

Hudson Valley Farm Business Incubator: A Regional Program for Growing Resilient Farmers



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Abstract

Although progress has certainly been made to support the surge of young people starting careers in farming, new and beginning farmers face tremendous obstacles on the path to operating viable farm businesses. Chief among those obstacles continue to be access to affordable land, working capital, agricultural training and business mentoring (2011, NYFC; 2011, GrowNYC). For the period of 2007 - 2012, US agriculture witnessed a 20% decrease in the number of new farmers who have been on their operation less than ten years (2012, USDA). So, not only are principal farm operators getting older, fewer new farmers are making a go of it. Although comparable data on the Hudson Valley is not readily available, it is our experience as a regional organization that both the challenges and opportunities in this region are significant.

Glynwood's Incubator helps new and growth-stage agricultural entrepreneurs with:

- Business and financial planning
- Farm mentorship
- Market connections
- Training in technical skills and leadership
- Support in accessing farm land

Objectives

- Support new farm businesses in critical early years of operation with services that will ensure their long-term success
- Improve new and beginning farmers' business, marketing and financial skills through curriculum delivery, workshop participation and one-on-one technical assistance
- Help new farms gain access to land
- Build a pipeline of new businesses that will keep farmland in the Hudson Valley in production

Activities



Direct services and farm mentorship for new entry farmers



Intensive workshops



Land access assistance

Anticipated Outcomes

Over the three year project period, this project aims to:

- Provide direct services for up to 30 new and beginning farmers, representing an estimated 10-15 new farm businesses
- Serve an estimated 350 new and beginning farmers through extensive practical skills and elective workshops
- Lead 6 farm businesses to fledge onto long term land
- Allow for 7 farmers to participate in the alumni network by remaining engaged with current program participants