Farmland for the Next Generation: Training Trainers to Help Beginners Secure Land and Succeed in Agriculture

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Background

- Access to land is a pervasive challenge faced by beginning farmers and ranchers (BFRs), as reported by:
  - USDA-ERS
  - American Farm Bureau Federation’s Young Farmers & Ranchers program
  - Land for Good
  - National Young Farmers Coalition
  - GrowNYC
  - American Farmland Trust
Land Access Barriers

It’s often hard for BFRs to:

- Find suitable, available and affordable land to purchase and/or lease;
- Secure loans to buy it;
- Negotiate appropriate lease arrangements, especially with non-family members;
- Identify technical assistance and support to navigate potential land access options and arrangements.
New TOTAL Survey Reinforces This

- 2014 Tenure, Ownership and Transition of Ag Land survey of *ag land rented out for ag* found:
  - 354M acres of rented land;
  - 20% owned by farmers;
  - 80% by nonfarming landowners;
  - Only 10% of it is likely to transfer in the next 5 years
Tackling the Challenge of Access to Land

- This EE project seeks to increase access to land for BFRs by training trainers to help them acquire land to purchase or rent from:
  - Retiring farmers and ranchers (or their estates);
  - Non-farming and institutional landowners; and
  - Nontraditional landowners including land trusts and the public sector.
Project Outcomes

1. Create a comprehensive curriculum and resources that address the breadth and depth of BFRs’ land access needs;

2. Validate and deliver the curriculum and resources to committed Land Access Trainers (LATs) who will pilot with BFRs and other trainers;

3. Ensure resources are widely available to a network of ag educators and services providers who will provide ongoing support to BFRs seeking to secure agricultural land.
Five Main Approaches

1. **Evaluate** existing curricula, methods and resources at the beginning and throughout the project;

2. **Leverage existing materials and fill identified gaps** to create a comprehensive national curriculum;

3. **Deliver, test and validate** the curriculum and training methods with dedicated LATs – revise and improve based on feedback;

4. **Support the LATs** as they field test with BFRs and ultimately extend the trainings to other trainers;

5. **Sustain the work** by laying the foundation for a network of educators and ag service providers and make widely available the curriculum, resources, materials and training modules widely available.
Primary Target Audiences

- Committed agricultural educators and service providers from USDA’s 10 farm production regions (Extension, land trusts, Farm Credit, nonprofits)
- At least 20% who work closely with underserved populations, selected to represent distinctive needs and regional differences
Quantifiable Project Outcomes

- By the end of this project, the team will have:
  - Developed a comprehensive curriculum and set of training methods, approaches and resources;
  - Tested and evaluated these with 25 experienced LATs, at least 5 who represent underserved and veteran populations;
  - Supported the LATs in validating the curriculum with 500 BFRs and revised curriculum and resources to reflect their feedback;
  - Supported the LATs in delivering the final curriculum to 125 ag educators and service providers in the 10 farm production regions;
  - Made curriculum, training methods and resources widely available on AFT’s Farmland Information Center website and the BFRDP Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse.
Partners / Collaborators

- Cornelius Blanding, Federation of Southern Cooperatives
- Don Edgar, University of Arkansas
- Kip Kolesinskas, Training Coordinator
- Kathy Ruhf, Land for Good
- Susan Stokes, Farmers Legal Action Group
Educational Enhancement Team

Partners / Collaborators Plus:

- Ed Cox, Attorney (formerly at Drake Ag Law School)
- Poppy Davis, Sustainable Agriculture Education
- Reggie Knox, California Farmlink
- Jiff Martin, University of Connecticut Extension
- Gary Matteson, Farm Credit Council
- Holly Rippon-Butler, National Young Farmers Coalition
- Cris Saybrook, Indian Land Tenure Foundation
- Martha Sullins, Colorado State University Extension
What We Have to Offer

- **Report:** *Cultivating the Next Generation: Resources and Policies to Help Beginning Farmers Succeed in Agriculture*
- **Hudson Valley Farmlink Network:** hudsonvalleyfarmlandfinder.org
- Information and BFR resources on farmland transition and access and a directory of entities who make protected farmland available for rent or purchase: www.farmlandinfo.org
We Hope to Learn from YOU!

- How many of you have developed any curriculum or resources related to farmland transition and access?
- What are especially effective ways to convey information to diverse audiences of varying levels of commitment?
- What do the BFRs you serve want and need to know about land access issues?
- What do YOU want to know?
Please Share with Us!

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