Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources

**Growing Your Farm Business Plan Course**

Application Form

Cost for the course, subsidized by MDAR, is $100 per farm (you may bring a partner for no additional cost, depending on meeting space). DO NOT SEND PAYMENT WITH YOUR APPLICATION - we will collect payments from participants after confirmation of course location & dates. It is important to us that course fees do not create a barrier to participation. If the fee would prevent you from participating, please contact Melissa at 413-726-2001 or Melissa.L.Adams@mass.gov and we can discuss waiving the fee.

### **Section I: Applicant Information**

Applicant’s name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date submitted \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of agricultural business:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ E-mail (required):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1) How did you hear about this course? *(Please also tell us if FSA or other lender has asked you to take this course as “Borrower Training”)*

2) How long has this Agricultural business been operating, and when/how did you become involved?

3) Have you participated in and/or are you receiving business development services from any other source at this time (such as an MDAR Farm Viability Program, a CDC program, Farm Credit services, NESFP, NESFI, or an SBDC/SBA program)? If yes, please describe:

4) Is your property protected by a permanent (APR) or temporary restriction (Farm Viability Enhancement Program)? Yes \_\_ No \_\_\_ If Yes, state which: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

5) Is the current farm enterprise your main source of income? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

1. If no, what other sources of income do you have which require a substantial investment of your time and/or resources? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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b) What percentage of your annual income do you expect to earn from farm receipts within one year of completing this course? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

6) Is there an additional participant in your enterprise who may want to attend course sessions, (on a space-available basis for no extra fee – limited to two per farm)? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

If yes, please describe their relationship to the business \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Section II: Farm Profile**

1) Number of years in operation: \_\_\_\_\_

2) How many years have you been operator/manager? \_\_\_\_\_\_

3) Type of legal organization:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4) Total acres in production: Owned: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Leased: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

5) Approximate production by specific crop (e.g., 20 acres hay, 6 acres vegetable crops, 15 acres bogs, 2,500 maple taps, milking 80 cows etc.):

6) Fill out table below to include the annual gross farm income (total revenue) and net income (total revenue less expenses) for the farm business for the prior three (3) years. If taxes have not yet been filed for most recent year please estimate. **This section must be completed for the application to be considered**.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Tax Year** | **Gross Farm Income** | **Estimated Net Farm Income/Loss** |
| **2022** |  |  |
| **2023** |  |  |
| **2024** |  |  |

7) Describe your business **marketing focus**: retail (such as farmstand or CSA) and/or wholesale (directly to restaurants or stores or through a distributor) or other:

8) Please describe any changes made over the last several years (e.g., production, operation, or new products/services) **and list any changes you are considering now for this business that you want to explore in this course**:

9) Who performs the following functions for your business?

 Bookkeeping: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Taxes/Financial Statements: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

10) Do You File IRS Schedule F (or corporate equivalent)? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

11) Number of employees: full-time\_\_\_\_ part-time/seasonal\_\_\_\_ other (interns, apprentices, etc.) \_\_\_\_

12) Do you or a family member regularly use a computer with internet/e-mail access (required for this course)? Yes \_\_ No \_\_ If yes, does it have a recent version of Microsoft Word and Excel? Yes \_\_ No \_\_

If not, do you have access and familiarity with Google Docs? Yes \_\_ No \_\_

Do you have bookkeeping/accounting software on the computer? Yes \_\_ No \_\_

If yes, what type (*such as QuickBooks*)? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

13) Are the following historical financial records available? (If Yes, please check)

 Farm tax returns \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Income/expense ledger \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Summary financial statements \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Once we review your application, we will reach out to you for copies of farm tax forms showing farm income and expenses over the past three years (**i.e. Schedule F (Form 1040) for Individuals/Sole Proprietors or Form 1120 (or Form 1120C or 1120S) for Corporations**).** You may also include them with this application. You will be required to submit these in order to participate in the class.

**Section III: Your Course Goals:**

1) What are your key objectives in taking this course?

Pleasecircle or check a *minimum of three* areas that you would like to focus on within the time frame of the course. Please *rate them in importance from 1 to 3*, with 1 being the most important:

* Evaluate current production systems
* Analyze profit/loss centers, product mix
* Prepare for farm succession
* Become/Continue to be eligible for Commercial Bank, Farm Credit, FSA or other source of loan based financing
* Set-up/refine bookkeeping, tracking systems
* Develop new products (indicate current ideas): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Identify risk management points and tools
* Reevaluate business structure/efficiency
* Develop marketing strategies
* Complete and understand standard financial statements
* Involve family in operating decisions
* Explore feasibility of a potential new/alternative farm venture (describe): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Other: (*state*) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

2) Overall, what do you need from this course to strengthen the economic viability of your enterprise?

3) Additional comments that you feel may help us evaluate/understand your interest in and/or expectations for this course:

**Answers to the following question is optional. This information will not in any way affect your eligibility for MDAR programs and is used for statistical purposes only.**

Is the applicant a Historically Underserved Farmer\*? Please check all of the following categories that apply:

\_\_ Limited Resource Farmer \_\_ Beginning Farmer

\_\_ Socially Disadvantaged Farmer \_\_ Veteran Farmer

\*Historically Underserved Farmer based on these USDA definitions: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/getting-assistance/underserved-farmers-ranchers>

**Section IV: Application Status Information**

While most of the program cost is underwritten by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, each participating business pays a registration fee of $100 (up to two farm partners may attend for this fee, space permitting). The fee goes towards instructors’ fees including a farm visit. We reserve the right to select applicants we think will best be served by this program. Payment to reserve your space is expected when you are notified of acceptance and course dates (not with this Application). If the fee would prevent you from participating, please call or email Melissa Adams at 413-726-2001 or Melissa.L.Adams@mass.gov, and we can discuss waiving the fee.

**Applicant Agreement to Program Requirements**

Students will be expected to:

1. Prepare and discuss historical and projected financial records with Instructor(s) that will serve as a confidential base-line for your plan.
2. Attend all course sessions (an alternate may attend by arrangement) in the format each is provided (in person or virtual) – full attendance facilitates completion of your business plan.
3. Complete “homework” assignments between sessions, seeking additional help as needed.
4. Complete and submit a copy of your business plan for confidential review by instructor.
5. Make a brief presentation of your business plan, with preparation assistance from instructor if needed.

**Confidentiality Statement**

All financial records and business plans will be kept confidential and will not be discussed in class (unless you choose to use specific examples). The purpose of sharing historical financial information with the instructor(s) is to help you clarify the current status of your farm finances, and to determine how the program can best assist you in the development of your business plan. It is important that you know your real capacity to implement your plans, and that you separate out personal assets that should not be placed at risk in your business (unless you make an informed choice to do so). The program instructor(s) will review your business plan during and after completion to help you identify where you may need to conduct additional research. Business plans may be reviewed by the MDAR staff for course evaluation purposes. Plans will not be filed, duplicated, or distributed. If you have any concerns or questions about any of the program requirements, please contact the MDAR Program Coordinator.

**Your signature below indicates your understanding of these terms.**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Please email your completed application to Melissa.L.Adams@mass.gov or mail it to:**

#### Attn: Melissa Adams

#### Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources

#### 138 Memorial Drive, Suite 42

#### West Springfield, MA 01089

Once we review your application, we will reach out to you for copies of three prior years of farm tax forms showing farm income and expenses (i.e. Schedule F (Form 1040) for Individuals/Sole Proprietors or Form 1120 (or Form 1120C or 1120S) for Corporations). You may also include them with this application. You will be required to submit these in order to participate in the class.

***Out of state applicants***: This course is sponsored and financially supported by a Massachusetts state agency and is intended for Massachusetts agricultural entrepreneurs.