

Nuts and Bolts: Getting Started in Farming Checklist

The following list has been designed by the UNH Extension Beginner Farmer Team for the New Farmer School. The goal of the checklist is to help you identify potential holes in your new business and better prepare you to become a successful farmer. Before you start your farm, we suggest completing the items on this list.

Farm Plan

- Complete Farm Goals Statement
- Complete Farm Vision Statement
- Complete Farm Mission Statement
- Decide on a commodity to grow

Financial

- Decide if you will be a part-time or full-time farmer
- Decide how you want to sell your goods (retail, wholesale, CSA, farmers market, etc.)
- Set a goal for annual income and a budget for your farm sales, farming expenses, living expenses and net farm income
- Set up a plan for managing cash flow, projecting financials
- Develop an enterprise budget
- Become familiar and comfortable with a recordkeeping system

Site/Land

- Determine you will not be growing in an environmentally sensitive area (wetland, estuary, aquifer)
- Determine your soil type through the Web Soil Survey
- Understand what crops are suitable given your land resource
- Submit a soil test to a lab
- Write a crop schedule plan (either animal, greenhouse or vegetable)
- Map out your site with potential buildings, structures, fields, etc.
- Apply for a pesticide applicators license with NH Department of Ag Markets and Food (includes organic producers as well)
- If leasing, make sure you have a lease signed by both parties

Marketing

- Complete your marketing plan
- Assess your local competition and know how to work with them not against them
- Decide on a unique farm name
- Register your farm business name with the NH Secretary of State
- Create a logo that is web and print ready
- Create a web and social media presence (Google listing, Facebook or Instagram page, website, etc.)
- Inform your insurance carrier of your intentions
- Attain the appropriate (optional) certifications (Organic, GAP or others)

Local Regulations

- Check your town's zoning requirements (setback, parking, signs, road access, etc.)
- Check your local land and structure tax rates - including how new construction (chicken coop, high tunnel, farm stand etc.) may be taxed
- Check if the property is in "Current Use" or determine if this designation is right for your operation
- Thoroughly read all Deeds, Covenants and Easements, if applicable

Miscellaneous

- Meet with your local NRCS contact
- Meet with your local UNH Extension contact
- Establish a farm mentor
- Discuss these goals and vision with your family
- Have someone knowledgeable in agriculture review your plan