



AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS PLANNING TEMPLATES AND RESOURCES

BUSINESS AND MARKETING RESOURCE LIST

Abstract: This resource list contains sources of business planning templates and further resources for agricultural enterprises. These resources include Internet and print resources as well as training courses and workshops.

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Introduction

Business planning is crucial to success for both new and established enterprises. Going through the planning process increases the chances for success and helps avoid costly mistakes. It can be very helpful to have your plan evaluated by several people to make sure that you haven't missed any vital components or issues. This critical evaluation will also be helpful when presenting the plan to lenders or other potential funders.

There is a great deal of information and assistance available for writing and using business plans in your farm enterprise. Every state has Small Business Development Centers and Cooperative

Extension offices that offer such assistance, as do many state departments of agriculture and/or economic development agencies. However, many producers would like to have business plan examples and other information that is specific to agriculture. This resource list, therefore, does not tell you how to write a business plan, but refers you to sources of business planning information and assistance that are most relevant to the smaller-scale or alternative agricultural entrepreneur.

General Agricultural Enterprise Business Planning Resources

Related ATTRA Publications:

Assessing the feasibility of an agricultural enterprise is the first step to developing a business plan. The following ATTRA publications will help you explore the feasibility of your enterprise ideas.

Evaluating a Rural Enterprise
Beef Farm Sustainability Checksheet
Dairy Farm Sustainability Checksheet
Small Ruminant Sustainability Checksheet
Growing Your Range Poultry Business:
An Entrepreneur's Toolbox
Holistic Management

Supporting information for organic agriculture business planning is also available in *Enterprise Budgets and Production Costs for Organic Production*. To request publications, call toll-free 800-346-9140, or visit the ATTRA Web site, www.attra.ncat.org.

ATTRA is the national sustainable agriculture information service operated by the National Center for Appropriate Technology, through a grant from the Rural Business-Cooperative Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. These organizations do not recommend or endorse products, companies, or individuals. NCAT has offices in Fayetteville, Arkansas (P.O. Box 3657, Fayetteville, AR 72702), Butte, Montana, and Davis, California.



Internet and Print Resources

While not focused on agricultural enterprises specifically, BizPlanIt's Virtual Business Plan is a free on-line resource that includes business plan fundamentals to consider and incorporate into each section of your plan; highlights the most common mistakes in each section of the plan; and provides other advice, articles, tips, tools, and links related to each section of a business plan. Available at www.bizplanit.com/vplan.html.

The following British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (BCMAFF) enterprise business planning templates are available on the Internet: Chicken Broiler Producer, Dairy Producer, Grains and Seeds, Bee Keeper, Cow/Calf Ranch, Greenhouse Vegetable, Greenhouse Floriculture, Wholesale Nursery, and Direct Farm Marketing (mixed vegetables, berries, and value-added products). These templates include detailed information on each step of developing agricultural enterprise business plans, and they are very highly recommended. They are available at www.agf.gov.bc.ca/busmgmt/bus_guides/index.htm.

A sample business plan for an herb enterprise is available at www.smallbusinessbc.ca/pdf/sample_primary.pdf.

A vineyard business plan workbook is available at www.siu.edu/~readi/viticulture/business-plan.htm.

Adding Value to Beef Production walks you through developing a business plan for value-added beef enterprises. Includes case studies of actual businesses. Available at www.ciras.iastate.edu/beef-manual/sec3.html.

Adding Value to Pork Production walks you through developing a business plan for value-added pork enterprises. Includes case studies of actual businesses. Available at www.ciras.iastate.edu/porkmanual/.

An interesting sample business plan for an Internet-based horse reseller is available at www.bplans.com/spv/3103/index.cfm?affiliate=.

A sample business plan for small food businesses is available at www.agmrc.org/business/pdf/samplebusplan.pdf.

A sample business plan for value-added sauces and other Hispanic foods is available at www.bplans.com/spv/3230/index.cfm?affiliate=.

Building a Sustainable Business: a Guide to Developing a Business Plan for Farms and Rural Businesses helps alternative and sustainable agriculture entrepreneurs to develop profitable enterprises. Sample worksheets illustrate how real farm families set goals, researched processing alternatives, determined potential markets, and evaluated financing options. Blank worksheets help producers to develop detailed, lender-ready business plans and map out strategies to take advantage of new opportunities. Print copies are available for \$14 (plus \$3.95 shipping and handling charge), or the publication is available free of charge at www.sare.org/publications/business/business.pdf.

To order print copies, contact:

Sustainable Agriculture Publications
210 Hills Building
University of Vermont
Burlington, VT 05405-0082
802-656-0484
802-656-9091 FAX
sanpubs@uvm.edu

Getting Started in Freshwater Aquaculture is a "one-stop" resource for planning an aquaculture enterprise. A CD-ROM includes sections on business planning, marketing, species selection, water resources needed, and production methods. An accompanying workbook provides review questions, business planning forms, and example test questions. Also included are sample business plans, cash flow statements, and enterprise budgets. *Getting Started in Freshwater Aquaculture* is available for \$59.95 (checks payable to Purdue University Aquaculture). To place an order, or for more information, contact:

LaDon Swann, Aquaculture Specialist
Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant College
Program
Purdue University
1026 Poultry Science Building

West Lafayette, IN 47907-1026
765-494-6264
swanndl@auburn.edu

Personal Assistance

Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), a national organization sponsored by the Small Business Administration (SBA), is made up more than 13,000 volunteer business executives who provide free counseling, workshops, and seminars to prospective and existing small business people. E-mail counseling is a confidential, fast, and convenient option that is also offered by SCORE. SCORE volunteers can assist you in developing a business plan, or review an existing plan. There are SCORE volunteers with expertise in agriculture available. You can find them by searching at www.score.org. If you don't have access to the Internet, call ATTRA, and we can do the search for you. If you would prefer face-to-face counseling, visit their Web site or contact SCORE to find a counselor near you.

SCORE Association
409 3rd Street, SW
6th Floor
Washington, DC 20024
800-634-0245

Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) are sponsored by the SBA, in partnership with state and local governments, the educational community, and the private sector. They provide technology, informational resources, and on-site counseling for start-up and expanding businesses to create business, marketing, and other plans, do research, and receive expert training and assistance. To locate your nearest SBDC, contact the SBA Small Business Answer Desk at 800-827-5722, or go to www.sba.gov/regions/states.html. SBA business planning resources are available at www.sba.gov/starting_business/planning/basic.html.

Software Resources

FINPACK is a comprehensive financial planning and analysis system designed to help farmers and ranchers understand their financial situation and make informed decisions. The FINPACK Business Plan includes a comprehensive outline,

sample plans, and detailed information on what should be included in the business plan. Supporting information from any electronic source can be cut-and-pasted into the plan. Cost is \$295 (\$145 for Minnesota residents) for the Professional version and \$95 for the Personal version. You can download a free trial version of the FINPACK Business Plan at www.cffm.umn.edu/Downloads/DownloadTrial.asp?P=BusinessPlan.

To order, or for more information, contact:

Center for Farm Financial Management
University of Minnesota
130 Classroom Office Building
1994 Buford Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108
800-234-1111
612-625-3105 FAX
www.cffm.umn.edu/Software/BusinessPlan/

Business Plan Pro 2004 is the most used business planning software available. More than 400 sample plans are included; among them are some plans relevant to agriculture, such as plans for medicinal herb, tree fruit, and mixed fruit and vegetable enterprises. Most Small Business Development Centers offer use of this software for free or at nominal cost. If you would like your own copy, it costs \$99.95. To order, or for more information, call 800-229-7526, or visit www.bplans.com/contentkit/index.cfm?affiliate=bestwarere.

PlanWrite is another highly recommended business planning software package. Sample business plans, some related to agriculture, and actual business plans from real businesses—winners of the prestigious MootCorp® business plan competition—are included. The basic version costs \$119.95. To order, or for more information, call 800-423-1228 or visit www.brs-inc.com/business_plan.asp.

Market Farm Forms is an excellent planning tool for diversified farms that market direct to the consumer or run Community Supported Agriculture operations. There are few resources for this type of farm enterprise, and this is one of the best. Developed by a market farmer, Market Farm Forms contains computer spreadsheet templates for planning and organizing information on diversi-

fied market farms. This software program will help you in planning crops and budgets, ordering seed and soil amendments, growing transplants, projecting yields and income, and then tracking what really happens compared to your projections. If you don't use a computer, you can copy the forms in the spiral bound manual and do the calculations by hand. The Market Farm Forms package is available for Windows or Mac systems for \$49.95 (free shipping). It can be ordered online or by mail.

Back40Books.com
Mail Order Department
Nature's Pace Sanctuary
Hartshorn, MO 65479
866-596-9982
LindaNaturesPace@earthlink.net
www.back40books.com/store/

Training Courses

Tilling the Soil of Opportunity is a comprehensive, 12-week course in business planning offered through the NxLevelL business planning training network. Individual sessions focus on topics such as marketing, financial management, how to perform market research, legal issues, human resource management, risk management, and other important issues. It is particularly useful to those considering marketing approaches such as direct marketing, agri-tourism, or developing a cooperative. Courses were available in 36 states at the time of publication. The course fee varies from community to community. Each state and/or community sets its own course fee structure. To find out whether the course available in your community, or for more information, contact:

Utah Small Business Development
Centers
9750 South 300 West, Bldg. 5
Sandy, UT 84070
801-957-3480
801-957-3488 FAX
info@nxlevel.org
www.nxlevel.org

FastTrac offers many business planning and feasibility assessment programs for entrepreneurs. Of particular interest is their Microenterprise series of programs, aimed at lower-to-middle-income

people who are starting or expanding a small business. For more information, contact:

FastTrac National Headquarters
4747 Troost
Kansas City, MO 64110
800-689-1740 (toll-free)
816-235-6216 FAX
info@fasttrac.org
www.fasttrac.org

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Business and Marketing Resource List

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The electronic version of **Agricultural Business Planning Templates and Resources** is located at:

HTML

http://www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/agriculture_planning.html

PDF

http://www.attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/PDF/agriculture_planning.pdf