

**IF YOU ARE ASKING YOURSELF “WHY NOT
SIGN UP FOR SOMETHING “FREE”, OR
THAT ONLY TAKES AN HOUR OR TWO IN A
SEMINAR?”**

Please consider that our courses are not one-shot wonders or cursory overviews with fill-in-the-blanks “business plans”. They don’t provide one-size answers from a book. The software doesn’t think for you. Our Instructors and Facilitators put lots of extra time into each individual enterprise to help you clarify your goals and how you might reach them. You will get proportional return on your personal investment. We find that farm businesses that make a moderate investment of time and money in a significant course go on to demonstrate the commitment needed to get results.

Please call or email (preferred) to make your interest known and to get questions answered. We will send you an application and additional information as soon as you request it!



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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**AGRICULTURAL
BUSINESS
DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMS**



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Do you need help sorting those piles of receipts and to-do-lists into meaningful information to make informed plans for the future?



Are your current enterprises on the farm not yielding a sustainable income, and do you need to know what to do next?



Is your family preparing for a changing of the guard from one generation to a new one?



Can you qualify for the loans you need?



Are you thinking you may be farming material, but do you wish you had a feasibility review for your ideas before you invest your money and valuable time?

HOW DOES THIS WORK?

MDAR will offer three learning formats in 2009. Courses are sited around the state wherever enough participants let us know they want a course. We love to work with local/regional ag organizations - at no cost to them other than some help with recruiting and site logistics.

FOR EXPERIENCED FARMERS

Sign up for the national farm entrepreneur course, *NxLevel*©'s "*Tilling the Soil of Opportunity*", with our experienced Instructor and team of topic experts. This 10 session (one per week) course has been successfully completed by over 250 MA ag businesses in the last eight years. They found it very helpful when they were working through the sessions, and continue to tell us so years later. Limited to already-working farms with access to land, this course runs early January-early April, 2009 in Western/Central MA and possibly also in the SE region. Participant fee is state supported at \$200 per business. More than one key decision maker may attend from the same enterprise if that helps the farm get on the same page.

Signup is October-early December.

FOR NEW FARMERS

Take "*Exploring Your Small Farm Dream*" (Explorer) for those contemplating or just beginning a new farm enterprise. MDAR partners with the New England Small Farm Institute (NESFI) to offer this very popular 4 session "litmus test" to see if you should start your farm now, wait a bit, keep your day job, or move on to a different idea. We expect to offer a session this year in late winter 2009 in Southeastern MA and another location to be announced. Fee is \$125 per business.

Signup is October through January.

FOR THOSE "IN BETWEEN"

We offer a new guided workbook format called "*The Small Farm Planner*". If you took Explorer and need some more input before you jump in - or if you have recently moved from "hobby" to "intend to make a profit" over the past year but you haven't quite nailed down all the specifics that give you full confidence - "Planner" is for you. We will meet for a kick-off session and hand out the self-guided workbook. Additional meetings to share progress and thoughts can be scheduled as needed, with a "wrap-up" session about four months later. In the interim, the facilitator will be available by email for ongoing support. This is a pilot year for us with Planner, and we don't know exactly how it will evolve. So we will offer it for the cost of the materials plus a modest fee - \$100 total. Since minimal travel is needed for this guided-workbook format, we will offer the pilot only in Western MA. *This course will begin in Fall 2009, allowing time for those interested to enroll in and complete Explorer, (see above) which is a pre-requisite.* If you are farther along and don't need Explorer as a course, you can meet the pre-requisite by obtaining the Explorer workbook from NESFI or DAR, and complete it on your own before Planner begins.

Then come and gather with your peers for a few evenings in a friendly setting with professional guidance to develop some measurable plans for your farm enterprise! These courses are taught by folks who have seen what works and what doesn't on many farms. The peer group in each session is also a valuable resource - farmers and/or hopeful farmers learn best from each other when given the excuse.

No pizza shop plug-in business plans here. No online template you fill in mindlessly and regret later. This is YOUR idea explored with others who speak the same language, and who will continue to support your efforts beyond the end of the classes.

