



Beginning Farmer Business Training & Education Project

Are you looking for programs and tools to enhance or expand your work with the next generation of farmers? If so, consider participating in the New England Small Farm Institute's Beginning Farmer Business Training & Education Project.

The New England Small Farm Institute (NESFI) has been providing programs and services to aspiring and beginning farmers since 1978. Now, thanks to a professional development grant from Northeast SARE (NESARE), NESFI is able to provide resources to other service providers in the Northeast that work with, or wish to begin working with, new farmers.

Specifically, the NESARE grant will allow NESFI to make its course and workbook *Exploring the Small Farm Dream: Is Starting an Agricultural Business Right for You?* more widely available, and to build a network of delivery partners. *Explorer*, a course in decision-making and farm planning, has been field-tested by a variety of organizations and agencies in the Northeast and beyond. Through the Project, experienced *Explorer* facilitators will conduct train the trainer sessions for service providers that want to consider adding *Explorer* to their beginning farmer "toolbox." Participants will learn how to use *Explorer* both in a classroom setting and as a one-on-one coaching tool, and will be introduced to other NESFI resources such as the new *Small Farm Planner*, a self-study sequel to *Explorer*. For background on *Explorer* visit www.smallfarm.org.

Who should participate in the Project?

Exploring the Small Farm Dream was created to meet a need NESFI identified in its own backyard. Through word of mouth several other service providers learned of the course and asked to be trained to use the curriculum, creating the start of a delivery partner network on which the Project will build. Current course delivery partners include a county extension office, non-profit agricultural and environmental organizations, and a state department of agriculture.

Consider joining the Beginning Farmer Business Training & Education Project if you:

- ✦ Are a service provider that currently works with new farmers
- ✦ Are a service provider developing programs to serve this constituency in the future
- ✦ Already offer a course such as NxLevel's *Tilling the Soil* and find it does not meet the needs of your new farmer clients
- ✦ Want to use a field-tested curriculum and not "reinvent the wheel"
- ✦ Want to join a network of service providers that work with beginning farmers to share information and best practices

Train the Trainer Sessions

Train the trainer sessions will be held in different locations around the Northeast beginning in Spring 2009. There will be no charge for service providers to attend the trainings. However, participants will be responsible for their own lodging and transportation expenses. Participants will receive copies of the *Explorer* and *Planner* workbooks along with a facilitation guide.

Led by experienced *Explorer* facilitators, the 1-1/2 to 2 day sessions will include:

- ✦ Discussion of new farmers, their needs and their interests
- ✦ Overview of *Explorer* and *Planner* and how they can fit into existing programs and services
- ✦ Strategies for planning, marketing and administering an *Explorer* course
- ✦ Detailed review of the curriculum for prospective course facilitators
- ✦ Opportunity for facilitators to practice delivery of course segments

Service providers that deliver *Explorer* courses will have support through NESFI's website as well as access to the network of course delivery partners. The project will also provide individual mentoring to a limited number of new partners during their first year of course delivery. All service providers in the network will have an opportunity to attend a best practices meeting.

If you would like to be notified when Train the Trainer sessions are scheduled, or if you have questions about the project, please contact Alice Posner at the New England Small Farm Institute at 413-323-4531 or aposner@smallfarm.org.



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