

## **Starting a farm? 10 things you'll need to do**

### **Everything you need to do to start a farm.**

Thinking about starting a farm? You're not alone. The more you know about starting a business, the more power you have to form an organization that develops into a lasting source of income and satisfaction. For help with the beginning stages of operating a farm, the following checklist is a great place to start.

#### **1. Make absolutely sure farming is what you want to do**

There have been numerous farmers who have left higher paying jobs simply for the "love of farming". This is not just a profession but also a lifestyle choice – a culture on to itself that requires a long-term commitment. Talk to those already in agriculture, friends and families, read and research fully before taking that all-important first step.

#### **2. Get family support**

Whether it's financial backing or just moral support, family members will be key to both the short-term and long-term viability of your operation. Talk with parents, spouse and children for their views, input and to determine what their roles may be. Going solo is not a good option.

#### **3. Prepare a business plan**

A good business plan has two basic goals: It should describe the fundamentals of your business idea and provide financial data to show that you will make money. Also check out provincial and federal sites for programs, registration and eligibility requirements.

#### **4. Keep abreast of current trends**

Agriculture is a continually evolving and changing industry. Education comes in many forms: courses offered at agricultural colleges/universities, researching the Internet, checking out national organizations like the [George Morris Centre](#), [Farm Credit Canada](#) and the [Publications and Resources section](#) of this site.

#### **5. Explore the meaning of value-added**

Farming is not just a matter of producing one or two crops. Determine what other products can result from a single commodity, talk with established farmers about their experiences, pay close attention to the marketplace and mine the wealth of information from Canadian sources.

## **6. Establish an Environmental Farm Plan**

Farmers have always been stewards of the land but with environmental concerns grabbing many of today's headlines, environmental farm planning initiatives have become an integral part of agricultural operations. Log on to any provincial agricultural website or click on the [National Environmental Farm Planning Initiative](#).

## **7. Put a management team in place**

Most of the time farmers have to be managers, labourers, economists and businesspeople rolled into one package. This can put a strain on one individual; so consider putting a management team – outside your immediate family – in place with a banker, accountant and/or lawyer.

## **8. Research your chosen product for marketability**

Don't make decisions on a whim or a hunch. Talk with established producers; check out market reports at the provincial and federal levels and resources like the Ipsos Reid's [Canadian Farm Trends report](#) (pdf).

## **9. Consider a niche market**

You have to understand all aspects of the niche market from growing, soil types, and climatic conditions to harvesting, packaging, shipping and ultimately marketability.

## **10. Attend applicable events**

Whenever possible, taking in sessions, seminars and conferences applicable for your farming needs is the ideal way to learn from other producers, agricultural and agribusiness experts and farming communities beyond your locality.