



New Entry
Sustainable
Farming Project
&
The National
Incubator Farm
Training



Eva Agudelo Winther,

National Technical Assistance Coord

Start2Farm
Beginning Farmer and
Rancher Conference

April 16th, 2014

New Entry
+ Sustainable
Farming Project
(New Entry)



WHAT WE DO

Our Mission: To develop comprehensive strategies to assist limited resource individuals to successfully farm in Massachusetts.



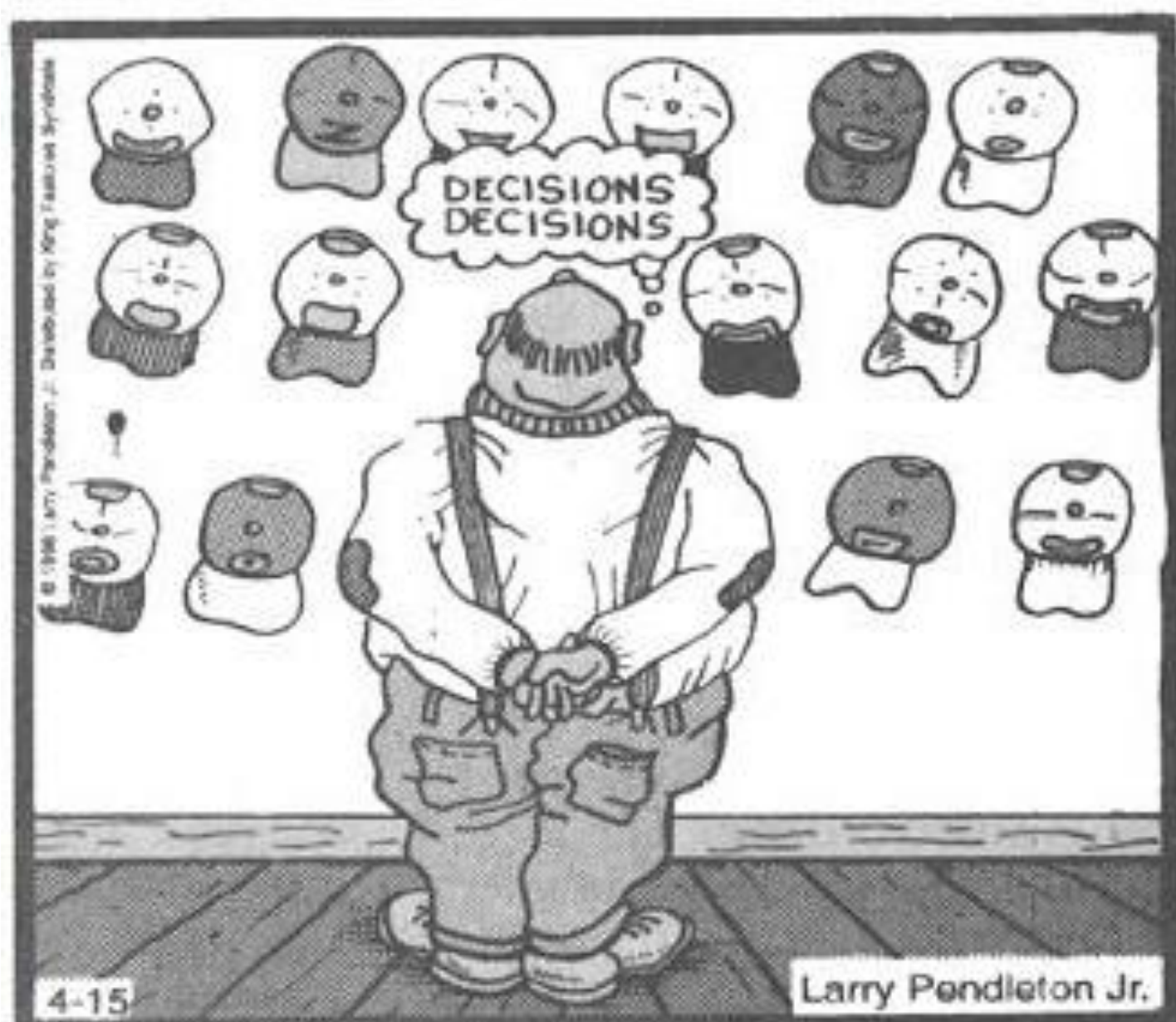
WHO WE SERVE

Engaging diverse growers

- Nationality
- Age range
- Gender
- Enterprise

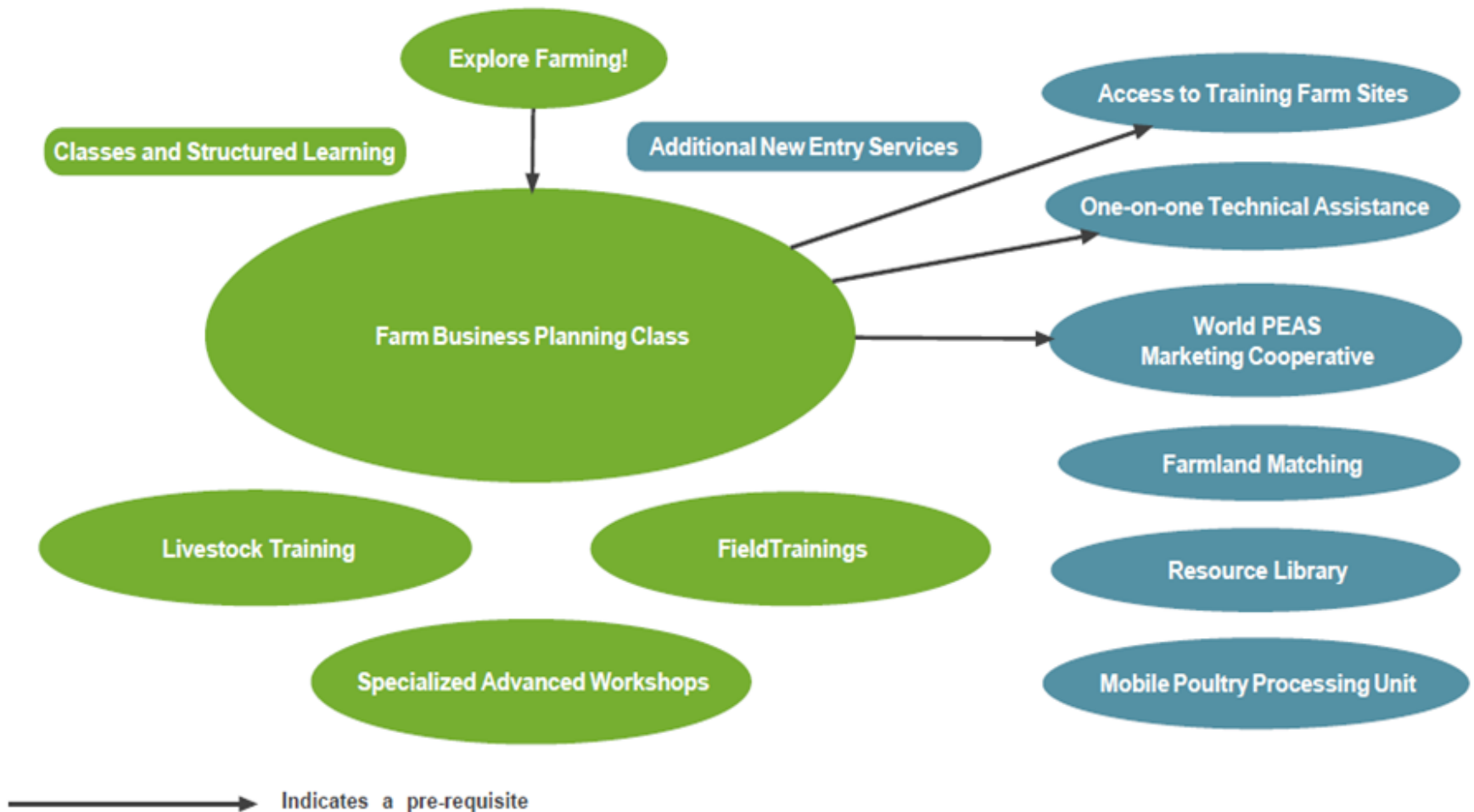


THE NEW BREED



The real reason farmers get up early.

New Entry Curriculum and Programs





PROGRAM GOALS

Capacity

Knowledge

Training &
Education

Practical
Skills

Technical
Assistance





PROGRAM GOALS



Resources

Farmland

Capital

Infrastructure



PROGRAM GOALS

Enterprise

Diversified

Markets

Multi-farm CSA

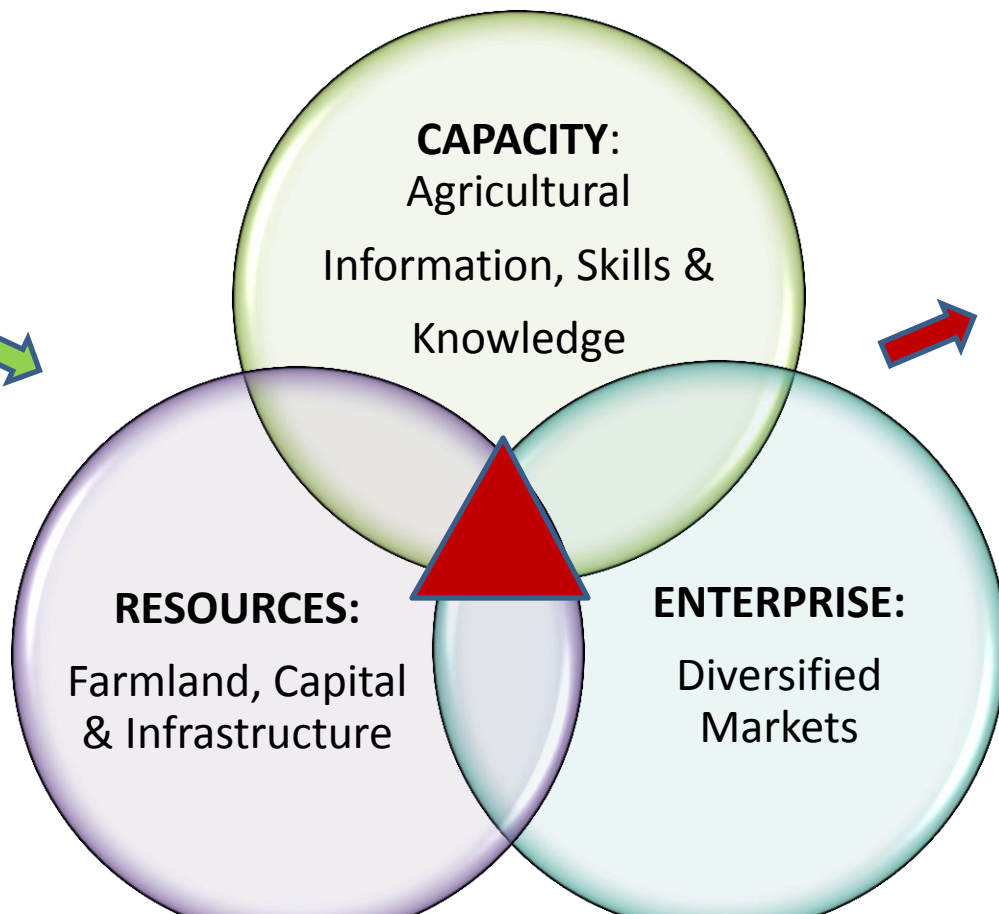
Food Hub





PUT IT ALL
TOGETHER...

Challenges
to enter or
engage in
the business
of farming



**Successful
Farmers**



Many more
tasty &
nutritious
meals!



OUTCOMES

- Data gathering has been spotty, follow up with farmers is challenging
- Started in 1998, assisted 18 Cambodian and Hmong refugees through 2002.
- Nine are still actively farming and still connected either to New Entry in Dracut or to the Flats Mentor Farm in Lancaster, MA
- Out of 152 total program participants since 2003, we estimate that 86 (56 percent) are still farming.
- Of these, 79 (51 percent) are farming independently and seven (4 percent) are still working on farms.
- Core participant data only; dozens more benefit from advanced classes, livestock, farmland matching, etc.



KEYS TO SUCCESS

- Comprehensive program - All pieces are important
 - Education
 - Resources
 - Markets
- Provide ongoing support
 - Farmland Matching
 - Market access - World PEAS
 - Help accessing credit, farm programs, etc.
- We work with what we have
- Innovation, creative thinking and problem solving





+ Farm Incubators: The Big Picture



National Incubator Farm Training Initiative (NIFTI)

- Proliferation of new incubator projects
- Shared challenges
- Increasing requests for TA



+

National Incubator Farm Training Initiative

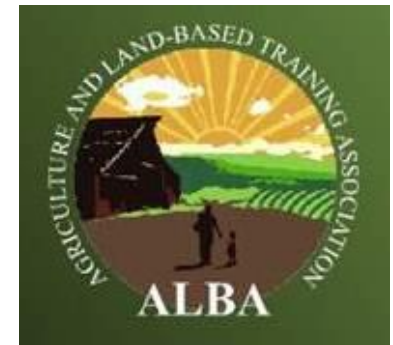
(NIFTI)

- Started in January 2012

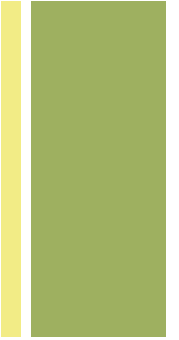


MINNESOTA FOOD ASSOCIATION

- Training the trainers
- Veteran incubator projects
- Services offered
 - One-on-one TA
 - Webinars
 - Field Schools



+ What is a Farm Incubator?



- Land-based...
- Beginning Farmer training...
- Focused on entrepreneurship and training small business owners

+ Why Farm Incubators?

- Aging farmer population and other demographic shifts
- Consumer demand for small-scale (human-powered) agriculture
- Family and/or Extension vacuum
- Access to resources (land, education, markets, capital)
- Farming is high risk!
- Sustainability goals
- Funding opportunities (BFRDP, OASDFR, RAP-P)





Types of Beginning Farmer Training

- Family farms
- Apprenticeships (paid or unpaid)
- Farm incubators
- Land grant or private university degree programs
- Non-profit classroom-based or on-farm trainings
- Extension
- Self-directed learning through print and online tools
- Others?



The CENTER for AGROECOLOGY
& SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension





Why Farm Incubators?

	Access to resources (land, equip., etc.)	Formalized educational component	Social capital/ community/ networking	Market development and access	Small business development	Payment arrangements
Family Farms						Free
Apprenticeships						Small stipends, sometimes housing and board to apprentice
Farm Incubator						Trainee pays a small (often subsidized) land rental fee
University						Tuition costs (can be offset with financial aid)
Classes (non-profit, extension)						Class-by-class fees differ depending on various factors
Self-directed learning						Free (internet resources) cost of subscriptions and books



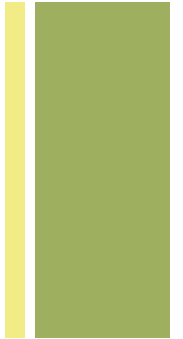
Who starts incubators?

- Extension
- Non-profits
- Colleges/universities
- Food Banks
- Refugee resettlement agencies/faith-based
- County or state DED
- Conservation districts



+

Where are they located?



- ~125 Projects
- ~ 91 operational
- 27, 0-1 years
- 38, 2-4 years
- 26, 5+ years
- 36 states
- 2,200 Acres

+

Who are we serving?



■ 1,120

Farmers

■ 3,000

Market
Gardeners

■ 72%

Immigrant,
refugee, low-
income

+

So, does it

work?

- Goals differ
 - Economic development
 - Job training
 - Food security
 - Community health and wealth
 - Environmental sustainability
- Measurement challenges
 - Training
 - Prioritizing
 - Resources

Farm Incubator Outcomes (n=25)



National survey data gathered from 43 incubator projects in April 2013 shows that of the 25 projects who track their farmers past graduation, seven (28%) reported 0 - 25% of graduates still farming, five (20%) had 26 - 50% of graduates still farming, seven (28%) had 51 - 75% of graduates still farming, and six (24%) had 75 - 100% of graduates still farming. Although this data shows that FIPs can be highly effective, many projects still lack the

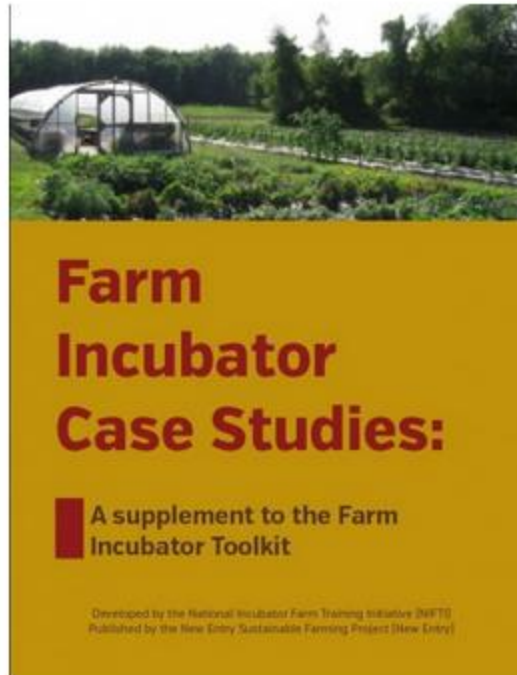
Farm Incubator Case Studies

Twelve case studies of farm incubator projects from across the U.S. conducted by the National Incubator Farm Training Initiative. Each case study is four full pages of information, including basic demographics (legal structure, numbers of staff and farmers served, acres, programs offered, etc.) as well as detailed discussions of project background, structure, operations, project management, lessons learned, and much more. The case studies also provide links to supplementary documents that offer insight and examples of the organization's work.

MEDIA: Digital Download

LANGUAGE: English

INCUBATOR TYPE: Urban Rural Peri-urban



<http://nesfp.org/nifti/casestudies>

+ Case Studies:

The Farley Center

Headwaters Farm
Incubator Program



- 10 acres, 16 miles southwest of Madison, WI
- Started with land from private landowner
- Serves recent immigrants (Latino, Hmong)
- BFRDP grant and non-profit status in 2010
- Collaborative decision making
- Most farmers have off-farm income
- Curriculum developed organically
- Focus on collective infrastructural improvements
- Cooperative marketing
- No time limit, no formal transition process
- Land link program

- Headwaters Incubator Program - est. 2013
- 30 acres, 20 miles east of Portland, OR
- Part of a government agency - emphasis on conservation practices
- Funded through local property taxes
- 4 year time limit, graduated fee structure
- Capacity for 15 businesses
- Workshops offered in collaboration with Extension and NRCS
- Upfront investment in infrastructure and fertility
- Transition assistance - credit and land access
- Competitive application process -





+ Best Practices

+ What works?

- Know your goals and who you're serving
- Get clear on the value-add
- Provide access to things that are missing, refer to things that are available but under-utilized
- Collaborate, collaborate, collaborate
- Have clear policies and procedures in place FIRST
- Have the capacity to offer what you're promising
- The perfect is the enemy of the good
- Start tracking baseline data and outcomes AT THE BEGINNING
- Diversify your funding streams
- Think about long-term land access early and often
- Include financial health and planning for farmers
- Don't manage things that farmers can manage themselves
- Focus on "leadership development"
- Manage your soil fertility and other shared resources
- Proximity to markets and some marketing

NIFTI Training Materials

The National Incubator Farm Training Initiative (NIFTI) offers over 150 resources compiled from dozens of organizations across the country related to best practices for farm incubator projects.

From sample curricula, to farmer leases and manuals, to site management protocols, NIFTI's library contains a wide range of tools to help your organization better serve beginning farmers.

Also take a look at our brand new **Farm Incubator Toolkit**; a comprehensive guide to starting and operating land-based beginning farmer training programs!

If you have a resource you would like see, or one you would like to share with the NIFTI community of practitioners, contact Eva: eagudelo@comteam.org.

I'M LOOKING FOR...

MEDIA

- ☒ CD
- ☒ Book
- ☒ DVD
- ☒ Periodical
- ☒ Digital Download
- ☒ Video
- ☒ Web Page

NIFTI TRAINING TOPIC

- ☐ Advocacy
- ☐ How to Teach
- ☐ Marketing Support
- ☐ Multi-lingual
- Resources
- ☐ NIFTI Webinars
- ☐ Plain Language Materials

INCUBATOR TYPE

- ☐ Urban
- ☐ Rural
- ☐ Peri-urban

POPULATION TYPE

- ☐ Immigrant
- ☐ Refugee
- ☐ US Born
- ☐ Low-Income
- ☐ College Student



Annual Assessment for Farmers and Staff

Digital Download

A 144-point skills assessment from the New American Sustainable Agriculture Program in ME used to evaluate farmer progress. This simple, but comprehensive tool uses pictures and straightforward questions to find out how farmers are progressing towards meeting their learning goals.



Annual Farmer Survey Interview

Digital Download

Beginning farmer survey written by Agricultural Land Based Training Association (ALBA) to confidentially learn how farmers are doing after receiving one year of services from ALBA. Survey includes questions on experience with ALBA, growing practices, and business finances.



Applying for Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Digital Download

Plain language guide from New Entry for farmers interested in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), which pays farmers and ranchers to implement practices that protect water, soil, and air quality. The guide explains how the program works and outlines eligibility, the application process, and how the money can be used.

<http://nesfp.org/nifti/library>

The Farm Incubator Toolkit

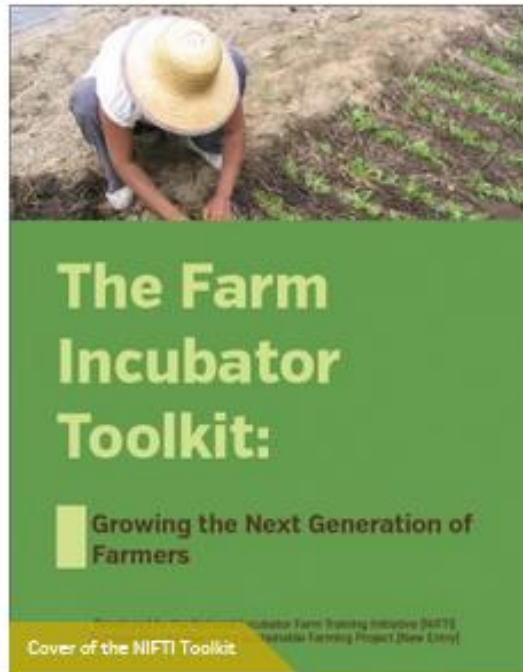
A comprehensive guide to starting and operating land-based beginning farmer training programs.

The National Incubator Farm Training Initiative has compiled the knowledge and experience of dozens of farm incubator projects across the U.S. to bring you the first edition of the NIFTI Farm Incubator Toolkit.

You can download the entire [NIFTI Farm Incubator Toolkit here \[2 MB\]](#).

For supplementary materials, such as budgets, full examples of curriculum, etc. that didn't fit in the toolkit here, visit the [NIFTI Library](#).

NIFTI welcomes and appreciates feedback on these resources, including any suggestions on additional materials or topics you would like to see included in future editions of the toolkit. Contact the NIFTI Program Coordinator, Eva Agudelo Winther, at eaagudelo@comteam.org.



<http://nesfp.org/nifti/toolkit>



Metrics and Evaluation for Farm Incubators

**A supplement to the Farm
Incubator Toolkit**

Developed by the National Incubator Farm Training Initiative (NIFTI)
Published by the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project (New Entry)

<http://nesfp.org/nifti/mande>



Contact NIFTI:

+ Eva Agudelo Winther
National Incubator Farm Training Initiative
Coordinator
New Entry Sustainable Farming Project
eagudelo@comteam.org
978-654-5731