



# FACT SHEET

## Land Trusts and Incubators

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Land trusts, which now protect more than 5 million acres of ranch and farmland nationwide, can play an important role in farm incubator projects' objective of providing beginning farmers with affordable access to land. A land trust establishes an easement, which permanently limits uses of the land in order to protect its conservation values, regardless of who owns the land in the future. Farmland sold often includes additional easements to further restrict non-agricultural activities and limit real estate values, therefore ensuring that the land remains in active agricultural production. Similarly to a conservation easement, an agricultural easement remains in effect regardless of any future changes in land ownership.

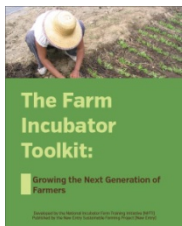
Some incubators simultaneously run the land trust and manage its programs, while others have an outside land trust manage the land where the incubator program is established. In both cases there are a number of requirements and benefits for all stakeholders involved. The tools and strategies listed below were shared by incubator projects on the [NIFTI list serve](#) in 2012 - 2013.

### Partnership Benefits

- **OPPORTUNITY** – Incubators that own or manage land conserved through a land trust must abide by standards outlined in the easement as any other landowner on conserved land would. These partnerships provide incubators the opportunity to operate on prime agricultural land that would otherwise be unaffordable and inaccessible to the incubator project and its participants.
- **INTERCONNECTIONS** – The partnership between a land trust and incubator may have implications beyond the land that the incubator uses, as the incubator can provide input on other land conserved throughout the area. Additionally, graduates of the incubator program may go on to farm on their own on land conserved by the land trust.
- **ACCESSIBLE LAND** – In the cases where the land trust itself is the incubator (such as the Peconic Land Trust or Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy), the trust can develop a farmland leasing program, which provides farmers with assistance and access to land.

# Land Trusts and Incubators, cont.

- **RESOURCES** – In addition to providing temporary access to land through an incubator project, the trust may also provide farmers with barn space, greenhouse space, retail space, shared equipment, and training opportunities.
- **AGRICULTURAL VALUE** – When the trust functions as the incubator, the trust recognizes the value in ensuring that the land remains in agricultural production for generations to come.
- **COLLABORATION** – Land trusts and farm incubator projects have a number of shared or overlapping goals, and thus it can benefit a variety of stakeholders to create or strengthen these partnerships within your own communities and programs.



*Information for this fact sheet was collected from our NIFTI community of practice on the [Incubator Farm Programs list serve](#) and was compiled by Alyssa Charney, NIFTI Program Associate. For additional guidance on incubator programs, see the “Farm Incubator Toolkit”, available as a free download at <http://nesfp.org/nifti/toolkit>.*

The National Incubator Farm Training Initiative (NIFTI) is a program of the [New Entry Sustainable Farming Project](#), which has trained and assisted the next generation of beginning farmers in Massachusetts since 1998. NIFTI provides comprehensive one-on-one consulting, educational resources, and professional development opportunities for dozens of organizations that run land-based beginning farmer training programs throughout the U. S. To find out more about NIFTI, visit us at <http://nesfp.org/nifti>.

