690613	\$157.95	207.11	157.95	1
	NOFA Guides	<a href="http://media.cneiseagreen.com/nofa-guides/">http://media.cneiseagreen.com/nofa-guides/</a>	9.7816E+12	\$79.95			
Livestock							
	The Backyard Goat	Sue Weaver	978-1-60342-790-6	\$16.95			
	The Cattle Health Handbook	Heather Smith Thomas	978-1-60342-090-7 No. 62090	16.22		16.22	1
	Getting Started with Beef & Dairy Cattle	Heather Smith Thomas	978-158017-596-8 No. 67596	\$11.53	10.53	11.53	1
	Grass-Fed Cattle	Julius Ruechel	978-1-58017-605-7 No. 670605	\$16.47	15.87	16.47	1
	The Chicken Health Handbook	Gail Damerow	978-0-88266-611-2 No. 66611	\$13.57	13.7	\$13.57	1
	Keep Chickens	Barbara Kilarski	978-1-58017-491-6 No. 67491	\$16.95	9.99		
	Livestock Guardians	Janet Vorwald Dohner	9778-1-58017-695-8 No. 67695	\$24.95			
	Storey's Illustrated Guide to Poultry Breeds	Carol Ekarius	978-1-58017-667-5 No. 67667	\$24.95	16.66		
	Storey's Illustrated Guide to Sheep, Goats, Cattle, and Pigs	Carol Ekarius	978-1-60342-036-5 No. 62036	\$24.95	15.5		
	Humane Livestock Handling	Temple Grandin with Mark Dessing	978-1-60342-028-0 No. 62028	\$15.69	15.86	\$15.69	1

CFIA Building an Entrepreneurial Beginner Farmer Resource Library

	Beekeeping	Richard E. Bonney	978-0-88266-861-1 No. 66861	\$13.53	9.32	\$9.32	1
	Natural Beekeeping	Ross Conrad		\$23.10			
	Hive Management	Richard E. Bonney	978-0-88266-637-2 No. 66637	\$11.53	11.95	\$11.53	1
	Storey's Guide To Keeping Honey Bees	Malcolm T. Sanford & Richard E. Bonney	978-1-60342-550-6 No. 62550	\$19.95	12.8		
	Attracting Native Pollinators	The Xerces Society	978-1-60342-695-4 No. 62695	\$29.95	25.14		
	Basic Butchering of Livestock & Game	John J. Mettler Jr., DVM	978-0-88266-391-3 No. 66391	\$11.00	10.63	\$11.00	1
	Keeping Livestock Healthy	N. Bruce Haynes, DVM	978-0-88266-391-3 No. 66391	\$19.95	12.39		
	Small-Scale Livestock Farming	Carol Ekarius	978-1-58017-162-5 No. 67162	\$18.95	12.6		
	Storey's Guide to Raising Meat Goats , 2nd Ed.	Maggie Sayer	978-1-60342-582-7 no. 62582	\$12.68	15.15	\$12.68	1
	Storey's Guide to Raising Dairy Goats, 4th Ed.	Jerry Belanger and Sara Thomas Bredesen	978-1-60342-580-3	\$12.28	13.97	\$12.28	1
	Storey's Guide to Raising Ducks, 2nd Ed.	Dave Holderread	978-1-60342-692-3 No. 62692	\$12.91	17.59	\$12.91	1
	Storye's Guide to Raising Rabbits, 4th Ed.	Bob Bennett	978-1-60342-692-3	\$19.95	17.5		
	Story's Guide to Raising Beef Cattle, 3rd E.	Heather Smith Thomas	978-1-60342-454-7	\$19.95	13.5		
	Story's Guide to Raising Pigs, 3rd Ed.	Kelly Klober	978-1-60342-473-8	\$12.68	12.6	\$12.68	1
	Story's Guide to Raising Chickens, 3rd Ed.	Gail Damerow	978-1-60342-469-1 No. 62469	\$19.95	12.61		
	Story's Guide to Raising Poultry, 3rd	Leonard S. Mercia	978-1-58017-263-7	\$18.95			
	Story's Guide to Raising Turkeys, 2nd Ed.	Leonard S. Mercia	978-1-58017-261-5 no. 67261	\$18.95	11.93		

CFIA Building an Entrepreneurial Beginner Farmer Resource Library

	Storey's Guide to Raising Llamas	Gail Birutta	978-1-58017--328-5	\$18.95	11.09		
	Greener Pasture on Your Side of the Fence: Better Farming Voisin Management-Intensive Grazing		961780738	\$30.00			
	Grass Productivity		933280645	\$40.60			
	Grass Fed Beef	Julius Ruechel	1580176054	\$16.47			1
	Forages Vol. 1	Robert F Barnes, C. Jerry Nelson, Michael Collins, Kenneth Moore	813804213	\$78.07			1
Soil Science	Compost Gardening Guide		978-1-58017-702-3 No. 67702	\$19.95	13.97		
	Let It Rot!	Stu Campbell	978-1-58017-023-9	\$12.95	8.06		
	Mulch It	Stu Campbell	978-1-58017-316-2 No. 67316	\$12.95	8.07		
	The complete Guide to Compost Gardening Guide	Barbara Pleasant & Deborah L. Martin	978-1-58017-702-3 No. 67702	\$19.95	13.97		
	Secrets to Great Soil	Elizabeth P. Stell	98-1-58017-008-6	\$13.97	17.25	13.97	1
	Elements of Soil	Brady	978-0135014332	84.32	94.38	\$84.32	1
	The Science of Composting		9.78157E+12	239.33		\$239.33	1
	Soil Microbiology & Sustainable Crop Production	Springer	9.78905E+12	209	179.5	\$179.50	1
<b>Library III: Business Management</b>							
Marketing	The New Farmers' Market: Farm-Fresh Ideas for Producers Managers & Communities [Paperback]	Vance Corum	963281429				1
	Market Farming Success	Byczynski, L	B004EVIGE8	\$30		\$30.00	1

CFIA Building an Entrepreneurial Beginner Farmer Resource Library

	Sell What You Sow: The Grower's Guide to Successful Produce Marketing	E. Gibson	963281402				1
	The Legal Guide For Direct Farm Marketing	N. Hamilton	967155606	\$146		\$78.98	1
	Backyard market gardening: the entrepreneur's guide to selling what you grow	A. Lee	962464805	\$17.95	17.02	\$17.95	1
	<i>Wholesale Success: A Farmer's Guide to Selling, Post Harvest</i>	familyfarmed.org	2 Copies				2
	Urban Agriculture: Growing Healthy, Sustainable Places	Kimberley Hodgson, Marcia Caton Campbell, and Martin	978-1932364910	\$60			
	Aquaculture Marketing Handbook		978-0813816043	105.11	120.02	\$105.11	1
	How to Direct Market Your Beef	<a href="http://www.sare.org/publications/beef.htm">http://www.sare.org/publications/beef.htm</a>		0			Free Downl
	Honor System Marketing	Acres		22.95		\$22.95	1
Financial Management	Buying and setting up your small farm or ranch	Lynn Miller	188521006X	\$28.95			
	Making Your Small Farm Profitable	Ron Macher	978-1-58017-161-8 No. 67161	\$13.57	10.38	\$10.38	1
	Successful Small Scale Farming	Karl Schwenke	978-0-88266-642-6 No. 66642	\$11.53	8.86	\$8.86	1
	Slow Money: Investing As If Food, Farms and Fertility Mattered	W. Tasch	1603582541	\$10.90	10.4		
	Handbook On OW To Make \$100,000 Farming on 25 acres	B.T. Whatley	913107093	\$185.99	51		1
	Financial Management in Ag						1
	From Budgets to Balance Sheets						1
	Aquaculture Economics and Financing		978-0813813011	83.61	72.27	\$72.27	1

CFIA Building an Entrepreneurial Beginner Farmer Resource Library

Business Planning	Building a Sustainable Business: A Guide to Developing a Business Plan for Farms and Rural Businesses	Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (802)656-0484					1 copy + Free Download Available
	Exploring the Small Farm Dream: Is Starting an Agricultural Business Right for You?	The New England Small Farms Institute, 2003 413-323-4531		\$22.00			1
	Starting An Ag Business: A Pre-planning Guide	Steve Richards/NY Farmlink 800-547-3276		\$15.00		\$0.00	Download ed copy
	Starting & Running Your Own Small Farm Business	Sarah Beth Aubrey	978-1-58017-697-2 No. 67697	\$19.95	12.8		1
	Growing Your Own Herb Business	Bertha Reppert	978-0-88266-612-9	\$11.53	10.52		1
	You Can Farm: The Entrepreneur's Guide to Start & Succeed in a Farming Enterprise	Joel Salatin	963810928	\$21.76	21.99	\$21.76	1
	Never Bet the Farm: How Entrepreneurs Take Risks, Make Decisions - and How You Can, Too [Paperback]	Anthony Iaquinto	0787983667	\$15.56	\$12.73		1
	The Nature of the Farm: Contracts, Risk, and Organization in Agriculture	Douglas Allen	262511851	\$22.00	25.86	\$22.00	1
	The Profitable Hobby Farm: How to Build a Sustainable Local Food Business	S.B. Aubrey	470432098	\$13.45	12.92		
	Holistic Management	A. Savory	155963488X	\$39.77	36.97		1
	Sustainable Vegetable Production From Start up to Market						1-multi-disciplined



## APPENDIX C:

HCIF Resources/Suggestions for Funding – Provided by the Center  
for Environmental Farming Systems

# bringing new farmers to the table [www.ncnewfarmers.org](http://www.ncnewfarmers.org)

## Hines Chapel Incubator Farm Suggestions and Resources

**Mission:** To set up a regional incubator farm for training in the arts, sciences and business of growing and selling food and other agricultural products, initiating in early 2014.

“This project will also serve as a catalyst to help network regional food and farming initiatives by providing a model for integrated food distribution/sale/access and a novel model for making land accessible to new farmers.”

**Visioning** identified focus of the project across the supply chain including:

- Economics
- Education and outreach
- Recruiting
- Preservation
- Technical

## Suggestions

### **Suggestion 1: Mentor farmers**

Incubator farms use various models for connecting participant farmers with farmer mentors in the community. One example is the Breeze model in Orange County, whereby they have the experienced farmers help train the participant farmers through a workshop series prior to participants engaging with the land, as well as through post-workshop series training events at the incubator and/or on other farms in the area. A nearby farmer training program (not an incubator farm) based in Davidson County, uses a model of in class training by Cooperative Extension and partners, followed by on-site farmer tours with experience farmers.

The Elma C. Lomax Incubator Farm in Cabarrus County used a farmer mentor model for the first two years. Their model entailed allowing the mentor farmer use of land on-site for their own business while providing mentorship / technical assistance to participants and farm management as a part of the lease agreement . There were problems with this approach, and Lomax has since removed this approach from their project design. David Goforth at Cabarrus County Cooperative Extension and Aaron Newton, the Lomax Farm Manager, can provide more insight into this approach, as can Brad Hinckley, who served as the mentor farmer:

<http://coldwatercreekfarms.blogspot.com/>

### **Suggestion 2: Farm management**

Based on the size of the Hines Chapel Preserve incubator site, careful consideration is needed to determine how all the land and fiscal management will be handled. Based on the experience at Lomax, it is not suggested that this activity be managed wholly by farmer mentors or other

*This document was prepared by the Center for Environmental Farming Systems as a resource through the [Bringing New Farmers to the Table](#) project. This project is supported by the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, grant number #2010-49400-21733. To find more resources for beginning farmers, please visit [www.Start2Farm.gov](http://www.Start2Farm.gov).*



United States Department of Agriculture  
National Institute of Food and Agriculture



NCSU | NCAATSI | NCDACS  
[www.cefs.ncsu.edu](http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu)

experienced farmer lessees at the site.

### **Suggestion 3: Recruiting and outreach**

Active recruitment of the first cohort of participants prior to implementation will provide great opportunity to design the program and training curriculum around the specific needs of aspiring farmers in the region. Consider reaching out to the nearby Piedmont Farm School (Amy-Lynn Albertson at Davidson County Cooperative Extension) for partnership and information on existing participants from the HCPIF region.

Recruitment can happen through contacting the media, writing press releases, a program website, Facebook page, descriptive brochures placed strategically around the city, talking to groups such as Slow Food and Carolina Farm Stewardship Association. The first cohort will be very important, and selecting them and bringing them in early may bring individuals motivated to translate good intentions to concrete action.

An interesting approach to outreach could be to partner with the Greensboro library's One City, One Book program in 2014, and recommend an agriculturally oriented book as a city, with Hines Chapel and its supporting groups taking an active role in facilitating discussions.

One City, One Book - <http://www.greensboro-nc.gov/index.aspx?page=848>

### **Suggestion 4: Think “co-op” from the start**

In the community workshop, the idea of 'farmers starting their own market' arose. Elma C. Lomax Incubator Farm has some models to share that have been unintentional, yet very valuable, informal cooperation among farmers. This could be developed in a more intentional way, not unlike the Tools Cooperative model used at the Intervale Center, but considering marketing opportunities, such as an aggregated CSA or other aggregated model. Perhaps 'graduates' of the program could opt to stay involved in this marketing model. ALBA is a model of this nationally, keeping their 'graduates' together as a cooperative, and marketing their 'brand' locally. This model could also be developed to provide opportunity for other local farmers as well. Also see the Intervale Food Hub and World PEAS out of New Entry Sustainable Farming Project.

<http://www.albafarmers.org/about.html>

### **Suggestion 5: Farming, conservation, and preservation**

An overall farm conservation plan may be advisable based on experiences at other incubator farms with flooded fields, erosion and pressure from invasive weeds. Consider learning more from Lomax and Breeze incubators locally.

### **Suggestion 6: Be inclusive**

There are other groups in the area interested in working with new and aspiring farmers. These include urban farming (Charlie Headington - [charlie.headington@gmail.com](mailto:charlie.headington@gmail.com)) and immigrant farmers in Greensboro (Margaret Evans, Education Coordinator, Church World Service—Greensboro, Refugee and Immigration Program - [educationnc@churchworldservice.org](mailto:educationnc@churchworldservice.org)).

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*Prepared August 26, 2013*

*by Don Boekelheide, Beginning Farmer Project Associate, Center for Environmental Farming Systems*

*For additional information:*

*Joanna Massey Lelekacs, State Coordinator, Incubator Farm Project; [joanna\\_lelekacs@ncsu.edu](mailto:joanna_lelekacs@ncsu.edu)  
Center for Environmental Farming Systems*

**Hines Chapel Preserve Incubator Farm Resources and Funding**

p. 2 of 2

*Prepared by the Center for Environmental Farming Systems  
Bringing New Farmers to the Table*

[www.cefs.ncsu.edu](http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu); [www.ncnewfarmers.org](http://www.ncnewfarmers.org)

**BRINGING NEW  
FARMERS TO THE  
TABLE:**



**Hines Chapel Preserve Incubator Farm Resources and Funding**

*Prepared by the Center for Environmental Farming Systems  
Bringing New Farmers to the Table*

## APPENDIX D:

### Funding Sources for Incubator Programs – Provided by the Center for Environmental Farming Systems

## Potential Funding Sources for Incubator Farms and/or Associated Marketing Programs

*Notes in parenthesis at the end of a funder option indicate an incubator farm that has received funding from this source.*

**Charitable arms of Banks in your local area** – check to see if local banks in your area have a charitable arm (e.g. Wells Fargo, Bank of America, etc.). For example, the [Bank of America Charitable Foundation](#) notes that they give more than \$7.9 billion to help develop and grow local non-profit organizations, including those that provide basic human services such as hunger relief {consider the community benefit component CEFS’ has asked our partners to include in their project design} and housing services.

**Wells Fargo Foundation** - [https://www.wellsfargo.com/about/charitable/nc\\_guidelines](https://www.wellsfargo.com/about/charitable/nc_guidelines)

Wells Fargo makes contributions in areas that we believe are important to the future of our nation's vitality and success. Our first priority is to support programs and organizations whose chief purpose is to benefit low- and moderate-income individuals and families. We look for projects that keep our communities strong, diverse, and vibrant. (ALBA)

**Ben and Jerry's Foundation, National Grassroots Grant Program** - <http://www.benandjerrysfoundation.org/>

Up to \$15,000 for a one-year period. Start with Letter of Intent.

Funds non-profit grass-roots community organizations w/budget of \$500K or less (not universities).

Funds grassroots, constituent-led organizations that are using community-organizing strategies to accomplish their goals and organizations that provide technical support and/or capacity-building resources to such groups.

**Cedar Tree Foundation** - <http://www.cedartreefound.org/apply.html>

Previous grants range from \$5k/yr to \$80k/year and some are multi-year. Start with Letter of Inquiry.

One focus area is Sustainable Agriculture. They ‘give particular consideration to proposals demonstrating strong elements of environmental justice and/or conservation.’

**Harry Chapin Foundation** - <http://www.harrychapinfoundation.org/>

The mission of the Harry Chapin Foundation is to support organizations that have demonstrated their ability to dramatically improve the lives and livelihood of people by helping them to become self-sufficient. Agricultural and Environmental Programs are an area of interest of the Harry Chapin Foundation.

**Community Foundations** could be explored, both local and regional.

**Clarence E. Heller Charitable Foundation - Environment and Health** -

[http://www.cehcf.org/env\\_health.html](http://www.cehcf.org/env_health.html); \$5,000 to \$600,000;

Letters of inquiry for the June 2013 funding cycle should be submitted by February 1, 2013.

To promote the long-term good health and viability of communities and regions

- by supporting programs to prevent harm to human health from toxic substances and other environmental hazards;
- by encouraging planning and development at the regional level, aimed at integrating economic and social goals with sound environmental policies; and
- by supporting initiatives for sustainability in agriculture and food systems.

**Farm Aid - <http://www.farmaid.org/>**

Farm Aid is focused on raising awareness and funds to strengthen family farm agriculture. Farm Aid has funded an incubator farm to research and evaluate creative alternative approaches to agricultural education and training to reach greater numbers of users.

**Heifer International - <http://www.heifer.org/>**

“Heifer International's mission is to work with communities to end hunger and poverty and care for the earth. By giving families a hand-up, not just a hand-out, we empower them to turn lives of hunger and poverty into self-reliance and hope.” (assisted in the development of a **microcredit loan program** at Grow NYC's New Farmer Development Project)

**National Rural Funders Collaborative - <http://nrfc.org/>**

NRFC has focused its grantmaking from 2007 – 2011 on strengthening rural asset-based economies and economic strategies employing a “connecting and catalytic” methodology – both 1) connecting or linking those economic alternatives and strategies to other asset-based approaches, to traditional and non-traditional/alternative forms of philanthropy, to networks for grassroots advocacy and policy change, and 2) catalyzing, accelerating and moving those efforts to scale through alignment with larger regional economic engines and with regional community-building sectors and institutions, e.g., colleges and institutions, health systems, financial institutions, etc. (ALBA holds a demonstration grant)

**New Belgium Brewing - <http://www.newbelgium.com/Community/local-grants.aspx>**

Environmental Stewardship Grants Program - The purpose of New Belgium's Environmental Stewardship Grants Program is to serve and connect with the communities where we sell our beers. We want to cultivate relationships and support those making an impact. Our goal is to improve the health of the planet and inspire others to joyously embrace sustainable choices.

**NC Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Grant Program - <http://www.ncagr.gov/markets/scgrant/index.htm> (deadline in April for 2012)**

The purpose of this program is solely to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops in North Carolina. For purposes of the program, specialty crops are defined as fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits and nursery crops (including floriculture). Additionally, projects aimed at developing local and regional food systems and improving food access will be considered.

**NC Rural Economic Development Center, Inc., New Generation Initiative - <http://ncruralcenter.org/leadership-a-engagement/youth-initiative.html>**

Transforming North Carolina's rural communities through youth and young adult engagement. The Initiative “opens exciting new opportunities for rural young people and the communities they live in. Opportunities for young people to become engaged as community leaders ... to start businesses ... to train for skilled jobs in high-demand fields. Opportunities for communities to learn how to more fully involve youth and young adults in economic and civic life.”

**NC Value-Added Cost Share Program – <http://plantsforhumanhealth.ncsu.edu/extension/programs-resources/cost-share/>**

The North Carolina Value-Added Cost Share Program (NCVACS) offsets the costs to N.C. value-added producers and processors for equipment purchases that are directly related to the processing, packaging, handling and production of value-added agricultural products made with N.C.-grown agricultural crops.

NCVACS is funded by the N.C. Tobacco Trust Fund Commission and the N.C. Rural Economic Development Center through the Family Farm Innovation Fund. NCVACS is administered by the N.C. Cooperative Extension component of the Plants for Human Health Institute at the N.C. Research Campus in Kannapolis.

***Potential Funding Sources for Incubator Farms and/or Associated Marketing Programs***

*Developed by the Center for Environmental Farming Systems for the Bringing New Farmers to the Table project – [www.ncnewfarmers.org](http://www.ncnewfarmers.org)*

**Jesse Smith Noyes Foundation** - <http://www.noyes.org/>

The Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation promotes a sustainable and just social and natural system by supporting grassroots organizations. The Noyes foundation has funded incubator farm program activities. One of their funding priorities is Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems. (New Entry)

**Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI-USA) – Tobacco Communities Reinvestment Fund** - <http://www.rafiusa.org/programs/tobacco/tobacco.html>

The Tobacco Communities Reinvestment Fund aims to assist farmers and rural communities to develop new sources of agricultural income through provision of cost-share grants.

**Solidago Foundation** - <http://www.solidago.org/>

Accept Letter of Inquiry.

Mission is to promote justice, equity, sustainability and enfranchisement for all through charitable grantmaking to, and work with, progressive, empowering, community-based organizations and collaborations.

**Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE)** - <http://www.sare.org/>

Next SARE is a program of USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service. SARE has funded farm transition program and immigrant farming projects. (New Entry)

**SARE Sustainable Community Innovation -**

<http://www.southernsare.org/Grants/Types-of-Grants/Sustainable-Community-Innovation-Grants>

Project maximums are \$10,000 for up to two years of activities.

CFP to be released March 2013.

“The Southern SARE Program and the Southern Rural Development Center, the sponsors of this competitive SCIG program, are seeking to invest in projects/programs that promote a stronger alignment between sustainable agriculture and community development strategies in the South. This type of alignment cannot be realized without strong and balanced working partnerships among people and organizations representing both sustainable agriculture and community development perspectives.”

**US Department of Agriculture (USDA)**

**Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)**

**Federal State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP) – [www.ams.usda.gov/FSMIP](http://www.ams.usda.gov/FSMIP)**

The Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP) provides matching funds to State Departments of Agriculture, State agricultural experiment stations, and other appropriate State agencies to assist in exploring new market opportunities for U.S. food and agricultural products, and to encourage research and innovation aimed at improving the efficiency and performance of the marketing system.

FSMIP has supported an incubator farm related marketing cooperative through strengthened performance by farmers, emphasizing improved producer training and technical assistance, and inclusion of value added. (New Entry)

**Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) - [www.ams.usda.gov/FMPP](http://www.ams.usda.gov/FMPP)**

FMPP is a competitive grant program for eligible entities that provides funds to assist in establishing, expanding, and promoting domestic farmers markets, roadside stands,

community-supported agriculture programs, and other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities.

## **National Institute of Food and Agriculture**

### **Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) -**

<http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/rfas/bfrdp.html>

The priority of the BFRDP program is to fund partnerships and collaborations led by or including nongovernmental and community-based organizations with expertise in new agricultural producer training and outreach. At least 25 percent of the funds will support programs and services that address the needs of limited resource beginning farmers or ranchers; socially disadvantaged beginning farmers or ranchers; and farm workers desiring to become farmers or ranchers. (New Entry, ALBA, plus others)

### **Community Food Projects (CFP)**

<http://www.nifa.usda.gov/fo/communityfoodprojects.cfm> (Due date was November in 2012)

Community Food Projects should be designed to (1): (A) meet the food needs of low-income people; (B) increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for their own food needs; and (C) promote comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition issues; and/or (2) meet specific state, local, or neighborhood food and agriculture needs for (A) infrastructure improvement and development; (B) planning for long-term solutions; or (C) the creation of innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers. (New Entry)

## **Office of Outreach and Advocacy**

### **Farmworker - Agricultural Career and Employment Grants Program "ACE"**

<http://www.outreach.usda.gov/grants/>

The Mission of USDA's Farmworker Coordination Program is to identify the challenges faced by farmworkers and coordinate the community's needs with USDA resources, as well as ensure training and support for farmworkers to advance into other agricultural fields.

### **Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers Program (OASDFR) -**

<http://www.outreach.usda.gov/grants/>

OASDFR is a program of USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service. OASDFR delivers outreach and technical assistance to assure opportunities for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers to successfully acquire, own, operate, and retain farms and ranches, and assure equitable participation in the full range of USDA programs. OASDFR funds have helped incubator farms with education, outreach, and technical assistance program. OASDFR is an annually run competitive grants program and eligible recipients include institutions of higher education and community-based non-profit organizations that provide capacity-building training and assistance to local farmers and ranchers. (New Entry) (ALBA)

### **Risk Management Agency (RMA) - <http://www.rma.usda.gov/>**

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Risk Management Agency – have funded other incubator's core training and education programs, including outreach, marketing, technical assistance, and resource library. (New Entry)

For example - [Risk Management Education and Outreach Partnerships Program](#)

## Rural Business-Cooperative Service

**Value-Added Producer Grants (VAPG)** - [http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP\\_VAPG.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_VAPG.html)  
Notice of Funds Available was published in August 2012.

“VAPG is a competitive grants program that awards grants to producers to help them develop farm-related businesses that add value to basic agricultural products through branding, processing, product differentiation, labeling and certification, and marketing.

VAPG includes projects that market inherently value-added production, such as organic crops, grass-fed livestock, and locally produced and marketed food products. VAPG also funds regional food supply networks that benefit small and mid-sized farms by incorporating producers into larger farm-to-fork, or “mid-tier,” value chains.

Grants may be used to develop business plans and feasibility studies (including marketing plans) needed to establish viable marketing opportunities for value-added products or to acquire working capital to operate a value-added business venture or alliance. Working capital applications generally must be supported by an independent feasibility study as well as a business plan.

The maximum grant amount for a planning grant is \$100,000 and the maximum for a working capital grant is \$300,000.” [http://sustainableagriculture.net/blog/vapg-2012-nofa/?utm\\_source=roundup&utm\\_medium=email](http://sustainableagriculture.net/blog/vapg-2012-nofa/?utm_source=roundup&utm_medium=email)

## Rural Development

**Rural Business Enterprise Grants (RBEG)** - [http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP\\_rbeg.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_rbeg.html)

Generally \$10,000 up to \$500,000

Eligibility: Rural public entities (towns, communities, State agencies, and authorities), Indian tribes and rural private non-profit corporations.

Contact your Rural Development State Office.

The RBEG program provides grants for rural projects that finance and facilitate development of small and emerging rural businesses, help fund distance learning networks, and help fund employment related adult education programs. To assist with business development, RBEGs may fund a broad array of activities. (ALBA)

**Rural Cooperative Development Grants (RCDG)** - <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/nc/rcdg.htm>

Contact your Rural Development State Office.

“PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: Grants are for establishing and operating centers for rural technology or cooperative development for the primary purpose or improving the economic condition of rural areas by promoting the commercialization of new services and products that can be produced or provided in rural areas; new process that can be utilized in the production of products in rural areas; and new enterprises that can add value to on-farm production through processing or marketing.

TYPE OF ASSISTANCE: Grants may be used to pay up to 75 percent of the costs of establishing or operating centers for rural technology or cooperative development. Purposes may be such things as technology research, investigations, feasibility studies, dissemination of information, commercialization of new products and processes, training, re-lending, technical assistance, research and support.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS: Grants may be made to public bodies or non-profit institutions and Indian tribes for use in rural areas (less than 50,000 in population) and a density or not more than 100 persons per square mile.

CONTACT: This program is administered by the Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. However applications are made at the Rural Development State Office. For assistance, please contact Neal Sherrod, Business Programs Specialist in the State Office. Mr. Sherrod can be reached at 919-873-2043 or email: [neal.sherrod@nc.usda.gov](mailto:neal.sherrod@nc.usda.gov).”

**Wallace Center at Winrock International: Healthy Urban Food Enterprise Development (HUFED) Program -**

<http://wallacecenter.org/our-work/current-initiatives/healthy-urban-food-enterprise-development-center/>

The purpose of the Wallace HUFED Center is to increase the access of underserved communities to healthy, affordable, local foods, including locally produced agricultural products. (ALBA)

The HUFED Center was created to respond to the growing need to reorganize, rethink and transform the way food is grown, sourced, distributed, marketed and consumed in the United States, in order to:

- Make more healthy and affordable food available in low-income areas;
- Increase market access for small- and medium-sized agricultural producers; and
- Promote positive economic activities generated by attracting healthy food enterprises into underserved communities.

*This document was prepared by the Center for Environmental Farming Systems ([www.ncnewfarmers.org](http://www.ncnewfarmers.org)) as a resource through the [Bringing New Farmers to the Table](#) project. This project is supported by the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, grant number #2010-49400-21733.*

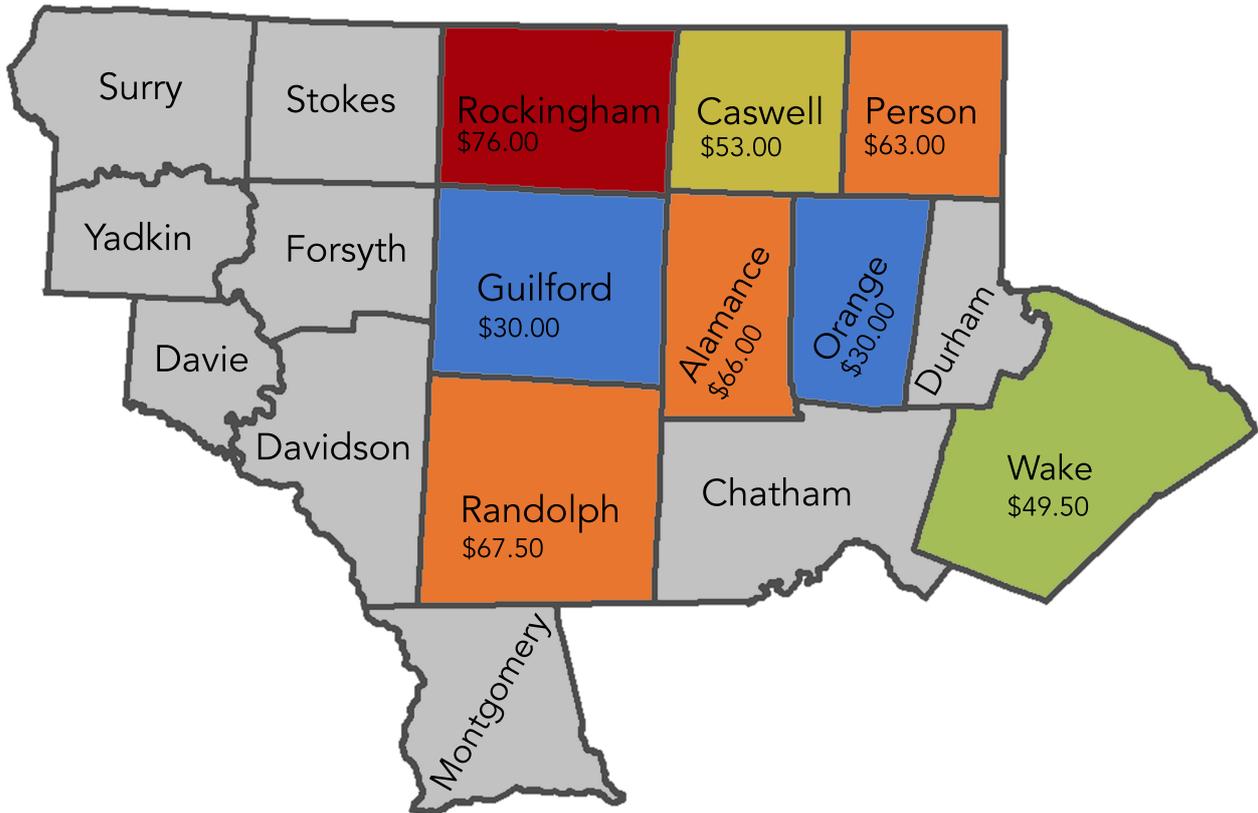


## APPENDIX E:

### Cash Rent Data for Piedmont region, NC

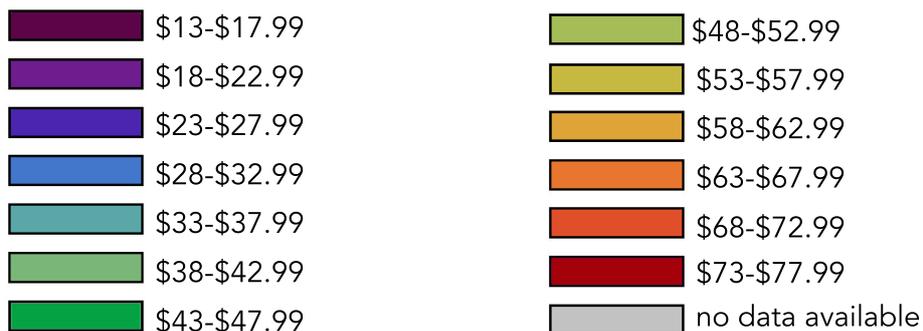
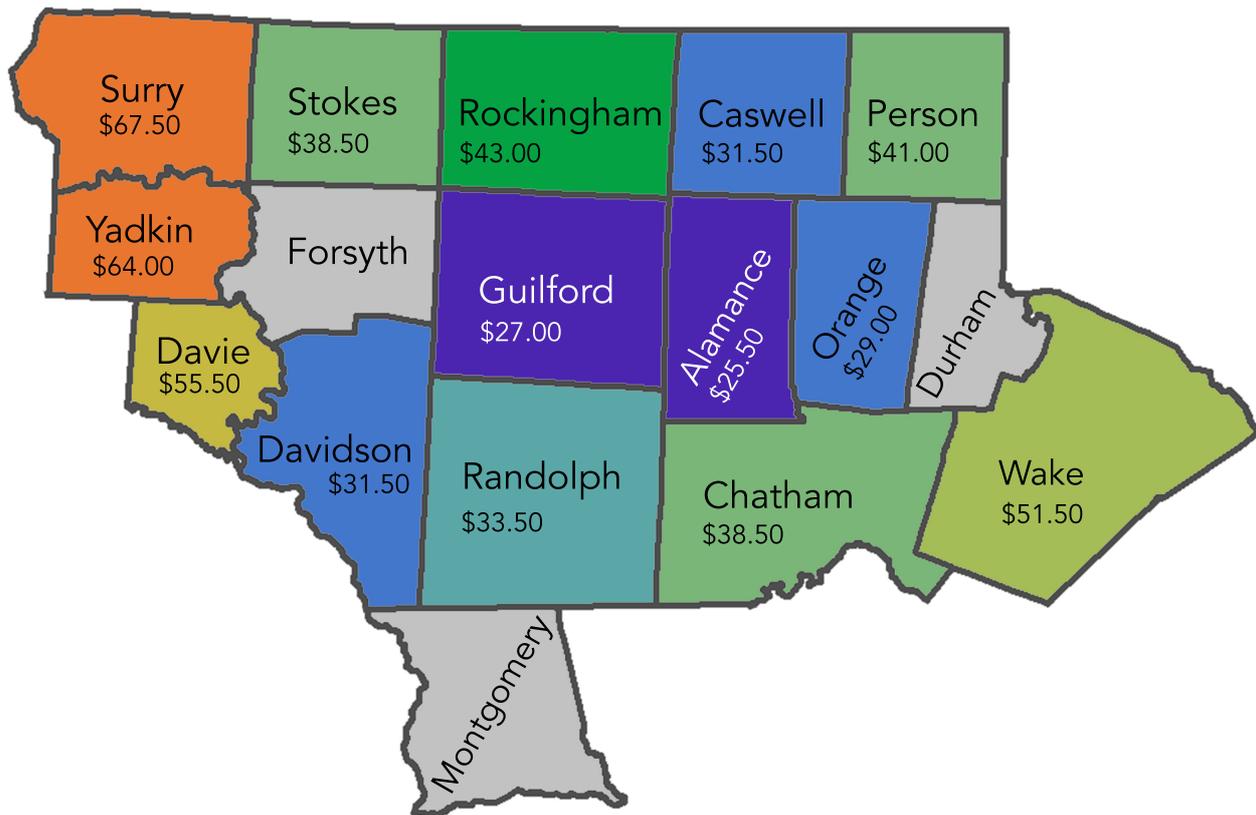
- Irrigated Land
- Non-Irrigated Land
- Pastureland

# Average Land Rents: Irrigated Cropland



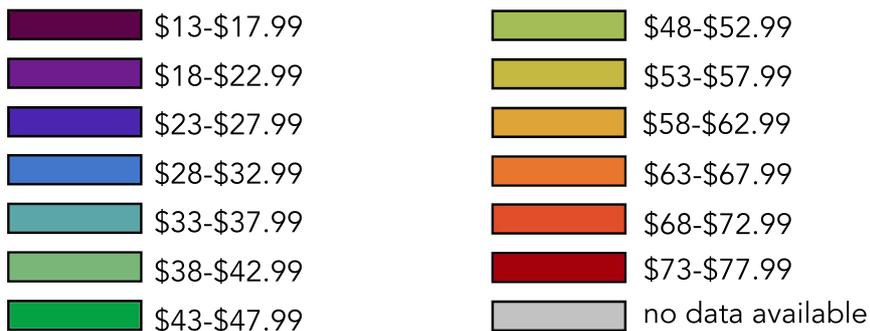
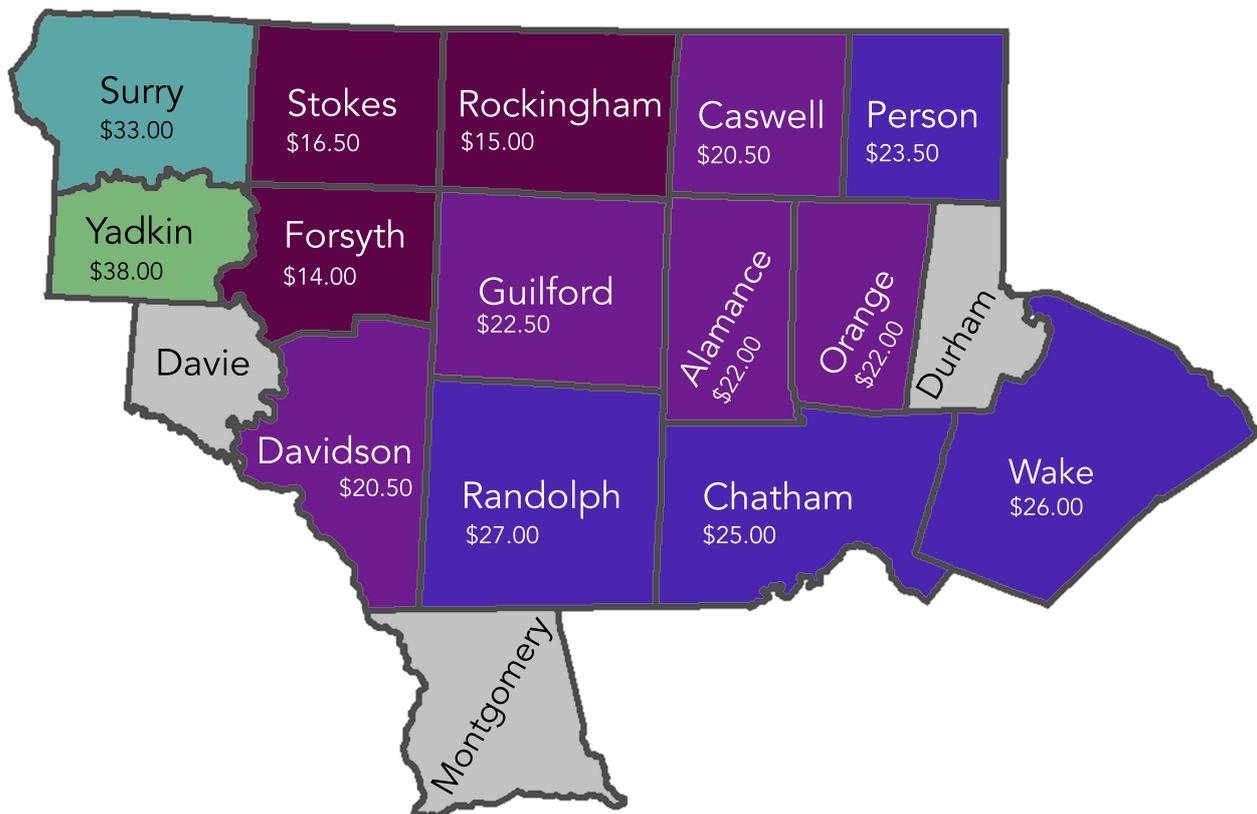
**Data Source:** United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service Quick Stats 2.0 <http://quickstats.nass.usda.gov/>

# Average Land Rents: Non-Irrigated Cropland



**Data Source:** United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service Quick Stats 2.0 <http://quickstats.nass.usda.gov/>

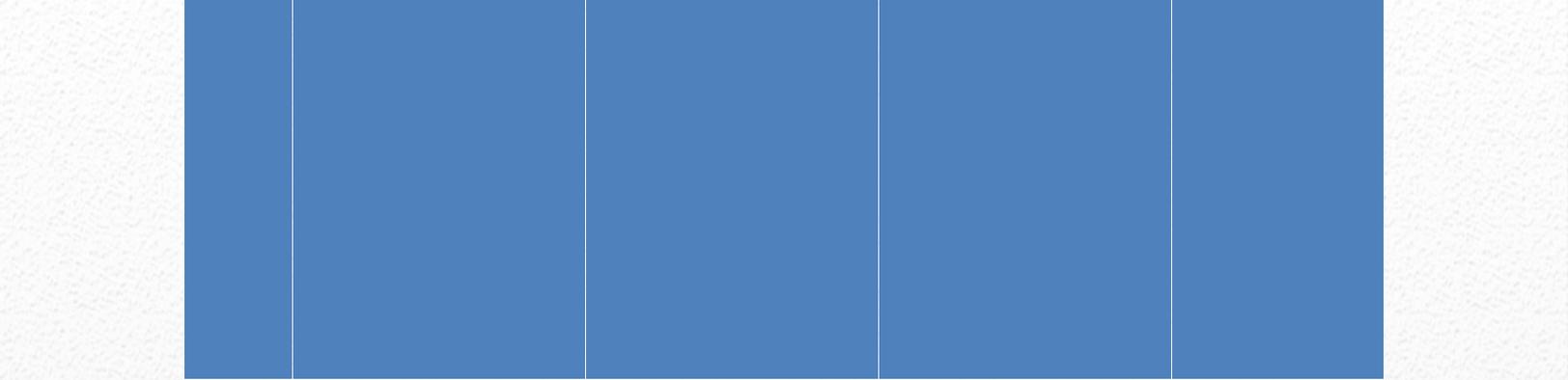
# Average Land Rents: Pasture Land



**Data Source:** United States Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service Quick Stats 2.0 <http://quickstats.nass.usda.gov/>

APPENDIX F:

Hines Chapel Incubator Farm Draft Business Plan  
Piedmont Conservation Council



# Hines Chapel Incubator Farm Business Plan

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## *A Regional Effort to Grow Farmers*

The following is a Business Plan for startup of a farm business incubator to service beginning farmers in the Piedmont region of North Carolina. Based in Guilford County, this incubator will assist in further development of the supply side of local agricultural production in North Carolina by reducing barriers to entry for new farm businesses. Through intensive community engagement it will also compliment efforts statewide to increase demand for locally grown agricultural products. It is a project of the Piedmont Conservation Council, Inc.

# HCIF Business Plan

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**Hines Chapel Incubator Farm Steering Committee:**

Janet MacFall, Ph.D., Chair	Elon University
Alex Ashton	Guilford County Open Space Program
Steve Moore	Elon University
Millie Langley	Guilford Soil & Water Conservation District
Dr. Wick Wickliffe	Guilford County Cooperative Extension Service
Anne Hice	Guilford County Open Space Program
Kevin Moore	Rockingham Co. Soil & Water Conservation District
Joanna Lelekacs	Center for Environmental Farming Systems
Eric Henry	TS Designs
Ariel Fugate	Lowe's Foods, Inc.
Dr. John O'Sullivan	NC Cooperative Extension Service, NCATSU
Phil Ross	Alamance County Soil & Water Conservation District
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# HCIF Business Plan

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## Executive Summary

The Piedmont Conservation Council is developing an incubator farm on the Hines Chapel Preserve in McLeansville, NC. This incubator will address a widely recognized need across the Piedmont and across the United States to reduce the barriers of entry for farm ownership among beginning farmers. Business incubation is a common practice across many sectors of the economy, and in recent years has been rapidly evolving within the small-scale farming industry. Successful programs across the country are beginning to tap into local, state, and national initiatives to grow their incubation programs and to develop networks to share standard practices and success stories.

North Carolina has a long and rich heritage of family farms, but in recent decades the pressure and risks have increased and the market for small farmers has changed rapidly. From development pressure due to urbanization to the rising costs of inputs and decreased profitability, many farms are no longer staying in the family. The average age of the North Carolina farmer is 57 according to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, up from 56 in 2002.<sup>i</sup>

There are numerous indicators that the local food movement has led to a dramatic rise in opportunity for small-scale producers, but there is a noticeable training gap as many newcomers to farming are not second and third – generation farmers like their predecessors. Incubator farms seek to fill that gap and help remove some of the primary obstacles for new farmers such as access to land and capital. The Hines Chapel Incubator Farm is one example of this emerging network of incubators. It will service the Piedmont region through a centralized location in Guilford County. Many valuable partners and collaborators are stepping up to the table to help plan and implement this incubator farm, and to find a way to compliment other statewide efforts to develop both the supply and the demand for local food.

### *History and Current Situation*

In January 2014 the Guilford County Board of Commissioners voted to give permission to the Piedmont Conservation Council to enter into a lease with Guilford County for the purpose of

developing and operating a farm incubator on a small portion of the 450 acre Hines Chapel Preserve.

This vote by the Board of Commissioners was the result of several years of project planning and development by a group of stakeholders from Guilford, Alamance, and Rockingham counties. The initial recommendation to develop this incubator farm made in the *2020 Guilford County Farmland Protection Plan: Preserving the Agricultural Economy* and similar needs were also recognized in Farmland Protection Plans developed for neighboring counties such as Rockingham and Alamance. These recommendations were the result of a number of trends including decreases in the number of family farms, rising demand for local produce including fruits & vegetables, rise in the average age of farmers, the threat of agricultural land being converted and developed, and a number of other trends highlighting the need to facilitate a new generation of farmers.<sup>ii</sup>

The 2020 Guilford Farmland Protection Plan made the following specific Education and Outreach Recommendation: **Establish a farm incubator to train young farmers**

**Task 1:** Conduct a feasibility study/business plan for a farm incubator

**Task 2:** Establish a farm incubator to assist beginning farmers on either Guilford County's Hines Chapel Preserve or Guilford County Prison Farm

**Task 3:** Work with graduates of the incubator program on building viable agribusinesses

## Description

### *Mission*

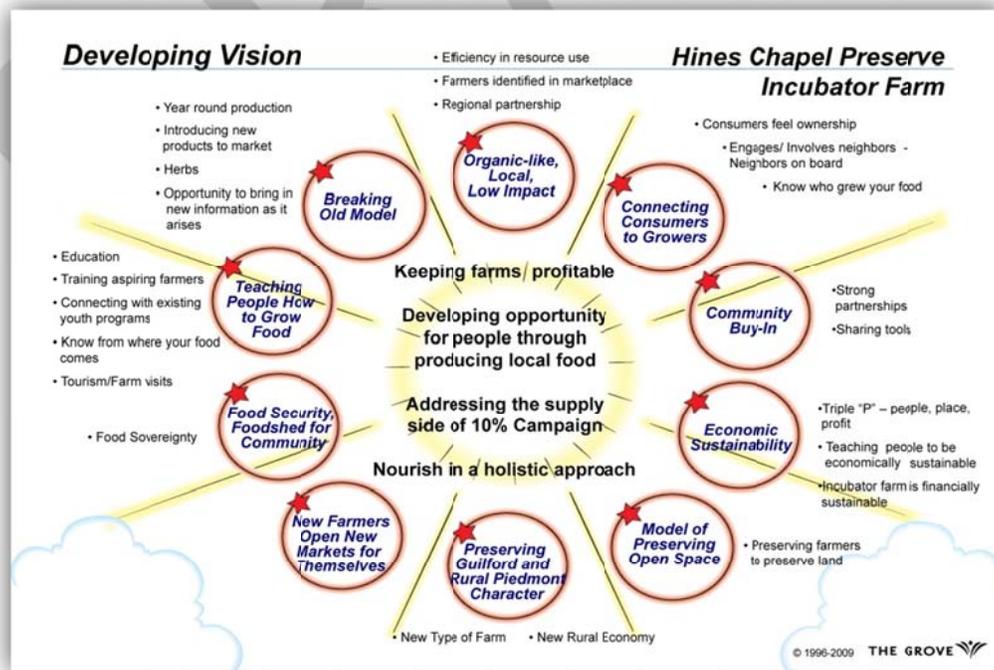
The mission for Hines Chapel Incubator Farm (HCIF) is *to establish a regional incubator farm for training in the arts, sciences, and business of growing and selling food and other agricultural products.* This mission was established in the early planning stages of the incubator's development and focuses on the establishment of a farm incubator as a resource to new and beginning farmers (clients) in the region. It is intentionally inclusive to any viable agricultural products in order to encourage product diversification and income diversification for clients.

## Vision & Goals

A kick-off meeting was held on September 13, 2012 (APPENDIX A) at Hines Chapel, located adjacent to the Hines Chapel Preserve. It was facilitated by the Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS) and Fountainworks through the CEFS *Bringing New Farmers to the Table*<sup>iii</sup> project. A group of 21 attendees was present including representatives from the community, Piedmont Conservation Council, the Center for Environmental Farming Systems, Elon University, local Soil & Water Conservation Districts, NC Agricultural & Technical State University, the Guilford County Open Space Committee, and more. The primary purpose of this meeting was to bring together stakeholders to establish the vision and objectives for the project as well as identify local resources that could be utilized. The secondary purpose of the kickoff meeting was to identify individuals with diverse skill sets and backgrounds who would be willing to commit to serving on a steering committee to conduct more detailed planning, maintain project momentum, and guide the development process, as well as to provide continued oversight once the incubator is established.

The following mandala (Figure 1) represents the vision themes identified that day, which have since been revised slightly by the project steering committee that was established in the kickoff meeting.

Figure 1



As shown in Figure 1, the primary vision themes of the incubator development project are:

- i. Keeping farms profitable
- ii. Developing opportunity for people through producing local food
- iii. Addressing the supply side of the 10% Campaign
- iv. Nourish in a holistic approach

Additional sub-themes were adopted such as breaking the “old model” of agriculture, providing a model of preserving open space, preserving the rural character of the region, developing community buy-in, fostering economic sustainability, etc. Another visioning characteristic of note which was not included as part of the adopted vision but remains critical to the incubator’s development and implementation is to focus the intensified *training* on beginning farmers who do not have the resources for an initial land purchase, while incorporating components of *education* that could be available to the broader farming community or to the general public. This strategy is intended to develop and maintain a stronger community connection for the incubator and emphasize the need for education and outreach on both the supply side and demand side of local food. One core component of the intended consumer education is to define “local” as regional rather than allowing it to be defined impractically by county boundaries.

The kickoff meeting in 2012 also served to establish goals & objectives for the incubator upon development. The following goals were established as necessary to achieve in a 3-5 year timeframe:

- i. New farmers are growing on the land at Hines Chapel Preserve
- ii. Provide a professional training program for new farmers
- iii. Enable new farmers to sell food/agricultural products in the region

The planning group expanded on the incubator’s goals by establishing the following 5-7 year goals recognized as highly important in order to maintain programmatic credibility, client recruitment, stakeholder commitment, and financial viability:

- iv. Transition new farm businesses to independent farmland
- v. Establish a multi-use purpose to the farmland (e.g. potential research opportunities and/or sub-lease of additional fields)

### *Client Focus*

As they stand currently, the goals for HCIF are clearly intended to provide a suitable environment for facilitating the development of new farm businesses while maintaining opportunities for partners and the general public to participate in the site's activities whether they are educational, recreational, or research-related. Since the property is a publicly-owned land there must be a clear intention to provide a public resource within reason, and to maintain positive relations with the local communities and larger stakeholder group.

The primary client focus for this project is beginning farmers in the Piedmont Triad with the intent to develop a new farm or food-related business. Primarily the focus will be on Guilford, Alamance, and Rockingham counties as stakeholders from those locations have been the driving factor behind this project's development, but in order to answer the demand for both local food consumption and beginning farmer assistance, we will encourage clients to participate in neighboring counties as long as they are willing to mitigate any geographical limitations. A critical point to address in identifying clients will be assessing the likelihood of their success given the resources provided. This will partially be done in an evaluation process that focuses on their independent business plans but will also factor in their ability to obtain local housing and/or dedicate an appropriate amount of time on the incubator site. Early discussions and research of existing incubators indicates that a key to success is to provide on-site housing or convenient local accommodations. Many incubator clients will have full-time or part-time jobs outside their farming endeavor and time spent at the incubator is a serious consideration for new clients.

### *Services Provided*

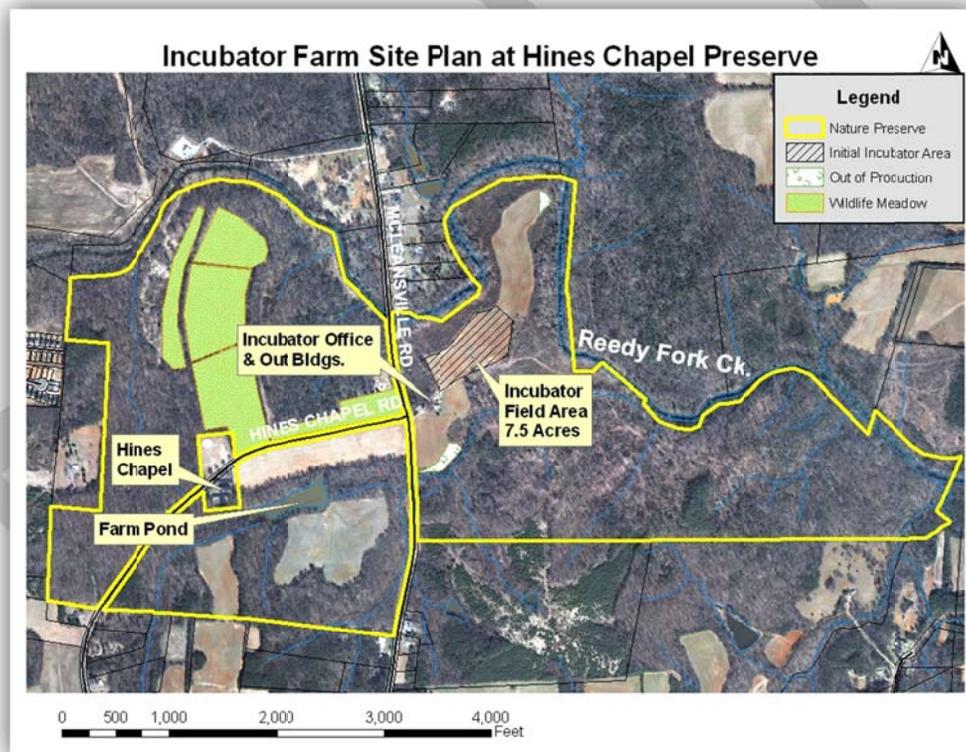
There are many layers to the services provided at any incubator. Access to land for growing agricultural products is a unique component to farm incubators and is often the essential ingredient, although there are other considerations for success of the client. A pre-requisite to a successful farm incubator should be the successful completion of coursework or training relating to farm management and evaluation of a prospective client's business plan and crop plan. Once enrolled in the incubator, a client receives a plot of land appropriate to their stage of development (e.g. ¼ acre of cropland for beginning farmer), access to technical assistance from experienced farmers, business professionals, or agricultural educators, access to infrastructure and equipment, and resources to assist in ultimate transition to independently owned or leased property. Services offered will also encompass market access assistance, business plan review, financial management training, and many more components of running a successful farm business. A combination of

resource development by Piedmont Conservation Council and partnerships for providing services will ideally meet these service needs. More details about the services provided by Piedmont Conservation Council and members of the HCIF Steering Committee can be found in the [Responsibility](#) section on page 21 of this document.

### *Location and Site Information*

The 450 acre county-owned Hines Chapel Preserve is managed by the Guilford County Open Space Program and is located around the vicinity of McLeansville Road and Hines Chapel Road in McLeansville. It was purchased in 2009 and is predominantly forested with about 80 acres of agricultural fields.

Figure 2



The farm is approximately 10 miles northeast of downtown Greensboro, NC. It is located within 5 miles of US Route 29 and US Route 70, and just 7 miles to Interstate 40/85, allowing relatively quick and convenient access to a number of neighboring cities to maximize client opportunities for marketing farm-grown products (examples below).

<b><u>Nearby Cities/Towns (County)</u></b>	<b><u>Distance / Direction</u></b>
Greensboro, NC (Guilford)	10 miles SW
Reidsville, NC (Rockingham)	15 miles N
Burlington, NC (Alamance)	17 miles SE
Hillsborough, NC (Orange)	35 miles SE
Asheboro, NC (Randolph)	37 miles S
Winston Salem, NC (Forsyth)	38 miles SW

A vacant farmhouse currently sits on the property at the entrance of the proposed incubator site. This two-story farmhouse is in need of repair, and early estimates have valued the improvements needed at approximately \$25,000. More investigation will need to be done prior to finalizing plans for renovation; however discussions have so far resulted in a preliminary decision to pursue retrofitting the residence into an office space for the incubator with two rentable apartments for incubator clients or a caretaker.

The proposed site for the incubator fields were formerly in agricultural production but have remained dormant for approximately 2 production seasons. Soil tests were conducted in-kind by Rockingham County Soil & Water Conservation District determining that the soils onsite are suitable for further agricultural production with minor soil amendments needed (SEE APPENDIX B). The former agricultural production onsite was conventional but no inputs have been added in approximately two years. The land is suitable for transitioning into organic production within the next 1-2 years. Early planning discussions regarding production philosophy and methods have leaned toward a preference for “organic-like” production, meaning that inputs and production methods used would likely be compliant with organic certification standards except in extraordinary circumstances. A final decision on production philosophy for the site will be made once an adequate pool of incubator clients is clearly identified and their production preferences and business practices are known. Until that point, efforts are being made to maintain the option to transition the incubator production area into organic certification if it best meets the needs of the client base.

### *Ownership and Organizational Structure*

The Hines Chapel Preserve is owned by Guilford County and managed by the Open Space Program. The county established the Open Space Program in 2000 to preserve the county’s water quality,

preserve wildlife habitats, and protect natural areas.<sup>iv</sup> With the recommendation of the Guilford County Open Space Committee and the Guilford County Parks & Recreation Commission, Piedmont Conservation Council was given permission by the Guilford County Board of Commissioners in January 2014 to enter into a lease on the Hines Chapel Preserve to develop and maintain a farm incubator.

Piedmont Conservation Council (PCC) will be the managing entity for this incubator. PCC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with the mission to leverage people and resources for innovative projects that promote conservation and sustainable communities. The organization has been in existence since its establishment in 1967 as part of the US Department of Agriculture's Resource Conservation & Development Program (RC&D). The RC&D Program was defunded by Congress in 2011, but PCC remains an active, independent nonprofit organization carrying out natural resource conservation and community development projects across a 10 county area in the upper central Piedmont region of North Carolina.<sup>v</sup>

PCC is governed by a Council of members representing each of its 10 counties. Representatives of that Council are involved at the ground level of each project providing oversight and reporting to the Council's Executive Committee. In this case, several of PCC's Council members actively participate on the steering committee for HCIF established shortly after the September 2012 kickoff meeting. The HCIF Steering Committee currently serves in an advisory capacity for the development and organization of the farm incubator. The farm incubator will serve as a project of PCC and the HCIF Steering Committee will continue to act in an advisory capacity with financial and managerial oversight provided by the Executive Committee of PCC.

## **Key Planning Assumptions**

### *Size of Market*

When considering the size of the market for this incubator it must be clarified that there are two primary markets being evaluated: (1) The market of beginning farmers or potential incubator clients, (2) The markets for the products produced by the incubator clients. The purpose of analyzing both markets is simple: the incubator needs successful clients in order to operate effectively and maintain credibility, and the clients need outlets for the products in order to be successful.

The market for incubator clients in North Carolina's Piedmont region is based on the assumptions that beginning farmers need support to access capital and they need to receive adequate training to adapt to the changing landscape of food production and the evolving markets for their products. This assumption is backed up by many national statistics that state that the number of beginning farms and ranches has been on the decline for two decades<sup>vi</sup> and that beginning farmers consistently report that their biggest challenge is access to land and capital as well as healthcare.<sup>vii</sup> These national trends are also true for North Carolina as was noted in the aforementioned *2020 Guilford County Farmland Protection Plan: Preserving the Agricultural Economy* (June 2011). As our Marketing Strategy will demonstrate, this need for services is high in the Piedmont and supported by an increasingly growing demand for locally grown products.

### *Surveying and Client Recruitment Limitations*

In developing this plan, and in general planning activities for this incubator, the primary limitation has been inability to lay out a confident and complete schedule of startup activities. This limitation was due largely to the fact that prior to the Guilford County Board of Commissioner's vote of approval in January 2014 there was uncertainty about the potential location of this incubator. This had an impact on many levels, including the geographic area served which lead to questions about proximity to adequate housing for incubator clients, partnership potential for property maintenance services, and access to markets. Until a location was known with certainty, the viability and likelihood of the incubator was in question. This led to many potential incubator clients having uncertainty about devoting time to surveys and interviews, as many of them were taking steps to start their own businesses and may or may not be in a position to participate when and if the incubator became functional. That limitation being known, there are many potential pools of incubator clients in the Triad who may show more willingness to participate now that a lease is being secured, funding is being actively sought, and an incubator start-date is more easily anticipated.

### *Competition*

A common challenge for incubator farms is the perception of unfair competition being created for existing farmers. In the early planning stages of the Hines Chapel Incubator Farm there were rumors of local farmer complaints about the potential for "subsidized" farmers to take business away from them utilizing an unfair advantage. This issue has been so common that the National Incubator Farm Training Initiative (NIFTI) included a passage about it in the *The Farm Incubator Toolkit: Growing the Next Generation of Farmers*, including strategies for avoiding conflict and

dealing with misperception. Piedmont Conservation Council and the HCIF Steering Committee took the proactive approach and invited a handful of prominent farmers in the McLeansville area to voice their concerns and learn more about the project first-hand. The meeting was held at the Barn Kitchen at the Guilford County Agricultural Center on October 15, 2013 and five local farmers attended. There were certainly some concerns but overall the group felt that these new farmers growing such small plots would pose no immediate threat to their businesses. More concern was expressed over the possibility that too many hurdles would be removed for the incubator farmers and it would unfairly allow them to develop inaccurate expectations when getting into such a difficult business. Despite the positive results of the meeting, we anticipate that the issue of unfair competition from “subsidized” incubator farmers will continue to come up and our planning will incorporate strategies for educating the community about the realities of the incubator, offering training opportunities relevant to existing farmers, and creating a level playing field for all producers.

## Marketing Strategy

### *Market Analysis*

The success of the business incubator is reliant on an adequate pool of aspiring farmers, but more important is the talent of that pool. The first key market to evaluate in planning for this incubator is the market for potential clients, or incubator farmers. Programs have emerged all over the state to provide the initial training and education to meet the demands of beginning farmers. The recently concluded Bringing New Farmers to the Table project is a great example.<sup>viii</sup> The project was a collaboration of the Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS), National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT), Carolina Farm Stewardship Association (CFSA), and North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service. It was funded by the USDA-NIFA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program.<sup>ix</sup> Piedmont Conservation Council received a technical assistance grant through the incubator farm component of this project that helped in the early planning stages of the Hines Chapel Incubator Farm.<sup>x</sup> The premise of that project component was that investment in the next generation of farmers makes good economic sense and that incubator farms are a viable method to make that investment if properly developed and implemented.<sup>xi</sup>

Other emerging programs offering education and training to beginning farmers in the Piedmont include the Chatham County Community College’s (CCCC) Sustainable Agriculture Program which

was developed in 2002 in partnership with the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service and CFSA. According to Robin Kohanowich of CCCC, the program consistently had an average of 50 students per year from 2002 - 2008, and since 2008 has averaged about 75 students per year.<sup>xii</sup>

*“Are there unmet business assistance needs in the area, and are existing sources [of assistance] willing to cooperate with the incubator and not consider it to be competition?”*

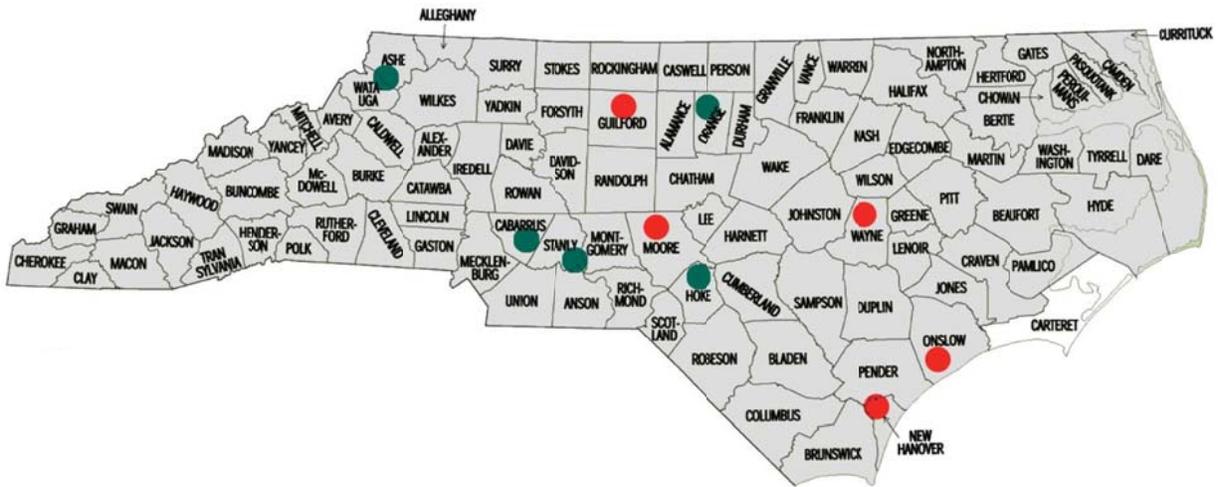
*-Jim Greenwood, President of Greenwood Consulting Group<sup>xiii</sup>*

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Other programs have also emerged at Elon University, Guilford College, North Carolina State University, and North Carolina A&T State University to satisfy the demand of potential local growers. These schools all have developed farm sites that provide training and demonstration which has increased the knowledge and capability of potential local growers. After having completed such programs, potential growers are armed with many of the tools needed to start a business, but are then faced with many of the hurdles already outlined such as access to land and capital. **That is where incubator farms in general fit into the equation**, allowing these potential business owners to gradually start their businesses and develop branding and marketing relationships with reduced risk, until they have reached the point of readiness to obtain loans and move forward with business expansion on their own rented or owned land.

With so many sources of local education, there is a large pool of potential incubator farmers who are looking to take the next step. That is where Hines Chapel Incubator Farm can play a vital role. Location is obviously a vital ingredient to success. Currently there are six existing incubator farms across North Carolina located in Carrabus County, New Hanover County, Watauga County, Onslow County, Orange County, and Hoke County. As Figure 2 shows, the Hines Chapel Incubator Farm in Guilford County is located in a prime position to attract new incubator clients without significant overlap with other incubator farms in existence.

Figure 3 - Courtesy of Bringing New Farmers to the Table



Another key feature of the HCIF's location is that it would be the only incubator farm within reasonable travel distance to markets in the Greensboro area. This leads to the second key market being evaluated: the market for products grown by incubator clients.

The *2013 Strolling of the Heifers Locavore Index* ranked North Carolina as 31<sup>st</sup> in the nation in terms of commitment to local food, which was a modest bump up from its 2012 ranking as 32<sup>nd</sup>, noting that North Carolina has 207 farmers' markets, 228 CSA's, and 13 food hubs.<sup>xiv</sup> The 2014 index is anticipated to have more thorough data from the updated 2012 Census of Agriculture and will be a better indicator. Regardless, there is an upward trend in the number of consumers who prefer local produce and that trend does apply to North Carolina. The 2010 CEFS guide *From Farm to Fork: A Guide to Building North Carolina's Sustainable Local Food Economy* references a statistic that 70% of consumers are willing to pay more for local food if it is available.<sup>xv</sup>

Besides capitalizing on demand for local food, a discussion has emerged in the course of HCIF planning as to what production philosophy would best serve the clientele. A majority of farm incubators that have emerged around the country have chosen to emphasize organic production to meet the needs of their clients and growing consumer demand. In early discussions with potential incubator clients for HCIF, there were mixed results although a majority preferred organic or biodynamic methods. Actual production philosophy for HCIF will be low-input and "organic-like" at a minimum; although the decision will be made whether or not to pursue organic certification once a preliminary group of applicants for the program are identified and surveyed.

In 2013 the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association released their *Organic Produce Marketing Survey* funded by the Specialty Crops Block Grant through the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. This survey resulted in a number of conclusions, including that organic produce is likely to continue to expand in mainstream grocery stores, and that locally grown produce was marketed as much or more than organic produce in many stores.<sup>xvi</sup>

The North Carolina 10 % Campaign is an effort to support the statewide initiative to develop a sustainable local food economy in North Carolina being promoted by the Center for Environmental Farming Systems, Goldenleaf Foundation, and NC Cooperative Extension Service. The 10% campaign is a program that recruits consumers, getting them to pledge to spend 10% of their food dollars locally. The campaign reports that since July 2010 there has been over \$58 million spent on local foods by individuals enrolled in the campaign's tracking system, which currently includes nearly 7,000 individuals and over 900 businesses.<sup>xvii</sup> This is only a snapshot of the local food economy in North Carolina, but it is a compelling argument that this is a lucrative market with room for growth. The campaign also has wholesalers getting involved. Lowe's Foods is an example, as they have committed to sourcing at least 20% of produce from growers with NC during the production season.<sup>xviii</sup>

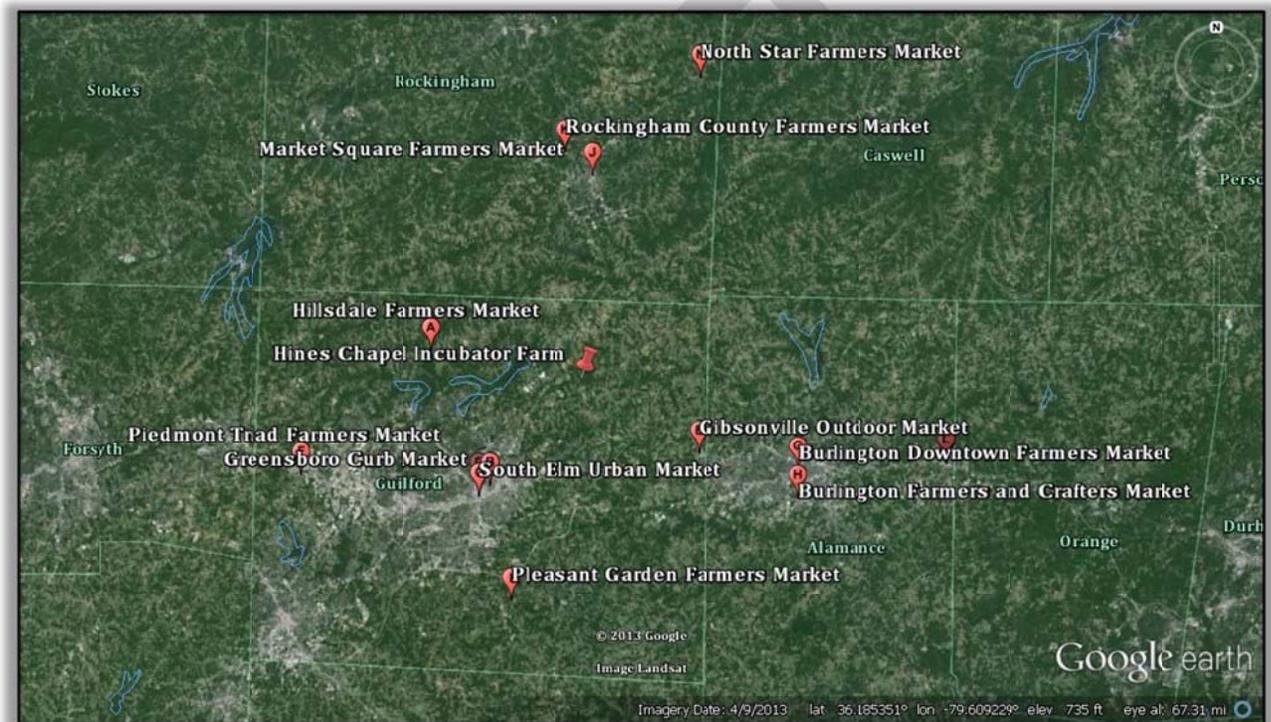
Hines Chapel Incubator Farm will embrace the strategy of promoting local growers and locally produced goods. This will be accompanied by creating an emphasis on the quality of goods and the individuals involved in the production process. Piedmont consumers will know that when they buy from HCIF clients, they are supporting a new, local business and that they have a stake in both the sourcing of their food as well as the economic development value that is added to their community through supporting these startups.

Early planning discussions have indicated that an on-site market may not be a possibility for HCIF growers, but we will still look for ways to bring consumers to the site for outreach, education, and recreational activities. As part of a county-owned nature preserve, hiking trails and public access are a high priority. In the future it is possible to embrace ideas such as community gardens or volunteerism to further the sense of involvement within the local community and to allow people to develop a sense of buy-in and belonging. This strategy will further the goals of consumer education and connectivity between farmers and consumers, which we believe will have a positive impact on the local food movement and market as a whole.

### *Proximity to Markets*

At least 14 farmers' markets are located within 25 miles of Hines Chapel Incubator Farm. Figure 4 (pictured below) shows their approximate locations. Access to these markets will depend on availability of vendor space and market rules. HCIF will attempt to coordinate collaborative opportunities to gain market space as needed. These will likely be a primary source of sales for the clients, although options such as Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA), wholesale distributors, and other opportunities within the community will be explored.

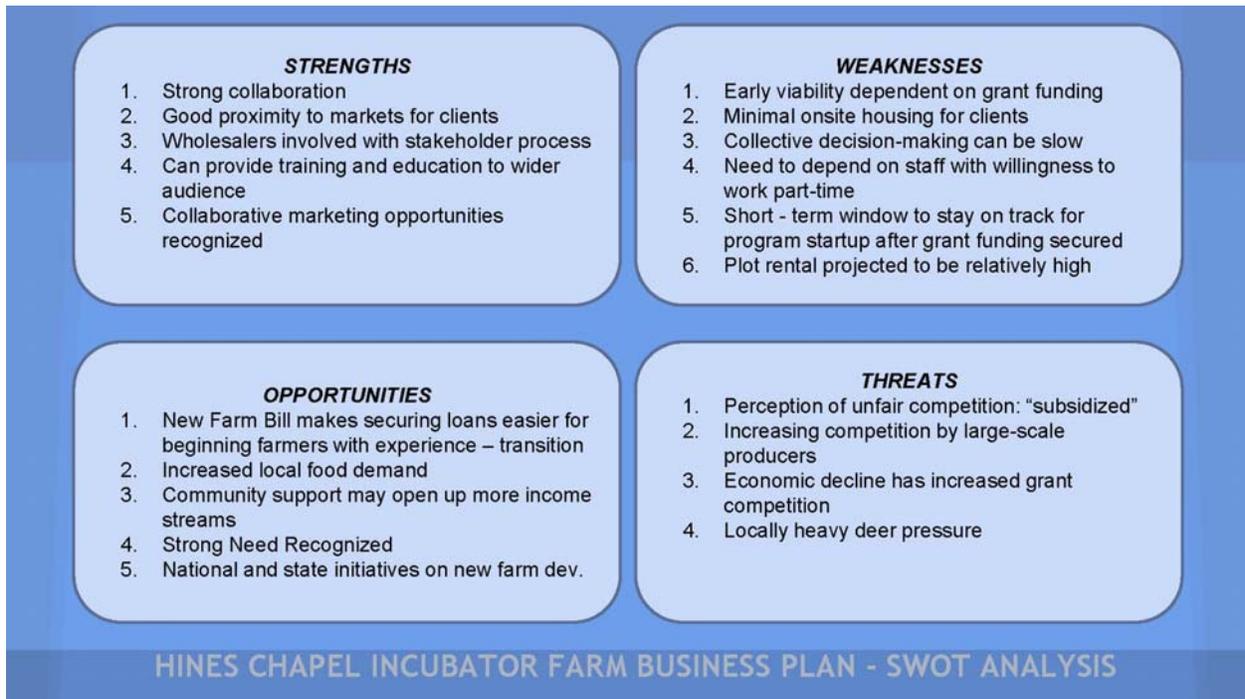
Figure 4



### *Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats*

The following SWOT Analysis outlines the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to the implementation of this plan. Internal factors are characterized through *Strengths* and *Weaknesses*, external factors through *Opportunities* and *Threats*.

Figure 5



### **Capitalizing on Strengths and Opportunities:**

The strong collaborations among partners in the planning process for this incubator have been noted, and we feel that we will be bringing the best possible resources to our clients by utilizing the best professionals in the Piedmont. The proximity to such great resources is also extended to local markets. Our clients will have a number of options for marketing their products, either independently or in a collaborative manner. Other strengths of our plan include a national and state emphasis on developing new farm businesses as the need for them has been recognized across a wide spectrum. Wholesalers have flocked to this cause recognizing the opportunity in local food sales with a growing market of consumers. Businesses such as Foster-Caviness and Lowe's Foods are already involved in early discussions with HCIF's Steering Committee and the NC 10% Campaign. With a strong outreach effort to the community we hope to further the cause of growing the market for local foods.

A recent development that strengthens our potential for ultimate client success is the passing of a new Farm Bill in 2014. Within the bill, there are provisions for continuing essential beginning farmer training initiatives and grant programs as well as implementing a microloan program that could benefit beginning or small-scale producers.<sup>xix</sup> Additionally, with increased exposure to the initiatives for beginning farmers, we hope to capitalize on the potential to get the community

involved in potential fundraising opportunities, on-site programming, and potentially to evaluate the possibility of creating a food hub<sup>xx</sup> to the benefit of the farming community as a whole.

#### **Addressing Weaknesses and Mitigating Threats:**

The primary source of startup funds for this venture will be grant funding. There are many sources available for such projects as noted in APPENDIX C but economic declines have taken a toll on government and foundation budgets, and competition is high. Piedmont Conservation Council has a solid track record for securing grant funding for high priority projects and the members of the HCIF Steering Committee include a number of experienced grant writers. We feel that the HCIF is equipped with the best personnel to secure these funds and that given local and national initiatives to promote local products and local economic development, there will be a high probability of success in funding this project. There are a number of upcoming grant deadlines and the staff at PCC has a solid start on preparation for proposal development to secure funds in a short timeframe.

The issue of on-site housing is a common weakness among incubators who cannot offer such accommodations. HCIF will pursue renovation of the existing farm house to provide some alternatives to clients with few housing options to ease this burden, however there will need to be an emphasis placed on candidates with existing local accommodations in order to ensure that they are able and willing to put in the necessary on-site work to grow their startup.

There is some risk in depending on part-time workers. Luckily, PCC will rely on a project manager that is also paid by other projects with the hope that they can provide services to the incubator part-time utilizing a full-time staff person or contractor. A part-time farm manager will also be recruited. We will seek an individual with other part-time work that will not interfere, which may be common among some local farmers who have scaled back production in recent years. An unfortunate reality is that many potential workers are underemployed in the current economy, and that is a symptom of recession that may work in favor of HCIF. Utilizing stipend-based mentors may also help to ease the workload for a part-time farm manager. We will budget a reasonable amount to pay a small number of interested local farmers for a few hours of technical assistance/mentoring each week during the production season. This added feature may also help diversify the advice and perspective given to clients and hopefully will add value to the experience.

The immediate area surrounding Hines Chapel Incubator Farm does include several other market growers with on-site sales. It is the goal of HCIF to assist in driving traffic to all local farm stands and to incorporate the larger community, including existing farmers, into the site's activities. Other

efforts will also be made to mitigate the threat of growing competition for existing farmers, including some strategies outlined in the *Farm Incubator Toolkit* developed by National Incubator Farm Training Initiative. The toolkit offers advice such as encouraging incubator farmers to develop realistic business plans that will not flood the market with products or undercut competitors' pricing, and educating the public on how introducing new farmers to the market allows supply and demand to grow and evolve together.<sup>xxi</sup> Allowing a perception to persist in the community that the incubator is breeding unfair competition for existing farmers would severely threaten the outcomes of this program, therefore these strategies will be implemented and any concerns will be taken seriously so that an environment of collaboration and growth can occur to the benefit of all farmers.

Although farming has become increasingly difficult for small scale producers who cannot compete with the scale of larger corporations, we feel that we are capitalizing on a niche market that is being promoted nationally and locally. There will always be a market for large-scale production's cheap goods, but there is security and local pride in buying local, and as we have noted, there are a growing number of consumers willing to pay higher costs to do so. The HCIF and its clients will have to adopt a flexible and evolving mindset to adapt to market situations, and we feel that the close mentorship and guidance provided through incubation will help.

Two more threats to this endeavor are somewhat related: high land rental fees and extraordinary deer pressure. We will take measures to install premium deer fence to secure the client plots, which will add value to the incubator's services and serve to mitigate threats of crop damage. This should be seen as a value-added service that will hopefully justify higher rental fees. We hope to find that high demand for plots will also help to keep rental fees in the upper tier among incubators nationally. To ease the cost of plot rental, we will make an effort to keep costs for other services and products minimal.

## **Management**

### *Management Structure*

The ultimate governance of the Hines Chapel Incubator Farm will be the executive board of the Piedmont Conservation Council. Budgets, grant proposals, financial statements, and staffing will all be approved by PCC's executive board at their monthly meetings. These elements of management will be brought before the executive board as recommendations from the HCIF Steering Committee which will continue to meet regularly and provide general oversight for the incubator and site

activities. The Guilford County Open Space Program will act as primary liaison between the management of the incubator and the owner (Guilford County). Open Space will provide guidance on operating within the parameters of the lease developed between Piedmont Conservation Council and Guilford County and will be the first point of contact to resolve any issues that arise.

Day-to-day management of the site will be provided by a farm manager who will be hired upon funding availability, anticipated to occur by fall 2014 in preparation for a launch in spring 2014. PCC Project Manager will provide general administrative support and oversight to the farm manager and lead the coordination of the incubator farm launch and partnership development.

### *Management Qualifications*

Piedmont Conservation Council has been in existence since the late 1960's and has an extensive track record for grassroots project management and solicitation and management of grant funding. The most recent audit of PCC's financial management processes was performed in 2013 with excellent results (APPENDIX D). The HCIF Steering Committee is made up of a variety of agricultural educators, conservationists, and business managers representing some of the key players of agricultural and conservation education and management in the Piedmont. PCC's current project manager is an experienced beginning farmer training provider and grant manager who has been responsible for the development and implementation of approximately \$10 million in programming for agricultural demonstration, site development, and training. He has also been involved in the site development, launch, and day-to-day management of two certified organic training farms in Manatee County, FL. An experienced farmer will be sought for the role of farm manager to provide regular support to the site and clients.

### *Responsibility*

The responsibility of this incubator will be to provide a location for the training and development of new farm business owners. Plots will be provided for rent in ¼ acre increments for client use along with equipment and infrastructure necessary for the management of small-acreage crop production. This will include but is not limited to access to water and irrigation, electricity, deer fencing, and mentorship. Expectation management is a critical task that falls on the managing entity; therefore a set of guidelines for incubator clients must be established early and clearly communicated to all participants. It will be the responsibility of the Piedmont Conservation Council in conjunction with the HCIF Steering Committee to develop a client agreement which will include at a minimum the following:

- Land Tenant Contracts (including terms and conditions of plot rental and tenure)
- Incubator Fee Structure
- Shared Use Equipment and Infrastructure Agreement
- General Rules and Regulations of the Incubator (including fees and penalties)

Additional training will be provided by partners such as Elon University, North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, NC A&T State University, and other cooperators. An example of curriculum and technical assistance to be provided would include the following subject matter:

- Business Planning for your Small Farm
- Financial Management for Farm Operation
- Enterprise Budgeting
- Food Safety
- Production Planning
- Marketing
- Risk Management

These trainings will take form in a variety of ways, some more formal than others. These methods may include: classroom training, field days, mentorship, peer-to-peer training, access to online workshops, etc.

*“You’re not selling cheap rent; you’re selling value-added services. Can you gain access to capital, professional services, mentoring, and strategic alliances? Do you have the core components to support particular sectors?”*

*-Chuck Wolfe, Principal of Claggett Wolfe Associate<sup>xii</sup>*

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In addition to programming, training, and mentorship, the Hines Chapel Incubator Farm will have the following responsibilities regarding maintenance and access to the site and client relations:

- Maintenance of property, equipment, facilities
- Control weeds and other invasive species outside of client plots
- Maintenance of any fallow plots
- Assist in providing access to markets for clients
- Generating community participation and volunteerism
- Site security
- Serve as contact for utility providers as necessary
- Coordinate regular stakeholder meetings for governance and partnerships
- Coordinate regular client meetings to address any conflicts and/or needs

## Financial Strategy

The primary financial goal of the Hines Chapel Incubator Farm is to be revenue-neutral for the property owner, Guilford County, as a way to maintain a healthy long-term relationship and ensure tenure on the property. Additionally, we intend to utilize internal expertise in grant solicitation to raise startup funds, while establishing an operational budget separate from grant-related activities that will be fed by revenue streams generated by the incubator's fees and rental from the converted house on-site. The goal is to maintain a separation between grant activities and operational activities. While the two are related in a practical sense, operational funding is particularly difficult to solicit through grant sources, and the earlier the incubator can demand fees to cover operational costs, the earlier it can claim financial sustainability.

Figure 6 on the following page is a tentative operating budget for Year 1 (2015) and Year 2 (2016) of Hines Chapel Incubator Farm. It is accompanied by notes on fee structure and assumptions made for the purpose of preliminary budget development. This figure is purely based on non-grant funded activities and includes only fees that will be collected through rental and services and costs of maintenance, basic technical assistance, and administration.

Figure 7 on page 23 is the grant-funded programmatic and site development piece of the incubator. These estimates are based on preliminary estimates for services, equipment, and infrastructure as well as initial program launch. Figures 8 – 9 on pages 24 – 25 show the percentage of revenue from various sources, which is explained further on the subsequent pages.

Figure 6

**Annual Operating Budget (Projected)  
Hines Chapel Incubator Farm**

<b>GROSS INCOME:</b>	<b>Yr. 1</b>	<b>Yr. 2</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Land Tenant Fees	2,750.00	2,750.00	7.5 acres, 1/4 acre plots, \$550/acre
Residence Tenant Fee	4,800.00	4,800.00	Rent upstairs @ \$400/month
Technical Assistance Fees	3,000.00	3,000.00	Avg. \$200/season/farmer
Post-harvest Cooler Fees	2,100.00	2,100.00	Avg. \$175/season/farmer
Equipment use Fees	2,400.00	2,400.00	Avg. \$200/season/farmer

**TOTAL GROSS INCOME:** 15,050.00 15,050.00

<b>EXPENSES:</b>	<b>Yr. 1</b>	<b>Yr. 2</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Utilities	5,000.00	5,000.00	Subject to change based on demand
Insurance	1,500.00	1,600.00	General liability on site; clients provide product liability
Contracted Maintenance/tech. assistance	5,000.00	5,000.00	Compensation for only direct services and t/a
Office Supplies/Misc.	400.00	300.00	
Fuel	1,000.00	1,200.00	For small-engine equipment for the 7.5 acres
Bookkeeping	500.00	600.00	
Project Oversight/Development	1,500.00	1,200.00	

**TOTAL EXPENSES:** 14,900.00 14,900.00

**BALANCE:** 150.00 150.00

**ASSUMPTIONS**

1. Business model approach is least intensive.
  - a. Ops funding includes only general maintenance and basic-level t/a for tenants - all other advanced programming/marketing support is independently funded.
  - b. On-site office needs are minimal; preference is to use on-site residence for rental property.
  - c. Tenants pay fee for access of facilities and equipment, tenants authorized to use equipment with minimal supervision (will need to provide safety and maintenance course as pre-requisite.)
2. Site development costs will be independently funded.
3. Programming costs will be independently funded.
4. 6 acres rented per season, 1/4 acre plots, no discount for multiple plot rentals.
5. Maximum 80 % occupancy rate (of 7.5 acres) necessary for proper fallow periods.
6. Land Tenants must sign 1 yr. minimum lease, are responsible for off-season cover crop and maintenance of plots.
7. High-tunnel production and greenhouse uses will be delayed until expansion beyond 7.5 acres or available funding.
8. Needs for greenhouse germination to be met off-site and is responsibility of clients - will assist client through t/a in identifying opportunities.

Figure 7

**Startup Costs (Projected)**  
Hines Chapel Incubator Farm

EXPENSES	Yr. 1	Yr. 2	NOTES
Field Prep	2,000.00	1,500.00	Tillage and cover cropping
Other Custom Tractor Work	1,500.00	1,500.00	Mowing, other site maintenance if no partner opportunities exist
House Renovation	30,000.00	0.00	Subject to thorough evaluation
Water Source	8,000.00	0.00	Estimate for well digging and install
Irrigation Installation	6,500.00	500.00	7.5 acres drip irrigation, pumps and filters, separate valves for plots
Deer Fencing	10,000.00	0.00	Assuming high-tension woven wire, 7'-10' for 7.5 acres
Storage	10,000.00	0.00	Shed/storage facility to store equipment, inputs
Electrical Supply	9,000.00	0.00	Meter install and service: Initial expense
Cold Storage	4,000.00	0.00	Storage container w/ CoolBot
Vehicle	10,000.00	0.00	Used truck for site activities
Equipment	5,000.00	500.00	Walk-Behind tractor & implements, hand tools
Office Equipment	3,000.00	1,000.00	1st floor house, office setup
Office Supplies/Training Materials	1,000.00	1,000.00	Supplies for programming/non-ops
Meetings	1,000.00	500.00	Food and seating for hosting mtgs
Staffing (Contract)			
P/T Project Manager	15,000.00	15,000.00	Pay PCC PM part-time for grant mgmt, program dev.
P/T Farm Manager	25,000.00	25,000.00	Onsite Mgr. not including housing considerations
Stipends for Mentors or T/A	2,000.00	2,000.00	P/T stipends for local farmers providing t/a, commit to # hours/yr.
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES:</b>	<b>\$143,000.00</b>	<b>\$48,500.00</b>	

Figure 8

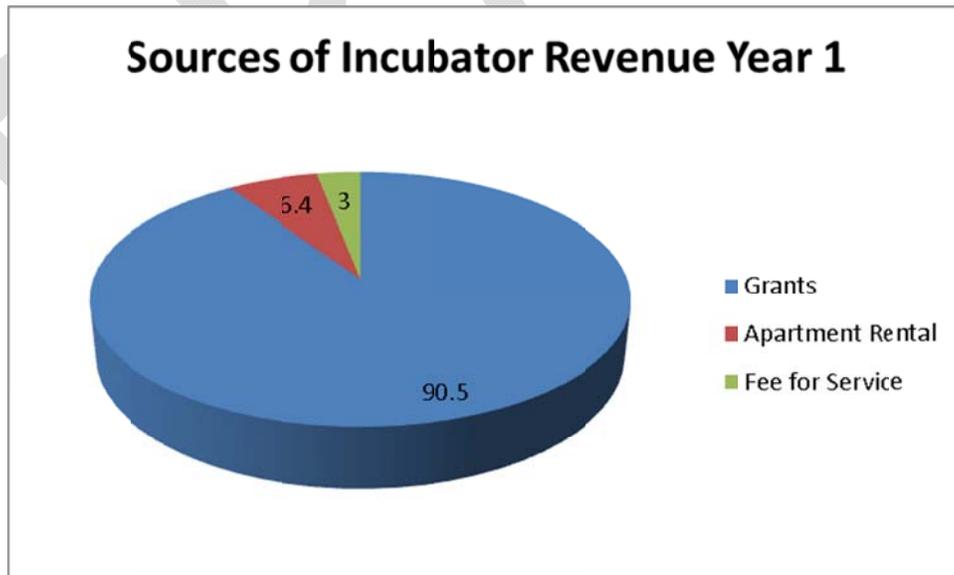
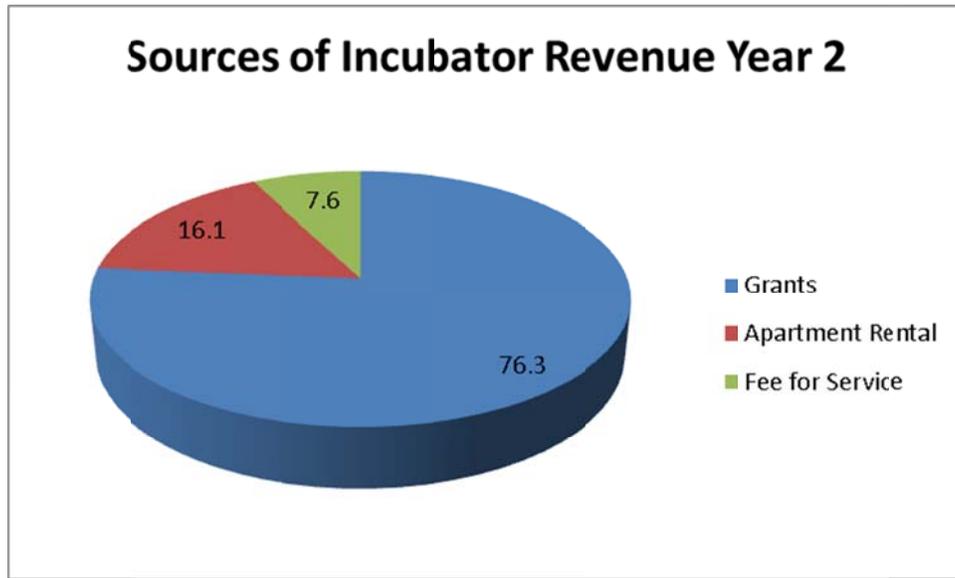


Figure 9



As Figures 9 - 10 show, a majority of the revenue generated for the incubator will come from grant sources in the first two years. This is largely due to the need to seek grant funding for developing infrastructure, procuring equipment, and securing salaries for site personnel. It is estimated that by years 3 - 4 of the program the incubator will need grant income exclusively for program staff time, formal training and demonstration, or other ventures not yet identified. Our goal is to bring down the grant portion of percentage of overall revenue to less than 50% by that time and hopefully continue that decline in future years. Alternative income may need to be developed for long-term maintenance and replacement of site equipment and infrastructure.

We estimate that a diverse pool of income sources will be needed for operation in future years. The income derived from program and service fees as well as apartment rental will continue to support a bare minimum of site activities, but advanced programming for intensive training will perpetually depend on some level of grant funding. Our hopes are that a significant amount of human resources needed for formal trainings can be secured as in-kind contributions through local agricultural education entities. Future income opportunities may include community gardens, training or education for the general public, recreational activities, development of a food hub operation, hosted fundraisers, crowd-sourcing, sponsorships, or individual donor cultivation. Specific sources of income will be tailored to the funding needs they will fulfill.

Other opportunities for income may include the leasing of adjacent tracts within the Hines Chapel Preserve to 3<sup>rd</sup> party farmers for row-crop or forage production. There are roughly 30 acres of unused crop fields on the property that could be subleased from PCC to area farmers to bring in additional income to the property. However, there is also strong interest in maintaining those fields as wildlife habitat which could also provide beneficial conservation outcomes for the property as well as potential outreach and education opportunities for HCIF.

DRAFT

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- <sup>i</sup> <http://www.ncagr.gov/stats/census/highlights.htm>.
- <sup>ii</sup> <http://www.piedmontconservation.org/caswellfpp>.
- <sup>iii</sup> <http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu/whatwedo/foodsystems/incubatorfarmproject.html>.
- <sup>iv</sup> <http://countyweb.co.guilford.nc.us/open-space-program>
- <sup>v</sup> <http://www.piedmontconservation.org>
- <sup>vi</sup> United States Department of Agriculture. Economic Research Service. *Beginning Farmers and Ranchers at a Glance: 2013 Edition*. Economic Brief Number 22. January 2013.
- <sup>vii</sup> Shute, Lindsay Lusher. *Building a Future with Farmers: Challenges Faced by Young, American Farmers and a National Strategy to Help Them Succeed*, Tivoli, NY: National Young Farmers Coalition, November 2011.
- <sup>viii</sup> <http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu/whatwedo/foodsystems/beginningfarmers.html>
- <sup>ix</sup> Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, National Institute of Food and Agriculture, US Department of Agriculture, grant #2010-49400-21733.
- <sup>x</sup> <http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu/whatwedo/foodsystems/projectpartners.html>
- <sup>xi</sup> <http://www.cefs.ncsu.edu/whatwedo/foodsystems/incubatorfarmproject.html>
- <sup>xii</sup> Robin Kohanowich, personal communication, February 27, 2014.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Erlewine, Meredith and Ellen Gerl. *A Comprehensive Guide to Business Incubation*. 2nd ed. Athens, Ohio: NBIA Publications, 2004.
- <sup>xiv</sup> <http://www.strollingoftheheifers.com/locavore-index-2013/>
- <sup>xv</sup> Curtis, Jennifer, et. al. April 2010. *From Farm to Fork: A Guide to Building North Carolina's Sustainable Local Food Economy*, a Center for Environmental Farming Systems report, Raleigh, N.C.
- <sup>xvi</sup> Carolina Farm Stewardship Association. (2013). *Organic Produce Marketing Survey: 2013*.
- <sup>xvii</sup> <http://www.ncsu.edu/project/nc10percent/index.php>
- <sup>xviii</sup> <http://www.lowesfoods.com/index.cfm/community/locally-grown/>
- <sup>xix</sup> <http://sustainableagriculture.net/blog/2014-farm-bill-outcomes/#BFR>
- <sup>xx</sup> For more information on Food Hubs and their role in growing the local food economy please refer to the National Good Food Network's Food Hub Resources Page. <http://ngfn.org/resources/food-hubs/food-hubs>.
- <sup>xxi</sup> Winther, et. al. 2013. *The Farm Incubator Toolkit: Growing the Next Generation of Farmers*, Developed by the National Incubator Farm Training Initiative.
- <sup>xxii</sup> Erlewine, Meredith and Ellen Gerl. *A Comprehensive Guide to Business Incubation*. 2nd ed. Athens, Ohio: NBIA Publications, 2004.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **September 13, 2012 Hines Chapel Incubator Farm and Feasibility Study: Kickoff Meeting Summary**

# Hines Chapel Preserve Incubator Farm and Feasibility Study

## Meeting Summary Kick-Off September 13, 2012

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### Purpose

Representatives of the Guilford County, Rockingham County and Alamance County communities and the Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS) met on September 13<sup>th</sup> at Hines Chapel in Guilford County to kick off the Hines Chapel Preserve Incubator Farm Project and Feasibility Study. The goal for the day's meeting was to assist the group in clarifying their vision and objectives for the project as well as to begin brainstorming on community resources that might assist in the success of the project.

### Attendees

Jacob Leech, Project Manager, Piedmont Conservation Council (PCC)  
Torry Nergart, Guilford County resident, Beginning Farmer  
John Beck, Project Coordinator, NC A&T State University  
Andrew Branan, Branan Law Firm  
Kevin Moore, Rockingham County Soil and Water Conservation District  
Alex Ashton, Guilford County Open Space Coordinator / PCC Board of Directors  
Dick Feulner, Guilford County Open Space Committee  
Anne Hice, Guilford County Open Space Committee, Century farm owner in Guilford County  
Janet MacFall, Elon University, PCC Board Member  
Steve Moore, Elon University  
Jamey Walker, Guilford County Soil and Water Conservation District  
Phil Ross, District Administrator, Alamance County Soil and Water Conservation District  
Sandra Wietzel, Area Coordinator, Soil and Water Conservation District  
Millie Langley, Guilford County Soil and Water Conservation District, Farmland Preservation Work Group  
Jerry Dorsett, retired from DENR, currently with Elon University  
Leon Moses, NCA&TSU Farm Superintendent  
John O'Sullivan, NCA&TSU, School of Agriculture  
John Marks, Pastor, Hines Chapel  
Jason Patterson, Neighbor to Hines Chapel Preserve  
Joanna Lelekacs, CEFS  
Warren Miller, CEFS/Fountainworks

## Project Orientation

Jacob Leech opened the meeting with a visit to the incubator farm site, just out back of the meeting room.



## Project Vision

After introductions and a presentation by Joanna Lelekacs on other incubator farms around the state and country, Warren Miller guided the group through a visioning process. Each person was asked to envision what the Incubator Farm looks and acts like in ten years. The ideas were recorded in the notes and on a graphic below.

### Individual visions:

- 'For future generations.' This is all about health.
- 'It's all about health.'
- 'In the flow.' NPR was talking about experiencing life in a groove or in excited states. The incubator farm will enable people to pursue a vocation in life that will give them that experience.
- 'Teamwork going forward.' This is going to take people working together.
- 'Next generation.' Will there be opportunities for keeping the farm in the family?
- 'Next generation.' Dramatic subdivision of land puts a damper on farming, particularly in areas with high land prices.
- 'More of a good thing.' Feeding America.
- 'Time to move to the big farm.' We'll be moving farmers from the incubator farm to 'the real thing.'
- 'Knowledge for future survival.' Food!
- 'Restaurants – Fresh Foods Variety.' Provide for small restaurants – supplying local businesses with local food.
- 'Diverse products.' "The only way to be successful as a small farmer is to have diverse products throughout the seasons... and end monoculture."
- 'Network of others going through similar hurdles.'
- 'The green space to get you growing and going.'
- 'Small farming, sustainable farming.' "Food has to be a community affair, grown by the community, eaten by the community and supported by the community through its businesses." Small farming, sustainable farming, transparency so farmers can get to know people who eat their food.

- “Bright and innovative. Drawing others nigh.”
- ‘Abundant life.’ “We have to have farms to have an abundant life.”
- ‘Food variety.’

**VISION THEMES identified:**

This incubator farm will be a place that is connecting the consumers to the growers, the government is on board, it is sustainable, preserving the rural character, providing a new rural economy. New farmers are opening new markets for themselves and introducing new products to the market and year round.



“[The incubator farm] will be connecting consumers to the growers –creating a community through food.”

“You know who grew your turkey.”

“[The incubator farm] weaves itself into the network of the community.”

“[The incubator farm] does not compete with [neighbor farmers], but collaborates with them.”

“Model of preserving open space.”

“[We are] visioning a new rural economy.”

**PURPOSE STATEMENT - The fundamental reason this farm exists:**

*Opportunity* – Developing opportunity for people through local food on the supply side and the demand side. Keeping in mind this is a regional project, so that can help define ‘local’.

*NOURISH* (holistic – mind, economy, land, community) - ‘Corporate agriculture sometimes seems to have an adversarial relationship with the people they are trying to feed.’

*Keeping ‘the farm’ profitable* – ‘Farms won’t be sold if they can continue to be profitable.’

**Project Objective**

After the visioning, Jacob presented a working objective for the project: ***To set up an incubator farm to train beginning farmers in the business of growing and selling fruits and vegetables; initiating in early 2014.*** The participants had some suggested changes to the mission, mostly around broadening the product base to food and other agricultural products:

**To set up a regional incubator farm for training in the arts, sciences and business of growing and selling food and other agricultural products, initiating in early 2014.**

Project partners are planning to start preparing the land for new farmers to begin in 2014. It will be held organic so as not to preclude certification as an option.



*Additional Comments:*

- This could be retraining existing farmers, not just beginning farmers.
- Should lean toward ‘beginning’ since it is for folks that don’t have the land resource or finances to start on a piece of land.
- *Training* will be for educating aspiring farmers. *Education* can be focused on general public or others in addition to the primary purpose of training the new farmers.

*What is INSIDE the scope of this project? What will be a part of the project in early 2014?*

- Hosting professional training – an education program
  - Intensive / focused training workshops so folks are ready to hit the land
- People growing on the land at Hines Chapel Preserve
- Selling

*What is OUTSIDE the scope of this project for now, but may be part of the project in the future?*

- Research – between A&T farm, Elon farm, and this farm – powerful research tool. (longer term)
- Multi-use of the site

*Initial Tasks Identified:*

Deer fencing

Equipment

Recruitment

Funding

Media / Publicity

Decisions on what will be growing on the land

Irrigation

Build a marketing network

## Community Resources

Participants were asked to identify all the community resources that could help move the project forward. The ideas were grouped by **Natural Capital** – land resources for incubator farm and transition land when participants leave the incubator – with proximity to markets; **Financial Capital** – local philanthropic organizations or individuals who may have interest in this work; other funding resources (local, regional, national), income generators within an incubator farm context (e.g. marketing component); grant writers in the community; **Built Capital** – infrastructure – access to tractors, tools, hoop/green houses, e.g. in-kind donations or shared resources; institutional drivers – restaurants, school cafeterias, hospitals, bases; **Social/Cultural/Human Capital** - supportive non-profit, for profit and government organizations, interest groups, food advocates, and info communication networks; food culture with high value on local food; people with strong interest, influence, innovation or resources (e.g. farmer mentors, Soil and Water Conservation staff, Farm Credit) and **Political Capital** – People, organizations with strong interest, influence to assist the project.

## Natural Capital

- Legacy Agreements – Easements
- Tractor Supply (AA)
- Southern States (AA)
- Haw River State Park (AA)
- Compost – City of Greensboro (AH)
- Municipal Compost where feasible (KN)
- Outreach to Retiring Farmers for Land (KN)
- Cover Crop Seed – Elon University Center for Environment
- Natural Resources Conversation Service/Soil and Water Conservation District Staff for Soil System – Best Management Practices (JMOS)
- Natural Resources Conservation Service Equipment Money? (JMOS)

## **Built Capital**

- Neighbors w/Tractor and Equipment (AA)
- Tractor Dealership Demos, Building Demos
- Piedmont Local Foods Marketing + Forsyth
- Farm to School Program – North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services – Heather Barnes, Coordinator (SW)
- Equipment and Personnel from NCD and TSW Farm
- Orange County? Regional Food Processor, PFAP
- I have a sawmill – might could do some limited sawing/providing of dimension lumber (KN)

## **Financial Capital**

- Agriculture Development & Farmland Preservation – Grant for Infrastructure (JD)
- Blue Cross Blue Shield (JEB)
- Bryan Foundation (AA)
- Community Foundation of Greater Greensboro (AA)
- CEMALA Foundation in Greensboro (AA)
- Center for Environmental Farming System 10% Campaign (JMOS)
- Division of Soil and Water Conservation has grant writer on staff (SW)
- Golden Leaf
- Elon – Limited Financial Support
- Farm Bureau – (AA)
- Farm Bureau - Seed Money (JD)
- Grant Writing – Piedmont Conservation Council, Inc. (JL)
- Lucky 32 – Jay Pierce (JMOS)
- Retail Cooperations – Deep Roots Company Store (JMOS)
- Farm Bureau (PR)
- Church Organizations (PR)
- Farm Clubs (PR)
- State & Federal Grants (PR)
- Foundation for Soil and Water Conservation – Director Michelle Lovejoy (SW)
- NRCS CIG – Conservation Innovation Grant – Matt Flint, NRCS State Office (SW)
- NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and ADFPTF
- Reidsville Area Foundation
- Syngenta
- Tobacco Trust Fund

## **Social/Cultural/Human Capital**

- Elon Law – Pro Bono (SM)
- Include conventional agriculture in the conversation
- Rockingham Community College Small Business Center
- Slow Food (KN)
- Carolina Farm Stewardship Association

- SWCD Boards, Agriculture Advisory Boards (KN)
- Elon University Center for Environmental Studies
  1. Organizing Professional Training
  2. Student Help with Project Development and Assessment (JM & SRM)
- Elon School of Communications (SM)
- Established Farmers – Educate – “Why” Support
- Guilford County Cooperative Extension Director, Wick Wickliffe (JMOS)
- Hines Chapel (AA)
- Reedy Fork Ranch (AA)
- Piedmont Triad Farmers Market (KN)
- Hosting Training Workshops
- Local Churches
- Hines Chapel Baptist Church and Pastor (JMOS)
- Johnny’s Seeds or Fedco Seeds (SM)
- Local Farmers Clubs
- Future Farmers of America
- Surrounding Farmers/Neighbors (AA)
- Rockingham County Extension – Brenda Sutton (JMOS)

### Political Capital

- Commissioner Troxler is a Neighbor (JMOS)
- Bert Jones (KN)
- Representative Marcus Brandon (JL)

### Next Steps

- The community needs to be brought into the conversation.
- Need to bring some of the local conventional farmers to the table. Via Farm Bureau? The Grange?
- Stakeholder meeting on September 20.
- Feasibility Study – including needed resources
- Public meeting – maybe at the church – maybe in February
  - Wick Wickliffe will have a good mailing list in Guilford County
  - Alex has contacts from the last public meetings
  - Need to have more details, resources in place before bringing the public in.
  - May need to have meeting in the evening to get farmers there.
- Must go before Open Space Committee, Board of Commissioners, and Planning Committee – not sure when that falls on the timeline.  
Will require about 2 months to get on commissioners agenda from the time we give them a proposal.
- Who else should be invited to the Sept. 20 stakeholder meeting:  
Guilford and Alamance –
  - The Grange
  - Farm Bureau
  - Agriculture Advisory Board

Soil and Water Conservation District Board  
Cooperative Extension  
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association

- Would be good to have a list of where we think organizations could plug into the process.
- Informational presentation of what an incubator farm is before handing out a Work Breakdown at a stakeholder meeting
- Need a timeline with benchmarks
- Explore a couple of funding opportunities to keep Jacob paid by PCC.
- Letters of support or letters of intent from key people may bring more peace of mind to the Commissioners.
- Last thoughts:
  - “Great meeting.”*
  - “I always worry about money.”*
  - “Timeline.”*
  - “Momentum.”*
  - “If anyone wants an ongoing role, they need to submit that interest to Jacob.”*
  - “Set planning meetings, need to meet every 2-3 weeks.”*
  - “We can make reports to our other committees, e.g. VAD, etc.”*



## **APPENDIX B**

### **Hines Chapel Soil Report**



# Predictive Soil Report

Mehlich-3 Extraction

*Client:* Kevin Moore  
525 NC 65, Suite 100  
Reidsville, NC 27320

*Advisor:*

*County:* Rockingham

*Farm:*

[Links to Helpful Information](#)

Sampled: 04/18/2013    Received: 04/24/2013    Completed: 04/30/2013

<b>Sample ID:</b> BF1	<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b>Lime</b>	<b>Nutrients (lb/acre)</b>									<b>More Information</b> <a href="#">Note: 12</a>
	<b>Crop</b>	<b>(tons/acre)</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub></b>	<b>K<sub>2</sub>O</b>	<b>Mg</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>Mn</b>	<b>Zn</b>	<b>Cu</b>	<b>B</b>	
<b>Lime History:</b>	1 - Sud/Sorg Pas	0.5	140-180	80	70	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	2 -							\$pH				

**Test Results [units - W/V in g/cm<sup>3</sup>; CEC and Na in meq/100 cm<sup>3</sup>; NO<sub>3</sub>-N in mg/dm<sup>3</sup>]:** **Soil Class:** Mineral

HM%	W/V	CEC	BS%	Ac	pH	P-I	K-I	Ca%	Mg%	S-I	Mn-I	Mn-AI1	Mn-AI2	Zn-I	Zn-AI	Cu-I	Na	ESP	SS-I	NO <sub>3</sub> -N
0.46	1.05	7.9	82	1.4	5.7	25	61	53	25	38	735	458		159	159	137	0.1	1		

<b>Sample ID:</b> BF2	<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b>Lime</b>	<b>Nutrients (lb/acre)</b>									<b>More Information</b> <a href="#">Note: 12</a>
	<b>Crop</b>	<b>(tons/acre)</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub></b>	<b>K<sub>2</sub>O</b>	<b>Mg</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>Mn</b>	<b>Zn</b>	<b>Cu</b>	<b>B</b>	
<b>Lime History:</b>	1 - Sud/Sorg Pas	0.4	140-180	70	70	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	2 -							\$pH				

**Test Results [units - W/V in g/cm<sup>3</sup>; CEC and Na in meq/100 cm<sup>3</sup>; NO<sub>3</sub>-N in mg/dm<sup>3</sup>]:** **Soil Class:** Mineral

HM%	W/V	CEC	BS%	Ac	pH	P-I	K-I	Ca%	Mg%	S-I	Mn-I	Mn-AI1	Mn-AI2	Zn-I	Zn-AI	Cu-I	Na	ESP	SS-I	NO <sub>3</sub> -N
0.36	1.10	5.6	78	1.2	5.7	29	66	48	24	26	634	397		127	127	79	0.0			

<b>Sample ID:</b> BF3	<b>Recommendations:</b>	<b>Lime</b>	<b>Nutrients (lb/acre)</b>									<b>More Information</b> <a href="#">Note: 12</a>
	<b>Crop</b>	<b>(tons/acre)</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub></b>	<b>K<sub>2</sub>O</b>	<b>Mg</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>Mn</b>	<b>Zn</b>	<b>Cu</b>	<b>B</b>	
<b>Lime History:</b>	1 - Sud/Sorg Pas	0.7	140-180	70	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	2 -							\$pH				

**Test Results [units - W/V in g/cm<sup>3</sup>; CEC and Na in meq/100 cm<sup>3</sup>; NO<sub>3</sub>-N in mg/dm<sup>3</sup>]:** **Soil Class:** Mineral

HM%	W/V	CEC	BS%	Ac	pH	P-I	K-I	Ca%	Mg%	S-I	Mn-I	Mn-AI1	Mn-AI2	Zn-I	Zn-AI	Cu-I	Na	ESP	SS-I	NO <sub>3</sub> -N
0.41	1.09	7.7	78	1.7	5.6	29	101	50	21	34	1424	871		168	168	140	0.1	1		



Reprogramming of the laboratory-information-management system that makes this report possible is being funded through a grant from the North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission.

Thank you for using agronomic services to manage nutrients and safeguard environmental quality.

- Steve Troxler, Commissioner of Agriculture

**Understanding the Soil Report: explanation of measurements, abbreviations and units****Recommendations**Lime

If testing finds that soil pH is too low for the crop(s) indicated, a **lime recommendation** will be given in units of either ton/acre or lb/1000 sq ft. For best results, mix the lime into the top 6 to 8 inches of soil several months before planting. For no-till or established plantings where this is not possible, apply no more than 1 to 1.5 ton/acre (50 lb/1000 sq ft) at one time, even if the report recommends more. You can apply the rest in similar increments every six months until the full rate is applied. If MG is recommended and lime is needed, use dolomitic lime.

Fertilizer

Recommendations **for field crops or other large areas** are listed separately for each nutrient to be added (in units of lb/acre unless otherwise specified). Recommendations for N (and sometimes for B) are based on research/field studies for the crop being grown, not on soil test results. K-I and P-I values are based on test results and should be > 50. If they are not, follow the fertilizer recommendations given. If Mg is needed and no lime is recommended, 0-0-22 (11.5% Mg) is an excellent source; 175 to 250 lb per acre alone or in a fertilizer blend will usually satisfy crop needs, SS-I levels appear only on reports for greenhouse soil or problem samples.

Farmers and other commercial producers should pay special attention to **micronutrient levels**. If \$, pH\$, \$pH, C or Z notations appear on the soil report, refer to [\\$Note: Secondary Nutrients and Micronutrients](#). In general, homeowners do not need to be concerned about micronutrients. Various crop notes also address lime fertilizer needs; visit [ncagr.gov/agronomi/pubs.htm](http://ncagr.gov/agronomi/pubs.htm).

Recommendations **for small areas, such as home lawns/gardens**, are listed in units of lb/1000 sq ft . If you cannot find the exact fertilizer grade recommended on the report, visit [www.ncagr.gov/agronomi/obpart4.htm#fs](http://www.ncagr.gov/agronomi/obpart4.htm#fs) to find information that may help you choose a comparable alternate. For more information, read [A Homeowner's Guide to Fertilizer](#).

**Test Results**

The first seven values [soil class, HM%, W/V, CEC, BS%, Ac and pH] describe the soil and its degree of acidity. The remaining 16 [P-I, K-I, Ca%, Mg%, Mn-I, Mn-AI1, Mn-AI2, Zn-I, Zn-AI, Cu-I, S-I, SS-I, Na, ESP, SS-I, NO<sub>3</sub>-N (not routinely available)] indicate levels of plant nutrients or other fertility measurement. Visit [www.ncagr.gov/agronomi/uyrst.htm](http://www.ncagr.gov/agronomi/uyrst.htm) for more information.

**Report Abbreviations**

<b>Ac</b>	exchangeable acidity
<b>B</b>	boron
<b>BS%</b>	% CEC occupied by basic cations
<b>Ca%</b>	% CEC occupied by calcium
<b>CEC</b>	cation exchange capacity
<b>Cu-I</b>	copper index
<b>ESP</b>	exchangeable sodium percent
<b>HM%</b>	percent humic matter
<b>K-I</b>	potassium index
<b>K<sub>2</sub>O</b>	potash
<b>Mg%</b>	% CEC occupied by magnesium
<b>MIN</b>	mineral soil class
<b>Mn</b>	manganese
<b>Mn-AI1</b>	Mn-availability index for crop 1
<b>Mn-AI2</b>	Mn-availability index for crop 2
<b>Mn-I</b>	manganese index
<b>M-O</b>	mineral-organic soil class
<b>N</b>	nitrogen
<b>Na</b>	sodium
<b>NO<sub>3</sub>-N</b>	nitrate nitrogen
<b>ORG</b>	organic soil class
<b>pH</b>	current soil pH
<b>P-I</b>	phosphorus index
<b>P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub></b>	phosphate
<b>S-I</b>	sulfur index
<b>SS-I</b>	soluble salt index
<b>W/V</b>	weight per volume
<b>Zn-AI</b>	zinc availability index
<b>Zn-I</b>	zinc index

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Potential Funding Sources**

## Potential Funding Sources for Incubator Farms and/or Associated Marketing Programs

*Notes in parenthesis at the end of a funder option indicate an incubator farm that has received funding from this source.*

**Charitable arms of Banks in your local area** – check to see if local banks in your area have a charitable arm (e.g. Wells Fargo, Bank of America, etc.). For example, the [Bank of America Charitable Foundation](#) notes that they give more than \$7.9 billion to help develop and grow local non-profit organizations, including those that provide basic human services such as hunger relief {consider the community benefit component CEFS’ has asked our partners to include in their project design} and housing services.

**Wells Fargo Foundation** - [https://www.wellsfargo.com/about/charitable/nc\\_guidelines](https://www.wellsfargo.com/about/charitable/nc_guidelines)

Wells Fargo makes contributions in areas that we believe are important to the future of our nation's vitality and success. Our first priority is to support programs and organizations whose chief purpose is to benefit low- and moderate-income individuals and families. We look for projects that keep our communities strong, diverse, and vibrant. (ALBA)

**Ben and Jerry's Foundation, National Grassroots Grant Program** - <http://www.benandjerrysfoundation.org/>

Up to \$15,000 for a one-year period. Start with Letter of Intent.

Funds non-profit grass-roots community organizations w/budget of \$500K or less (not universities).

Funds grassroots, constituent-led organizations that are using community-organizing strategies to accomplish their goals and organizations that provide technical support and/or capacity-building resources to such groups.

**Cedar Tree Foundation** - <http://www.cedartreefound.org/apply.html>

Previous grants range from \$5k/yr to \$80k/year and some are multi-year. Start with Letter of Inquiry.

One focus area is Sustainable Agriculture. They ‘give particular consideration to proposals demonstrating strong elements of environmental justice and/or conservation.’

**Harry Chapin Foundation** - <http://www.harrychapinfoundation.org/>

The mission of the Harry Chapin Foundation is to support organizations that have demonstrated their ability to dramatically improve the lives and livelihood of people by helping them to become self-sufficient. Agricultural and Environmental Programs are an area of interest of the Harry Chapin Foundation.

**Community Foundations** could be explored, both local and regional.

**Clarence E. Heller Charitable Foundation - Environment and Health** -

[http://www.cehcf.org/env\\_health.html](http://www.cehcf.org/env_health.html); \$5,000 to \$600,000;

Letters of inquiry for the June 2013 funding cycle should be submitted by February 1, 2013.

To promote the long-term good health and viability of communities and regions

- by supporting programs to prevent harm to human health from toxic substances and other environmental hazards;
- by encouraging planning and development at the regional level, aimed at integrating economic and social goals with sound environmental policies; and
- by supporting initiatives for sustainability in agriculture and food systems.

**Farm Aid - <http://www.farmaid.org/>**

Farm Aid is focused on raising awareness and funds to strengthen family farm agriculture. Farm Aid has funded an incubator farm to research and evaluate creative alternative approaches to agricultural education and training to reach greater numbers of users.

**Heifer International - <http://www.heifer.org/>**

“Heifer International's mission is to work with communities to end hunger and poverty and care for the earth. By giving families a hand-up, not just a hand-out, we empower them to turn lives of hunger and poverty into self-reliance and hope.” (assisted in the development of a **microcredit loan program** at Grow NYC's New Farmer Development Project)

**National Rural Funders Collaborative - <http://nrfc.org/>**

NRFC has focused its grantmaking from 2007 – 2011 on strengthening rural asset-based economies and economic strategies employing a “connecting and catalytic” methodology – both 1) connecting or linking those economic alternatives and strategies to other asset-based approaches, to traditional and non-traditional/alternative forms of philanthropy, to networks for grassroots advocacy and policy change, and 2) catalyzing, accelerating and moving those efforts to scale through alignment with larger regional economic engines and with regional community-building sectors and institutions, e.g., colleges and institutions, health systems, financial institutions, etc. (ALBA holds a demonstration grant)

**New Belgium Brewing - <http://www.newbelgium.com/Community/local-grants.aspx>**

Environmental Stewardship Grants Program - The purpose of New Belgium's Environmental Stewardship Grants Program is to serve and connect with the communities where we sell our beers. We want to cultivate relationships and support those making an impact. Our goal is to improve the health of the planet and inspire others to joyously embrace sustainable choices.

**NC Department of Agriculture Specialty Crop Grant Program - <http://www.ncagr.gov/markets/scgrant/index.htm> (deadline in April for 2012)**

The purpose of this program is solely to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops in North Carolina. For purposes of the program, specialty crops are defined as fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits and nursery crops (including floriculture). Additionally, projects aimed at developing local and regional food systems and improving food access will be considered.

**NC Rural Economic Development Center, Inc., New Generation Initiative - <http://ncruralcenter.org/leadership-a-engagement/youth-initiative.html>**

Transforming North Carolina's rural communities through youth and young adult engagement. The Initiative “opens exciting new opportunities for rural young people and the communities they live in. Opportunities for young people to become engaged as community leaders ... to start businesses ... to train for skilled jobs in high-demand fields. Opportunities for communities to learn how to more fully involve youth and young adults in economic and civic life.”

**NC Value-Added Cost Share Program – <http://plantsforhumanhealth.ncsu.edu/extension/programs-resources/cost-share/>**

The North Carolina Value-Added Cost Share Program (NCVACS) offsets the costs to N.C. value-added producers and processors for equipment purchases that are directly related to the processing, packaging, handling and production of value-added agricultural products made with N.C.-grown agricultural crops.

NCVACS is funded by the N.C. Tobacco Trust Fund Commission and the N.C. Rural Economic Development Center through the Family Farm Innovation Fund. NCVACS is administered by the N.C. Cooperative Extension component of the Plants for Human Health Institute at the N.C. Research Campus in Kannapolis.

***Potential Funding Sources for Incubator Farms and/or Associated Marketing Programs***

*Developed by the Center for Environmental Farming Systems for the Bringing New Farmers to the Table project – [www.ncnewfarmers.org](http://www.ncnewfarmers.org)*

**Jesse Smith Noyes Foundation** - <http://www.noyes.org/>

The Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation promotes a sustainable and just social and natural system by supporting grassroots organizations. The Noyes foundation has funded incubator farm program activities. One of their funding priorities is Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems. (New Entry)

**Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI-USA) – Tobacco Communities Reinvestment Fund** - <http://www.rafiusa.org/programs/tobacco/tobacco.html>

The Tobacco Communities Reinvestment Fund aims to assist farmers and rural communities to develop new sources of agricultural income through provision of cost-share grants.

**Solidago Foundation** - <http://www.solidago.org/>

Accept Letter of Inquiry.

Mission is to promote justice, equity, sustainability and enfranchisement for all through charitable grantmaking to, and work with, progressive, empowering, community-based organizations and collaborations.

**Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE)** - <http://www.sare.org/>

Next SARE is a program of USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service. SARE has funded farm transition program and immigrant farming projects. (New Entry)

**SARE Sustainable Community Innovation -**

<http://www.southernsare.org/Grants/Types-of-Grants/Sustainable-Community-Innovation-Grants>

Project maximums are \$10,000 for up to two years of activities.

CFP to be released March 2013.

“The Southern SARE Program and the Southern Rural Development Center, the sponsors of this competitive SCIG program, are seeking to invest in projects/programs that promote a stronger alignment between sustainable agriculture and community development strategies in the South. This type of alignment cannot be realized without strong and balanced working partnerships among people and organizations representing both sustainable agriculture and community development perspectives.”

**US Department of Agriculture (USDA)**

**Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)**

**Federal State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP) – [www.ams.usda.gov/FSMIP](http://www.ams.usda.gov/FSMIP)**

The Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP) provides matching funds to State Departments of Agriculture, State agricultural experiment stations, and other appropriate State agencies to assist in exploring new market opportunities for U.S. food and agricultural products, and to encourage research and innovation aimed at improving the efficiency and performance of the marketing system.

FSMIP has supported an incubator farm related marketing cooperative through strengthened performance by farmers, emphasizing improved producer training and technical assistance, and inclusion of value added. (New Entry)

**Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) - [www.ams.usda.gov/FMPP](http://www.ams.usda.gov/FMPP)**

FMPP is a competitive grant program for eligible entities that provides funds to assist in establishing, expanding, and promoting domestic farmers markets, roadside stands,

community-supported agriculture programs, and other direct producer-to-consumer market opportunities.

## **National Institute of Food and Agriculture**

### **Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) -**

<http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/rfas/bfrdp.html>

The priority of the BFRDP program is to fund partnerships and collaborations led by or including nongovernmental and community-based organizations with expertise in new agricultural producer training and outreach. At least 25 percent of the funds will support programs and services that address the needs of limited resource beginning farmers or ranchers; socially disadvantaged beginning farmers or ranchers; and farm workers desiring to become farmers or ranchers. (New Entry, ALBA, plus others)

### **Community Food Projects (CFP)**

<http://www.nifa.usda.gov/fo/communityfoodprojects.cfm> (Due date was November in 2012)

Community Food Projects should be designed to (1): (A) meet the food needs of low-income people; (B) increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for their own food needs; and (C) promote comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition issues; and/or (2) meet specific state, local, or neighborhood food and agriculture needs for (A) infrastructure improvement and development; (B) planning for long-term solutions; or (C) the creation of innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers. (New Entry)

## **Office of Outreach and Advocacy**

### **Farmworker - Agricultural Career and Employment Grants Program "ACE"**

<http://www.outreach.usda.gov/grants/>

The Mission of USDA's Farmworker Coordination Program is to identify the challenges faced by farmworkers and coordinate the community's needs with USDA resources, as well as ensure training and support for farmworkers to advance into other agricultural fields.

### **Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers Program (OASDFR) -**

<http://www.outreach.usda.gov/grants/>

OASDFR is a program of USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service. OASDFR delivers outreach and technical assistance to assure opportunities for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers to successfully acquire, own, operate, and retain farms and ranches, and assure equitable participation in the full range of USDA programs. OASDFR funds have helped incubator farms with education, outreach, and technical assistance program. OASDFR is an annually run competitive grants program and eligible recipients include institutions of higher education and community-based non-profit organizations that provide capacity-building training and assistance to local farmers and ranchers. (New Entry) (ALBA)

### **Risk Management Agency (RMA) - <http://www.rma.usda.gov/>**

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Risk Management Agency – have funded other incubator's core training and education programs, including outreach, marketing, technical assistance, and resource library. (New Entry)

For example - [Risk Management Education and Outreach Partnerships Program](#)

## Rural Business-Cooperative Service

**Value-Added Producer Grants (VAPG)** - [http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP\\_VAPG.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_VAPG.html)  
Notice of Funds Available was published in August 2012.

“VAPG is a competitive grants program that awards grants to producers to help them develop farm-related businesses that add value to basic agricultural products through branding, processing, product differentiation, labeling and certification, and marketing.

VAPG includes projects that market inherently value-added production, such as organic crops, grass-fed livestock, and locally produced and marketed food products. VAPG also funds regional food supply networks that benefit small and mid-sized farms by incorporating producers into larger farm-to-fork, or “mid-tier,” value chains.

Grants may be used to develop business plans and feasibility studies (including marketing plans) needed to establish viable marketing opportunities for value-added products or to acquire working capital to operate a value-added business venture or alliance. Working capital applications generally must be supported by an independent feasibility study as well as a business plan.

The maximum grant amount for a planning grant is \$100,000 and the maximum for a working capital grant is \$300,000.” [http://sustainableagriculture.net/blog/vapg-2012-nofa/?utm\\_source=roundup&utm\\_medium=email](http://sustainableagriculture.net/blog/vapg-2012-nofa/?utm_source=roundup&utm_medium=email)

## Rural Development

**Rural Business Enterprise Grants (RBEG)** - [http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP\\_rbeg.html](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/BCP_rbeg.html)

Generally \$10,000 up to \$500,000

Eligibility: Rural public entities (towns, communities, State agencies, and authorities), Indian tribes and rural private non-profit corporations.

Contact your Rural Development State Office.

The RBEG program provides grants for rural projects that finance and facilitate development of small and emerging rural businesses, help fund distance learning networks, and help fund employment related adult education programs. To assist with business development, RBEGs may fund a broad array of activities. (ALBA)

**Rural Cooperative Development Grants (RCDG)** - <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/nc/rcdg.htm>

Contact your Rural Development State Office.

“PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: Grants are for establishing and operating centers for rural technology or cooperative development for the primary purpose or improving the economic condition of rural areas by promoting the commercialization of new services and products that can be produced or provided in rural areas; new process that can be utilized in the production of products in rural areas; and new enterprises that can add value to on-farm production through processing or marketing.

TYPE OF ASSISTANCE: Grants may be used to pay up to 75 percent of the costs of establishing or operating centers for rural technology or cooperative development. Purposes may be such things as technology research, investigations, feasibility studies, dissemination of information, commercialization of new products and processes, training, re-lending, technical assistance, research and support.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS: Grants may be made to public bodies or non-profit institutions and Indian tribes for use in rural areas (less than 50,000 in population) and a density or not more than 100 persons per square mile.

CONTACT: This program is administered by the Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. However applications are made at the Rural Development State Office. For assistance, please contact Neal Sherrod, Business Programs Specialist in the State Office. Mr. Sherrod can be reached at 919-873-2043 or email: [neal.sherrod@nc.usda.gov](mailto:neal.sherrod@nc.usda.gov).”

**Wallace Center at Winrock International: Healthy Urban Food Enterprise Development (HUFED) Program -**

<http://wallacecenter.org/our-work/current-initiatives/healthy-urban-food-enterprise-development-center/>

The purpose of the Wallace HUFED Center is to increase the access of underserved communities to healthy, affordable, local foods, including locally produced agricultural products. (ALBA)

The HUFED Center was created to respond to the growing need to reorganize, rethink and transform the way food is grown, sourced, distributed, marketed and consumed in the United States, in order to:

- Make more healthy and affordable food available in low-income areas;
- Increase market access for small- and medium-sized agricultural producers; and
- Promote positive economic activities generated by attracting healthy food enterprises into underserved communities.

*This document was prepared by the Center for Environmental Farming Systems ([www.ncnewfarmers.org](http://www.ncnewfarmers.org)) as a resource through the [Bringing New Farmers to the Table](#) project. This project is supported by the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, grant number #2010-49400-21733.*



## **APPENDIX D**

### **Piedmont Conservation Council Fiscal Year 2012 Financial Audit**

PIEDMONT CONSERVATION COUNCIL  
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

June 30, 2012

PIEDMONT CONSERVATION COUNCIL  
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA

(Organized under the laws of the  
State of North Carolina, September 4, 1986)

DIRECTORS

William Alston  
Alex Ashton  
Eddie Culbertson  
Frank Green

C. Hester Vernon

Robin Hammond  
Gail Hughes  
Rudy Langley  
Hazel Puckett

OFFICERS

Alex Ashton  
Eddie Culbertson  
Norton Webster  
Rudy Langley

Chairman  
Vice-Chairman  
Secretary  
Treasurer

PIEDMONT CONSERVATION COUNCIL  
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA

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## **Unqualified Opinion on Financial Statements - Not-for-Profit Entity**

The Board of Directors  
Piedmont Conservation Council  
Durham, North Carolina

We have audited the accompanying statement of financial position of Piedmont Conservation Council as of June 30, 2012, and the related statements of activities, functional expenses and cash flows for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of Piedmont Conservation Council's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and the significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Piedmont Conservation Council as of June 30, 2012, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

The Board of Directors  
Piedmont Conservation Council  
Page Two

In accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*, we have also issued our report dated February 10, 2013, on our consideration of Piedmont Conservation Council's internal control over financial reporting and on our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements and other matters. The purpose of that report is to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* and should be considered in assessing the results of our audit.

Our audit was conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the financial statements as a whole. The accompanying schedule of expenditures of Federal and State awards is presented for purposes of additional analysis as required by U.S. Office of Management and Budget Circular A-133, *Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations*, and is not a required part of the financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements. The information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements or to the financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. In our opinion, the schedule of expenditures of Federal and State awards is fairly stated in all material respects in relation to the financial statements as a whole:

J. Michael Gargis & Associates LLP  
Certified Public Accountants

February 10, 2013

PIEDMONT CONSERVATION COUNCIL  
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION  
JUNE 30, 2012

<u>ASSETS</u>	
Cash and cash equivalents	\$65,048
Grants receivable	20,817
Prepaid expenses	401
Equipment (net of depreciation of \$7,974)	<u>2,000</u>
 Total Assets	 <u>\$88,266</u>
 <u>LIABILITIES</u>	
Accounts payable	<u>\$23,407</u>
 Total Liabilities	 <u>\$23,407</u>
 <u>NET ASSETS</u>	
Unrestricted	\$33,885
Temporarily restricted	<u>30,974</u>
 Total Net Assets	 <u>\$64,859</u>
 Total Liabilities and Net Assets	 <u>\$88,266</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

PIEDMONT CONSERVATION COUNCIL

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES  
YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2012

	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Temporarily Restricted</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>REVENUES AND OTHER SUPPORT</u>			
Federal awards	\$	\$ 9,118	\$ 9,118
State awards		539,767	539,767
Support:			
American Rivers Organization		55,683	55,683
Local Foundations		35,385	35,385
Dues and memberships	8,400		8,400
Contributions		21,742	21,742
Investment income	<u>27</u>		<u>27</u>
Total Revenue	\$ 8,427	\$661,695	\$670,122
<u>NET ASSETS RELEASED FROM PURPOSE RESTRICTIONS</u>	<u>630,721</u>	<u>( 630,721)</u>	<u>-0-</u>
Total Revenues and Other Support	<u>\$639,148</u>	<u>\$ 30,974</u>	<u>\$670,122</u>
<u>EXPENSES</u>			
Program	\$633,193		\$633,193
Management and general	<u>11,152</u>		<u>11,152</u>
Total Expenses	<u>\$644,345</u>	<u>\$ -0-</u>	<u>\$644,345</u>
<u>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</u>	(\$ 5,197)	\$ 30,974	\$ 25,777
<u>NET ASSETS, June 30, 2011</u>	<u>39,082</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>39,082</u>
<u>NET ASSETS, June 30, 2012</u>	<u>\$ 33,885</u>	<u>\$ 30,974</u>	<u>\$ 64,859</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

PIEDMONT CONSERVATION COUNCIL

STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES  
YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2012

	<u>Program</u>	<u>Management and General</u>	<u>Total</u>
Project costs:			
Contracted construction costs	\$539,561	\$	\$539,561
Contracted administration	58,652		58,652
Licenses and permits	684		684
Website design and publications	6,925		6,925
Project supplies and materials	20,553		20,553
Advertising, printing and promotional materials	<u>6,289</u>		<u>6,289</u>
	\$632,664	\$ -0-	\$632,664
Accounting expenses		2,201	2,201
Office expenses		53	53
Travel expenses	504		504
Licenses	25		25
Insurance expense		736	736
Contracted services		7,202	7,202
Dues and subscriptions		<u>960</u>	<u>960</u>
	<u>\$633,193</u>	<u>\$11,152</u>	<u>\$644,345</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

PIEDMONT CONSERVATION COUNCIL

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS  
YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2012

<u>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</u>	
Increase in net assets	\$ 25,777
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash used by operating activities:	
(Increase) in operating assets:	
Receivables	( 20,817)
Prepaid expenses	( 401)
(Decrease) in operating liabilities:	
Accounts payable	( <u>54,908</u> )
Net Cash Used by Operating Activities	( \$ <u>50,349</u> )
<u>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</u>	
(Increase) in property and equipment	( \$ <u>2,000</u> )
Net Cash Used by Investing Activities	( \$ <u>2,000</u> )
<u>NET DECREASE IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS</u>	( \$ 52,349)
<u>CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS, July 1, 2011</u>	<u>117,397</u>
<u>CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS, June 30, 2012</u>	<u>\$ 65,048</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

# *J. Michael Fargis & Associates, LLP*

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**Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting  
and on Compliance and Other Matters  
Based on an Audit of Financial Statements  
Performed in Accordance With *Government Auditing Standards***

The Board of Directors  
Piedmont Conservation Council  
Durham, North Carolina

We have audited the financial statements of Piedmont Conservation Council as of and for the year ended June 30, 2012, and have issued our report thereon dated February 10, 2013. We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States.

## **Internal Control Over Financial Reporting**

Management of Piedmont Conservation Council is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal control over financial reporting. In planning and performing our audit, we considered Piedmont Conservation Council's internal control over financial reporting as a basis for designing our auditing procedures for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the financial statements, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of Piedmont Conservation Council's internal control over financial reporting. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of Piedmont Conservation Council's internal control over financial reporting.

Our consideration of internal control over financial reporting was for the limited purpose described in the preceding paragraph and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control over financial reporting that might be significant deficiencies or material weaknesses and therefore, there can be no assurance that all deficiencies, significant deficiencies, or material weaknesses have been identified. However, as described in the accompanying schedule of finding and response, we identified a certain deficiency in internal control over financial reporting that we consider to be a material weakness.

A *deficiency in internal control* exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct misstatements on a timely basis. A *material weakness* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the entity's financial statements will not be prevented, or detected and corrected on a timely basis. We consider the deficiency described in the accompanying schedule of finding and response to be a material weakness.

#### **Compliance and Other Matters**

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether Piedmont Conservation Council's financial statements are free of material misstatement, we performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements, noncompliance with which could have a direct and material effect on the determination of financial statement amounts. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our audit, and accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. The results of our tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*.

We noted a certain matter that we reported to management of Piedmont Conservation Council in a separate letter dated February 10, 2013.

The Board of Directors  
Piedmont Conservation Council  
Page Three

Piedmont Conservation Council's response to the finding identified in our audit is described in the accompanying schedule of finding and response. We did not audit Piedmont Conservation Council's response and, accordingly, we express no opinion on it.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of management, the Board of Directors, others within the entity, and the North Carolina State Auditor and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

J. Michael Jorgis & Associates, LLP  
Certified Public Accountants

**PIEDMONT CONSERVATION COUNCIL  
SCHEDULE OF EXPENDITURES OF FEDERAL AND STATE AWARDS  
For the Year Ended June 30, 2012**

Grantor/Pass-through Grantor/Program Title	Federal CFDA Number	Contract or Agency #	State/Pass-through Grantor's Number	Receipts	Fed. (Direct & Pass-through) Expenditures	State Expenditures
<b>Federal Grants:</b>						
<b>Cash Programs:</b>						
United States Department of Agriculture: Natural Resource Conservation Service: Randolph County Quilt Trail	10-902	68-4532-10-014		\$9,118	\$7,375	\$0
Total assistance - Federal programs				<u>\$9,118</u>	<u>\$7,375</u>	<u>\$0</u>
<b>State Grants:</b>						
<b>Cash Assistance:</b>						
North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources: Clean Water Management Trust Fund: CW Stanford Middle School Innovative Stormwater Treatment and Stormwater Reuse Project Alamance Community College Innovative Stormwater Project		G 20161072211CWT G 20168102809CWT	34919 2010-722 32690 2008-1028	\$321,436 \$202,043		\$375,940 \$202,785
North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services: ADFF Trust Fund: Gulford Farmland Protection Plan		G 20100001610 ADF	27482	\$11,614		\$8,421
Total assistance - State programs				<u>\$333,093</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$387,146</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSISTANCE</b>				<u>\$544,211</u>	<u>\$7,375</u>	<u>\$587,146</u>

Notes to the Schedule of Expenditures of Federal and State Financial Awards:

1. Basis of Presentation  
The information on this schedule has been prepared on the cash basis of accounting; therefore, receipts are recognized when received rather than when earned, and expenditures are recognized when paid rather than when obligations are incurred.

Reconciliation between receipts for financial statement purposes and for this schedule is as follows:

	Per Financial Statement	Receivable June 30, 2011	Receivable June 30, 2012	Per Report
Federal Grants	\$9,118	\$0	\$0	\$9,118
State Grants	\$39,767	0	(4,674)	\$35,093
	<u>\$548,885</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>(\$4,674)</u>	<u>\$544,211</u>

Reconciliation between disbursements for financial statement purposes and for this schedule is as follows:

	Per Financial Statement	Payables June 30, 2011	Payables June 30, 2012	Per Report
Federal Grants	\$7,391	\$0	(\$16)	\$7,375
State Grants	\$30,307	61,513	(4,674)	\$87,146
	<u>\$537,698</u>	<u>\$61,513</u>	<u>(\$4,690)</u>	<u>\$594,521</u>

PIEDMONT CONSERVATION COUNCIL

SCHEDULE OF FINDING AND RESPONSE  
YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2012

**SUMMARY OF AUDITOR'S RESULTS**

1. The auditor's report expresses an unqualified opinion on the financial statements of Piedmont Conservation Council.
2. A significant deficiency disclosed during the audit of the financial statements is reported in the Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting and on Compliance and Other Matters Based on an Audit of Financial Statements Performed in Accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*. This deficiency is reported as a material weakness.
3. No instances of noncompliance material to the financial statements of Piedmont Conservation Council were disclosed during the audit.
4. An audit finding that is required to be reported in accordance with Section 510(a) of OMB Circular A-133 is reported in this Schedule.

**FINDING - FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AUDIT**

**Material Weakness**

2012 - 1.

Segregation of Duties.

Condition: There is not adequate staff to allow for sufficient segregation of financial duties for the organization.

Criteria: Internal controls should be in place to provide reasonable assurance that financial data is accurately and reasonably reported.

Cause: There are too few contracted financial personnel to allow for sufficient segregation of duties for various accounting procedures.

PIEDMONT CONSERVATION COUNCIL  
SCHEDULE OF FINDING AND RESPONSE  
YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2012 (CONCLUDED)

**FINDING - FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AUDIT (Concluded)**

**Material Weakness (Concluded)**

2012 - 1. (Concluded)

Segregation of Duties (Concluded).

Effect:                   The lack of segregation of duties allows  
the possibility of collusion or misstatement.

Recommendation: The Board of Directors needs to carefully review  
financial information on a consistent and timely  
basis. Timely financial record approval and  
review with contracted bookkeeper can help with  
segregation of duties and possibility of errors.

Views of Responsible Officials and Planned Corrective Action:  
The organization agrees to carefully review  
financial information on a monthly basis and  
continue to approve all financial disbursements.

PIEDMONT CONSERVATION COUNCIL

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

JUNE 30, 2012

A. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Accounting policies considered significant are briefly described below.

OPERATIONS.

Piedmont Conservation Council is a not for profit organization that addresses natural resource conservation and development issues. Piedmont Conservation Council serves Alamance, Caswell, Chatham, Durham, Guilford, Orange, Randolph, Rockingham, and Wake Counties of North Carolina. Its administrative offices are located in Durham, North Carolina.

The primary sources of revenue for the organization are Federal and State awards, private grants and individual donors.

CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS.

For purposes of the statement of cash flows, the organization considers all unrestricted highly liquid investments with an initial maturity of three months or less to be cash equivalents.

PROMISES TO GIVE; SUPPORT.

Contributions are recognized when the donor makes a promise to give to the organization that is, in substance, unconditional. Contributions that are restricted by the donor are reported as increases in unrestricted net assets if the restrictions expire in the fiscal year in which the contributions are recognized. All other donor-restricted contributions are reported as increases in temporarily or permanently restricted net assets depending on the nature of the restrictions. When a restriction expires, temporarily restricted net assets are reclassified to unrestricted net assets and reported in the Statement of Activities as net assets released from restrictions. Promises to give are substantially all due within one year; there are none at June 30, 2012.

PIEDMONT CONSERVATION COUNCIL

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

JUNE 30, 2012 (CONTINUED)

A. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Concluded)

ALLOWANCE FOR DOUBTFUL ACCOUNTS.

The organization uses the allowance method of accounting for bad debts. At June 30, 2012, all receivables were considered collectible and hence no allowance was recorded.

PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT.

Property and equipment items with a cost of at least \$200.00 are capitalized. Donations of property and equipment are recorded as support at their estimated fair value. Depreciation is computed using the straight-line method over the estimated useful lives of the assets.

Donated property and equipment are reported as unrestricted support unless the donor has restricted the donated asset to a specific purpose. Assets donated with explicit restrictions regarding their use and contributions of cash that must be used to acquire property and equipment are reported as restricted support. Absent donor stipulations regarding how long those donated assets must be maintained, the organization reports expirations of donor restrictions when the donated or acquired assets are placed in service as instructed by the donor.

INCOME TAXES.

Piedmont Conservation Council is a not-for-profit organization that is exempt from income taxes under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The organization is not classified as a private foundation.

ESTIMATES.

Management uses estimates and assumptions in preparing financial statements. Those estimates and assumptions affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities, the disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities, and the reported revenues and expenses. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

PIEDMONT CONSERVATION COUNCIL

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

JUNE 30, 2012 (CONCLUDED)

B. PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT

Property and equipment at June 30, 2012, consist of the following:

Furnishings and equipment	\$9,974
Accumulated depreciation	<u>7,974</u>
	<u>\$2,000</u>

C. NET ASSETS

Unrestricted net assets at June 30, 2012, are undesignated.

Temporarily restricted net assets consist of the following:

Restricted as to purpose:	
FAB LAB Project	<u>\$30,974</u>

D. FAIR VALUE

All receivables and payables are due within one year thus book value is basically equivalent to fair market value.

E. MANAGEMENT REVIEW

Management has reviewed the financial statements and subsequent events for inclusion as of March 25, 2013, the date the financial statements were available to be issued.

## APPENDIX G:

Skill Self-Assessment Tool for Evaluation

New England Small Farms Institute

**NORTHEAST SMALL SCALE, “SUSTAINABLE” FARMER  
SKILL SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL**

© 2000 New England Small Farm Institute

<b>Task Statements</b> These are the <i>duties</i> (categories of work) and <i>tasks</i> (discrete chunks of work) identified by a panel of successful farmers as what farmers actually do in the management of their farms.	<b>Can you perform this task?</b> Do you currently have this skill: circle yes, no, or ? (for unsure).	<b>Do you need to learn more to be able to perform the task?</b> Do you need training to learn this skill: circle yes, no, or ? (for unsure).	<b>Is acquiring this skill a priority?</b> Is this a skill you need to learn to begin and/or operate your farm business? circle yes, no, or ? (for unsure).
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

<b>Task Statements</b>	<b>Can you perform this task?</b>	<b>Do you need training?</b>	<b>Is acquiring this skill a priority?</b>
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**Duty A: PLAN WHOLE FARM**

1. Set whole farm goals (e.g. gather farm partners, family, and/or interested parties; set vision, mission statement, 3-part sustainability goals and farm/family priorities [economic, environmental, quality of life])	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
2. Assess available resources & needs (e.g. physical, capital, human; skills, experience, time, land, equipment, profitability, short and long-term owner’s draw)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
3. Conduct market research (e.g. research industry, competition, markets/customers, production potential, marketing strategies)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
4. Select enterprise(s)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
5. Prepare production plan (e.g. process budgets, production potential, farm operations timeline, labor needs)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
6. Prepare marketing plan (e.g. pricing, marketing strategies, logo, product line, target customers, sales potential, promotion, product placement, labor needs, consumer trends, name, organic/”green” label options, potential for value-adding)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
7. Prepare financial plan (e.g. financial statements, annual budget, cash flow projections, whole farm budget, capitalization plan)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
8. Secure access to land (e.g. rent, lease, purchase)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
9. Assess site (e.g. map & analyze: soils, topography, water, drainage, threats to natural resources, access, infrastructure, climate and microclimate)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
10. Prepare conservation & land use plan (e.g. research conservation programs & regulations; timeline & budgets for: infrastructure development, conservation practices, irrigation/water projects; update maps)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
11. Research legal requirements (e.g. zoning, organizational structure, product handling, liability, tax abatement options, development rights)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
12. Assemble whole farm plan (e.g. timelines, budgets, labor, equipment, infrastructure, supply, and financial needs, roles, general business description, one year, five year, and long term plans)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?

<b>Task Statements</b>	<b>Can you perform this task?</b>	<b>Do you need training?</b>	<b>Is acquiring this skill a priority?</b>
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**Duty B: SET UP FARM BUSINESS**

1 Obtain necessary financing (e.g. family, banks, others)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
2. Establish farm legal structure (e.g. sole proprietor, partnership, corporation, cooperative)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
3. Establish farm management team (e.g. create management and professional job descriptions; hire lawyer, accountant, and others; hire non-labor employees; establish service contracts; conduct new employee orientation)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
4. Establish farm policies (e.g. visitor, safety, personnel)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
5. Obtain necessary licenses, permits & certifications (e.g. federal employer ID#, fuel storage, farm labor camp, tax exemption, organic certification, certified kitchen)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
6. Open business bank accounts	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
7. Purchase liability & property insurance	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
8. Establish credit with key suppliers	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
9. Obtain necessary office equipment & supplies	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
10 Set up bookkeeping system (e.g. cash journal, asset ledger, payables & receivables; by hand or on computer)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
11. Set up filing & record-keeping systems	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
12. Provide for farm family security (e.g. purchase life & health insurance, establish retirement plan)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?

<b>Task Statements</b>	<b>Can you perform this task?</b>	<b>Do you need training?</b>	<b>Is acquiring this skill a priority?</b>
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**Duty C: MANAGE FARM BUSINESS**

1. Establish tasks & timelines (e.g. administration, production, marketing)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
2. Manage communications (e.g. phone, fax, email, on-site messages, correspondence)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
3. Collect payments	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
4. Pay bills	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
5. Manage payroll	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
6. Pay taxes & fees	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
7. Balance checking account(s)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
8. Monitor cash flow	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
9. Manage short & long-term debt	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
10. Take family living/owner's draw	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
11. Keep good records (e.g. income, expenses, payroll)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
12. Adhere to federal, state & local regulations (e.g. sales tax & exemptions, workers compensation, payroll reporting)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?

Task Statements	Can you perform this task?	Do you need training?	Is acquiring this skill a priority?
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**Duty D: PURSUE EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

1. Prepare plan to meet skill & information needs (e.g. goals, timeline, budget)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
2. Apprentice to experienced farmer	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
3. Find farmer-mentor	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
4. Observe your farm <i>daily</i>	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
5. Read agricultural literature (e.g. books, journals, catalogs)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
6. Visit other farms	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
7. Establish relationships with local institutions & organizations	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
8. Attend classes, conferences, workshops & trade shows	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
9. Consult with local experts	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
10. Dialogue with customers	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
11. Keep posted on current events & trends	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
12. Learn from experience (e.g. frequently compare actual outcomes to farm plan and adjust day-to-day operations accordingly)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?

Task Statements	Can you perform this task?	Do you need training?	Is acquiring this skill a priority?
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**Duty E: NOURISH FAMILY & COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

1. Set aside time for family & self	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
2. Establish friendly relations with neighbors	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
3. Participate in community organizations & activities	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
4. Maintain an attractive farmstead	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
5. Host community events & farm tours	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
6. Patronize local businesses	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
7. Establish cooperative relationships with other farmers, businesses & organizations	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
8. Promote sustainable, local farming & food system security	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?

Task Statements	Can you perform this task?	Do you need training?	Is acquiring this skill a priority?
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**Duty F. MANAGE FARM LABOR RESOURCES**

1. Prepare farm labor plan (e.g. self, family, hired [H2A, interns, other], volunteer, CSA work-share)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
2. Create job descriptions (e.g. clear & comprehensive)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
3. Fill out any necessary state & federal labor forms	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
4. Recruit labor	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
5. Establish labor contracts	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
6. Conduct farm orientation (e.g. health & safety issues, “where things are”)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
7. Assign daily tasks	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?

8. Train farm workers (e.g. fieldwork, efficiency, equipment safety)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
9. Supervise farm workers (e.g. communicate, motivate, resolve disputes)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
10. Adhere to all state & federal labor regulations (e.g. state and federal employment law [fair wage, workers' compensation, unemployment, equal opportunity, sexual harassment, etc.]; state and local farm property tax abatements programs; volunteer protection; product and general liability; risk management)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
11. Keep good records (e.g. time sheets, labor reports, records of disputes & injuries)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?

Task Statements	Can you perform this task?	Do you need training?	Is acquiring this skill a priority?
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### Duty G. MANAGE TOOLS, EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES

1. Inventory tools, equipment & supplies	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
2. Acquire necessary tools, equipment & supplies (e.g. purchase, borrow, rent)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
3. Fabricate tools & equipment	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
4. Establish preventive maintenance schedule for tools & equipment	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
5. Establish parts & supplies inventories (including scrap pile)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
6. Monitor condition of tools & equipment	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
7. Maintain tools & equipment	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
8. Repair tools & equipment	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
9. Provide storage for tools, equipment & supplies	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
10. Store tools, equipment & supplies (e.g. safely, in good order)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
11. Get rid of unneeded tools & equipment (e.g. sell, give away)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
12. Keep good records (e.g. equipment manuals, repair records, expenses, capital repairs, future problems/needs)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?

Task Statements	Can you perform this task?	Do you need training?	Is acquiring this skill a priority?
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### Duty H. MANAGE FARM INFRASTRUCTURE (e.g. grounds, farmhouse, utilities, roads, sheds, shop, fence line, ditches, barns, irrigation systems, greenhouses)

1. Adhere to federal, state & local legal & regulatory requirements (e.g. zoning, permits, building codes, fuel & pesticide storage)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
2. Build/ install infrastructure	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
3. Create farm signage (e.g. promotional, safety, traffic, posting)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
4. Establish preventive maintenance schedule for infrastructure	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
5. Establish parts & supplies inventory	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
6. Monitor condition of infrastructure	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
7. Maintain infrastructure	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
8. Repair infrastructure (e.g. emergency, seasonal, annual)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
9. Demolish unnecessary infrastructure (including salvage & recycling)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
10. Keep good records (e.g. plans of land, "as-builts", expenses, capital repairs, future problems/needs)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?

<b>Task Statements</b>	<b>Can you perform this task?</b>	<b>Do you need training?</b>	<b>Is acquiring this skill a priority?</b>
<b>Duty I: MANAGE PRODUCTION &amp; NATURAL RESOURCES</b>			
1. Implement conservation practices & measures (e.g., buffer strips, water quality management projects, wildlife habitat improvement, strip cropping)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
2. Test soil & water	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
3. Build soil health & productivity (e.g., make compost, plant and manage cover and catch drops, integrate crop and livestock production, install crop rotations, add organic amendments if and as required)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
4. Obtain necessary supplies & inputs	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
5. Monitor weather	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
6. Manage pests (e.g. insects, diseases, parasites, weeds, critters, predators; provide habitat for beneficials)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
7. Manage crop & livestock rotations	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
8. Conduct trials of new breeds, crops, products & techniques	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
9. Monitor ecological impact of all production activities	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
10. Manage crop residues & other farm by-products (e.g. compost)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
11. Custom hire farm services	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
12. Adhere to federal, state & local regulations	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
13. Keep good records (e.g. inputs, soil health, weather, pests)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?

<b>Task Statements</b>	<b>Can you perform this task?</b>	<b>Do you need training?</b>	<b>Is acquiring this skill a priority?</b>
<b>Duty J. RAISE LIVESTOCK</b>			
1. Prepare annual livestock & animal products production plan (e.g. stocking, rotation, feeding & grazing, health, production goals)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
2. Obtain stock (e.g. produce on farm, buy in)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
3. Provide stock with appropriate housing, shelter & protection from predators	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
4. Establish flock or animal ID system	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
5. Assess animal nutrient needs	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
6. Establish grazing plan	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
7. Manage pastures	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
8. Obtain feed & supplements (e.g. produce, buy in)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
9. Balance feed rations	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
10. Feed & water animals	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
11. Monitor animal health & well-being	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
12. Meet all animal health & veterinary needs	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
13. Manage manure & livestock mortalities	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
14. Harvest animal products (e.g. milk, eggs, fleece, honey)	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?
15. Slaughter meat animals	yes no ?	yes no ?	yes no ?

16. Perform post-harvest handling & processing tasks (e.g. pasteurize, bottle, wash, process, butcher, package, freeze, store)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
17. Add value to animal products if required by marketing plan	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
18. Adhere to federal, state & local regulations (e.g. slaughtering & processing, manure)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
19. Keep good records (e.g., herd or flock ID numbers, purchase and sales, production, general health, feed & supplements, breeding, processing, treatments [parasite control, medications, physical i.e. dehorning])	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?

<b>Task Statements</b>	<b>Can you perform this task?</b>	<b>Do you need training?</b>	<b>Is acquiring this skill a priority?</b>
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### **Duty K: RAISE CROPS**

1. Prepare annual crop production plan (e.g. planting schedule, crop rotation, soil fertility, application of inputs, harvest dates, production goals)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
2. Obtain seeds & plant materials (e.g. produce on farm, buy in)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
3. Prepare soil (e.g. greenhouse or field, tillage or no-till, beds or rows)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
4. Plant crops (e.g. seed, transplants, rootstock, slips)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
5. Care for growing plants (e.g. transplant, mulch, prune, trellis, cover, stake)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
6. Fertilize crops (e.g. foliar, side-dress)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
7. Irrigate crops	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
8. Cultivate soil	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
9. Harvest crops	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
10. Perform post-harvest handling & processing (e.g. wash, trim, pack, cool, store)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
11. Add value to crops if required by marketing plan	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
12. Adhere to federal, state & local regulations (e.g. APHIS, pesticide regulations)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
13. Keep good records (e.g. planting & harvest dates, inputs, yields, crop health, field plan “actuals”, sales)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?

<b>Task Statements</b>	<b>Can you perform this task?</b>	<b>Do you need training?</b>	<b>Is acquiring this skill a priority?</b>
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### **Duty L: MARKET FARM PRODUCTS AND SERVICES**

1. Prepare annual/seasonal marketing plan (e.g. marketing strategies, sales outlets [on-farm, farmers’ markets, retail, wholesale], pricing, value adding).	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
2. Monitor market conditions (e.g. price, supply, competition, consumer trends)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
3. Develop promotional materials	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
4. Promote farm products & services (e.g. advertise, participate in “buy local” or “green label” campaigns)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
5. Obtain necessary supplies (e.g. scales, receipt books, cash box, packaging, labels)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
6. Contact buyers (e.g. retail and/or wholesale)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?

7. Sell farm products & services	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
8. Distribute farm products (e.g. deliver, ship)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
9. Obtain customer feedback	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
10. Adhere to federal, state & local regulations (e.g. sales tax & exemptions, weights & measures)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
11. Keep good records (e.g. customer comments, competition, price changes, sales, promotional activities)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?

<b>Task Statements</b>	<b>Can you perform this task?</b>	<b>Do you need training?</b>	<b>Is acquiring this skill a priority?</b>
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**Duty M: REVIEW & RE-PLAN WHOLE FARM**

1. Prepare year-end financial statements, tax returns & reports	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
2. Review whole farm plan (e.g. goals & needs, production, land, financial & marketing plans)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
3. Review/analyze all farm records (e.g. compare projections to results, budgets-to-actuals, crop yields, financials, environmental impact; compare actual profitability with profitability projections, goals, and needs.)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
4. Revise whole farm plan as needed (see Duty A)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?
5. Develop annual plan for coming year (see Duty A)	yes	no	?	yes	no	?	yes	no	?

## APPENDIX H:

Farming and Skills Business Assessment  
New England Small Farms Institute

**Exploring the Small Farm Dream:**

**Worksheet #4 -- Farming & Business Skills Assessment**

© The New England Small Farm Institute, 2003

How would you rate your skills in the following areas? Use a scale of 1 to 5.

- 1. Very experienced. I am confident that I can handle all aspects of this part of my farm.
- 2. Comfortable. I have experience or training in all or most of the aspects of this part of farming.
- 3. Moderate. I have experience or familiarity with most of the relevant skills.
- 4. Somewhat familiar. I have experience or knowledge relating to some of the necessary skills, but not most.
- 5. No experience. This aspect of running a farm business is completely new to me.
- X. Not applicable (for example: experience with livestock is not needed if you do not plan to raise animals).

<b>KNOWLEDGE &amp; SKILLS</b>	<b>Rating (1-5)</b>
<b>1. Whole Farm Planning</b>	
Goal setting	
Market research	
Acquiring land (e.g., rent, lease, purchase)	
Developing production, marketing & financial plans	
Researching legal requirements	
Mapping & developing a land use plan	
<b>2. Business Start-Up</b>	
Choosing a legal structure	
Obtaining credit or capital	
Obtaining permits, licenses & insurance	
Setting up bookkeeping & record-keeping systems	
<b>3. Business Management</b>	
Collecting payments	
Bookkeeping; paying bills & taxes	
Monitoring cash flow	
Making quick decisions	
Record keeping (e.g., financial, production, sales)	
Managing debt	
<b>4. Pursuing Further Education &amp; Training</b>	
Keeping up with the latest production & marketing trends	
Keeping up with the latest management trends	
Attending conferences, courses & workshops	
Apprenticing or finding a farmer-mentor	
Reading agricultural books, magazines & catalogs	
<b>5. Maintaining Family &amp; Community Relations</b>	
Making time for yourself & your family	
Building relationships with your neighbors	
Participating in community & agricultural organizations	

## Worksheet #4 -- Farming & Business Skills Assessment (page 2)

### KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS

Rating (1-5)

KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS	Rating (1-5)
<b>6. Managing Farm Labor</b>	
Preparing seasonal labor & farm safety plans	
Training & supervising workers	
Complying with state & federal labor regulations	
<b>7. Managing Tools, Equipment &amp; Supplies</b>	
Fabricating new tools & equipment	
Maintaining & repairing tools & equipment	
<b>8. Managing Farm Infrastructure</b>	
Building infrastructure (e.g., barns, greenhouses, fences)	
Maintaining & repairing infrastructure	
<b>9. Managing Production</b>	
Managing soil fertility	
Managing pests, weeds & diseases	
Responding to unpredicted weather (e.g., drought, hail, hurricane)	
Implementing conservation practices	
<b>10. Raising Livestock</b>	
Managing pastures	
Feeding & watering animals	
Monitoring & treating animal health problems	
Milking, slaughtering & other harvest and processing tasks	
Managing manure	
<b>11. Raising Crops</b>	
Preparing a crop production plan	
Operating equipment & implements safely	
Seeding, planting & harvesting	
Post-harvest handling & storage	
<b>12. Marketing</b>	
Choosing marketing strategies	
Developing promotional materials; advertising	
Monitoring competition & market conditions	
Adapting quickly to sudden changes	
Selling farm products & services	
<b>13. Annual Farm Business Review &amp; Re-planning</b>	
Preparing financial statements & tax forms	
Reviewing & analyzing records	
Revising whole farm plan	

## APPENDIX I:

### Incubator Farm Project Flow Chart

# Establishing an Incubator Farm Project

from ideation to project implementation

level of involvement



project development over time