

Worksheet 5: Assessing your Personal Resources Inventory and Goals

As you go through this assessment, please take the time to answer the questions as completely and honestly as you are able regarding your skills, knowledge base, experience, time constraints, energy, health, time constraints, labor, and family considerations.

The questions explore where you currently are, as well as what personal resources you might need to move towards your whole farm plan goals.

This exercise should be completed by each person who will be integrally involved in the farm operation.

One vital area that can be overlooked when considering a farm enterprise is personal health and well-being. Farming can be very demanding physically, emotionally, and mentally. It is good to know your limitations and stress points, as all will be tested at some point in a farming career.

A successful farming enterprise is pro-active in preparing for these challenges. Staying healthy is critical for the long haul. Review your nutrition, exercise, medication, mental and social health needs in order to consider the health-related questions.

Step 1: Read the information in the left hand side bar

Step 2: Consider and answer the following questions:

1. Knowledge, Skills, and Experience

- What knowledge, skill base, and prior experience do you already possess?
- What knowledge and skills are needed to produce specific agricultural product(s) you are interested in?
- What communication & marketing skills?
- What additional resources and information do you need in order to learn more about the production, processing, and marketing related to your product(s)?
- Where and how can you access these resources and learning opportunities?

2. Time, Energy, Health, and Labor

- Do you work off farm?
- If so, how many hours will you be able to devote to the overall farm enterprise?
 - To production?
 - To sales and marketing?
 - To “growing” your knowledge base?
- Given the proposed farm enterprise idea, how much time and energy is required to carry out your enterprise successfully?
 - Daily
 - Weekly
 - Monthly
 - Seasonally
- When will you work (i.e. days, evenings, weekends, seasonal, etc.)?
- Overall, do the time and energy demands required fit your personal availability and abilities?
- Are there any health-related issues that may impact running the farm business, and that need to be addressed and planned for before moving forward?
- Do you know what the demands, risk factors, and safety requirements are of certain farming vocations, types of machinery, chemical uses, etc.?

Another very important aspect within the personal inventory is to consider how a farm enterprise might impact family life. Farming can be very time-intensive and place heavy demands on the normal day-to-day dynamics of family living. As you consider your whole farm plan, it is important to evaluate farm goals within this larger family context.

- Do you know what resources are available if you should need assistance, guidance, intervention, etc., to allow you to be able to farm safely, effectively, and productively? (eg. AgrAbility; Farm Bureau Safety)

- How much labor is required for the enterprise?

3. Family Considerations

- How much family involvement will the farm entail; i.e. will all family members participate with the farming operation?

- If children are involved, how will their school and after-school activities dovetail with the farm?

- Given your overall whole farm, how will your farm enterprise fit within the larger context of family life?