




## Ag 416: Sustainable Small Acreage Farming and Ranching

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A  course. For more information visit [www.cultivatinguccess.org](http://www.cultivatinguccess.org)

This course builds on a foundation of principles established by Cultivating Success:

- **Farmer Mentoring** – involves farmers as speakers, on-farm tours, encourages mentoring after class
- **Experiential Learning** – on-farm visits and learning activities as part of the process for evaluation of enterprises, trying out ideas on others and receiving feedback
- **Community based** – building networks of resource people and connections that help location of needed information
- **Whole Farm and Sustainability Focus** – dependent on environmental, financial and quality of life aspects
- **Small Farm Focus** – geared to smaller acreage operations that produce high value specialty crops and/or livestock and direct market to customers – BUT can be taken by producers with any sized operation as a means to learn more about specialty farming and/or direct marketing.

### Course Dates/Times for Fall 2006

August 21 – December 15  
Mondays, 5:30 – 6:30 pm  
Two out-of-class field trips; dates to be determined

### Course Format

Course will be offered as a “hybrid” or “web enhanced” model to be offered to both UI and WSU academic students and community members in Moscow/Pullman.

Students will meet as a class once a week throughout the semester. The remainder of the course will be offered on-line through WEBCT with a combination of PowerPoint lectures, discussion boards, DVD/video clips, readings and worksheets/assignments that will reinforce the concepts presented in class and through field experiences.

### Expectations

**Academic students:** will be expected to attend all sessions and complete all on-line assignments and activities, plus prepare a proposed farm plan report and in-class presentation. More details are covered under **Policies, Assignments and Grading for Academic Students.**

**Community Members seeking CEU Credits:** Community members (non-academic) may earn 1.5 Continuing Education Credits by attending the in-person session and accessing the on-line materials. CEU students will not be *required* to complete on-line assignments. CEU are awarded on a basis of at least 80% attendance. They will have no required assignments but will be encouraged to complete the farm plan process to benefit fully from the course.

## **Course Objectives**

- Students will seek to gain knowledge of the practical aspects of sustainable small acreage production systems for a wide variety of enterprises.
- Students will practice assessing the feasibility of developing a small acreage farming enterprise, including how to: evaluate personal and family goals, evaluate land and personal resources, develop a farm plan, and research marketing, regulations, and community resources.
- Students will experience the challenges and opportunities faced by small acreage farmers, preparing them for farming and/or technical, advisory, and agricultural educational positions.

## **Textbook**

Students will purchase, check-out, or be given the following on the first night of class:

- 1) Sustainable Small Acreage Farming and Ranching notebook or resource packet (\$25)
- 2) DVD case of 4 farmer case studies (buy or check-out)
- 3) The *New American Farmer* (CD or hardcopy included with course). Also available for free download online at <http://www.sare.org/publications/na2/index.htm>.)

## **Course Content Modules**

### **Module 1: Starting with Whole Farm Sustainability in Mind**

- Understanding “sustainability” and “whole farm” concepts
- Applications of sustainability and whole farm concepts on the farm

### **Module 2: Successful Whole Farm Planning**

- Applying the “Whole Farm” concepts to develop a farm plan
- Whole farm planning tools
- Assessing personal (and family) interests, skills, and values
- Developing your whole farm goals

### **Module 3: Evaluating Your Whole Farm Resources**

- Introduction to the whole farm plan layout
- Resource inventory and assessment
- Mapping the farm property

### **Module 4: Direct Marketing Strategies**

- Exploring methods to market direct to consumers

### **Module 5: Enterprise Assessment**

- Enterprise ideas for small acreage farms/ranches
- Production requirements and feasibility of enterprise

### **Module 6: Evaluating your Market**

- Consumer and market trends
- Researching the market and customer base

### **Module 7: Sustainable Crop Production**

- Implementing farming practices that promote sustainability
- Growing organic

### **Module 8: Ecological Soil Management**

- Soil characteristics important to plant growth
- Building healthy Soils
- Soil testing

### **Module 9: Integrated Pest and Weed Management**

- Basics of Integrated Pest Management
- Ecological weed management

### **Module 10: Sustainable Livestock/Poultry Systems**

- Sustainable animal production
- Grazing management on small acreages

**Module 11: Facilities and Equipment**

- Selecting Appropriate Equipment
- Irrigation Systems for small acreage farming
- Meeting the building and fencing requirements

**Module 12: Assessing the Potential for Profit**

- The basics of farm economics
- Enterprise budgets as decision making tools

**Module 13: Enhancing Success of Your Whole Farm Plan**

- Tools for tracking success
- Assessing Sustainability

**Policies, Assignments and Grading for Academic Students**

Academic students will attend all sessions and do all on-line assignments and activities, plus prepare a proposed whole farm plan by report and oral presentation.

*Attendance*

Due to the nature of the course with the many valuable guest speakers that cannot be duplicated, attendance will be required at all class sessions and field trips unless an excused absence is requested in advance.

*Participation*

Students are expected to engage in class discussions and activities, both in class and on-line. There are several on-line quizzes (called Self Assessments) throughout the course that are not graded, but WILL be counted for participation.

*Assignments*

There will be required periodic reading and weekly written assignments. Value of assignments will vary from 5-15 points. Some are discussion forum topics that you will have to discuss on-line, others are worksheets to complete.

*Final project and presentation*

1. The final project is the completion of a whole farm management plan based on the evaluation of the feasibility of a specific farming enterprise. Course assignments throughout the semester are focused on developing this plan.
2. A 10 minute summary of your whole farm plan will be presented to classmates in the last week(s) of class.

Grading for Academic Students

<i>A-F Grading Criteria:</i>	<i>Points</i>
Assignments and participation	300
Final Report - Whole Farm Plan	50
Final Project Presentation	<u>100</u>
	450

NOTE: Assignments will be marked down 2 points for every day they are late unless you have an excused absence. Presentations will be marked down 10 points if not presented on planned day. The Final Reports will be marked down 10 points for every day they are late.

***UI Grading Scale (by Percentage):***

A	90-100	B	80-89	C	70-79	D	60-69	F	< 60
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***WSU Grading Scale (by Percentage):***

A	96-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	66-69
A-	90-95	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	60-65
		B-	80-82	C-	70-72	F	<60