

2008 FARMER MANUAL



New Entry Sustainable Farming Project

A Program of:
Tufts University, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy
Agriculture Food and Environment Program
and
Community Teamwork, Inc.

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Purpose of Farmer Manual

The purpose of the NESFP Farmer Manual is to provide you with information you need to participate in our farmer training programs. Our project helps you:

- get access to land at affordable rates
- get basic farm supplies, training, and technical assistance so you can get started on a farm right away
- plan and move onto your own farm

There are many resources the NESFP offers and many steps you can take to become a successful farmer. There are also many things you can do so that you farm:

- safely
- legally
- responsibly

Many of these practices and rules are outlined in this manual. Some of the rules come from the landowners, some come from farmers participating in the program, and others come from commitments NESFP makes to groups who support the project. All of the rules are important for you to know so that you can be successful on your farm.

This manual also provides

- training schedule for this season
- basic information on the fees, schedules, and rules of the NESFP training farms
- contact information for NESFP staff
- contact information for your fellow farmers (including where they are farming)
- contact information for the landowners

Please read each section very carefully and make sure you understand what we expect from you and what you can expect from us. If you have any questions, please talk to a NESFP staff member.



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NESFP Program Description

Now that you have finished the Farm Business Training Course, you can participate in a 3-4 year program to help you with your new farm business. The program has two parts that work together:

A. Beginning Farmer: We help you to start your farming business. You will receive assistance all year long for three years to help you grow your crops and grow your business. You can choose to farm either on our training sites or on your own land. We will help you to implement your farm business plan, get farmland to grow crops, and find markets to sell your products.

B. Independent Farmer: We also help you to become successful as a farmer on your own after three years. Together, we will plan for this independent farming business. We will help you to build your farm skills, find your own land to farm, and learn to manage your farm on your own. At the end of 3 years, we want you to have your own farming business and to be successful on your farm.

A. Beginning Farming Program - What we provide for you:

Land to farm: You can rent land at one of our training farm sites. We will help with plowing, irrigation, equipment, storage, and other services. If you have your own land, we can give you advice on how to get it ready for farming.

Before the season: We help you one-on-one with

- planning your crops and markets
- ordering seeds and seedlings
- getting permits and insurance

Training and on-farm assistance: We offer hands-on training so that you can learn to

- plant crops
- use a hoop house
- set up irrigation systems
- controlling weeds and pests, and diseases safely
- use farm equipment

We also offer workshops and tours of markets and other farms.

Markets: We help you find places to sell your crops and get the best prices for them. You can also join the World Peas Cooperative to sell your crops.

Keeping records: We help you keep track of: what you plant, pest problems, what you harvest and sell, and your income and expenses.

Managing your farm business plans: We review your business plan regularly and help you make changes as needed.

Loans and credit: We can help you request a small loan through Accion or other lending programs.

Beginning Farming Program – What we require from you

Completion of Business Training Course: You must complete the Business Planning Course and develop a business plan before you begin to farm.

Required Trainings: You must attend the pest management and equipment safety training in order for you to learn how to operate safely and legally on your farm.

Attendance at Trainings and Field Trips: You must attend at least 2/3 of the trainings and field trips during the season so that you can see how established successful farms operate and learn to operate your own farm successfully.

Agreement to Follow the Farmsite rules: You must agree to the site guidelines and pesticide use rules and follow them all season so that you can operate your farm successfully.

Recordkeeping: We expect you to keep good records of

- crops which you plant
- water use
- pesticide use
- expenses
- sales and revenues

You must share these with NESFP staff so that they can assist you to become successful.

Meetings with staff: You will be expected to meet with NESFP staff on a regular schedule to work on and review your production and marketing needs.

Participation on Farmer committees: You will be expected to participate in at least 2/3 of farmer committee meetings. You will also be expected to participate in Coop meetings if you are a member of the World PEAS Cooperative.

B. Independent Farmer Assistance: What we will provide for you:

Help in finding farmland: We will help you understand what kind of land you will need for your farming business. We will help you to find land and provide you with information regarding how to lease or buy land.

Community connections: We will help you connect with community programs and farming resources in your area.

Hands-On Field Workshops: We will provide workshops so that you can learn about farming topics that are important to you.

One-on-one Assistance: Our staff will help you to learn skills you need to become an independent farmer.

Independent Farmer Assistance: What we require from you:

Farming goals: You will work with NESFP staff to make a plan for your independent farm and to plan all the steps you will take to get there.

Attendance at workshops: You are expected to attend farm training workshops and conferences recommended by NESFP.

Meetings with staff: You will be expected to meet with NESFP staff on a regular schedule to work on and review your independent farm plan.

Records of progress: You will keep records about how you are meeting your goals. Your records of progress will help NESFP staff assist you to become an independent farmer.

2008 Fees / Payments

| | Fee | Due Date | Fee Includes |
|----------------------------|--------------------|--|---|
| Land Rental | \$ 550 / acre | 1 st payment: April 15, 2 nd payment: July 15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring/fall plowing • field scale PH/ fertility applications • landowner fees • sanitary facilities • access to irrigation & electricity • general farm liability insurance • fall cover crop seed |
| Custom Tractor Work | \$40 / hour | Upon completion of work | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rototilling • disk and Harrow (finer seedbed) • raised Beds • plastic Mulch laying (you supply your own plastic mulch and drip irrigation tape) • mulch removal (machine lifts edges of plastic – you remove from field and throw away) • mowing |
| Equipment Fee | \$50 / season | April 15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of BCS rototiller (refueling, oil changes and repairs due to misuse are not included) • use of flame weeder • use of backpack sprayers • use of hand tools and wheelbarrows <p>You Must follow all Equipment Use guidelines.</p> |
| Pesticide Fee | \$50 / season | April 15 | <p>Use of NESFP-approved and provided pesticides and fungicides. You must follow all Pesticide Safety and Pest Management guidelines.</p> |
| Cooler Use | \$ 125 / season | June 15 | <p>\$125/season. You must follow Cooler Use guidelines.</p> |
| Lost Key Fee | \$10 | Upon service | <p>Keys give access to gates, sheds, cooler, and equipment locks. Duplicating keys is not allowed.</p> |

Invoices will be mailed to farmers before April 1, 2008. If you cannot make payments by the due date, you need to make arrangements in writing with NESFP staff or a late fee will be charged.

2008 Trainings and Farm Visit Schedule

The 2008 Technical Assistance Program includes three basic areas:

1. Individual Assistance

There is a lot to learn when starting your own farm, and you may have many questions beyond the information you receive in the training courses. For this reason, you will receive individualized technical assistance in order to answer your questions and get advice. You will meet with a Technical Assistant

- in the office (to make crop plans or to order seeds)
- at your home (to set up a home seed propagation system)
- in the field (to trellis tomatoes efficiently, or identify and manage pests)

2. Hands on Field Workshop Series

After graduating from the Farm Business Planning Course, you will learn additional skills through attending workshops in the field. You will learn about organic agricultural production and marketing, food and farm safety, and soil and water conservation. The workshops meet about 12 times over the growing season on weekday evenings. A workshop and field trip schedule will be mailed to you each month.

3. Mandatory Trainings

You are required to attend two trainings in order to operate safely and legally on your farm:

- 1) **pest management and pesticide safety training AND**
- 2) **equipment use training**

The workshops will be held on days scheduled in April, May and June. We will let you know the exact dates in advance of the trainings. You will not be allowed to use pesticides or NESFP equipment unless you attend the trainings and demonstrate that you understand what you have learned.

General Farm Guidelines

Schedule for training farm sites:

Hours open: sunrise to sunset (avoid darkness).

We begin Spring plowing in April or May (depending on weather and soil conditions).

We begin Fall plowing in early October. Plant your late crops in one location so we can plow and plant cover crops in the other locations beginning in early fall. Please talk with the farm-site manager about where you want to plant your late crops. Make sure you:

- Remove all stakes, plastic mulch, and trellises by September 15th.
- Mark perennials and tell the Farm Manager by September 15th.
- Store or remove all your property by October 1st.
- Till and plant cover crop seed on any areas still planted after fall plowing.

Keys & Gates: We provide keys to gates, storage sheds, and rototillers one time only. If you lose a key, you will need to pay \$10 to receive a new key (see **Fees/Payments**). Return keys to staff when you are finished farming for the year. Only NESFP staff may copy keys or change locks. Please keep gates closed and locked at all times (even when working on the farm).

Storage Shed: There is a small amount of shed space to store your items. You may use the lockers in each storage shed to keep personal belongings – please use your own lock and remove it at the end of the season. If we need to cut off a lock and clean out your belongings, you will be charged a \$20 fee. Keep all equipment and supplies we supply secure (see **Equipment Use Section**) and use as follows:

- Keep the shed clean and avoid items that bring insect pests, rodents, or mold.
- Keep walkways clean and open; store items neatly.
- Respect NESFP property and the property of your fellow farmers

Structures and Buildings: You are not permitted to build any structures on the training farms except for temporary shade tents. You must remove tents at the end of the season. Ask NESFP staff before putting up a shade tent. Also, NESFP must approve in advance the installation of any fences, and removal of trees/limbs.

Trash:

You are responsible for removing all trash from your farm site (including black plastic mulch, stakes, trellis, and other supplies). Everything must be removed by September 15th.

- Keep your fields and all common areas clean and neat at all times. Remove all trash each day.
- Stack your farm supplies neatly and prevent them from blowing into the fields.
- If a dumpster is needed at the farm sites for year-end disposal, farmers will rent and pay for the dumpster.

Parking:

- Park only in approved spaces on the farm.
- Please do not block NESFP project vehicles or tractor / cooler / shed access.
- To drive on the farm you must have a driver's license and the speed limit is 5 MPH.

Farm Help and Visitors: Give NESFP the names and address / phone for all persons working on your fields. You must be on your farm when visitors or helpers are there. Be sure your visitors understand the farm guidelines.

Sublet: You are not allowed to sublet (rent out) your plot.

Access to your plot: NESFP is allowed to enter your field when necessary and without notice. We also host field visits, volunteer events, and educational tours at training farms. NESFP will notify you in advance of these events and encourage your involvement.

General:

- Supervise children and visitors at all times.
- No open fires. Cook meals in picnic/shade areas.
- Alcohol and illegal drugs are not permitted.
- Violent or aggressive actions (physical or verbal) to others are not allowed.
- No pets.
- Please respect neighbors. Stay off their land and prevent loud noises and music.

Water Use And Irrigation

These watering guidelines are only for *dry* periods. Use less water if it rains during the week. Measure rain amounts with a rain gauge.

One inch of rain is equal to four to five hours of watering with drip irrigation.

Water Required for Drip Irrigation

| Immediately After Planting | When Growing | Before and During Harvest |
|--|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2 – 3 hours immediately after planting | One inch per week | 2 – 3 inches per week |

Always check the soil moisture before and after watering.

Irrigation Schedule

You will work out watering schedules together with NESFP before **May 1** each year. You may water only during your scheduled time. You should keep the irrigation system working properly. You are responsible for making any repairs due damage which you cause. You should notify NESFP of major irrigation problems or failures, especially involving a wellhead or pump. It is important for you to fix any leaks as soon as you notice them in order to avoid waste of water, time, and money. Turn off pumps and watering systems at night and before you leave the farm.

Conserve Water:

- Avoid watering between the hours of 10 AM and 4 PM because the water is wasted — 65% can evaporate, and the sun can burn the wet leaves.
- Plant crops with same root depth close together to save time irrigating.
- Check the soil 6 to 8 inches below the ground (root zone), before and after irrigating to see how much water to apply and whether you watered the root zone.
- Watch the weather. Irrigate less on cool, cloudy, or foggy days. Use a rain gauge.
- Use mulch, compost, hay or plastic to keep soil moist.
- Watering too much causes weak roots and unhealthy plants. It also washes away fertilizers.

Soil And Land Use

Organics: NESFP organic farms produce crops by following the organic standards set by the National Organic Program (NOP). If your farm is managed organically, please read the **Organic Guidelines Section**. Contact a staff member if you have questions about what materials you can use under organic standards. Note: all seeds¹, transplants, fertilizers, pesticides, cleaning products, and other supplies must have an “approved for organic” or OMRI-approved label.

Soil Testing. Farmers must do a Standard Soil Test with Organic Matter which costs \$13. We will give you a brochure for UMass Amherst Soil Testing Lab and we will teach you how to test the soil. You should test your soil at least once per year.

Fertilizers and Compost: Your soil tests will determine which fertilizers and compost you should use. Record all fertilizer and compost use in the farm record book. Using too much can harm the soil and water quality.

Cover Crops: Plant cover crops (green manures: grains and legumes such as rye, oats, clover, vetch or peas) on all bare ground to stop erosion and weeds. After you finish harvesting a crop, plant a green manure or cover crop to improve the soil. If you don't plant a cover, then you need to remove or till in all crop leftovers, and put mulch over the soil.

Crop Rotation: Keep a map of where you planted crops each year on a field map. Each year, you should grow crops in a new place. Wait three years to grow the same crop in the same area where the crop grew before.

Weeds: Control weeds by mulching, mowing, cultivating, or flame weeding. Keep weeds from entering other farmer's fields. Mow edges of your fields and trim brush and/or weeds. You are not allowed to use weed killers (chemicals). Farmers should not grow any plants that are listed on the Federal Noxious Weed list. Check with NESFP staff before planting uncommon crops.

Rocks and Stones: Place rocks and stones from fields on existing rock walls or in marked places. Please do not start new rock walls or piles.

Pest Management: Too much pesticide can poison the soil and water. Follow all rules in the **Pest Management and Pesticide Safety Guidelines**. Record all pesticides you use in the farm record book. Follow pesticide labels and state and federal laws. Alternate pesticides so pests do not get used to them. Always spray safely. Put up signs in the field on crops that you sprayed.

¹ Non-organic seeds may be used if you have proof (3 sources) that the organic variety is unavailable. Always use untreated seed.

Equipment Use

After you attend the training workshops and demonstrate that you understand how to use the equipment, you can use the following NESFP equipment:

- BCS rototiller and attachments: hiller/furrower, brush mower, sickle bar mower, and rotary plow
- Weed trimmer with string and blade attachments
- Flame weeder with propane tank and tank cylinder dolly
- Solo backpack pesticide sprayer
- Recommended Pesticides (in storage cabinet):
 - Spintor
 - AzaDirect (Organic)
 - Surround (Organic)
 - Hot Pepper Wax
 - Garlic Barrier
 - PyGanic
 - Dipel
 - Others will be supplied as needed
- Hand tools: hoes, weeders, rakes, wheelbarrows, shovels, saws, hammers, etc.
- Chainsaw (with prior safety approval)

Only NESFP staff may use the tractors due to liability concerns.

Using Equipment:

- Sign out equipment every time - fill in the log book with the date, your name, how many hours used, and any problems
- You may only use equipment for 2 hours if other farmers are waiting
- When finished, clean the equipment, put in fuel, and put it in the shed
- Keep shed locked at all times (even if you are on the farm)
- Equipment must stay on the farm unless OK'd by NESFP
- Let us know if the machines have problems or need maintenance
- Get NESFP approval before repairing equipment

Know the Machine Before Working With It:

- Take the NESFP Equipment Training. Watch the BCS operating videos.
- Read the operator's manual.
- Be gentle with the machines.
- Learn all the machine controls.
- Be sure other people who are not trained do not use the machines.

Look for problems in the field:

- Walk around the field and look for rocks, irrigation, stakes, animal traps, before using machines.
- Take care near slopes and ditches.

Know the machine is in a safe condition before operating:

- Always have the rototiller kick guard in place.
- Check the oil and fuel tanks before starting.

- Make sure all the tines are tight.
- Look for leaks.

Protect yourself and others:

- Avoid loose clothes since they can get caught on control levers and knobs.
- Use safety goggles and hearing protection (ear plugs).
- Use gloves and boots – no sandals.
- Never stand or reach under the machine when the machine is running.
- Keep small children away from machine when operating.

Equipment damage: Please tell NESFP about any problem or damage. If you break the machine from improper use, then you will be required to pay to fix it.

Greenhouse (Hoophouse) Use

NESFP greenhouses are located at Smith Farm and Richardson's Dairy. The greenhouse is for NESFP farmers only. There is no charge to use the greenhouse. You may be responsible for replacing torn or worn plastic covers.

Space: You will share the greenhouse with other farmers. You will get your own space for your use only. You will work out a space schedule with other farmers.

Use: In spring, use the space to start seeds and grow seedlings. After that, you may grow crops in the soil or dry crops like onions, winter squash, or garlic that need solar heat.

Equipment: You must provide your own greenhouse supplies and equipment. The greenhouse is not a place to store tools, equipment, or personal belongings.

Care for the greenhouse: You must look after the greenhouse with the other farmers, and make any necessary repairs. Keep it clean to prevent insects, pests, weeds, and disease.

Cleanup: You will be expected to take part in regularly scheduled cleanup days for the greenhouses. You will meet with other farmers in early spring, mid-summer and in late fall to clean the greenhouse to prevent pests and disease. You are encouraged to sweep the greenhouse on a regular basis. You should remove plastic and ground cover at the end of the year.

Safety and security: You should secure the greenhouse and all materials in it. Do not leave valuables in the greenhouse since the greenhouse is not locked.

Children and visitors: You must escort all children and visitors in the greenhouses at all times. Children are not permitted without their parents in the greenhouse.

If you fail to comply with the guidelines, NESFP will give you one warning. The second time you fail to comply, you will lose greenhouse privileges.

Pest Management

Control pests by thinking about your whole farm. Some pests are good to have, some are not. If you need to control pests, it helps you and your customers to stay safe by minimizing the use of pesticides. This saves time and money and is good for the environment.

Step 1) LEARN

- You must take our pest management and pesticide safety class.
- Learn to identify pests in your fields – know which pests are good and which pests hurt your crops.
- Remember what time of year pests show up on your farm.
- Find out ways to keep pests from making a home on your farm.
- Learn about ways to control the pests once they appear.

Step 2) PREVENT

- Rotate your crops each year and plant varieties that are disease-resistant.
- Use row cover to prevent pests from finding your crops.
- Plant crops when pests are not active in the field.
- Use mulch to prevent weeds or crops from being splashed with soil.
- Practice good weed control, especially along edges of field.
- Plant flowers and herbs to attract predators (beneficial bugs).

Step 3) SCOUT AND MONITOR

- Check your plants for pests 3-4 times each week.
- Look on the top of the leaves and underneath the leaves; check in the soil by the roots.
- Look at the edges of your fields.
- Keep checking back and see what the pest is doing (eating leaves, chewing roots, or eating other bugs). Use sticky traps to catch pests in the field.

Step 4) WRITE DOWN WHAT YOU FIND

- Keep a notebook with the dates you looked for pests.
- Write down what crops you examined and how many pests you found.
- Take a picture of the pest or draw it so that someone can help you identify it.

Step 5) MAKE A DECISION

- Ask yourself if the pest is going to hurt your crop and cause you to lose money.
- If there are not enough pests to damage your crop, you might decide to do nothing.
- If there are so many pests that you will lose the crop, decide how you will control them.
- Using pesticides should be your **last** option.

Step 6) TALK TO OTHER FARMERS ON THE FARM OR TO NESFP STAFF

- Find out if other farmers have the same pests.
- Ask them how they are controlling the pest.
- Work together to do the same things to avoid sending pests to other farmers' crops if you control them on your field.
- Talk to NESFP staff to make sure your decision makes sense.

Pesticide Safety

Step 1) TALK TO NESFP STAFF

If you decide to use pesticides to control a pest, first talk to NESFP staff about your decision.

Step 2) READ AND UNDERSTAND THE LABEL

The label is the law. Please follow the label instructions carefully.

The most important information on the pesticide label is:

- Brand name, type of pesticide, and danger level
- Active chemicals
- First aid
- Directions
- Time before you can go back into the field
- Days to Harvest

Please do not use a pesticide without a trained person to help you.

Step 3) WEAR SAFETY EQUIPMENT

Read the pesticide label to learn what safety gear is required. It is a law to wear the proper safety gear when you are using pesticides.

The most important safety equipment includes:

- Rubber gloves
- Shoes plus socks
- Masks
- Rubber Apron
- Long pants
- Long-sleeved shirt

Step 4) MEASURE AND MIX IN PESTICIDE AREA ONLY

Please be very careful when you are measuring and mixing pesticides in the pesticide mixing area.

The most important things to remember are to:

- Follow the pesticide label instructions
- Use the pesticide steps you learned in the pesticides training.

Step 5) SPRAY SAFELY

Please remember to keep your safety and the safety of other people in mind when you are using pesticides.

The most important things to think about are:

- The weather
- The time of day
- Other people at the farm.
- **FOR EMERGENCIES: GO TO A HOSPITAL QUICKLY. PLEASE REMEMBER TO CARRY THE NAME OF THE PESTICIDE THAT YOU WERE USING.**

Step 6) POST SIGNS

Signs will tell other people that you have sprayed a pesticide. The signs help keep everyone safe.

The most important things to do after spraying your pesticide are:

- Put a pesticide sign in your field after spraying pesticides
- Take down the sign when it is safe to go back into the field.
- Do not harvest the crop until it is safe to harvest

Step 7) CLEAN UP & STORAGE

The most important things to remember for pesticide **CLEAN UP** are:

- Always wash with soap and water after using pesticides
- Wash clothing you wore when spraying separately from other clothes.
- Clean and store all safety equipment and sprayers
- Use clean water to rinse empty sprayers
- Rinse and clean the sprayers three (3) times each time you use it
- Spray clean water through the sprayer when you are done using the sprayer
- Use pesticide equipment for pesticides only. Do not use pesticide equipment for anything else.
- Do not throw pesticides or pesticide bottles away in the trash

The most important things to remember for pesticide **STORAGE** are:

- Keep all chemicals in the locked pesticide cabinet at the farm.
- Protect pesticide containers when carrying them in your car. Keep them away from passengers, pets, and/or produce.
- Never store pesticides inside a vehicle or in your home or your shelter at the farm

Step 8) ALWAYS WRITE DOWN WHAT YOU SPRAY (use the NESFP record sheets)

Please use the pesticide record sheet in the shed every time you spray a pesticide. If you need help writing on the sheet please ask an NESFP staff member.

Enforcing pesticide rules:

It is your job to protect all farmers and their families from pesticides. You need to protect the people who eat your vegetables and the staff that help you on the farm. It is very important to follow pesticide safety rules and to always obey the law when using pesticides.

If you do not follow these guidelines then NESFP will need to take the following actions:

First time breaking the rules: You will meet with an NESFP staff member to talk about reasons for the mistake. We will review the pesticide safety rules together. You will not be allowed to use pesticides without NESFP permission until we are sure that you have learned to use pesticides correctly.

Second time breaking the rules: You will be dismissed from the farm site and NESFP programs.

Please refer to **Consequences and Probation** section of this manual for further details.

Organic Guidelines

Organic farming means:

- Using no chemical fertilizers or pesticides
- Using crop rotation and mulch
- Using animal manures and composts
- Using organic fertilizers
- Using organic pesticides
- Planting good cover crops
- Practicing good soil management

Crop rotation means:

- Planting the same families of crops together in the same place
- Moving your crops to a different spot in the field the next year
- Switching between crops that give the soil fertilizer and crops that take a lot of fertilizer .
- Switching between crops that help stop weeds and crops that always get weedy

Organic fertilizer use means:

- Testing your soil each year to know what fertilizers you need
- Using only certified organic fertilizers
- Using mineral fertilizers as a last resort

Manure and compost use means:

- Plants should be composted and used as fertilizer
- Use manures and other waste from organic growing systems
- Turn fresh manures and other waste products to compost before use
- Make sure commercial manures and composts have an official "organic" symbol.
- Not recommended: Sawdust from woodlots; leaves collected from busy roadsides (they often include trash); and animal residues and manures from intensive livestock systems.
- Manures, composts and other materials containing plant foods should be covered and stored to avoid washing out of plant foods. Leaching washes away the nutrients and pollutes the groundwater.
- Apply manures and compost only to growing plants, or to soil where plants are soon to be grown. Use only one wheelbarrow full of well-rotted manure, or two of compost per 100 square feet of ground per year.

Pest and Disease Management means you:

- Prevent pests and diseases
- Give plants good soil and balanced food
- Choose good plant varieties
- Call "good bugs" - predators and parasites – to your farm
- Use other things such as mulch, bug traps and row cover instead of pesticides
- Use pesticides as the last resort

Things you can do to prevent pests and disease:

- Use clean tools and equipment
- Remove, burn or deeply bury crops that carry plant disease or insect pests
- Control weeds
- Watch your plants closely
- Start with healthy seeds and plants
- Grow plants that will do well in your soil type and weather conditions
- Rotate your crops
- Choose good planting dates
- Water enough, but not too much
- Build bat boxes or bird houses around your farm
- Use live animal traps for rodents or rabbits
- Use deer fencing

Weed Control:

- Draw your crop plan to help stop weeds before they start
- Don't use chemicals to kill weeds

Things you can do to practice good weed control:

- Plant crops in new places every year
- Use a hoe or pull weeds by hand before they make seeds
- Plant crops with close spacing
- Use ground cover or plant cover crops (clover) under larger vegetable crops.
- Use straw, old hay, grass clippings to put between rows
- Use plastic mulches and remove them at the end of the growing season.
- Practice flame weeding or use a "stale seed bed"
- Don't using too much fertilizer

What Pesticides or Fertilizers Can I Use in Organic Crop Production?

Always ask a certifier or NESFP staff to find out if a pesticide or fertilizer can be used in organic farming. The pesticides that are allowed and not allowed may change every year.

Seed and Transplant Sources:

- Only use organic seeds
- Buy transplants from a certified organic source
- Be careful not to use a commercial potting mix. They have fertilizers and chemicals that are not allowed.
- Organic farmers are not allowed to use genetically engineered (GE or GMO) seeds or plants.

Record Keeping: Keep good records because it is required for organic certification. Write down how and where a crop was planted. Write down what fertilizers or pesticides you used. Write down when and how your pesticides are stored. Keeping good records helps you to prove that the crop was organically grown. Your good records will show that your crops do not have chemicals on them.

Insurance Guidelines

There are two main types of insurance for farmers:

- liability insurance
- crop insurance.

Liability Insurance: Liability insurance protects you from being sued if you hurt someone or damage their property. Liability insurance also protects you from customers that sue you if they get hurt or sick from eating your crops. Liability insurance is required for all farmers that sell to markets, make value-added products, and hire workers. Liability insurance covers medical expenses, first aid, the cost of a lawyer, bodily injury and property damage, farm chemical transportation coverage, and more.

There are many insurance companies that sell liability insurance. Choose an insurance company that sells farm insurance for farmers. Farm Family Casualty Insurance Company, [**Special Farm Package 10® (SFP 10®)**] gives you many insurance choices. Farm Family Casualty Insurance Company is in Northborough, Ma. Talk to an insurance agent there and explain how you plan to farm. Learn about the best type of insurance to protect you and your things. The cost of your insurance premium can be related to your income from farming.

NOTE: If you want to be eligible and get money taken off of farm insurance, you need to be a member of the Massachusetts Farm Bureau. The Mass Farm Bureau has different levels of membership. Their most basic membership package is the Associate Membership that costs \$60.00 a year.

Massachusetts Farm Liability Insurance Contacts:

Farm Family Casualty Insurance Company

Agent: Richard Bourgault

88C Main Street, Northborough, MA 01532

phone: 508-393-9327 or 1-800-THE-FARM (1-800-843-3276)

email: rich_bourgault@farmfamily.com

Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation, Inc.

466 Chestnut Street, Ashland MA.

Phone: 508-881-4766

Crop Insurance: Crop insurance protects the value of your crops if a disaster happens. Some of these disasters are: hail, drought, too much rain, freezing, heat, and disease. You can get crop insurance for over 76 kinds of crops. Crops covered by crop insurance in Massachusetts are: apples, clams, cranberries, peaches, potatoes, sweet corn, tobacco and winter squash. Crop insurance is available only through private crop insurance agents. You have to buy crop insurance before the damage happens. Please check on the dates that you need to buy the insurance.

Catastrophic Risk Protection (CAT) is the smallest level of insurance. The Federal government pays a lot of the cost. Farmers may have to pay a small fee, but sometimes there is no charge depending on your income. A crop insurance agent can help you. .

Noninsured Assistance Program (NAP): For crops not covered by the above, NAP covers your crops similar to the CAT level. You must apply for NAP before you plant. Also, you need to give the local Farm Service Agency a production and acreage report each year.

Adjusted Gross Revenue-Lite (AGR-Lite) insurance: This “whole-farm” insurance protects all the money you would normally earn in a year on the farm. It protects you against low farm income if a natural disaster hits or your marketing fails. Most farm-raised crops, animals, and animal products are eligible for this insurance. AGR-Lite can be used with other Federal crop insurance plans. If you buy more than one type of crop insurance, your AGR-Lite premium will be lower.

How AGR-Lite works: You must file farm income taxes to be eligible, since it uses how much farm revenue you report on your federal taxes over 5 years. It also covers more than one crop by protecting all your farm income. To be eligible for AGR-Lite coverage, you must:

- Be a U.S. citizen or legal resident;
- File a farm tax return;
- Have less than \$1 million in gross income;
- Have your IRS tax forms available for the past 5 years.
- Purchase by March 15th each year.

Massachusetts Crop Insurance Contacts

[Cross, J](#), (508) 867-7538 East Brookfield, MA

[Plastridge, P](#) (978) 486-3575 Littleton, MA

Marketing Cooperative Agreement

The World Peas Cooperative helps NESFP farmers sell their crops as a group. All farmers are invited to be members of the coop. The Coop will sell crops through a CSA program. The Coop is coordinated by NESFP and the WPC steering committee. To be a part of World Peas, there is a fee to join, and an agreement to sign.

What is required of farmer members:

- Help set up the cooperative for production and marketing by members
- Grow food for the coop to market
- Pay coop fees in order to participate
- Grow food for the coop to market according to plans and schedules you agree to
- Deliver crops to the coop according to plans and schedules you agree to
- Attend meetings to plan and coordinate activities
- Agree to guidelines set by the coop
- Keep records of production, harvesting and deliveries to the coop
- Help us evaluate how the coop is working for farmers who participate

Assistance NESFP will provide includes:

- Help to coach the leadership of coop activities – planning, coordination, production, marketing, and management
- Identify grants and donations for equipment, materials, and services for the coop
- Recruit new coop members and CSA customers
- Teach coop skills to all members
- Assist with legal incorporation documents for the coop
- Evaluate the success of the coop each year
- Assist to keep track of sales and crop distribution
- Assist to pay farmers on time for crops sold through the coop
- Coordinate with landowners to secure sites for farming, and for cooling and storage of products.

Cooler / Refrigeration Use

NESFP has a cooler at Richardson's Dairy in Dracut, MA. The cooler is for the World Peas Marketing Cooperative and co-op members. If you are not a co-op member, you can use the cooler after you pay a use fee. The fee helps to pay for electricity and maintenance.

Cooler Use Rates: If you are not a co-op member, you pay \$ 125 for the season (due July 1). The marketing cooperative will store crops you sell through World Peas for no charge. The \$125 fee is charged if you want to store crops for your personal markets, even if you are a co-op member.

Eligibility:

- Be an active farmer with NESFP
- Pay annual fee up front
- Short training on cooler management

Cooler Use Guidelines: Since we will all share one cooler, we must manage it carefully.

- Use storage boxes and mark **each box** as follows:
 - o Your Name
 - o Crop / Product
 - o Where grown (ex. Smith Farm, White Gate Farm)
 - o Date of harvest and when put in the cooler
- Produce not labeled will be thrown away.**
- Keep all your boxes together, and stack them neatly to save room.
 - Load and unload quickly and keep the doors closed.
 - Keep the cooler on if other produce is stored inside; turn it off if empty.
 - Keep the cooler clean – sweep/wipe floor if dirty.
 - Remove all vegetables within 7 days of harvest or sooner if spoiled.

If you do not follow the guidelines, you may lose cooler use after one warning.

Record Keeping and Reporting

You have to keep good records. Good record keeping is important for your farm business. Good record keeping helps NESFP help you. You will be given a record keeping book to keep in the shed at each farm. You should write in your record keeping book every day you are at the farm. NESFP will show you how to use your record keeping book and will help check it to be sure it is complete. Your record keeping book has pages for:

- **Business and Crop Plans**
- **Marketing and Co-op Plans**
- **Farm expenses**
- **Planting and Seeding Schedules**
- **Harvest (yield) and Market Schedules**
- **Sales Records**
- **Pests and Pesticide Applications**

Please respect the privacy of other farmers' record books.

Consequences and Probation

You and NESFP staff will agree to follow the guidelines in the Farmer Manual or you may be asked to leave the farm and the NESFP program.

You will be on probation if you:

- Miss more than 2 mandatory workshops or monthly meetings.
- Always miss meetings with NESFP staff.
- Do not complete record-keeping materials.
- Do not follow the guidelines of this Agreement.

If you are put on probation, the NESFP Director (Jennifer) will meet with you to discuss the reasons and the Director will set the terms of your probation. To continue in the program you will have to agree to the terms of your probation.

You will be removed from NESFP if you:

- Do not meet the terms of your probation.
- Do not cooperate with other farmers or NESFP.
- Disrespect the farm property - such as damage or neglect equipment, or litter.
- Do not use pesticides well.
- Do not communicate with NESFP staff.
- Use alcohol or illegal drugs on NESFP property.
- Steal from farm sites, other farmers or neighbors.
- Are violent or aggressive towards others.

Complaints and appeals (grievances):

STEP 1) You can file a complaint against another farmer, landowner, or NESFP itself. Your complaint should be in writing if possible. Write or speak your complaint as soon as possible after the problem happens.

STEP 2): The NESFP Director (Jennifer Hashley) will try to fix the problem directly with you, and seek other staff help if this does not work.

Agreement to Participate - NESFP Farm Program

The NESFP Farming Program helps you start a farm business and build a good farming business. NESFP offers a four-year program that has:

- a training course
- farm planning
- access to farmland
- help with producing crops
- help finding good markets for your products
- help with setting up your own separate farming business

Enrolling in the NESFP program: After finishing the fall-winter training course, you can sign up in the full NESFP program for the next 3 ½ years. NESFP will give you help and we also are asking you to agree to:

- Plan and start up a farm business this year and over the next 3 years
- Grow and market your crops as a business
- Get training and hands-on help from NESFP if you need it
- Follow the guidelines and give us information about what you grow and sell
- Work with us to plan and start up your own farm

Agreement to farm: This document contains all the agreements and guidelines that are part of the NESFP. Please review this manual and talk about it with staff. When you sign your name below, it means you agree with all the rules in the NESFP Farmer Manual, including:

- Farmer plot assignments and land rental payments
- Payments for other services received as listed in the fee schedule
- Completing NESFP training program and farm business plan
- Participation in 2008 trainings and farm visit schedule
- Farm guidelines:
 - (a) general farm guidelines
 - (b) water use and irrigation
 - (c) soil and land use
 - (d) equipment use
 - (e) pest management
 - (f) pesticide safety
 - (g) organic guidelines and
 - (h) use of cooler at Richardson's Dairy
- Marketing - World Peas Cooperative agreement
- Recordkeeping and reporting
- Liability insurance
- Consequences and probation

I / We _____ have reviewed this agreement and I / We understand it and agree to participate in the 2008 NESFP Farmer Program.

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| _____ FARMER – PRINT NAME | _____ FARMER - SIGN NAME |
| _____ NESFP – PRINT NAME | _____ NESFP - SIGN NAME |

NESFP Staff Contact List

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9 Central Street, Suite 402, Lowell, MA 01742

978-654-6745

www.nesfp.org



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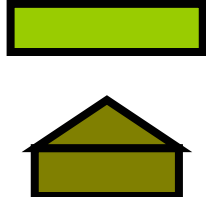
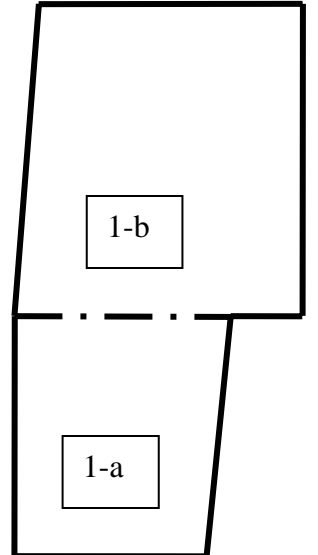
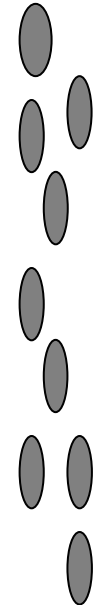
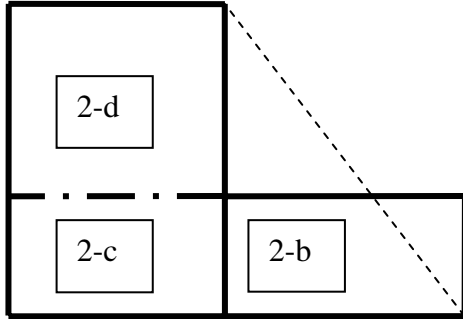
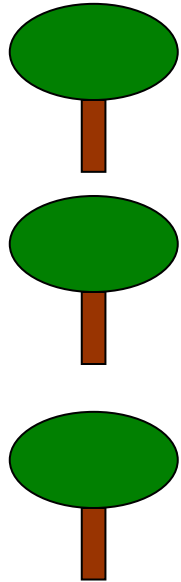
Training Farm Maps and Farmer Plots (TBA)

| Farm Site | Farmer Name | Plot Number | Acreage* | Organic/Conventional |
|--------------|---------------------|-------------|----------|--------------------------|
| Smith | Oen Un | | | transitioning to organic |
| Smith | Noueth Deth | | | transitioning to organic |
| Smith | Carrasquillo Family | | | transitioning to organic |
| Smith | Carrasquillo Family | | | transitioning to organic |
| Smith | Nelson and Maria | | | transitioning to organic |
| Smith | Nelson and Maria | | | transitioning to organic |
| Smith | Kosall Deth | | | transitioning to organic |
| Smith | Addison Toussaint | | | transitioning to organic |
| Richardson's | Seona Ban | | | Organic |
| Richardson's | UNASSIGNED | | | Organic |
| Richardson's | UNASSIGNED | | | Organic |
| Richardson's | Grace Mwanza | | | Organic |
| Richardson's | Nikki Makarutsa | | | Organic |
| Richardson's | Nikki Makarutsa | | | Organic |
| Richardson's | Nikki Makarutsa | | | Organic |
| Richardson's | UNASSIGNED | | | Organic |
| Richardson's | UNASSIGNED | | | Organic |

*Growers will be billed for land rent based on acreage of the field.

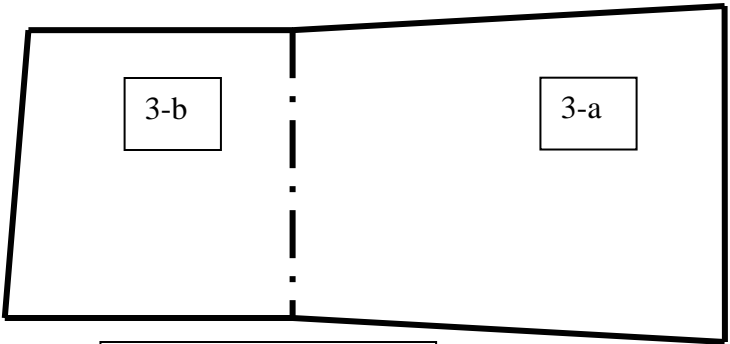
Unassigned land will be planted with a cover crop and rotated each year.

**Smith Farm
Dracut Land Trust, Inc.**



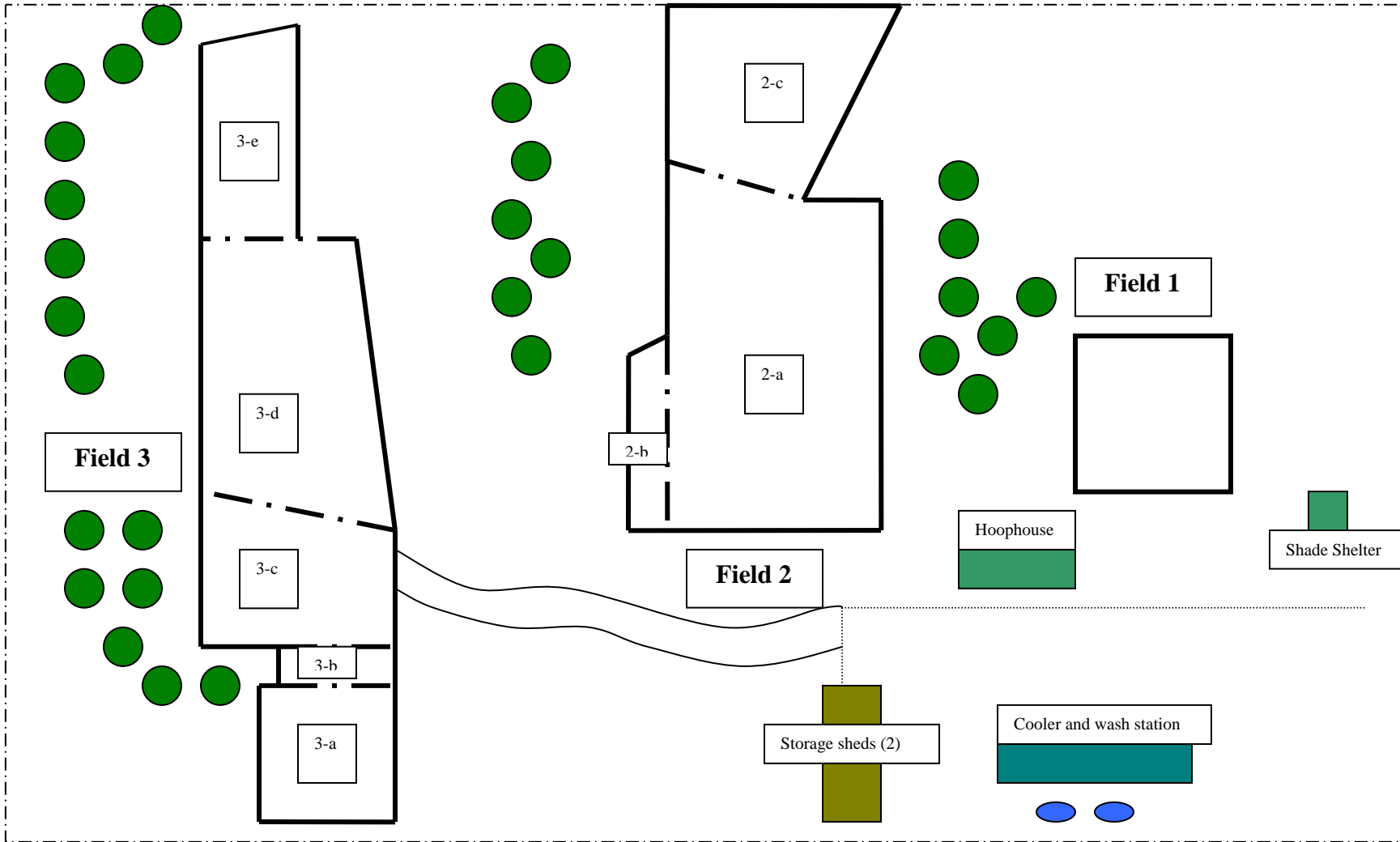
Field 2

Field 1



Field 3

Neighboring property



Richardson's Dairy
1480 Bridge Street, Dracut, MA

The New Entry Sustainable Farming Project

is a program of:

Friedman School
of Nutrition Science and Policy

**Tufts University, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy
Agriculture Food and Environment Program**

and



Community Teamwork, Inc.

Visit the NESFP website at:

www.nesfp.org