

## **LSP's Farm Beginnings® Sample Class Outline**

The first two classes and the last class are all-day Saturday classes. All subsequent classes will be held from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Thursdays. Once the formal classes are completed, a series of on-farm education sessions will be announced, based on participants' interest.

This is a participatory class. The expectation is that you make use of the resources presented to the fullest potential. The Farm Beginnings organizers encourage input and ideas from the participants. With this input we are able to tailor the sessions to your educational needs. The sessions will have resource people sharing their expertise. This is your opportunity to **ASK QUESTIONS AND GET AS MUCH GUIDANCE AS YOU POSSIBLY CAN.**

### **Session #1 — Building Networks, Values Clarification and Goal Setting (10 a.m. - 4 p.m.)**

Presenters:

- **Laura Paine**, Grass-fed Beef Farmer, and Grazing and Organic Agricultural Specialist at WI DATCP
- **Dan French**, Grass-fed, Organic Dairy Farmer, Pastureland Cooperative member

We will introduce the framework of the Farm Beginnings course and sustainable agriculture. During the class we will focus on activities and discussions to gain a better sense of personal values and goals and how they relate to getting into farming. There will be opportunities for networking with other Farm Beginnings participants and established farmers to begin to approach your farming enterprise(s) creatively.

### **Session #2 — Whole Farm Planning (10 a.m. - 4 p.m.)**

Presenters:

- **Terry VanDerPol**, Grass-fed Beef Farmer, LSP Organizer, Montevideo, MN
- **Jennifer & Mike Rupprecht**, Earth-Be-Glad Farm, Grass-fed, Organic Beef / Poultry/ Crop Farmer, Lewiston, MN

You will have an opportunity to share your goals with other participants and established farmers. An important part of your planning is establishing and using a decision-making process, which will be highlighted. You will use your three-part goal that you determined in the first session to practice a decision making process that takes into account biologically sustainable agriculture principles, your values and goals, and sound economics. In this session, you will also be introduced to the concepts of Whole Farm

Planning and on-farm observation, along with the LSP monitoring toolbox. You will participate firsthand in on-farm monitoring with a visit to a local farm.

### **Session #3 — Creating the Plan - Nuts and Bolts (6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.)**

Presenter:

- **Chris Blanchard**, Rock Spring Farm, Vegetable/ CSA Farmer, Spring Grove, MN

Most people don't plan to fail, but fail to plan. In this session, you will have the opportunity to see real numbers from Chris' operation. Chris is willing to share the tips he has learned over the years. Additionally, you will experience the processes he uses to determine financial projections. Tools will be introduced to begin assessing and developing a financial plan for your enterprise.

### **Session #4 — Planning for Profit (6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.)**

Presenter:

- **Chris Blanchard**, Rock Spring Farm, Vegetable/ CSA Farmer, Spring Grove, MN

In order to succeed in your farming enterprise, you need to PLAN FOR PROFIT. This session will be a continuation of the last session. Chris will talk about using money as a tool for goal achievement. Chris will discuss his perspectives and ideas on creating a financial plan and the foundation points he uses to make important decisions, taking into account quality of life, economic, and environmental sustainability. Time will be spent reviewing, discussing and answering questions about the financial plan you put together after the last class, and you will learn how to use that plan to create a target for profit.

### **Session #5 — Building Your Business Plan (6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.)**

Presenters:

- **Caroline van Schaik**, Grass-fed Sheep Farmer, LSP Organizer
- **Regi Haslett-Marroquin**, farmer/ Business Planning Mentor
- **Erin Varney**, Permaculture Farmer, FB Grad
- **Aimee Finley**, Grass-fed Dairy Farmer, FB Grad

This session will outline a structure within which previous and future course work can fit. We will discuss reasons why to do a business plan, what a business plan entails, and resources to help you put a plan together. We will also discuss the entrepreneurial nature of farming and what that means to you, the farmer. This is specifically drawn from the work of Ernesto Sirolli. We will hand out and introduce some of the financial

options for getting started. The beginning farmers will also tell you about their experiences with writing business plans and securing financial.

**Session #6 — Marketing 101- Intro to Marketing (6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.)**

Presenters:

- **Prescott Bergh & Juliet Tomkins**, Four Winds Farm, River Falls, WI, Organic grass-fed beef farmers,

Marketing is an important key to a successful farming enterprise. We will cover the basics of marketing and help you recognize creative marketing opportunities that exist. In small groups, you will work together to create a marketing plan for a product of your choice.

**Session #7 — Marketing 201- Realities from the Field – (6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.)**

Presenters:

- **Farmer Marketing Panel TBA**

Learn about different ways farmers are marketing their products.

**Session #8 — Connecting with Resources & Class Presentations – Identifying the Next Steps (6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.)**

Presenters:

- **Class Participants and Farmer Resources TBA**

Additional farming organizations, materials and resources will be shared. These resources will broaden the foundation for support as you begin / continue your farming ventures. This session is the culmination of the work you have done throughout the course. Each family will have an opportunity to present to a plan for their enterprise to an audience of their peers (the class), established farmers and ag professionals.

**Session #9 — Connecting with Resources & Class Presentations – Identifying the Next Steps (6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.)**

Presenters:

- **Class Participants & Tim Gossman**, Root River State Bank

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### **Optional Session - March - Working with a Mentor**

Topics: Effective Communication, Generational Diversity and Conflict Resolution.  
(Required if applying for a Livestock Loan.)

### **April – August**

#### **On- Farm Education:**

- 1) One-on-one mentorships for those who are ready
- 2) Farm Tours/ Skills Sessions (TBA)

### **August**

Farm Beginnings Potluck Picnic- Date & Location TBA

As an LSP member (for first-time LSP members, you have received a **complimentary one-year membership** with your Farm Beginnings program fee, current members will have an extension of your current membership until this time next year) you will be receiving information regarding educational opportunities, our *Land Stewardship Letter*, e-mail updates if you choose. You are encouraged to get involved in any number of ways through our organization!