



# More Farmers on the Land

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## LSP's Farm Beginnings, Farm Dreams & Journeyperson

[www.landstewardshipproject.org/morefarmers](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org/morefarmers)

### Farm Beginnings

Farm Beginnings® is a 12-month Land Stewardship Project (LSP) training program that provides participants an opportunity to learn firsthand about low-cost, sustainable farm management.

Farm Beginnings started in 1997 when a group of southeast Minnesota farmers called the “Wabasha County Give A Damns” approached LSP with concerns about where the next generation of farmers would come from. These farmers saw a need for a program that would combine classroom instruction and on-farm mentoring.

What resulted was an initiative that has its roots in the philosophy that farmers learn new techniques and management systems best by networking with other farmers in a community-based setting. The first LSP Farm Beginnings classes began meeting in southeast Minnesota and later expanded to other regions.

### The Farm Beginnings Course

Farm Beginnings classes begin in the fall of each year and meet throughout the winter. Class participants learn goal setting, financial planning, business plan creation, alternative marketing and low-cost sustainable farming techniques. Participants are encouraged to develop a sustainable business plan that enhances their quality of life and helps them achieve their goals—a plan that factors in sound environmental practices while being economically viable. Established farmers and other professionals such as lenders and agricultural business instructors present at the seminars, providing a strong

foundation of community resources, networks and contacts for those interested in farming. These relationships often last long after the formalized course is concluded.

The highlight of the winter classes is a set of presentations given by beginning farmers outlining their goals and how they plan on achieving them. At the conclusion of classes, Farm Beginnings moves onto the land itself, where participants take part in a series of on-farm field days and innovative farmers demonstrate firsthand how they raise food and fiber using methods that are economically and environmentally sound.



### The Influence of Farm Beginnings

- ✓ During the first 16 years of the initiative, more than 600 people have completed the Farm Beginnings course in the Minnesota region alone.
- ✓ Farm Beginnings graduates are engaged in a broad spectrum of farming enterprises, including beef, dairy, hogs, meat goats, poultry, wholesale vegetables, Community Supported Agriculture, organic grains and specialty products such as cut flowers.

✓ Farm Beginnings has served as a model for a nationwide community-based beginning farmer support initiative called the Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Program, which is administered by the USDA.

### Farm Dreams & Journeyperson

As part of LSP's work to train and support the next generation of farmers, we offer the **Farm**

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### **Dreams** workshop and the **Journeyperson Training Course**:

• **Farm Dreams** is an entry level, four-hour, exploratory workshop designed to help people who are seeking practical information on whether a farming career is the right choice for them. This workshop is full of practical, common sense information on what it takes to start and manage a farm-based business. It's recommended as a precursor workshop for those who are considering taking Farm Beginnings.

• **The Journeyperson Training Course** gives beginning farmers a boost in the early years of their farm enterprise. This course is for farmers who are in their first to sixth year of farming, and it helps them establish healthy, sustainable farm management so that their businesses can become successful. The Journeyperson Course includes formal mentorship, financial and whole farm planning assistance, connection with a Farm Business Management instructor, networking with a peer group and a matched savings account.

### **Farm Beginnings Contact Info**

If you are a beginning farmer in the Minnesota region who is interested in learning more about LSP's Farm Beginnings Program, there are several ways to get started:

#### ♦ **Driftless Region**

*(SE Minn., Western WI, NE Iowa)*

- Karen Benson,  
E-mail: [karenb@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:karenb@landstewardshipproject.org)
- Dorian Eder  
E-mail: [dori@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:dori@landstewardshipproject.org)  
Phone: 507-523-3366

#### ♦ **Prairie Region**

*(Western Minn. & NW Iowa)*

- Amy Bacigalupo,  
E-mail: [amyb@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:amyb@landstewardshipproject.org)
- Nick Olson  
E-mail: [nicko@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:nicko@landstewardshipproject.org)  
Phone: 320-269-2105

#### ♦ **Lake Superior Region**

- Cree Bradley  
E-mail: [cree@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:cree@landstewardshipproject.org)  
Phone: 218-834-0846

### **Farm Beginnings in Other Regions**

Besides Minnesota, Farm Beginnings is in Illinois, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and New York. For details on these programs, which are all part of the Farm Beginnings Collaborative, see [www.landstewardshipproject.org/morefarmers](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org/morefarmers).

### **Farm Dreams Contact Info**

For more information on Farm Dreams, including details on upcoming workshops, see [www.landstewardshipproject.org/morefarmers](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org/morefarmers). More information is also available by contacting LSP's Nick Olson at 320-269-2105 or [nicko@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:nicko@landstewardshipproject.org).

### **Journeyperson Contact Info**

For more information on the Journeyperson Course, see [www.landstewardshipproject.org/morefarmers](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org/morefarmers). Details are also available by contacting LSP's Richard Ness at 320-269-2105 or [rness@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:rness@landstewardshipproject.org).



*This fact sheet is brought to you by the members and staff of the Land Stewardship Project, a nonprofit organization devoted to fostering an ethic of stewardship for farmland and to seeing more successful farmers on the land raising crops and livestock. For more information, call 612-722-6377 or visit [www.landstewardshipproject.org](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org).*