

# Stateline Farm Beginnings®

## Year 7: 2011-12

### Information & Application Package



Stateline Farm Beginnings Class of 2010-2011 (Year 6)

coordinated by



**Angelic Organics Learning Center**

1547 Rockton Road, Caledonia, IL 61011

(815) 389-8455

[www.learnrowconnect.org](http://www.learnrowconnect.org)    [craft@learnrowconnect.org](mailto:craft@learnrowconnect.org)

in cooperation with



**Collaborative Regional Alliance *for* Farmer Training**



main: 1547 Rockton Rd ☎ Caledonia IL 61011  
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773.288.5462 (p) ☎ 425.969.0317 (f)

## Dear Prospective Farmer,

It is with great enthusiasm that I send along this packet of information on the 2011-2012 Stateline Farm Beginnings<sup>®</sup> program. The following should help you become more familiar with what we have to offer.

Stateline Farm Beginnings<sup>®</sup> is aimed at both beginning and transitioning farmers who want to enter sustainable agriculture. It is a farmer led training program where you will learn and develop your own farm vision and whole farm plan with guidance from successful sustainable agriculture growers from our region. Stateline Farm Beginnings<sup>®</sup> is a project of the farmers in the Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training (CRAFT) which is coordinated and administered by Angelic Organics Learning Center. CRAFT farmers have worked collaboratively for nearly ten years to offer farmer-led training to prospective farmers through field days, workshops, and mentoring. Stateline Farm Beginnings<sup>®</sup> will be entering its 7th year in October 2011 and has produced over 100 graduates. We are pleased to say that over 60% of our graduates are currently farming!

The information in this packet provides you with a draft program schedule for Stateline Farm Beginnings, graduate profiles, our CRAFT brochure, a list of the 2011 CRAFT field day workshops, the Land Stewardship Project Farm Beginnings<sup>®</sup> fact sheet, and an application form.

When you enroll in Stateline Farm Beginnings<sup>®</sup>, you enter a farmer-led learning environment that includes:

- \* Winter coursework (9 sessions from October to March)
- \* Approximately 10 CRAFT Field Day Workshops at regional farms (April to October)
- \* Mentoring by successful sustainable agriculture farmers (either via internships, employment, or technical assistance arrangements).

This is a unique opportunity to learn directly from successful farmers. There are no college courses that will prepare you for starting or transitioning your farm. I hope you will join us this fall and build a solid foundation for your farm dream.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jesse Strassburg", is centered on a light blue rectangular background.

Sincerely,

Jesse Strassburg, Program Director  
[jesse@learngrowconnect.org](mailto:jesse@learngrowconnect.org)

*Learn. Grow. Connect.*



# **Stateline Farm Beginnings®**

Year 7: 2011-12

## **Application Information**

### **Course Fee: \$1500**

(Scholarships and a flexible payment plan are available. Please inquire if you are interested.)

### **The course fee includes:**

- 45 hours of classroom time
- course supplies (including books and course binder)
- CRAFT membership (2012--includes field day workshops, resources, CRAFT Handbook, informal day visits to member farms)
- \$200 one-on-one mentoring payment (paid to the mentor of your choice)
- \$100 reimbursement for educational workshops you attend.

(The actual cost of the course is more than \$4000 but, through the generous support of our funding partners, we are able to offer this course to students for \$1500.)

### **Application Deadline Deadline: September 1, 2011**

(Envelope MUST be postmark on or before 9/1/2011)

### **\$150 "Early Bird Discount": August 15, 2011**

(Envelope MUST be postmark on or before 8/15/2011)

To apply, please send completed application(s) with the non-refundable \$100 deposit prior to the application deadline. You will be notified regarding acceptance or denial into the program via email by September 15.

Make checks payable to Angelic Organics Learning Center

Mail to: Angelic Organics Learning Center, 1547 Rockton Road, Caledonia, IL 61011

Space is limited. We allow only fifteen farmer applicants into the course (a farmer applicant can include your business partner, family or life partner). This will keep course participation to a maximum of thirty people and provide time for more interaction with one another and the guest speakers.

If you are unable to pay the full course fee, we encourage you to apply for a scholarship.  
Please call or email us for a scholarship application.

For more information, contact us at 815-389-8455 or [CRAFT@learnrowconnect.org](mailto:CRAFT@learnrowconnect.org)

# Stateline Farm Beginnings®

## Year 7: 2011-2012 Program Components and Schedule

### A. Winter Course Dates and Times — October, 2011 to March, 2012

#### 2011 Dates

Saturday, October 22 – 10:00am-4:00pm  
Saturday, November 5 – 10:00am-4:00pm  
Saturday, November 19 – 10:00am-4:00pm  
Saturday, December 3 – 10:00am -3:00pm  
Saturday, December 17 – 10:00am-4:00pm

#### 2012 Dates

Saturday, January 7 – 10:00am-4:00pm  
Saturday, January 21 – 10:00am-3:00pm  
Saturday, February 4 – 10:00am-4:00pm  
Saturday, February 18 – 10:00am-3:00pm  
Saturday, September 15 – Tentative

*All sessions are held at Pine Row Farm, 11449 Havenswood Road, Roscoe, Illinois*

**SNOW DATE** ((Please keep this date open. Snow dates have traditionally been used.):

Saturday, March 5, 2011 – 10:00am-3:00pm

#### **Session #1** *Saturday, October 22, 10am-4pm—Starting on Solid Ground: Integrating Values and Goals*

Presenters: Jesse Strassburg (AOLC Farmer Training Program Director), Sheri Doyel (Swamp Angel Farm and Stateline Farm Beginnings Facilitator), Beginning Farmer Panel

We will introduce the framework of the Stateline Farm Beginnings® course and hear from Stateline Farm Beginning Graduates. During the class we will gain a better sense of personal values, goals, and how they relate to starting a farm business. Activities/Assignments: goals clarification; skills assessment; personal aim; more

#### **Session #2** *Saturday, November 5, 10am-4pm—The Whole Farm: Envisioning and Analyzing the Situation*

Presenters: Don Larson (Pine Row Farm)

Important in your planning is establishing your strategic objective and primary aim. You will actively envision your farm, hear plans from fellow students, and consider the farm as a whole organism. Meet the farmer: Don Larson, Pine Row Farm. Activities/Assignments: SWOT analysis; share strategic objective/primary aim; enterprise brainstorm; develop mission and goals; more

#### **Session #3** *Saturday, November 19, 10am-4pm—Introduction to Marketing Strategies and Financial Planning*

Presenters: Jim Munsch (Deer Run Farm)

Learn about whole farm planning and the integral relationship between your product and your market. Jim will share tips learned over the years. Tools will be introduced to begin assessing your marketing strategy. Activities: share mission and goals; get feedback on enterprise ideas; target market and competitive advantage exercises.

#### **Session #4** *Saturday, December 3, 10am-3pm—Defining Pricing and Distribution Strategy*

Hear the successful marketing and distribution strategies of 3 different farmers, including a vegetable farm that sells at farmers markets, a pork farm that sells through CSA, and a value added producer who sells through farmers markets and wholesale. The 4 P's of marketing will be included: product, price, place, and promotion. Activity: share and refine marketing and distribution strategy; more.

#### **Session #5** *Saturday, December 17, 10am-4pm—Assembling Financial Data and Developing Organizational Structure*

Presenters: Tom Spaulding (Angelic Organics Learning Center), Margaret Nelson (Margie's Grass Kickin' Chicken)

Learn about managing the financial data of the business. Hear how our farmer speakers track and utilize their financial data. Tools will be introduced to begin assessing and developing a financial plan for your enterprise, including building your cash flow statement. Organizational strategies for people and procedures will be introduced. Meet the Farmer: Margaret Nelson, Margies Grass Kickin' Chicken. Activities: construct a cash flow statement, complete organizational chart.

**Session #6 Saturday, January 7, 10am-4pm—Building the Business Plan**

Presenters: Carl Rainey & Paul Dietmann (Wisconsin Department of Ag, Trade and Consumer Protection)

In depth discussion of farm financials, and the elements of a successful strategic business plan. Paul Dietmann will review a student's budget with the class. Class Facilitator will introduce the Farm Skills Evaluation and the Growing Season Learning Plan. Activity: work together on business plan worksheet (marketing, distribution, production, and financials).

**Session #7 Saturday, January 21, 10am-3pm—Realities from the Field: Refining the Business Plan**

Farmer-Buyer Panel: Steve Pincus (Tipi Produce), Steve Tiwald (Green Earth Institute), Michelle Princer, Owner and Chef (Toni's of Winnebago), Dennis Ryan, Market Manager, (61<sup>st</sup> Street Market), Irv Cernauskus (Irv and Shelly's Fresh Pics), and more. All speakers yet to be confirmed.

Learn about distribution and marketing strategies of other producers, as well as the buying practices of retailers. The panel discussion will be moderated by Stateline Farm Beginnings<sup>®</sup> facilitator and address the marketing, distribution, and production aspects of particular farm businesses.

**Session #8 Saturday, February 4, 10am-4pm—Connecting with Resources and Building a Mentoring Plan**

Presenters: Phil Lehman (Harvard State Bank), David Wolf (Woodstock Legal Consultants), Steve Miller (Country Financials), Margaret Larson, (University of Illinois Extension), NRCS representative, and more. All speakers yet to be confirmed.

Resources will be introduced regarding legal issues, insurance, trademarks, taxes, and business name. Regional educational resources discussed, as well as mentorship guidelines for the upcoming growing season.

**Session #9 Saturday, February 18, 10am-3pm—Class Presentations**

This session will provide the synthesis of the class and the work you have done throughout the course. Activity: Participants will have an opportunity to present to the rest of the class where they started, where they are now and share their next steps.

**B. Field Day Workshops — April to October 2012**

Stateline Farm Beginnings<sup>®</sup> participants take part in multiple field day workshops of their choice from April to October. The workshops are hosted and led by member farmers in the Upper Midwest CRAFT (Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training-Northern Illinois and Southern Wisconsin).

**C. One-on-One Mentoring — April to September 2012**

Stateline Farm Beginnings<sup>®</sup> participants are paired with mentor farmers on a case-by-case basis. The Stateline Farm Beginnings<sup>®</sup> facilitator helps each student assess his or her mentoring needs and helps the student establish a relationship with a mentor. A \$200 fee is available to be paid to the mentor of your choice.

**D. Educational Workshop Reimbursement — October 2011 to September 2012**

All Stateline Farm Beginnings<sup>®</sup> participants are reimbursed up to \$100 for attending skills building workshops of their choice.

**E. Last Meeting and Graduation Event — September 15, 2012**

All Stateline Farm Beginnings participants meet to share and evaluate their experience during the growing season AND to celebrate with a graduation potluck picnic at the Angelic Organics Learning Center picnic shelter.

## Stateline Farm Beginnings®

### Graduate Profile

#### **Mark and Margaret Nelson Margie's Grass Kickin Chickens Roscoe, Illinois**

Margaret grew up on a conventional dairy farm in northern Illinois and always wanted to farm, but thought it was too unrealistic. She and her husband Mark, a city kid, got a few cattle as soon as they moved onto their six acres. They wanted to make sure that their daughters were brought up around livestock. So the girls both helped to raise a few beef cattle and show them through 4H and at the county fair each year. I asked Margaret about Mark as a farm laborer and she drew back and laughed. She said that when they first got the cattle Mark would feed them, and upon returning she would ask, "Did you call them?" Mark would say, "What for, they come when they see the feed." Margaret would tell him again and again, "You have to call those cattle." So, reluctantly...he would call them and dole out the feed.

One day when Mark was driving home from work he thought he caught sight of the back end of a calf heading into the corn field. Sure enough, when he got home the cattle were no where to be found. He grabbed his bucket of feed and went back down the road to where he thought he saw the calf and starting calling. Next thing you know, Mark is leading the group of cattle down the road, calling them, and luring them along with the feed bucket. Margaret laughs, "I never had to ask him to call the cattle again."

It wasn't until they put together a couple of the Joel Salatin moveable chicken pens that they began to think more seriously about farming as a business. Margaret and Mark both grew up near Roscoe, Illinois and once some of their friends tried some of their pasture raised poultry, Margie's Grass Kickin' Chicken was born. The couple took the Farm Beginnings class in the Fall of 2005 and have added laying



Margaret Nelson

hens to go along with the meat birds and a couple pigs. Mark is the builder of the animal housing and as Margaret puts it, "A real good chicken catcher...he's fast." The Salatin pens worked good for their mobility, but Margaret found them a bit heavy and Mark found them a bit low to the ground for his 'chicken catching' leading up to harvest. This year Mark has built some cattle panel hoopstyle houses for the meat birds and a moveable wagon house for the laying hens.

Margaret's favorite parts of Farm Beginnings® were doing a cash flow statement for the business and meeting all the farmers and hearing their stories. She also remarked that the classes made them think about what their goals were for the farm and what direction they wanted to take their business. Margaret just went through some decisions concerning the chickens feed, which brought back memories of farmer Dave Varney's talk during Farm Beginnings that emphasized being flexible and open to the fact that your business plan is going to change as unpredictable circumstances arrive.

Margaret was able to give up her part-time job this spring so that she can focus full time on the farm. I asked her how she liked not working off the farm, and in typical farmer speak she replied, "it's alright, but I'm pretty busy... a lot to do around here." So what is her biggest challenge? Time. Time for those grass kickin' chickens.

# Stateline Farm Beginnings®

## Graduate Profile

**By Kristen Kordet, Farmer,  
Blue Moon Community Farm  
Stoughton, Wisconsin**



Anne Shapiro

“There is no college degree that prepares someone for a life in farming”

I had a garden once. It was a patch of ground outside of an apartment building where the soil had been stripped. I spent a few days following tips from an old Organic Gardening magazine, planted some seeds, and waited. Some of them came up, along with an army of weeds, and I took up knitting. Gardening seemed like too much work. The baby plants died, smothered by weeds and parched in the dry sandy ground.

Later I became an “environmentalist.” This was my job. I had a health plan. I talked to farmers about their land. I asked them not to plant too close to the streams. I asked them to plant grasses to trap chemicals that flowed from their fields into the water. I was an expert.

I thought the farmers should clean up their act. I still had not grown anything. But I wanted to.

There was something mysterious and exciting about what those farmers did. I started wondering about soil. I wanted to grow food. It seemed like an important thing to learn — You never know. So I looked for a farm that would employ me. If I had dared to write an ad, it might have read: “Enthusiastic individual seeks employment in organic farming. No growing experience, no carpentry or mechanical skills.”

By any standard, I was unemployable. To my surprise, there are farmers out there, great farmers, who hire people like me. They accepted the challenge and put a hoe in my hand. They put me on a tractor. They sent me under the hood of a pick-up. And so I learned things. Farming, yes; more importantly — patience, attention, persistence, forgiveness (mostly, the ability to forgive myself). I learned to build things and fix a few things too. And I could grow whatever I wanted. I made lots of mistakes, but I was driven and I loved those farms. I had the experience of having everything to lose when I had nothing to lose. I bruised my knees. My hands calloused over. I bruised my ego. I had graduated college at the top of my class. I used to be an expert. Farming brought me to my knees.

I am a farmer now, because I don’t want to be anything else. I’m not so much a grower but a witness to growth and beauty. Every day I am challenged and reminded how much I have to learn. I have had so many teachers/farmers who taught me through an unfailing sense a wonder about the work we are doing.

CRAFT is important. There is no college degree that prepares someone for a life in farming. It is not a career or a job; it is truly a life. Wendell Berry, the Kentucky poet-farmer, said, “If we do not live where we work and when we work, then we are wasting our lives and our work too.” The best way to learn farming is to live like a farmer. Let it soak into your pores and fill your senses. Let it seduce you. That’s what a season on a CRAFT farm is. Its worth cannot be underestimated.

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Kristen Kordet owns Blue Moon Community Farm in Madison, WI. Kristen interned for 2 years on a CRAFT member farm in upstate New York and for 2 years on a CRAFT member farm in Sun Prairie, WI.



Anne Shapiro

## ***Stateline Farm Beginnings® Graduates that are CRAFT Farm Members***

*3 Flat Acres*, Angie & Bill Mitchell (Year 5, 2009-10), [www.3flatacres.com](http://www.3flatacres.com)  
*Angelic Organics Learning Center*, Tom Spaulding (Year 1, 2005-06), [www.learnrowconnect.org](http://www.learnrowconnect.org)  
*Big Head Farm*, Karen & Jody Warner (Year 4, 2008-09), [www.bigheadfarm.com](http://www.bigheadfarm.com)  
*Blessed Roots Farm*, Jason & Jenna Raymond (Year 6, 2010-11), [www.blessedrootsfarm.com](http://www.blessedrootsfarm.com)  
*Bob's Fresh and Local*, Bob Vierow (Year 5, 2009-10), [www.bobsfreshandlocal.com](http://www.bobsfreshandlocal.com)  
*Breslin Farms, LLC*, John & Molly Breslin (Year 5, 2009-10), [www.breslinfarms.com](http://www.breslinfarms.com)  
*Broken Fence Farm*, Susie Jeppsen-Rudawski (Year 4, 2008-09), [www.brokenfencefarm.com](http://www.brokenfencefarm.com)  
*Brown Deer Farm*, Kathryn Brown (Year 3, 2007-08), [www.browndeerfarm.com](http://www.browndeerfarm.com)  
*The Coney Garth*, Julie Engel (Year 5, 2009-10)  
*First Hand Harvest CSA Co-Op*, [www.firsthandharvest.com](http://www.firsthandharvest.com) (the following three farms are partners in this coop): *Hazzard Free Farms*, *Mighty Sprout Farm* & *Pine Row Farm*  
*Fondy Farm Project*, Stephen Petro (Year 6, 2010-11), [www.fondymarket.org](http://www.fondymarket.org)  
*Four Friends Farms*, Mike & Susan Kirby (Year 5, 2009-10), [www.fourfriendsfarms.com](http://www.fourfriendsfarms.com)  
*Freedom Organix*, Cindy Nawiesniak (Year 2, 2006-07), [www.freedomorganix.com](http://www.freedomorganix.com)  
*The Gentleman Farmer*, Dominic & Jessica Green (Year 5, 2009-10), [www.gentleman-farmer.com](http://www.gentleman-farmer.com)  
*Good Day Sunshine Organics*, Nancy Stumpf (Year 1, 2005-06), [www.gooddayorganics.com](http://www.gooddayorganics.com)  
*Grace Note Farm*, Tracey Hall (Year 1, 2005-06), [www.roseberrysoap.com](http://www.roseberrysoap.com)  
*Harvest Moon Farms*, Jenny Borchardt (Year 2, 2006-07), [www.harvestmoon-farms.com](http://www.harvestmoon-farms.com)  
*Hazzard Free Farms*, Andrea Hazzard (Year 2, 2006-07)  
*Hidden Marsh Farm*, David and Joanne Wolf (Year 1, 2005-06), [www.hidddenmarsh.com](http://www.hidddenmarsh.com)  
*Irish Grove Acres*, Jackie de Batista (Year 2, 2006-07), [www.irishgrove.blogspot.com](http://www.irishgrove.blogspot.com)  
*Loony Acres*, Robert & Theresa Gould (Year 5, 2009-10)  
*Margie's Grass Kickin Chicken*, Margaret Nelson (Year 1, 2005-06), [www.margiesgrasskickinchicken.com](http://www.margiesgrasskickinchicken.com)  
*Mighty Sprout Farm*, Michael Keefe (Year 3, 2007-08), [www.mightysproutfarm.com](http://www.mightysproutfarm.com)  
*Mike & Clare's Farm*, Michael Birch (Year 2, 2006-07), [www.mikeandclares.com](http://www.mikeandclares.com)  
*Peasant's Plot*, Todd & Julie McDonald (Year 2, 2006-07), [www.peasantsplot.com](http://www.peasantsplot.com)  
*Pine Row Farm*, Don & Tresea Larson (Year 2, 2006-07), [www.pinerowfarm.com](http://www.pinerowfarm.com)  
*Royal Soil Farm*, David & Cori Taylor (Year 6, 2010-11), [www.royalsoilfarm.com](http://www.royalsoilfarm.com)  
*Swamp Angel Farm*, Sheri Doyel (Year 4, 2008-09)  
*Sweet Home Organics*, Kim Marsin & Rachel Reklau (Year 4, 2008-09), [www.sweet-home-organics.com](http://www.sweet-home-organics.com)  
*Tall Oaks Farm LLC*, George Joseph (Year 2, 2006-07)  
*Tempel Farms Organics*, Chris & Tania Cubberly (Year 1, 2005-06), [www.redtailfarmer.com](http://www.redtailfarmer.com)  
*Thistle Ridge*, Kay & David Hatch (Year 4, 2008-09)  
*Three Sisters Community Farm*, Jeff Schreiber (Year 4, 2008-09), [www.threesisterscommunityfarm.com](http://www.threesisterscommunityfarm.com)  
*Torpland Farm*, Ann Torp (Year 5, 2009-10)  
*Trogg's Hollow*, Chris & Marcy Prchal (Year 6, 2010-11), [www.troggshollow.com](http://www.troggshollow.com)  
*Wild Abundance*, Lance Weinhardt & Nicole Bickham (Year 5, 2009-10), [www.wildabundancefarm.com](http://www.wildabundancefarm.com)  
*Wild Goose Farm*, Meg Runyan (Year 3, 2007-08), [www.wildgoosefarm.net](http://www.wildgoosefarm.net)

# 2011 CRAFT Field Days

Saturday, May 21, 9am, potluck after

## **Biodynamic Dandelion Pick**

Zinniker Farm, East Troy, WI

Monday, June 13, 1-4pm, potluck at 12noon

## **From Field to Jar: Turning Produce into Value Added Goods**

Tomato Mountain Farm, Brooklyn, WI

Monday, June 20, 1-4pm, potluck at 12noon

## **Small Grains and Beans**

*This is a Beginning Farmer Field Day – an advisor will be on hand at this new farm*

Advisor: Dave Campbell of Lily Lake Organic Farm

Breslin Farms, Ottawa, IL

Thursday July 14, 1-4pm, potluck at 12noon

## **Post Harvest Handling**

Vermont Valley Community Farm, Blue Mounds, WI

Saturday, July 23, 1-4pm, potluck at 12noon

## **Crop Rotations: Who Follows? Who Leads? You Might be Surprised**

Angelic Organics, Caledonia, IL

Sunday August 14, 1-4pm, potluck at 12noon

## **Multi-species Rotational Grazing**

VDB Organic Farms, Delavan, WI

Mid-August, To Be Announced

## **Bees and Honey: From Hive to Extraction**

Honey Valley Apiaries, East Troy, WI

Sunday September 4, 1-4pm, potluck at 12noon

## **Raising Goats and Marketing Soap**

Grace Note Farm, Whitewater, WI

Saturday, September 24, Time To Be Announced

## **Biodynamic Preparations**

Zinniker Farm, East Troy, WI

Saturday, October 1, 2-5pm, potluck after

## **Machinery for the CSA Farm**

Springdale Farm, Plymouth, WI

Thursday, October 20, 11am – 3pm, potluck at 12:30

## **Move a House: Movable Hoophouses and Heated Hoops**

*This is a working field day – come prepared to learn and work*

Heritage Prairie Market Farm, Elburn, IL



# Farm Beginnings®

Updated:  
Aug. 2009

*Rotating in a new generation of farmers*

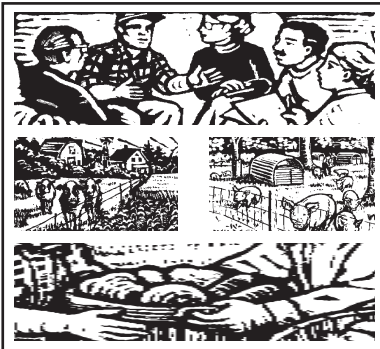
[www.farmbeginnings.org](http://www.farmbeginnings.org)

## What is Farm Beginnings?

Farm Beginnings® is a Land Stewardship Project (LSP) initiative that provides participants an opportunity to learn firsthand about low-cost, sustainable methods of farming.

Farm Beginnings started in 1997 when a group of southeast Minnesota farmers called the “Wabasha County Give A Damns” approached LSP with concerns about where the next generation of farmers would come from. These farmers saw a need for a program that would combine classroom instruction and on-farm mentoring.

What resulted was an initiative that has its roots in the philosophy that farmers learn new techniques and management systems best by networking with other farmers. The first LSP Farm Beginnings classes began meeting in southeast Minnesota and later expanded to other regions.



## Why is it needed?

Making a go of it in farming today can be very difficult. However, a growing group of farmers are showing that through the use of low-cost techniques, creative marketing and whole farm planning, one can develop a farming operation that is economically viable and provides a good quality of life.

Studies show that a major barrier to adopting “sustainable” farming methods is lack of information and first-hand knowledge related to such systems. A Northwest Area Foundation study found that farmers adopting alternative production methods were more likely to be successful if they were part of some sort of formal or informal network of like-minded farmers.

Another potential barrier to getting started in farming is lack of access to capital. A 2003 survey of farmers, lenders and agricultural educators in Minnesota and Wisconsin found that not having a good business plan was a major impediment to getting financing for alternative enterprises.

By providing a good foundation in business planning while creating the opportunity for participants to network with established farmers, Farm Beginnings helps knock down two major barriers to the adoption of innovative agricultural systems.

## The Farm Beginnings course

Farm Beginnings classes begin in the fall of each year and meet throughout the winter. Class participants learn

goal setting, financial planning, business plan creation, alternative marketing and low-cost sustainable farming techniques. Participants are encouraged to develop a sustainable business plan that enhances their quality of life and helps them achieve their goals—a plan that factors in sound environmental practices while being economically viable. Established farmers and other professionals such as lenders and agricultural business instructors present at the seminars, providing a strong foundation of community resources, networks and contacts for those interested in farming. These relationships often last long after the formalized course is concluded.

The highlight of the winter classes is a set of presentations given by beginning farmers outlining their goals and how they plan on achieving them. At the conclusion of classes, Farm Beginnings moves onto the land itself, where participants take part in a series of on-farm field days during the spring and summer. At these field days, innovative farmers demonstrate firsthand how they raise food and fiber using methods that are economically and environmentally sound. The on-farm education component is a critical part of the learning. Participants find themselves touring a variety of farms in addition to having a one-on-one experience with a specific farmer. Throughout the 10-month course, participants are encouraged to utilize established farmers as mentors.

## The Livestock Loan Program

In a further effort to help people get launched in their farming careers, Farm Beginnings has partnered with Heifer International to provide a zero interest revolving livestock loan for qualified beginning farmers. The Livestock Loan Program helps farmers build equity while supporting them with a continuing education component.

## How successful is Farm Beginnings?

- ✓ During the first dozen years of the initiative, more than 380 people have completed or are enrolled in the Farm Beginnings course in southeast and western Minnesota.
- ✓ Over 60 percent of those graduates are farming.

- ✓ Over 6,000 acres of land is owned, rented or otherwise farmed by Minnesota-region Farm Beginnings graduates.
- ✓ Farm Beginnings graduates are engaged in a broad spectrum of farming enterprises: beef, dairy, hogs, meat goats, poultry, wholesale vegetables, Community Supported Agriculture, organic grains and specialty products such as cut flowers.
- ✓ Sixty-six percent of the course graduates who are farming say their net farm income has increased since taking Farm Beginnings. The average net farm income increase is \$12,500.

## Are you in the MN, IA, WI, SD region?

If you are a beginning farmer in the Minnesota region who is interested in learning more about Farm Beginnings, there are several ways to get started:

### ◆ Driftless Region

*(SE Minn., Western WI, NE Iowa)*

- Karen Stettler (general information)  
E-mail: [stettler@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:stettler@landstewardshipproject.org)
- Parker Forsell (Farm Beginnings Collaborative)  
E-mail: [parker@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:parker@landstewardshipproject.org)
- Karen Benson (class registration)  
E-mail: [lpse@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:lpse@landstewardshipproject.org)  
Website: [www.farmbeginnings.org](http://www.farmbeginnings.org)  
Phone: 507-523-3366  
Address: P.O. Box 130, Lewiston, MN 55952

### ◆ Prairie Region

*(Western Minn., SE S. Dak., NW Iowa)*

- Amy Bacigalupo (general information)  
E-mail: [amyb@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:amyb@landstewardshipproject.org)
- Nick Olson (class information)  
E-mail: [nicko@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:nicko@landstewardshipproject.org)  
Phone: 320-269-2105  
Address: 301 State Rd., Suite 2, Montevideo, MN 56265

## Farm Beginnings in other regions

Besides Minnesota, Farm Beginnings is now in Illinois, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and the Hudson Valley of New York, as well as the Lake Superior region in north-east Minnesota and northwest Wisconsin. LSP and the groups listed here make up the Farm Beginnings Collaborative:

### ◆ Central Illinois Farm Beginnings

- Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant (Greenview, Ill.)  
Phone: 217-968-5512  
Cell: 217-341-0398  
E-mail: [cvnghgrn@illinois.edu](mailto:cvnghgrn@illinois.edu)  
Website: <http://central.illinoisfarmbeginnings.org>

### ◆ Illinois: The Land Connection

- Kathy McGroarty-Torres (Evanston, Ill.)  
Phone: 847-570-0701

Fax: 847-570-0711  
E-mail: [kathy@thelandconnection.org](mailto:kathy@thelandconnection.org)  
Website: [www.thelandconnection.org](http://www.thelandconnection.org)

### ◆ Illinois: Stateline Farm Beginnings

- Tom Spaulding/Sheri Doyel/  
Tracey Hall (Caledonia, Ill.)  
Phone: 815-389-8455  
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E-mail: [sheri@learngrowconnect.org](mailto:sheri@learngrowconnect.org)  
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Website: [www.learngrowconnect.org](http://www.learngrowconnect.org)

### ◆ Lake Superior-NW Wisconsin/NE Minnesota

- Cree Bradley (Two Harbors, Minn.)  
Phone: 218-834-0846  
E-mail: [cree@lakesuperiorfarming.org](mailto:cree@lakesuperiorfarming.org)  
Website: [www.lakesuperiorfarming.org](http://www.lakesuperiorfarming.org)

### ◆ Nebraska

- Gary Lesoing (Auburn, Neb.)  
Phone: 402-274-4755  
E-mail: [glesoing2@unl.edu](mailto:glesoing2@unl.edu)
- William Powers (Lincoln, Neb.)  
Phone: 402-525-7794  
E-mail: [healthyfarms@gmail.com](mailto:healthyfarms@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.nebsusag.org](http://www.nebsusag.org)

### ◆ New York

- Rachel Schneider (Ghent, N.Y.)  
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Website: [www.hawthornevalleyfarm.org](http://www.hawthornevalleyfarm.org)

### ◆ North Dakota

- Britt Jacobson/Karri Stroh (Medina, N. Dak.)  
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Fax: 701-486-3580  
E-mail: [info@farrms.org](mailto:info@farrms.org)  
Website: [www.farrms.org](http://www.farrms.org)

### ◆ South Dakota

- Frank James/Heidi Kolbeck-  
Urlacher (Brookings, S. Dak.)  
Phone: 605-697-5204  
Fax: 605-697-6230  
E-mail: [heidiku@dakotarural.org](mailto:heidiku@dakotarural.org)  
E-mail: [fejames@dakotarural.org](mailto:fejames@dakotarural.org)  
Website: [www.dakotarural.org](http://www.dakotarural.org)



*This fact sheet is brought to you by the members and staff of the Land Stewardship Project, a nonprofit organization devoted to fostering an ethic of stewardship for farmland and to seeing more successful farmers on the land raising crops and livestock. For more information, call 612-722-6377 or visit [www.landstewardshipproject.org](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org).*

**Stateline Farm Beginnings®**  
**Year 7: 2011-2012 Program Application**

**Primary Applicant Contact Information**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Farm Name (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

County: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (in order of preference)

(1<sup>st</sup> choice) \_\_\_\_\_ Home/Work/Cell (circle one)

(2<sup>nd</sup> choice) \_\_\_\_\_ Home/Work/Cell (circle one)

May we call you at work?  Yes  No

Will a family or business partner attend SFB with you?  Yes  No

If YES, please have partner complete a *Partner Application*.

Partner's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Partner's Relationship to you \_\_\_\_\_

# Stateline Farm Beginnings®

## Year 7: 2011-2012 Program Application

Primary Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*(If you need more space than provided, please attach additional sheets)*

1. How did you hear about Stateline Farm Beginnings®?

2. Why are you interested in farming?

3. How long have you been interested in farming?

4. Please indicate your highest level of education:

\_\_\_\_\_ Some high school

\_\_\_\_\_ Some college

\_\_\_\_\_ Graduate /Professional Degree

\_\_\_\_\_ High school diploma

\_\_\_\_\_ Bachelor's degree

\_\_\_\_\_ Technical school degree

# Stateline Farm Beginnings®

## Year 7: 2011-2012 Program Application

Primary Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Provide a summary of the school(s) you have attended and your work experience including present occupations:

6. Please summarize any agricultural jobs, training, or experience you have had. Include any and all experience you have related to farming or farm planning and management.

7. Are you currently farming? (For the purposes of this application, "farming" can include starting a farm, transitioning an existing farm from conventional to sustainable and/or working as a manager, employee or intern on someone else's farm.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_\_\_ No

8. What do you see as your biggest obstacle in starting your own farm operation?

# Stateline Farm Beginnings®

## Year 7: 2011-2012 Program Application

Primary Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Indicate the areas you are specifically interested in working on throughout the Farm Beginnings® course. Check all that apply:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial management         | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Agricultural practices |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business planning            | <input type="checkbox"/> Livestock production               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of life issues             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Monitoring     | <input type="checkbox"/> Lowering production costs          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Management intensive grazing | <input type="checkbox"/> Organic farming                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please list here)     |   |

10. What farming enterprise (s) are you considering?

- dairy  beef  sheep  goats  hogs  vegetables  flowers  
 agri-tourism  fruit  grains  other (please list)

11. After completing the Stateline Farm Beginnings® program, when do you anticipate farming?

- Already farming  
 Within 1 year  
 2-3 years  
 4-5 years  
 More than 5 years

12. The 2010-11 Stateline Farm Beginnings® program includes a one-on-one mentorship with an experienced farmer during the 2011 growing season. Are you able to participate in a this mentorship? (Mentorship participation varies from occasional meetings to full-time employment.)

- Yes,  No

**Stateline Farm Beginnings®**  
**Year 7: 2011-2012 Program Application**

*Primary Applicant Name:* \_\_\_\_\_

13. Please share any questions, concerns or comments you have about the Stateline Farm Beginnings® program.

14. Please list one personal and one business reference. (Name, phone, and email only.)

**Stateline Farm Beginnings®**  
**Year 7: 2011-2012 Program Application**

**Partner Applicant Contact Information**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Farm Name (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

County: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (in order of preference)

(1<sup>st</sup> choice) \_\_\_\_\_ Home/Work/Cell (circle one)

(2<sup>nd</sup> choice) \_\_\_\_\_ Home/Work/Cell (circle one)

(3<sup>rd</sup> choice) \_\_\_\_\_ Home/Work/Cell (circle one)

May we call you at work?  Yes  No

Will a family or business partner attend SFB with you?  Yes  No

If YES, please have partner complete a *Partner Application*.

Partner's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Partner's Relationship to you \_\_\_\_\_

# Stateline Farm Beginnings®

## Year 7: 2011-2012 Program Application

Partner Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*(If you need more space than provided, please attach additional sheets)*

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2. Why are you interested in farming?

3. How long have you been interested in farming?

4. Please indicate your highest level of education:

\_\_\_\_\_ Some high school

\_\_\_\_\_ Some college

\_\_\_\_\_ Graduate /Professional Degree

\_\_\_\_\_ High school diploma

\_\_\_\_\_ Bachelor's degree

\_\_\_\_\_ Technical school degree

# Stateline Farm Beginnings®

## Year 7: 2011-2012 Program Application

Partner Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_ Yes

\_\_\_\_\_ No

8. What do you see as your biggest obstacle in starting your own farm operation?

# Stateline Farm Beginnings®

## Year 7: 2011-2012 Program Application

Partner Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Indicate the areas you are specifically interested in working on throughout the Farm Beginnings® course. Check all that apply:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Business planning            | <input type="checkbox"/> Livestock production               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marketing                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Quality of life issues             |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please list here)     |   |

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- Yes,  No

**Stateline Farm Beginnings®**  
**Year 7: 2011-2012 Program Application**

*Partner Applicant Name:* \_\_\_\_\_

13. Please share any questions, concerns or comments you have about the Stateline Farm Beginnings® program.

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