Recordkeeping in Real-life

Best practices for incubator projects and their farmers

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Recordkeeping for Farmers

• Background
• Required Records- for projects and their farmers
• Production & Crop Planning Records
• Financial Records
• Human Resource Records
• Resources
Lowcountry Local First, founded in 2007, advocates the benefits of a local living economy by strengthening community support of our local independent businesses & farmers. Buy Local and Eat Local initiatives provide training, networking, education and outreach.

- Over 500 Business Members
- Launched Local Works Co-working
- Hosts annual GOODBusiness Summit
- Provides monthly networking events and ongoing advocacy
- Advocated for municipal local preference option

- Over 180 farmers served
- Launched first farming apprenticeship & incubator farm (Dirt Works) in SC
- Graduated over 107 farming apprentices since 2010
- Provides monthly farmer training, field trips, and networking
- Consumer Education and Outreach
Growing New Farmers
- Sustainable Ag Certificate & Apprenticeship
- Dirt Works Incubator Farm
- Land Match

Farm Services
- Growers Groups, Workshops, Listserv

Consumer Education and Outreach
- Eat Local Month, Farm Fresh Food Guides, Ripe Charts
Dirt Works Incubator Farm, a program of Lowcountry Local First, provides business incubation for innovative & sustainable agricultural entrepreneurs in South Carolina.

The program, launched in fall of 2012, provides 6 participants land, infrastructure, equipment, mentorship, marketing, and networking for $2,000 annually for up to three years.

Project is a 10 acre parcel located on a private 70 acre vegetable farm owned by a local produce company.

As the first agricultural business incubator in South Carolina and one of less than 110 in the United States, the program is also a model for the Southeast.
Project Records

- Keeping good records provides a touchstone for both managers and participants.
- Capturing quantitative (the numbers) and qualitative (why and how).
- Utilizing records to guide farmers and determine where participants need help.
- Providing support, training, and expert assistance in keeping good records.
Project Records

• Quarterly check-ins.
• Annual survey with in-depth reviews.
• Pairing with business and financial mentorship.
• Annual documents required include Schedule F and Balance Sheet as well as # and narrative on cost of goods, revenue, and expenses.
• Production numbers by crop type.
Farm Records

• Farming as a business.
• Records are a window into a business and provide control in an otherwise high risk field.
• Keeping good records allow for farmers to comply with business requirements, file their taxes, apply for loans, and make sound business decisions.
• There is a lot of overlap in records and they can be multi-use.
Production Records

• Tools for crop planning, projecting financials, and determining markets.
• Tools vary based on intended market outlet, climate, and local pricing.
• Linked with enterprise budgets.
• Paired with field notes, harvest numbers, final sales from each market outlet, and other detailed notes about what sold, what grew well, what held up well in post harvest, disease and pest.
# Production

## Summary of crop timing information

The #s below are generalizations for early-medium maturity varieties. The earliest varieties available may mature sooner. Late maturity varieties are likely to take 2+ weeks longer.

As the season progresses, rate of crop maturation tends to accelerate. This should be considered when timing successional plantings.

* = only one planting
NR = not recommended

### TABLE 1: Crops grown from transplants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crop</th>
<th>Swiss chard</th>
<th>Parsley</th>
<th>Green onions</th>
<th>Kohlrabi</th>
<th>Head lettuce</th>
<th>Broccoli</th>
<th>Cauliflower</th>
<th>Pac-choi</th>
<th>Collards</th>
<th>Cabbage</th>
<th>Summer squash</th>
<th>Cucumbers</th>
<th>Storage onions</th>
<th>Eggplant</th>
<th>Bell peppers</th>
<th>Tomatoes</th>
<th>Watermelons</th>
<th>Cantaloupes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Successional interval (weeks)</td>
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<td>Seed to transplant (weeks)</td>
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<td>Transplant to harvest (weeks)</td>
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<td>Seed -&gt; transplant -&gt; harvest (weeks)</td>
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<td>Direct seed as an alternative (weeks)</td>
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### TABLE 2: Crops grown from direct seeding

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<th>Crop</th>
<th>Radishes</th>
<th>Spinach</th>
<th>Arugula</th>
<th>Beets</th>
<th>Turnips</th>
<th>Kale</th>
<th>Peas</th>
<th>Mustard greens</th>
<th>Carrots</th>
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**Formula (from TABLE 1.):**

For Swiss Chard: $B13 = +B11+B12$

This means:

(seed to transplant (weeks)) PLUS (transplant to harvest (weeks))

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http://growingsmallfarms.ces.ncsu.edu/growingsmallfarms-farmrecords/
Production

**Timing of direct seeding**

Blue # = week when crops should be direct seeded to begin harvesting on the week indicated in the far left column.

As the season progresses, the rate of crop maturation tends to accelerate. The information presented below does **not** account for accelerated development, and thus may need to be adjusted accordingly.

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<th>Harvest week</th>
<th>Radishes</th>
<th>Spinach</th>
<th>Arugula</th>
<th>Beets</th>
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</table>

**EXAMPLE Formula:**

For Radishes: B6

= $A6-(timing!B$20)

(Harvest week number) minus (**seed to harvest (weeks)**)

**This is on the page named TIMING, SEE TABLE 2.**

http://growingsmallfarms.ces.ncsu.edu/growingsmallfarms-farmrecords/
Production

This produce calendar was developed in 2001 for the CEFS student farm in Goldsboro, NC.

It is possible to begin harvesting many spring crops before week 19 in Goldsboro, NC.

Each farm should develop a harvest calendar that is appropriate for their production conditions and market opportunities, this is only one example.

The recommended planting dates contained in “Commercial vegetable recommendations for the Southeast” are useful when developing a harvest calendar.

Website to find more information: [http://ipm.ncsu.edu/vegetables/CommercialVegetables/](http://ipm.ncsu.edu/vegetables/CommercialVegetables/)

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### Produce calendar

1. **Weeks when crops are PROJECTED TO BE AVAILABLE**
2. **Weeks when crops are “NOT” projected to be available.**

5. The number of weeks each crop is projected to be available can be found at the bottom of each crop column.
6. The number of crops projected to be available each week can be found at the far right of each week row.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week of the year</th>
<th>Monday date</th>
<th>Swiss chard</th>
<th>Parsley</th>
<th>Green onions</th>
<th>Radishes</th>
<th>Spinach</th>
<th>Arugula</th>
<th>Beets</th>
<th>Turnips</th>
<th>Kale</th>
<th>Kohlrabi</th>
<th>Lettuce</th>
<th>Broccoli</th>
<th>Cauliflower</th>
<th>Parsley</th>
<th>Peas</th>
<th>Mustard greens</th>
<th>Carrots</th>
<th>Collards</th>
<th>Cabbage</th>
<th>Potatoes</th>
<th>Sweet corn</th>
<th>Summer squash</th>
<th>Cucumbers</th>
<th>Storage onions</th>
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<td>2-Aug</td>
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<td>9-Aug</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of weeks:

- Swiss chard: 15
- Parsley: 10
- Green onions: 10
- Radishes: 10
- Spinach: 10
- Arugula: 10
- Beets: 10
- Turnips: 10
- Kale: 10
- Kohlrabi: 10
- Lettuce: 10
- Broccoli: 10
- Cauliflower: 10
- Parsley: 10
- Peas: 10
- Mustard greens: 10
- Carrots: 10
- Collards: 10
- Cabbage: 10
- Potatoes: 10
- Sweet corn: 10
- Summer squash: 10
- Cucumbers: 10
- Storage onions: 10
- Garlic: 10
- Snap beans: 10
- Okra: 10
- Eggplant: 10
- Peppers: 10

[http://growingsmallfarms.ces.ncsu.edu/growingsmallfarms-farmrecords/](http://growingsmallfarms.ces.ncsu.edu/growingsmallfarms-farmrecords/)
Production

Carolina Farm Stewardship Association, 2014
Organic Broccoli – Irrigated – Wholesale Market – 20 lb Case

Budget Based on 1 acre of broccoli on a 10 acre mixed organic vegetable farm.

Estimated Costs and Returns per Acre.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNIT</th>
<th>QUANTITY</th>
<th>$/UNIT</th>
<th>TOTAL $/AC</th>
<th>YOUR FARM $/Ac.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RECEIPTS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Broccoli</td>
<td>Case</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>9,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. VARIABLE COSTS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Organic certification</td>
<td>Acre</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Seedlings</td>
<td>Thou.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Compost</td>
<td>Ton</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Cover Crop</td>
<td>Acre</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Lime (prorated)</td>
<td>Ton</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Organic Pest. Sprays</td>
<td>Oz.</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Fuel</td>
<td>Gal.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Box and Cool</td>
<td>Each</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

http://www.carolinafarmstewards.org/enterprise-budgets/
Total Variable Costs

15. FIXED COSTS
   17. Irrigation         Acre  1  80   80
   18. Land Charge       Acre  1  50   50

Total Fixed Costs 370

TOTAL COSTS 5,250

RETURN ABOVE VARIABLE COSTS 4,420

RETURN ABOVE TOTAL COSTS 4,050

Service 2019 published crop land rents.

Machinery and Equipment Costs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Purchase Price $</th>
<th>Salvage Value $</th>
<th>Useful Life Yrs.</th>
<th>Acres Used/Yr.</th>
<th>Repair &amp; Maint. $/Ac.</th>
<th>Total $/Ac.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tractor</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chisel Plow</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transplanter</td>
<td>2,600</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pest. Sprayer</td>
<td>9,400</td>
<td>1,900</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.50</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trailer</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disk</td>
<td>4,450</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manure Spreader</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bed Shaper</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200 Buckets</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total $/Acre = 240
Financial Records

- Projected Budget
- Recording Expenses and Income
- Balance Sheet - financial record for a certain point in time. Two columns, assets and liabilities - totals at bottom should balance.
- Profit and Loss or Income Statement - reflects all revenues, expenses, adjustments, and taxes.
- Schedule F - Tax reporting form for farmers (P&L)

Refer to document on /www.cinram.umn.edu
Financial Records

• Receipts, invoices, credit card statements, and copies of checks.
• Personal versus business (making sure these are separate). If there is overlap- making sure there is a clear process for determining which is which.
• Understanding that your business records also must capture more than tangible dollars but also account for assets and depreciation.

Refer to document on /www.cinram.umn.edu
Financial Records

- Labor Hired
  - (farm labor, piecework, contract labor)
- Equipment Repair
  - (tractors repair, sprayer repair)
- Farm Building & Fence Repair
  - (barn roof, new fence post)
- Interest
  - (from bank loans, car loans)
- Rent
  - (land, animals, machinery)
- Feed Purchased
  - (for livestock not for personal consumption)
- Seed & Plants Purchased
  - (for production, not personal use)
- Fertilizer
  - (fertilizer and lime)
- Chemicals
  - (pesticides, herbicides)
- Conservation Expenses (only 25% of farm income)
  - (soil and water, like diversion channels)
- Employee Benefit Plans
  - (health insurance for workers)
- Pension and Profit-Sharing Plans
  - (retirement)
- Other Cost
  - (marketing)

- Livestock Expenses
  - (veterinary, breeding, medicine)
- Custom Hire (Machine Work)
  - (baling hay, plowing field)
- Gasoline, Fuel, Oil
  - (for farm equipment)
- Taxes
  - (state, local, real estate tax)
- Water Charges
  - (irrigation charges)
- Insurance (other than personal)
  - (on farm buildings, equipment, crops)
- Utilities
  - (water, electricity, telephone for farm)
- Supplies Purchased
  - (livestock supplies such as bedding)
- Car and Truck Expenses
  - (if used 50% or more for farm)
- Depreciation (form 4562)
  - (on vehicles and machinery)
- Freight and Trucking
  - (shipping, trucking)
- Storage and Warehousing
  - (grain storage)

Refer to document on /www.cinram.umn.edu
Human Resource Records

• Accounting for labor from owner operator- this is an essential piece in creating a realistic business plan, budget, crop planning, and market selection.

• Without properly accounting for labor costs owners will not be able to properly price or evaluate if certain crops/markets are financially viable.

• Employees: full-time or part-time

• Contract workers
National Incubator Farm Training Initiative

The New Entry Sustainable Farming Project has been providing training and support to the next generation of farmers for over 15
Resources

http://www.agsquared.com/

Management Tools
- Manage your tasks
- Organize your staff
- Track your supplies

Planning Tools
- Map your farm
- Create your crop plan
- Simplify your calculations

Analysis Tools
- Track your harvests
- Track your labor
- Analyze your costs

Record Keeping
- Turn actions into records
- Keep a journal
- Review your season
Resources

- http://nesfp.nutrition.tufts.edu/sites/default/files/resources/nifti_toolkit_v2.pdf
- http://nebeginningfarmers.org/farmers/achieving-profitability/profitability-tutorial/managing-your-finances/
- http://www.agsquared.com/
- http://growingsmallfarms.ces.ncsu.edu/growingsmallfarms-farmrecords/
- http://www.carolinafarmstewards.org/enterprise-budgets/
Lowcountry Local First is a non-profit advocate for local, independent businesses and a resource for the community members they serve.

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Nikki@lowcountrylocalfirst.org
@lowcountrylocal