

FAQ 1

How Do I Start a New Farm Business?

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Many potential farmers ask this question, especially if the farm enterprise has a high start-up capital requirement. Farmers looking to expand farm operations with a new enterprise (e.g., cow/calf herd and vegetable farm) might also be interested in the question.

In general, three things need to be done before one can begin to farm.

1. Do a self-assessment of your resources, abilities, etc.
2. Ask yourself, "What should I produce?" This includes answering the questions:
 - a. What can I sell?
 - b. What can I produce?
 - c. Do I buy or lease farmland?
3. Once you have addressed the previous two items, build a farm enterprise plan that includes a marketing plan, a production plan, and a financial plan.

There are many resources available that a start-up enterprise will find useful. The Beginning Farmer Center (URL below) offers several particularly helpful publications to guide the setup of a new farm enterprise.

Resources for Start-Up Enterprises

Resources	Sources
<i>Getting Started in Farming</i> series (NCR-81, NCR-82, NCR-83, NCR-85)	Order from the Media Distribution Center (1-888-398-4636)
<i>Getting Established in Farming</i> (NCR-610E)	Available from Midwest Planning Service (1-800-562-3618 or mwps@iastate.edu)
<i>A Guide to Starting a New Farm Enterprise</i> , a British Columbia, Canada publication w/ good spreadsheets	http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/scregion
<i>Farm Savvy</i> manual and other publications from the Beginning Farmer Center at Iowa State University	http://www.extension.iastate.edu/bfc/programs.html
<i>A PRIMER for Selecting New Enterprises for Your Farm</i> . University of Georgia	http://www.ces.uga.edu/Agriculture/agecon/PRIMER.htm
Developing Your Own Farm for Rotational Stocking. Purdue Extension	http://www.agry.purdue.edu/ext/forages/rotational/pastures/rot_stock_mgmt/develop_farm.htm

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