

Enhancing On-Farm Success: Building a Sustainable Platform for Beginning Farmer Support

Serving Farmers and Ranchers Across Montana

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Goals

- **Expand our collaborative network** to reach a broad sector of the beginning agricultural community at every stage of their first ten years
- Assist beginning farmers in developing **clear, compelling business plans** that allow them to effectively evaluate their costs and identify productive market channels
- Continue to **develop financing tools** that connect farmers with resources throughout Montana
- **Enhance and tighten partnerships** to embed our services in the work of our partners to ensure these resources continue to be available well into the future

Target Audience

- Beginning Farmers and Ranchers
- Limited Resource Producers



Planning for On-Farm Success Classes Photo: Annie Heuscher



Serving Diverse Producers Photo: Cathrine Walters



Farmer Field Days Photo: Annie Heuscher

Outputs



Farmer Field Days Photo: Annie Heuscher

- **Planning for On-Farm Success (PFOS):** A workshop series covering strategic planning, market analysis and differentiation, financial management and planning, financing, risk management, and land access. Offered through a partnership with MSU Extension across the state.
- **Farm School:** Workshops focused on specific challenges encountered beyond the startup phase, including advanced financial management and recordkeeping, diversification, employee management, and scaling up.
- **Field Days:** On-farm, farmer-led production workshops targeting pre-startup and early stage farmers to enhance their understanding of diverse production techniques.
- **Technical Assistance:** One-on-one, personalized assistance in developing business, financial, marketing, and financing plans.
- **Farm Link Montana:** An online clearinghouse with resources and tools to connect BFRs with mentorship, on-farm employment, and land. Launched with a BFRDP grant in 2015.
- **Kiva Loans:** Crowdfunded, 0% interest, no fee loans up to \$10,000. In addition, CFAC also offers technical assistance on mini-grants up to \$5,000 through a Specialty Crop Block Grant with the Montana Department of Agriculture.
- **Community Investing and Land Access Tools:** Resources to connect farmers with local investors and provide both groups with tools to bolster community investing.
- **Statewide Network of Service Providers:** Professional development retreats and additional support for service providers to improve their ability to effectively serve beginning farmers.

Outcomes

- 500 BFRs with workshops and field days
- 100 BFRs with technical assistance to develop a business, financial, or marketing plan
- 60 new listings for Farm Link Montana, encouraging 500 BFRs to create profiles and 80 BFRs to access mentors, employment, or land
- 15 new pages of content on Farm Link Montana, driving 18,000 users to the site
- 15 farmers with fully funded Kiva loans
- 3 farmers with access to community financing and land access tools
- 90 beginning farmer service providers with retreats for professional development.
- 45 beginning farmer service providers with additional support, serving 135 BFRs



Serving Diverse Stages of BFRs Photo: Chad Harder



Farmer Field Days Photo: Annie Heuscher



Serving Diverse Scales of Agriculture Photo: Laurie Childs