

# National Farm Renewal Initiative

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS



**The next Agricultural Policy Framework should include  
a Farm Renewal & Business Development Pillar to:**

- Support the transition between retiring farmers and new entrants
- Make farmland accessible and protect it for future generations
- Encourage the transition toward more sustainable, resilient and secure national food production

August 2016



## FARMSTART

supporting a new generation of farmers

Over the past 10 years, FarmStart has offered flexible programs to encourage and provide a new generation of entrepreneurial, sustainable farmers with the resources, tools, and support necessary to get their businesses off the ground and to thrive. Our innovative and groundbreaking programs and services have included:

- **Farm Viability Programs** including business development farm tours and our courses: *Digging into Farming: Planning Your New Farm*; *Fearless Farm Finances: Planning for Profit*. More than 6,000 people have participated in our courses and workshops.
- **Start-Up Farms & Seed Capital** providing low risk access to land, equipment and infrastructure as well as small grants to help new farmers during the first 5 years of their farm start-up. We have directly supported 65 new farmers to date, including 30 new Canadian farmers through Seed Capital Grants.
- **Farmlink.net & the Toolshed Blog** providing an online place to connect for new farmers and land owners, as well as best practices and useful resources. Over 2,500 registered users on land-linking web platform, [www.FarmLINK.net](http://www.FarmLINK.net) and over 20,000 have people accessed our online resources and Toolshed blog.
- **Sector-wide leadership and a voice for a new generation of farmers.** FarmStart has led many strategic initiatives, sector-wide research projects and collaborative efforts.

*However, after 10 years FarmStart's programs and services are coming to a close due to the lack of funding for new farmer programs and services. Without core and sustained funding, FarmStart will not be able to continue to run current operations or expand the number and diversify the opportunities for near urban and rural Start-Up Farm Facilities.*



# Summary of Policy Recommendations

## **Farm Renewal must become a priority and requires active Federal and Provincial support.**

Drawing from our consultations with over 150 farm organizations across the country as well as government representatives, and new farmers themselves, we have developed a set of recommended policy changes that can support a new generation of Canadian farmers.

## **Knowledge**

**Training & Extension** developing recommended standards & accreditation, funding training programs and effective and necessary on-farm research and extension strategies

**Business Development Opportunities** including incubator farms, new farmer training programs and Management clubs

**Mentorship & Networks** including organizations that support mentorship programs and a national on-farm employment program

## **Capital**

**Seed Grants** including minimum wage salary grants, establishment grants and income-stabilization grants

**Decrease restrictions on farm losses**, allowing full deduction of farm losses for new farmers

**Offer debt forgiveness** on government student loans to those who become a farmer

**Provide early-stage loans** through character-based loan funds or loan guarantees

## **Farmland Protection and Transfer**

**Address land speculation and eliminate non-agricultural development of Class 1-4 farmland**

**Provide Core Funds for farmland protection initiatives** and Farmland Trusts organizations

**Enact an Agricultural Gifts Program** providing charitable tax receipt for easements on agricultural land

**Fund succession initiatives** such as subsidized access to professional advisors and coaches, provide core funding for farm linking programs and develop retirement savings program for exiting farmers

**Create finance initiatives that support farm transfers** including a Registered Farm Savings Program for new farmers, capital gains tax exemptions tied to passing on the farm to new farmers or a farmland trust, and impact and institutional investment strategies that help transition and protect farmland for future generations of farmers



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# A Farm Renewal Crisis

We are facing a very real crisis of renewal in agriculture, unlike any other sector in Canada. Farming communities are aging, and structural, economic and practical challenges are preventing new and young farmers from getting into the sector.

**In Canada, over 50% of our farm assets will be transferred in the next 10 years and 75% of retiring farmers do not have a successor.** With less than 30,000 young farmers in Canada today and the fastest pace of decline in our history, fewer and fewer farmers will be producing our food in the future. We need to encourage and support a new generation of farmers today, who will be prepared to fill the shoes of our soon-to-be retiring farmers in the next 10 years. And we need to intervene to support what could be a transformative and dynamic generational transition.

The continued loss of family and independent farm operations will affect the health of our rural communities, the availability of quality, differentiated and locally produced foods, as well as the careful stewardship of our productive agricultural resources for generations to come. This combined with climate change, international political instability, and insecure global food markets, underscores the need to rebuild local food production capacity, starting with the producers. Without targeted programs supporting local diversified food production systems farms will continue to become consolidated commodity-oriented production operations, and farmland will continue to move out of the hands of farmers.

Regional food and farm organizations across the country are working to encourage a new generation of farmers. However these efforts remain piecemeal, dispersed, and marginalized without institutional support, sustained funding and a national vision. This process needs to move at a much faster pace if we are to address the looming farm succession and knowledge transfer crisis.

**Farm Renewal must become a priority and requires active Federal and Provincial support.**

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1 Beaulieu, Martin, S. 2015. Demographic Changes in Canadian Agriculture. Statcan.gc.ca. Retrieved August 22, 2016: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/96-325-x/2014001/article/11905-eng.htm>



# National New Farmers Initiative: Findings

Over the course of three and a half years (2012-2015), FarmStart spearheaded a national **New Farmers Initiative (NFI)** with Food Secure Canada (FSC). We reached out to farm organizations across the country to open up a space for dialogue and interaction. The NFI undertook a range of provincial and national consultations involving over 150 organizations and individuals as well as coordinated 2 national New Farmer Roundtable meetings at the Food Secure Canada Conferences in Edmonton and Halifax with over 90 participants from across the country.

## This is what we heard:

**Farm policies must support small farms**, because young farmers and new farmers often start out on small farms. If our policies do not create and support viable small farms, we bar the door against farmer entry.

**Sustainability means long-term land tenure and stewardship.** Long-term investment and care for our land, soil, ecosystems and local communities requires secure land tenure for those who grow food, and access to land for those who want to begin. It means that the farmers and other producers who work the land must be the ones to control that land—we cannot let our land be bought up by corporations, investors, or absentee owners.

**Rising land prices and speculation are creating significant barriers.** It is important to examine agricultural zoning policy, allowing smaller plots and new forms of farm cluster development in order to facilitate land access for new entrants and new business models. Speculation can be curtailed in a number of ways, but action must be taken to prevent farmland from being purchased for non-agricultural uses, particularly those that preclude its return to agricultural production.

**Farmland Trusts and public ownership can allow farmers to steward the land, not necessarily own it.** While many farm families want to own their own land, and while our policies must support farmer ownership, not all of Canada's farmland needs to be owned privately by individuals. Innovative arrangements of public ownership for some land may help young and new farmers enter agriculture. Public ownership arrangements can help keep high-value land adjoining major cities in food production. In some places, communities will want to own or control a portion of their food-producing land.

**New, debt-minimizing forms of land transfer will allow farm succession.** Land ownership must not bring with it an unmanageable burden of debt. Over the past decade, farm debt has grown. Over the coming decade, a status quo model of debt-financed intergenerational transfer and land



acquisition will drive that debt higher. To attract new entrants, we must reduce debt barriers. To retain current farmers, we must staunch the interest-payment bleed-off of wealth.

**Venture and patient capital is needed.** New farmers want to do things differently and need the opportunity to learn by doing. They want to scale up and invest strategically over time, minimizing their debt. They need recognition for small-scale, diversified business models. They need venture and character based lending, government funded shared savings programs, start-up and establishment grants, patient loans, and access to the appropriate scale of asset and equity financing.

**New farmers need training programs in rural and urban communities and are looking for accessible, lower-risk ways to enter the sector.** The current scattered approach to teaching new farmers is not enough. Agricultural colleges focus largely on research and theory, and underfunded non-profits try to bridge the gap to provide opportunities for mentorship, experience and capacity building. We must encourage new farmers from all backgrounds and must engage them where they are living before expecting them to take the leap and “buy the farm”. New farmers from non-farm backgrounds need low risk ways to explore a career in agriculture, or we will lose prospective farmers at the outset.

**Farmer-to-farmer mentoring and the transfer of knowledge and skills is critical for the next generation.** Investment is required to increase the opportunities, standardization and quality of mentorship-based, farm centered, hands-on farmer training that is necessary to support a professional and viable generation of new farmers. New farmers need experienced and well connected regionally based coaches that can provide them with support as they find their own path to farming.

**Farmers need regionally based extension services.** Farmers need expert information about low-input agriculture, cost reduction, adaptation to climate change, integrated pest management, alternative fertility techniques, energy efficiency, and other techniques unlikely to be well-covered by seed or chemical company staff.

**Acknowledgement of the ecological services provided by small and mid scale farms and diversified agriculture** would benefit young and new farmers. This could be done by implementing payments to producers, increasing research, development and extension funding for public sector and farmer lead ecological research and enabling appropriate scale infrastructure and equipment.

**Exiting farmers want to retire with dignity and security.** We can make room for new farmers by implementing a retirement plan for farmers that enables existing farmers to leave and pass on the farm. Ensuring that farmers have adequate retirement funds means that families will not have to sell and refinance their land-base each generation.



**Farm support, farm income, and supply-management initiatives must be more flexible.**

Current programs and supply managed systems are inaccessible, do not serve, and often prohibitive for new farmers. They must begin to accommodate and support new entrants, as well as, new innovative business models. Broader quota new entry programs, lower minimum quota requirements, and increases to the below-quota production limits should be considered.

**Food production can happen in the North.** There is a lack of agricultural policy for some areas of the North (NT and NU). The next Agricultural Policy Framework should include all three territories, making programs available and adapting them to the particular conditions, cultures, and demographics of the North.

**Over the last 10 years, no national or provincial funding streams or programs have focused on the particular opportunities and challenges facing farm renewal and the needs of a new generation of farmers.** Funding that provides capacity and sustainability of critical sector partners and valuable programs and services are immediately needed.

Drawing from our conversations with such a wide range of government representatives, farm and non-profit organizations and new farmers themselves, **we have developed a set of recommended policy changes that can support a new generation of Canadian farmers.**

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## **Policy Recommendations**

**The next Agricultural Policy Framework should include a Farm Renewal Pillar with:**

**1. Knowledge Programs**

Funding training and extension, mentorship, business development and networking opportunities.

**2. Seed Capital**

Providing start-up grants, savings and debt forgiveness programs and early stage, high-risk loans.

**3. Farm Transfer Interventions and Farmland Protection**

Supporting farmland protection strategies, succession incentives and support, and farmland transfer financing initiatives.





# 1. Knowledge Programs

Funding is needed to support the development and sustaining of programs and services that address entry level planning and training needs, business development, resources and advising. New farmers need low-risk opportunities to start new farms, more accessible regionally based mentorship, advising and coaching opportunities and more farm transfer and succession opportunities. Regional farm leaders, organizations and networks are critical partners in this effort alongside government resources, universities and colleges.

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## Training & Extension

- **Recommended standards & accreditation** for training farmers of different backgrounds and sectors & fund regional coordination.
- **Training programs:** new or ongoing programs of training institutions, not-for-profits, and accreditation for regional organizations for specific training/courses, farm and value chain organizations, as well as, regionally based chapters of provincial and national organizations who are providing training, support services and business development opportunities.
- **Effective and necessary on-farm research and extension strategies**, resources, mentor and advisors through farm led research networks, professional development and training.

## Business Development Opportunities

- **Incubator farms** and other shared farm platforms, new farmer training programs and services.
- **Management clubs:** supporting industry and farmer organizations, and farmer peer groups, that help farmers access technical support, training and common services together.

## Mentorship & Networks

- **Mentorship programs:** Increase the ability for regional leaders, organizations and networks to create and sustain “places to connect” as well as regional support networks and resources that help new farmer “find the right match” (coach mentor or advisor) at the right time.
- **A Farm employment program** similar to [AAFC's Career Focus](#) program but for on-farm employment/internships on accredited farms, to help encourage farmers to offer reliable on-farm employment and pay a living wage while providing opportunities to learn-to-farm. This could be facilitated by regional mentorship organizations.



## 2. Seed Capital

New entrant farmers need access to seed and establishment grants, early stage operating capital and shared savings programs. They need grant and financing programs that are able to take measured risks on these farmers as they start-up. New risk taking grants and capital should be developed alongside programs that provide sound business management coaching, training and resources before and throughout to increase the likelihood of farm success.

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### Grants

- **Minimum wage salary grants** (similar to [Quebec's support for self-employment](#)): This provides a minimum wage salary grant for first year in business, with business plan development coaching.
- **Establishment grants** (similar to [Quebec's program](#)): These are grants that are for infrastructure or equipment purchases. The amount awarded may vary from \$20,000 to \$50,000 depending on the recipient's level of training. The grants would require a combination of 6 years of post-secondary education and work experience on a farming operation (to encourage both formal education and hands-on experience).
- **Income-stabilization grant** (like in [EU](#) through the [CEJA](#)) New farmers could get different grants based on the environmental, animal welfare and food safety standards they fulfill and young farmers under 40 receive an additional 25% top-up for the first five years of their business.

### Savings & Debt Forgiveness

- **Decrease restrictions on farm losses** [allow full deduction of farm losses for new farmers](#) whose farm business is not their primary source of income. Many new farmers depend on off-farm income to fund their fledgling operations and should be given the freedom to deduct a farm loss from their overall income.
- **Debt forgiveness on government student loans to those who become a farmer**, like [New York's Young Farmers Loan Forgiveness Incentive Program](#).

### Early-Stage Loans

- **Seed Capital Loan Funds** that can offer early-stage, character based loans to new farmers or Loan Guarantee Funds that encourage financial institutions to take more risks. New farmers struggle to access the kind of capital necessary to establish a viable operation or grow their business as typical lenders look at the balance sheet, equity, income and secured assets, practices that can be prohibitive for those just starting out. Typically, new farm enterprises do not need large amounts of capital: (\$40,000-\$60,000), what these farmers need is someone to take a measured risk based on their abilities, experience, and personal track record.



## 3. Farmland Protection and Transfer

The Canadian Government needs to find creative ways to intervene in the imminent generational transition or we will see much of our valuable farmlands transferred out of the hands of farmers in the next decade. If not, the loss of our productive soils and farm assets will be a critical economic and systemic driver, limiting the potential scale and capacity of a sustainable food system in the future, regardless of market demands or food security needs.

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### Farmland Protection

- **Address land speculation.** For example put a cap the price land can sell above agricultural value and improve farmland protection against non-farm uses to stop speculation on farmland.
- **Eliminate non-agricultural development of Class 1-4 farmland**, not only in peri-urban green belts, but also across the country.
- **Core Funds for Farmland Trusts organizations** and farmland protection initiatives by municipalities, communities and other conservation organizations.
- **Agricultural Gifts Program** could provide for the cost of an easement on agricultural land by issuing a charitable tax receipt for the difference of land value. An Ecological Gifts easement costs \$60,000, and the process is complex and only applies to the ecologically sensitive areas of the farm. An Agricultural Gifts proposal would simplify the process, decrease the cost, and cover the entirety of the workable acreage.

### Succession Incentives & Support

- **Subsidize access to professional support:** farm business/succession planning advisors, tax specialists, lawyers, at higher rates than GF2 – ex. 75% instead of 50%
- **Core funding for farm linking programs** such as [www.Farmlink.net](http://www.Farmlink.net), [Banque de Terres](#), [Land for Good](#) - that offer succession coaching for non-family transfers, match-making between farmers and landowners (for lease, sale or farm business transfer), land listings, resource development/sharing.
- **Retirement savings program for exiting farmers.** This could be funded by taking un-used EI contributions over the lifetime of a farm business and converting it to an RRSP. This would discourage crisis sales and increase the probability of farm transfers to undercapitalized new farmers.



## Land Transfer Finance Initiatives

- **A Registered Farm Savings Program for new farmers:** A savings program for new farmers and for transfers similar to [Quebec's Desjardins Savings Plan](#), [US Individual Development Accounts](#), [Practical Farmers of Iowa - Savings Incentive Program](#). This could be designed like a Registered Education Savings Plan to be a matching, tax-free savings account and paid into monthly, helping aspiring farmers save for a mortgage. The Government can provide matching funds when the money is withdrawn for a farm purchase.
- **Capital Gains Tax Exemptions for Retiring Farmers** tied to passing on the farm to a new farmer, or could to the establishment of Farmland easements. Checks and balances would need to be put in place to ensure the recipient of the farm assets is operating a farm business on a continuous and regular basis after the transfer.
- **Impact and institutional investment** to help transition and protect farmland for future generations of farmers. Investment strategies could include: subordinated loans, lease to own for a new entrant, financing for a community owned farms, condo farm development or a farmland trusts properties.

### Examples from other Jurisdictions

A variety of sustainable, farmland investment strategies have taken off with great success in the US, Australia, UK and Europe (see below for a few examples). While there are farmland funds in Canada, there are currently no sustainable and succession oriented funds outside of Quebec.

#### **Fonds d'investissement pour la relève agricole, (Quebec)**

FIRA, a Public-Private investment partnership in Quebec, is a \$75 million fund with contributions from 2 pension funds (Desjardins and Fonds de solidarite FTQ) and the government of Quebec, which aims to support young entrepreneurs in agriculture. Investments are made in the form of subordinated loans or by purchasing and leasing farmland in a lease to own arrangement to young farmers.

#### **Terre de Liens (France)**

TdL is a civil society organization in France created to address the difficulties faced by organic and peasant farmers in securing farmland, particularly outside traditional family succession. To acquire land, Terre de Liens has created two financial tools; **la Foncière**, a solidarity investment company, and **le Fonds**; an endowment trust which collects investment or donations in cash or in kind. Terre de Liens owns, or is close to acquiring, 102 farms where 180 farmers are working, and has 12,000 members



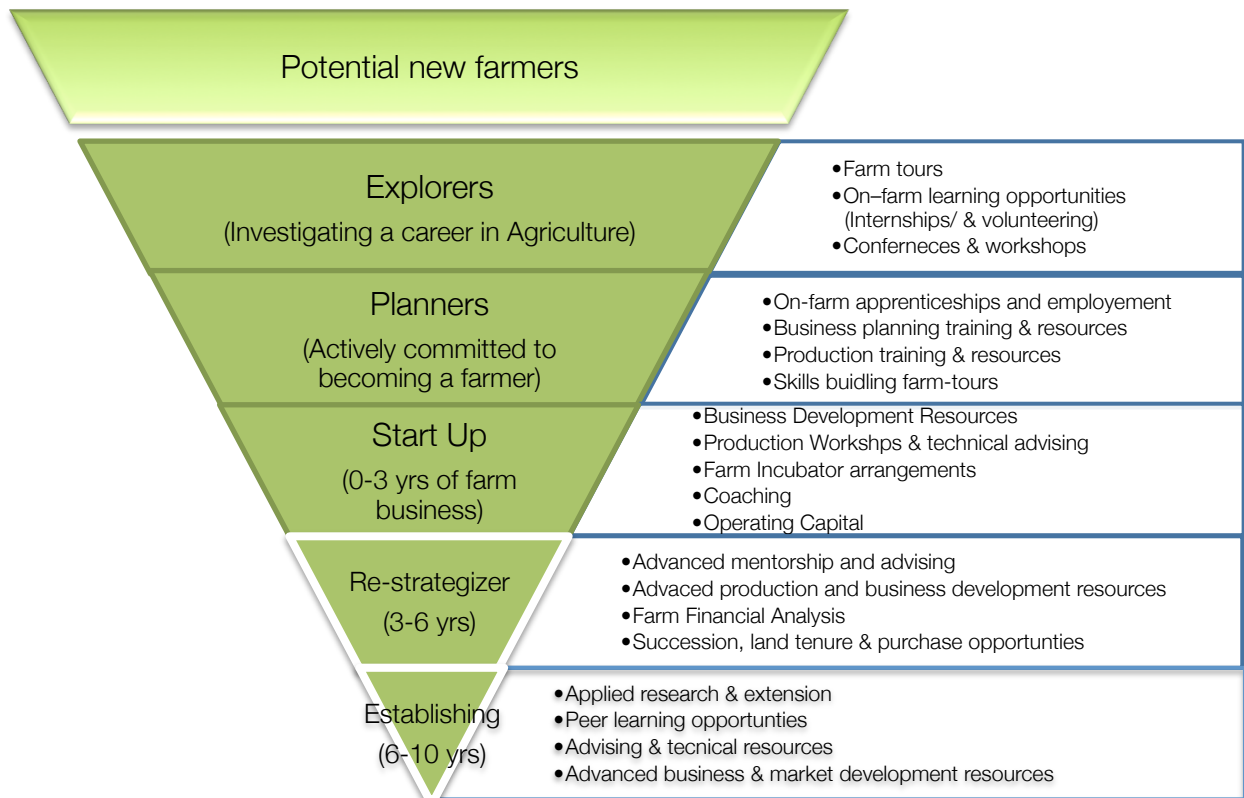
# Appendix 1: What it takes to become a Farmer

## FarmStart's Approach

New farmers need to be as skilled as an electrician, as broadly knowledgeable as a general physician, and as entrepreneurial as a start-up. We should be investing in their development as we invest in skilled trades people, doctors and start-up tech businesses.

It can take up to 10 years for a new farmer to build established and viable farm business. New farmers from both farming and non-farm backgrounds often move through several stages in their farm business: *exploring, planning, starting-up, and re-strategizing* - before they have 'established' a farm business. Farmers, who come from a range of backgrounds with varied assets and experience, need a range of tailored, staged and flexible programs, services and resources. They most often need access to the opportunities listed in the *Figure 1* below.

**Figure 1: New Farmer Spectrum – Detailing programs and training opportunities**  
*Illustrating the progression of prospective new farmers towards established farm businesses*



The diminishing size of each row in Figure 1 above indicates the decrease in individuals who chose to move on to the next stage, as lives change, businesses fail and a smaller number of people become more committed. While this is a similar attrition rate to other sectors (such as doctors or start-ups), the agriculture community, training programs and the prohibitive start-up costs does not encourage the kind of broad recruitment and exploration that is necessary to bring renewal and innovation. Almost all programs are set up to serve traditional farm succession from one generation to their children, however, 75% of retiring farmer do not have successors. While we need new ideas and new people to pursue a career in farming, there are very few pathways that encourage new entrants, be they young people from non-farm backgrounds, New Canadians, or second career farmers.

## FarmStart's Research Findings

### Learning to “become a farmer”

The FarmON Alliance (comprising five farm organizations working with new farmers across Ontario) completed an online survey in 2011. Of the 430 respondents, 73% were either in the planning stages or the first three years of farming and 60% were under the age of 40. (Refer to the full [Learning to Become a Farmer Report](#)).

- **“Planners” need orientation, coaching, and financial support to appropriately access a wide range of opportunities** for on farm apprenticeships, farmer-to-farmer mentorship, business development, production training and technical consultation.
- As new farmers “start-up” their farm businesses, **incubator farms and business development programs become valuable low-risk entry and capacity building opportunities.**
- **Start-Up farmers do not have a lot of time or money**, and therefore look for access to regional (close to home) farmer-to-farmer coaching, mentorship and advising services, specific technical knowledge on the internet and access to timely guidance as well as effective business development tools and information.
- **Farmers learn best from other farmers. Farmers also learn by doing.** So on-farm work experience and peer-to-peer opportunities are critically important to new farmers. This type of learning opportunity marks the difference between education that is “learning about farming” and that, which is “learning how to become a farmer”.

### Business capacity development through incubator farms

Over the last 10 years FarmStart has been developing facilities that aim to allow ecological and entrepreneurial new farmers start their small-farm businesses at significantly reduced costs and to give them space to test products and practices, gain experience, identify markets and build their



capacity. Incubator farms or “incubating” arrangements on existing farms provide valuable low risk and supported start-up platforms for new farmers.

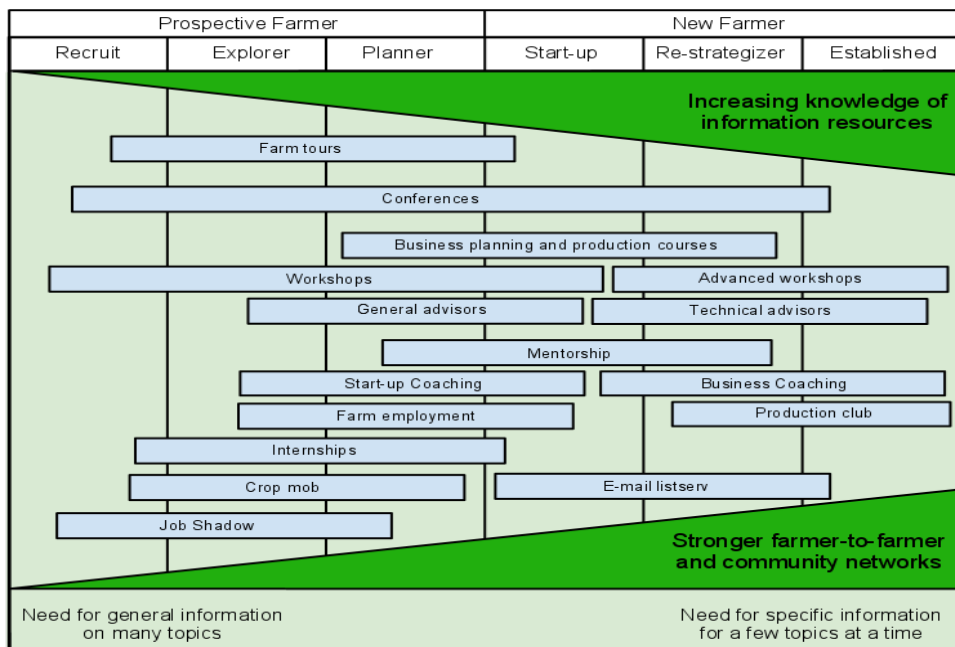
Incubator farm programs have grown exponentially over the last 10 years in the US and many programs have a waiting list for participant new farmers. There are now 77 Incubator Farm Programs in the US, and there are only 3 in Canada. According to the National Incubator Farm Training in the US many of these programs were established after 2008, and the introduction of the USDA’s New Farmer and Rancher Development Program. In a 2013 survey of this network, FarmStart found that the more than half of the Incubator Farm Programs ranked federal funding as the most important funding source for their organizations, while only 2% listed private foundation grants and state funding as important.

FarmStart and several other Canadian Incubator Farms were also started within the last 10 years, but lacked any government support similar to the BFRD. While there is a lot of ground level interest in the model in Canada only a handful of program are in operation.

### Coaching, mentorship and advising

Coaching, mentorship and advising (CMA) services also play a valuable role providing support and guidance to new or re-strategizing farmers.

Figure 2 - Knowledge and skill sources used by farmer through development stage



From the FarmON report, titled [Farmer-to-farmer Coaching, Mentorship and Advising](#), which identifies the ways in which farmers are passing on business ‘know how’, technical production knowledge and moral support to a new generation of farmers.

Figure 2 above illustrates the types of learning and support commonly used at each stage of farmer development. New farmers tend to gain skills and information from a wide diversity of sources. As a farmer gains experience, the type of skills and information required becomes less general and more specific. As a new farmer progresses through the stages of development they increasingly turn to their communities and local resources to address their farm plans and problems.

### Capital and Land

In 2013 FarmStart and the Junior Farmers Association of Ontario, completed a survey of 250 new farmers. A summary of the findings:

- 61% of respondents were 21-35 in age and 30% were 35-55.
- 77.5% of respondents said start-up costs were the greatest challenge
- 57.2% of respondents indicated access to land as the greatest challenge
- Only 31% had approached a financial institution, with most financing coming from personal savings, friends and family and a line of credit achieved before they started to farm

The evidence confirms that as new farmers establish their businesses, access to affordable land and early stage capital are most often the biggest challenges, especially for young people and New Canadians. We need all of these opportunities, programs and services operating to create the conditions for a

new generation of farmers. Figure 3 illustrates how the components of a connected Provincial Farm Renewal Initiative could work together.

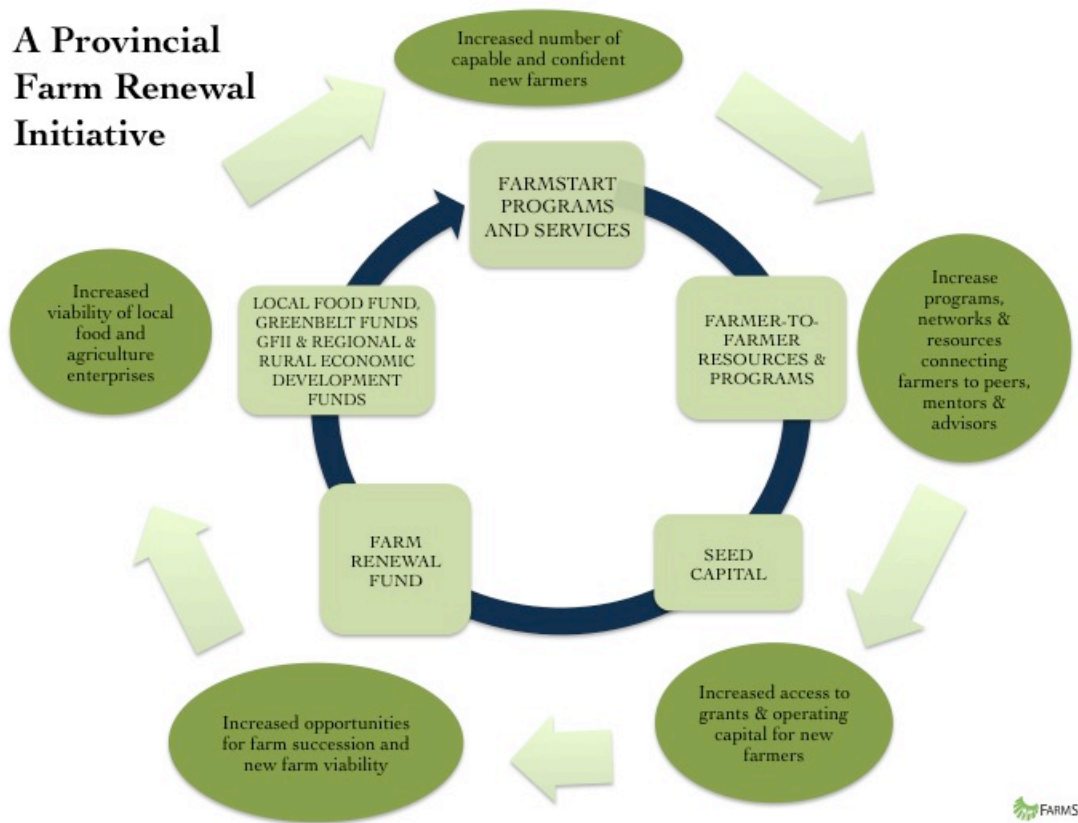


Figure 3: Connected Components of an Provincial Farm Renewal Program



## Prospective New Farmers:

FarmStart receives on average 30 – 50 independent inquiries every month from prospective and beginning farmers. And we have over 1500 registered farm-seekers on our Farmlink.net matchmaking platform.

### Examples of inquiries to FarmStart:

(from September 2016)

*Am interested in your farming training programs. I would need information on how to start , duration and mentor-ship most especially on livestock. Waiting for your reply as soon as possible.*

- Peter .K

*I am interested in starting farm and I have no experience. I'm looking for information on how to get started and programs grants etc...*

*Thank you for your time and consideration.*

- Luke H.

*Hello I am seeking information on starting up a farm, I have been wanting to for quite a while now and was seeking information on any programs that would be able to assist me with start up finances? If there is any information that can be provided please let me know.*

- Kyle M

*I am interested in learning more about starting of farming in Ontario .*

*As I belong to farming family in Punjab (India). I like to be in this business*

*Please me information how to be in this business. Thanks*

- Ramandeep G

*My husband grew up on a farm so he knows how to run the day to day aspects of farming but we don't know where to start financially. We were disappointed when we heard you were not running the Exploring your New Farm Dream course this fall. I see you have Digging into Farming this winter. Is this a similar course? Will it go over financial aspects of purchasing, and speak about any grants or loans available for agriculture?*

*These are areas of concern for us. We are not completely sure where to go for answers. Consulting with someone would help to answer these questions. Would you have any contact recommendations? Thanks,*

- Laura E

*I am very interested in starting Organic Farming business and would like to know if there is any start-up course. I am currently working as an engineer but want to get into it slowly and eventually farming in full time after retirement. Thank you for your help.*

- Unhui L

*Just acquired 7 acres and my whole family loves it. We were thinking about buying more land. Maybe start with hay and move on from there. But finically to get into farming is almost impossible. We are very interested in the whole idea of farming. Any help would be great.*

- Joe



## Examples of Farm-seeker Postings on Farmlink.net

### Small Market Gardener

"I am open to renting a small part of a farmer's land, including renting to own. Open to working someone looking to transition out of farming and act as a mentor. I would be happy to work in collaboration with the landowners to develop businesses that compliment each other. Sharing customers and working closely, while maintaining some independence would be ideal."

### Couple ready to start a goat and vegetable operation-

"We have a business plan prepared and secured funding to start a meat goat farm. We already have a customer ready to take our market kids. Looking for a farmer that would be willing to allow us to install fencing for rotational grazing. Looking to incorporate a vegetable CSA into farm plan."

### Two siblings & their partners interested in starting a large sheep dairy.

"Interested in gradual transfer of existing farm, willing to look at partnership arrangements with opportunities to purchase farm business over time. Looking to start a large sheep dairy, hay/forage crops 460-640 acres to graze & winter 1000 sheep for milk & cheese production"

Experience;

- Grew up on a farm outside of Canada
- Post secondary education in agriculture
- Experience with large herd health, breeding, livestock handling
- Farm equipment operating & maintenance experience

Interested in;

- > Business partnerships
- > lease, lease to own
- > Purchase

New Farmer Case Study:

Luna Field Farm, Lydia Carpenter and Wian Prinsloo

*Lydia and Wian run Luna Field Farm a few hundred acres of rented land in Manitoba and grass-fed and pasture raised meats including grass-fed beef, lamb, and poultry. Their farming venture was sparked by Lydia's studies in rural livelihoods and Wian's years of working on farms. Wian spent years working seasonally on farms and being mentored by farmers. He built his farming resume from the experiences he gained. While many of the arrangements were short term, they all contributed to his knowledge base and ability to craft successful farming partnerships.*

*For several years the pair farmed in short term year-to-year lease situations but knew that to make it work they needed a longer term lease.*

*In 2013 they partnered with a rancher who shared a similar management philosophy and understood the difficulty of cash-flowing a start up operation. He was willing to lease to them over the long-term. They share some labour (the farmer custom grazes 400 head) and gain from his "200-year management vision for the land". On their leased section, they make all the management decisions.*

*The current arrangement took several months to work out and was the product of working and thinking together on shared management goals. Luna Field Farm will be expanding from 160 to 320 acres in 2015. Lydia and Wian have built a support network that includes grazing clubs, holistic management groups, and an engaged group of neighbours and customers.*



## Stories of a few FarmStart Farmers

**Cheng Ying Dong**, a new immigrant from northern China, came to Canada with work experience solely in mushroom farming. He started with a 500 square foot poly house at FarmStart's McVean Farm where he experimented with learning how to grow mushrooms in Canadian conditions and organically. FarmStart provided him a Seed Capital grant which helped him learn about organic production in Canada, and to buy his first poly house and materials. He has since bought his own farm and started his own mushroom enterprise.



**Tamas Dombi**, was originally from Eastern Europe and left his job as a realtor in Toronto, after he attended FarmStart's Explorer course. With a Seed Capital grant for his first greenhouse, and a lot of effort, Tamas started a greenhouse operation in the Holland Marsh (north of Newmarket) growing baby salad greens and edible flowers. He grew from 1 to 6 greenhouses in just 6 months and now sells his produce through three farmers markets in the GTA region and is a full-time farmer. He is currently looking to buy his own farm.

**Jake Heeramun**: Jake is a new immigrant from Mauritius who settled on a 13 acre farm at Bothwell (near London). He attended many FarmStart workshops while he was in the process of setting up his enterprise and this helped him to narrow down what he wanted to do. He received a Seed Capital grant to purchase his initial sheep. He now raises sheep and goats for the halal markets and has been steadily building his flock over the last 4 years. Half his land is also used for market gardening where he grows mainly garlic. He recently helped another new farmer by passing on 5 sheep and 2 kids, as part of the Seed Capital "pass-on".



**Tarrah Young**, was one FarmStart first participants, raising chickens and turkeys and vegetables at our Start-Up farm near Guelph, ON. And she was the first to move onto her own farm. She now owns 100 acres with her partner, on a side road outside of Nuestadt, ON, where they raises pastured pigs, chickens and lamb as well as running a winter vegetable CSA. While they were the first new farming family on their side road, in the 8 years since 6 more young farmers and their families have settled on the same side road or in the area.