



Connecticut Beginning Women Farmer Program Results

We've just tabulated more results of our [Beginning Farmers & Ranchers: Women in the Northeast & Texas program](#). These are from the 2013-2014 season in Connecticut. This program, funded by a grant from the USDA/NIFA Beginning Farmer/Rancher Development Program, was coordinated by **Deb Legge and Sherry Simpson** of Connecticut Northeast Organic Farming Association. This group finished their Holistic Management learning sessions in May and their final farm mentor visits in July. Lead instructors were Certified Educators **Seth Wilner and Phil Metzger** and Whole Farm Planning Instructors **Sherry Simpson and Crystal Stewart**. Mentors for the program were **Allyson Angelini, Christine Farrugia, and Phoebe Browning**.

Of the participants responding

- 75% are currently farming and 88% intend to continue to farm
- The average years of farming was 2 years (range: 1 – 8 years)
- The average acres under production was 2 acres under production (range: 0.25 – 5 acres)
- The average age was 42 years old (range: 24 to 67 years old)
- The types of farm operations were as follows:
 - Vegetable/Fruit/Produce (75%).
- The total customers of all participants: 76

Here's what some of the participants had to say and the results from this year's program:

"I have a confidence in my own knowledge and ability to speak up regarding our homesteading."

"I have enhanced the usage of our space due to our land plan."

"We have developed a friendship with our mentor and a participant farmer nearby. They are both a wealth of information and excellent resources for us."

"Through this training, I've met many individuals willing to share their knowledge and passion of farming which has increased my own knowledge of farming immensely."

"All the individuals (peers and instructors/mentors) I have met during this class have taught me something, and have helped me unearth my own self confidence in myself along with the weaknesses I struggle with. And it feels wonderful to have a small group of people who have a similar mindset or love for farming, the land, and good food. All of this has nurtured the flame and love I have for this lifestyle I live."

"I have folks that I can work with that are in the program and also some I have met through workshops I have learned about as a result of the program."

BWF PARTICIPANT BEHAVIOR CHANGE	% of participants
Grazing Plan	100%
Forge Relationships That Positively Impacted You	100%
Holistic Goal/Whole Farm Plan	88%
Business Plan	86%
Financial Plan	63%
Marketing Plan	63%
Biological Monitoring	50%
Land Plan	38%

Key Outcomes of Increased Satisfaction Experienced	% Participants Experiencing Change
Satisfaction with Ability to Determine Needed Profit	88%
Satisfaction with Ability to Make Complex Decisions	88%
Satisfaction with Communication	71%
Satisfaction with Time Management	71%
Satisfaction with Quality of Life	57%

Session Satisfaction	Class Percent rated good or excellent
On-Farm/Ranch Goal Setting	100%
Time Management / On-Farm/Ranch Decision Making	94%
Introduction to Holistic Financial Planning	100%
Enterprise Analysis	83%
Holistic Marketing Planning	89%
Holistic Business Planning	82%
Leadership and Communication	100%
Holistic Land Planning	100%
Holistic Grazing Planning	100%
Soil Fertility/Biological Monitoring	100%

Participants Experienced the following Key Outcomes	% of Participants
Human Resource Management	
Better Ability to Determine Resources Available to You	88%
More Efficient Use of Resources	88%
Clearer sense of what your farm is managing towards	75%
Improved Decision Making	75%
Improved Communications on the Farm	63%
Better Relationships	63%
New Policies and Systems Implemented	50%
Financial Resource Management	
Improved Ability to Articulate Goals and Objectives of Business to Others	88%
Strategies for More Effective Reinvestment in the Business	75%
New or Improved Record Keeping Systems	75%
Enhanced Understanding of Your Farm Finances	75%
Clearer Sense of How Your Business Is Projected to Grow in Future Years	75%
Improved ability to determine most effective enterprises	63%
Ability to Identify Business Challenges from Previous Years	50%
Changes in How Your Prioritize Expenses	50%
Improved ability to discern most appropriate market channels	50%
Improved Understanding of your Market and How Your Business Fits In	38%
New Business Systems (Improved Understanding of your Market and How Your Business Fits into These)	38%
Prioritized investments	38%
New enterprises or products (including value-added) you are selling	38%
New ways of displaying or packaging product	38%
Reduced Farm Expenses	25%
Greater efficiencies realized	25%
New markets you have entered	25%
Improved ability to effectively market products	25%
New marketing methods you have employed	25%
Natural Resource Management	
Improved Understanding of Your Farm's Eco-System	88%
Improved Ability to Determine Appropriate Management to Address an Environmental Issue	63%
Improved Ability to Incorporate Social, Environmental, and Financial into Your Land Plan	63%
Improved Environmental Conditions as a Result of Land Planning	50%
Achievement of Environmental Goals in Your Land Plan	50%
Desired Change in Species Composition	50%
Improved Ability to Prioritize Land Planning Investments	38%
Improved Understanding of Your Forage Composition	38%
Improved Environmental Conditions on Your Farm	38%
Enhanced Production as a Result of Land Planning	25%

Improved Environmental Conditions	25%
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Knowledge Change Topic/Course	% Participants Experiencing Knowledge Change
Session One – Goal Setting	
Develop a Whole Farm Goal	90%
Integrate Social, Economic, and Environmental Factors into Decision-Making	85%
Define What You Are Managing Towards	80%
Inventory Farm Resources	70%
Identify Needed Farm Systems and Protocols	70%
Session Summary	95%
Session Two – Time Management	
Assess How Time is Spent on Farm	75%
Ability to Make Complex On-Farm Decisions	69%
Effectively Manage Time on Your Farm	69%
Understanding Seasonal Time Demands/ Flows	63%
Session Summary	75%
Session Three – Financial Planning I	
Determining Viable Profitable Enterprises for Your Farm	100%
Determining Your Farm’s Projected Revenue	100%
Identifying Logjams and Adverse Factors on Farm	92%
Attitude Toward Financial Planning	83%

How to Increase Farm Net Worth	83%
Session Summary	100%
Session Four – Financial Planning II	
Getting Profit You Need from Your Farm	100%
Prioritizing and Cutting Farm Expenses to Guide Reinvestment	92%
Skills in Developing Whole Farm Financial Plan	83%
Monitoring Your Financial Plan	83%
Delineating Farm Expense Categories	75%
Assessing Farm Cash Flow	67%
Session Summary	100%
Session Five – Marketing	
How to Develop a Marketing Plan	89%
Using Whole Farm Goal and Financial Plan to Develop Marketing Plan	89%
Profitably Price Products and Services	89%
Effectively Promote Products and Services	89%
Understanding Your Competition	78%
Marketing Outreach Towards Your Whole Farm Goal	78%
Session Summary	89%
Session Six – Business Planning	
Ability to Use Holistic Goal to Guide Business Strategic Plan	82%
Ability to Implement Systems and Projects to Move Towards Whole Farm Goal	73%
Knowledge of Resources for Developing Strategic Plan for Farm	73%
Ability to Develop a Business Plan for Farm	73%

Ability to Use Financial Plan to Determine Viable Markets for Farm	55%
Session Summary	91%
Session Seven – Leadership and Communication	
Using Whole Farm Goal to Guide Communication on Farm	92%
Awareness of Communication Patterns on Farm	92%
Effective Communication Tools for Farm	92%
Incorporating Diverse Learning Styles toward More Effective Leadership and Communication	83%
Conflict Resolution Skills for Farm	75%
Sense of Yourself as a Leader	75%
Understanding Diverse Ways People Seek Recognition and Affirmation	75%
Session Summary	100%
Session Eight – Land Planning	
Prioritize Land and Infrastructure Development/Investments	100%
Design Strategies to Build Resilient, Diversified Farms	100%
Assess Management Considerations to Guide Land Planning	100%
How to Incorporate Natural Resource Issues into Land Planning	100%
How to Incorporate Social/Legal/Contractual into Land Planning	80%
Session Summary	100%
Session Nine – Grazing	
Value of Grazing Planning	100%
How to Assess Recovery Periods	100%
How to Assess Quantity of Forage in Pasture	100%

How to Determine Number of Animals Your Pasture Can Support	100%
How to Determine the Number of Paddocks	100%
How to Determine Grazing Periods	100%
How to Improve Land Health with Livestock	88%
Session Summary	100%
Session Ten – Soil Fertility	
Indicators of a Healthy Farm Eco-System	80%
Understanding Eco-system Processes on Your Farm	70%
Ability to Monitor Farm Eco-System Health	70%
Benefits of Biodiversity	70%
Importance of Improving Soil Fertility Sustainably	60%
Benefits of a Covered Soil	60%
Value of Organic Matter in Soils	50%
Session Summary	80%

Confidence Increased as a Result of Training	% of participants
Human Resource Management	
Developing Written Whole Farm Goal	90%
Manage Your Time on Your Farm	88%
Make Complex Decisions on Your Farm	88%
Providing Recognition for Farm Workers	83%
Providing Leadership on Your Farm	83%
Using Testing Questions	80%
Communicating with Farm Workers	67%

Building an Effective Management Team	55%
Financial Resource Management	
Promoting Your Farm Products	100%
Assessing Your Competition to Understand Your Farm's Strengths	100%
Communicating with Decision Makers	100%
Determining Weak Link in Farm Enterprises	92%
Ability to Identify Logjam/Adverse Factors	92%
Identifying Resources to Assist You in Developing a Business/Strategic Plan	91%
Developing a Business/Strategic Plan	82%
Pricing Your Farm Products	78%
Determine Viable Profitable Enterprises	75%
Monitoring Your Farm Financial Plan	75%
Getting Profit You Need From Your Farm	75%
Developing a Marketing Plan that Meets Your Farm's Needs and Goals	75%
Increase Your Farm's Net Worth	58%
Determine Your Farm's Projected Revenue	58%
Prioritizing Cutting Farm Expenses to Guide Re-investment	58%
Identifying Cash Flow Issues on Farm	58%
Implementing Important Strategic Systems and Projects	55%
Natural Resource Management	
Calculating the Number of Paddocks for your System	100%
Determining How Long Animals Will Stay in Each Paddock	100%

Ability to Prioritize Land/Infrastructure Improvements on Farm	90%
Ability to Incorporate Natural Resource Issues into Land Planning	90%
Determining the Number of Animals Your Land Can Support for Grazing	88%
Monitoring Your Farm's Eco-System Health	80%
Improving Eco-System Health on Your Farm	80%
Building Organic Matter in Your Soils	80%
Assessing Quantity of Forage and Pasture	75%
Ability to Incorporate Social/Legal Considerations into Land Planning	70%
Assessing Recovery Periods	63%
Ability as a Grazer	50%
Intended Behavior Change as Result of Training	% of participants
Human Resource Management	
Implement Time Management Tools or Processes	100%
Change Leadership Practices	100%
Develop a Whole Farm Goal	95%
Using Testing Questions	87%
Change Management Practices	60%
Financial Resource Management	
Complete or Modify a Financial Plan	100%
Complete or Modify a Marketing Plan	100%
Complete or Modify a Business Plan	100%
Change Marketing Practices	89%

Enter Financial Data Regularly	83%
Change Enterprise Assessment	67%
Determine Profit Up Front and Cap Expenses	67%
Change Business Planning Practices	60%
Prioritize and Cut Expenses	58%
Change Record-Keeping	58%
Monitor Financial Plan	50%
Natural Resource Management	
Complete or Modify Written Land Plan	100%
Conduct Biological Monitoring on Farm	100%
Change Eco-System Health Practices	88%
Change Land Management Practices	67%
Complete or Modify Written Grazing Plan	50%
Change Grazing Practices	50%