



# BACKGROUND MATERIAL FOR FARM PLANNING TRACKS

*The Farm Planning Track is a tool to help prospective or current farmers map three years of learning. It includes educational skills sessions, one-on-one consultation, skills assessment, learning plan, field day workshops, and both Farm Dreams and the Farm Beginnings class.*

## Why a Farm Planning Track?

The Farm Planning Track is meant to act as a kind of road map to assist the beginning farmer in developing a comprehensive strategy for implementing their farm plans. Farm Dreams is a half-day class and Farm Beginnings is a nine session class meant to help participants set goals and plan toward a sustainable farming enterprise. There are many more steps involved with specific production techniques and site specific realities of any individual farm. A beginning farmer can increase their chance of success by continually investing in their education through seeking out experts, attending field days and other educational events, and making skills assessments and annual learning plans part of their overall farming plan. The Farm Beginnings class helps to steer individuals toward completing certain tasks associated with creating a unique farming plan. The Farm Planning Track is a tool to help identify actions and activities that will aid actualization of the farm plan.

## Defining the Aspects of a Farm Planning Track

Farmer Network Handbook - the *LSP Farmer Network Handbook* lists contact information of Farm Beginnings graduates and LSP member farmers who are willing to offer on-farm opportunities and advice to beginning farmers who have participated in the Farm Beginnings planning course.

Skills Assessment - the skills assessments are based upon the knowledge of what working farmers believe are key skills needed for executing a particular type of farming operation. By assessing your skills, one is better able to narrow down areas to concentrate upon in any given year.

Growing Season Learning Plan - a growing season learning plan is used to organize the areas narrowed down for concentration from the skills assessment. The growing season learning plan can be put together on one's own or in conjunction with a mentor or consultant.

Conferences and Winter Workshops - LSP and a number of other organizations offer one-day or more educational events that can aid one in furthering their knowledge in specific areas identified as part of skills assessments and learning plans. Each year a certain amount of time and money should be budgeted for attending educational events.

Work Exchange - an opportunity for a beginning farmer to gain experience through hands-on learning. Farms that offer one-on-one visits are listed in the *LSP Farmer Network Handbook*.

Field day workshops - LSP offers a number of field days on member farms each year. These workshops are invaluable for gaining knowledge of specific farming operations and improving one's own plans. Attendance can't be emphasized enough.

Informal Day Visit - an informal day visit is a one-on-one visit of a farming enterprise. These visits are a rare opportunity to get a personal tour of a farm and ask questions that are specific to one's farm plans. Farms that offer one-on-one visits are listed in the *LSP Farmer Network Handbook*.

On-farm Consultants - LSP has a relationship with several consultants that work one-on-one with beginning farmers to help develop their farm plans. These individuals work for a fee. An on-going relationship with a farm consultant in the early years of an operation can be a thorough way of complimenting other areas discussed in the production track.

Internship/Employment - there is no substitute in the early part of your farm career for actual experience working on a farm. There are a variety of farms associated with the *LSP farmer network* that provide longer-term engagement in day-to-day farming activities.

*The Farm Planning Track is a product of the Land Stewardship Project's Farm Beginnings program.*



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# FARM PLANNING TRACK

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December - February

March - May

June - August

September - November

## Year One

\* Farm Dreams class - develop an action plan (\$20)

\* Attend Spring LSP Field Day (\$25 gas)

\* Attend Summer LSP Field Day (\$25 gas)

\* Attend Fall LSP Field Day (\$25 gas)

\* Skills Assessment - Develop Growing Season Learning Plan

\* Attend other field day or skills session through another organization related to your area of interest or need (\$25 gas)

\* Attend other field day or skills session through another organization related to your area of interest or need (\$25 gas)

\* Arrange one visit to a farm in your interest area (\$25 gas)

\* Review programs for annual conferences and attend workshops that will help further your farming plans (budget \$500)

\* Arrange one visit to a farm in your interest area (\$25 gas)

\* LSP membership (\$35)

**Proposed Budget: \$730**

## Year Two

\* Farm Beginnings class (\$1500)

\* Attend Spring LSP Field Day (\$25 gas)

\* Attend Summer LSP Field Day (\$25 gas)

\* Attend Fall LSP Field Day (\$25 gas)

\* Review programs for annual conferences and attend workshops that will help further your farming plans (budget \$500)

\* Attend other field day or skills session through another organization related to your area of interest or need (\$25 gas)

\* Attend other field day or skills session through another organization related to your area of interest or need (\$25)

\* Arrange one informal day visit of a farm in your interest area (\$25 gas )

\* Skills Assessment - Develop Growing Season Learning Plan

\* Arrange one informal day visit of a farm in your interest area (\$25 gas )

\* LSP membership (\$35)

**Proposed Budget: \$2210  
includes Farm Beginnings**

## Year Three

\* Review FB class farm plan and make adjustments

\* On-farm consultant visit (\$300 + mileage \$40)

\* Attend Summer LSP Field Day (\$25 gas)

\* On-farm consultant visit (\$300 + mileage \$40)

\* Skills Assessment - Develop Growing Season Learning Plan

\* Attend Spring Field Day through LSP or other organization (\$25 gas)

\* Attend other field day or skills session through another organization related to your area of interest or need (\$25)

\* Attend other field day or skills session through another organization related to your area of interest or need (\$25)

\* Review programs for annual conferences and attend workshops that will help further your farming plans (budget \$500)

\* Arrange one informal day visit of a farm in your interest area (\$25 gas)

\* LSP membership (\$35)

\* Arrange one informal day visit of a farm in your interest area (\$25 gas )

**Proposed Budget: \$1365**