

START2FARM Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse Collection Development Policy



The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse and the program Web site – Start2Farm.gov (S2F) is a component of the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). The purpose and priorities of the program are “to provide U.S. beginning farmer and rancher producers and their families, as appropriate, with the knowledge, skills and tools needed to make informed decisions for their operations, with the goal of enhancing success of beginning farmers and ranchers.”

Legislative authority and background for the Start2Farm Clearinghouse include Section 7405(e) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 3319(e)) (Pub. L. 107-171), as amended by section 7410 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008) (Pub. L. 110-246), which requires the Secretary to establish an online clearinghouse that makes available to beginning farmers or ranchers education curricula and training materials and programs.

S2F will:

- 1) Identify ongoing beginning farmer and rancher education, training, outreach and mentoring activities in the US focusing on all of the identified disciplines or activities listed under “Priorities for Standard BFRDP Projects in FY 2009” RFA.

Priorities for Standard BFRDP Projects in FY 2009

I. Production and management strategies to enhance land stewardship by beginning farmers and ranchers.

- Mentoring, apprenticeship, and internship activities;
- Curriculum development;
- Whole farm planning;
- Conservation assistance (conservation planning or implementation, not funding of conservation projects);
- Basic livestock and crop farming practices, forestry and range management;
- Specific types of practices, (i.e., sustainable, organic, Best Management Practices, Integrated Pest Management); and Farm safety.

II. Business management and decision support strategies that enhance the financial viability of beginning farmers and ranchers.

- Information processing;
- Resources and referrals (understanding asset based farming opportunities available, including external resources such as Farm Service Agency loan programs, Natural Resources Conservation

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Service conservation programs, and other appropriate private and/or public resources focused on beginning farmers and ranchers);

- Entrepreneurship and business training;
- Financial management training, including assessment and training for establishing Individual Development Accounts (no grant funds can be used to match IDA funds);
- Risk management education; and
- The acquisition and management of agricultural credit.

III. Marketing strategies that enhance the competitiveness of beginning farmers and ranchers.

- Diversification and marketing strategies; and
- Understanding the impact of concentration and globalization (production and/or marketing).

IV. Legal strategies that assist beginning farmers with acquisition and transfer.

- Technical assistance for beginning farmers or ranchers in acquiring land from retiring farmers and ranchers (excluding financial payments);
- Innovative farm and ranch transfer strategies, including training for absentee landowners to bring their land into production;
- Environmental compliance (understanding rules and regulations); and
- Development of model land leasing contracts (including alternative land acquisition contracts).

- 2) Identifying materials from ongoing regional activities or national activities which could be placed on the online Clearinghouse or linked thereto.

Start2Farm.gov (S2F) is comprised of programs, materials, and other resources to assist the following groups to make informed decisions about starting and maintaining a farm/ranch business or diversifying a current farm/ranch business.

- People who are considering becoming farmers or ranchers including people who have never farmed/ ranched before and those with some farm/ ranch experience.
- Farm workers who wish to start their own farms.
- Farmers and ranchers who have less than 10 years experience.
- Educators for children and teens in K-12 programs who are looking for programs and curriculum to teach farming.
- Educators, trainers, and programs that assist or educate any of the above groups to start or successfully maintain a new farm or ranch.

Content will include:

- Information about training programs including where they are located, affiliated organizations, if there are associated costs, etc.
- Information about financing programs including loans, credit education, grants, etc.
- Information about technical assistance programs including legal aid, disaster assistance, business incubators, etc.

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- Information about networking opportunities including professional organizations and associations, online communities, and other appropriate groups.
- Contact information, at a state or national level, for organizations and programs of use to new and future farmers including the Cooperative Extension Service and other appropriate groups.
- Education resources and curriculum relevant to new and future farmers. These may be in the form of documents, web tutorials, web pages and sites, videos, podcasts, and other objects and resources deemed appropriate for the site.
- A calendar of events specific to beginning farmers and ranchers.

Content may be present in the following formats.

- S2F hosted Web pages with information including publication citation information, links, etc.
- Links to outside web pages and sites and other web content.
- S2F hosted Web documents from the NAL digital collections as well as NAL catalog records.
- Links to outside e-documents hosted on other sites.
- S2F hosted videos and images.
- Links to videos and images hosted on other sites.
- Feeds from sites hosted by USDA and from sites not hosted by USDA.

The S2F content will be searchable by facets including region, type of program (training, networking, assistance, funding), farming practice, farmer experience, among others or by keyword. In addition, guides and assessments will be available to assist prospective and current farmers to identify their needs and find the most relevant resources.

S2F will gather information and resources about training, financial assistance, technical assistance, and networking programs which assist and educate new and future farmers about aspects of farming/ranching including getting started as a farmer/rancher. All programs and resources in these groups will be vetted for appropriateness and legitimacy. S2F will not gather information about programs that are not appropriate or do not have aspects that are appropriate to new and future farmers or ranchers.

S2F will gather information about and resources from the following types of programs:

- Training programs which provide education and training to new or future farmers including those that are or are not required for certification, licensing and permits, and non-degree education credits. S2F will gather information and resources about training programs which provide experience and know how. These training programs may be in the form of online courses, in person courses including those that occur on-site at a farm, apprenticeships, internships, and mentoring programs as well as any other types of appropriate training programs.
- Funding and financial assistance programs including loans and other types of financing or financial education and assistance.

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- Assistance programs including but not limited to those that provide farmers with legal assistance, insurance, disaster assistance, and start up assistance such as farm business incubators.
- Networking programs including professional organizations and associations, informal online communities, and any other appropriate networks or groups.
- Other programs and services that provide information and resources deemed appropriate to Start2Farm.

S2F will gather information and resources from the following places:

- Federal agencies with programs that can be applied to beginning farmers and ranchers.
- State agencies with programs that can be applied to beginning farmers and ranchers.
- All programs that have received funds through the NIFA BFRDP program.
- Non-government organizations including non-profit, for profit, and grass roots organizations with programs and resources that can be of use to beginning farmers and ranchers.
- Other national governments and international organizations, only if the programs and resources are available and directly applicable to farmers and ranchers in the United States.

S2F does not guarantee to include all possible programs and resources. Where appropriate, S2F will include resources that aggregate other resources such as databases and directories.

S2F is *NOT* a social, political, or commercial forum. Some organizations that provide programs or resources for farmers and ranchers deemed acceptable under the S2F Collection Development policy may have a specific political, commercial, or social agenda. The presence of any organization's programs or resources in Start2Farm is *NOT* an endorsement by Start2Farm of the views and positions advocated by the organization.

S2F will not specifically gather information on topics such as rural community development, social justice, nutrition programs, advocacy programs including political and social advocacy, health, housing, or other topics that may be of concern to farmers and ranchers but which are not directly related to starting and maintaining a successful farm or ranch business.

S2F will not specifically gather information about particular aspects or how to of farming such as animal husbandry or horticulture but may refer users to the relevant information sources. Nevertheless, S2F may acquire access to resources that include this type of information.

S2F will not specifically gather information about programs for people who do not intend to sell their farm products or which have a primary purpose other than training or assisting farmers and ranchers to establish or maintain a business.

S2F will not gather information about agriculture programs that are only available to matriculated students at a university or college unless the program meets all of the following criteria:

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- The program is not a two or four year degree program (certificates, or diploma equivalents of certificates, or extension credit are acceptable provided the student can take the full course without matriculating into a degree program),
- The program specifically teaches practical, immediately usable aspects of establishing or running a farm or ranch business as opposed to related scientific experimentation, related business studies, general rural studies, etc.,
- The program is focused on training farmers and ranchers and not intended as an extracurricular opportunity for students.
- The program meets all other criteria of the S2F Collection Development policy.

S2F will not include tools, services, or other products that are available commercially and not directly produced or distributed by a program or resource adopted under this Collection Development policy for the purposes that the program or resource was originally adopted under the policy. Examples may include but are not limited to, companies which sell farm equipment including equipment that is scaled for smaller farms, farm management software products, online direct marketing tools which charge a fee for use or which are supported by third party advertising. Additionally, S2F does not consider training programs under this policy to include training consumers to use the products being sold.

All content will be acquired by S2F and vetted for accuracy, relevance, currency, and legitimacy according to established criteria before being made available on the site. All links to websites, e-resources, or other web content will be vetted through the Start2Farm.gov Linking Policy.

S2F will seek permissions from content creators and owners and those who appear in images and videos before hosting full-text resources, images, and other objects or documents on Start2Farm.gov. S2F will not seek permission to link to resources and sites already available to the public on the World Wide Web.

S2F will provide an opportunity for BFRDP grant recipients to submit feedback on the usefulness of the content and/ or recommend information and resources that could be included on the Web site, but nothing will be added until it is reviewed and approved by S2F.

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