



MODEL FARM YOUTH ROADMAP

A PRACTICAL ROADMAP FOR ENGAGING HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN AGRICULTURE

A step-by-step guide to help farmers and community organizations teach sustainable agriculture, build business skills, and connect students to real-world opportunities.

PHASE 1

DISCOVER & PLAN
Month 1



MARKET RESEARCH & PLANNING

- Explore agricultural careers & local opportunities
- Conduct marketing research: Who are our customers? What do they want? How much will they pay?
- Analyze community needs & trends
- Set goals, roles, and expectations
- Create a farm & business plan

KEY OUTPUTS



Market research summary, farm plan, student roles, goals

SUCCESS KEYS



STUDENT OWNERSHIP

Give students choices and responsibility. Let them lead in areas that match their interests and strengths.

PHASE 2

PREPARE & BUILD
Months 2-3



BUILD THE FOUNDATION

- Prepare soil & beds
- Install systems: raised beds, hydroponics, composting, irrigation
- Learn soil health & composting
- Plan crops based on market research & season

KEY OUTPUTS



Healthy soil, prepared beds, systems ready, crop plan



ENGAGE VOLUNTEERS

Use volunteers as mentors and role models. Match their skills and passions to meaningful tasks.

PHASE 3

PLANT & PRODUCE
Months 4-6



PRODUCE & MAINTAIN

- Plant crops & start hydroponic systems
- Maintain crops & manage pests naturally
- Track data: growth, inputs, labor, yield
- Hands-on learning in sustainability & problem solving

KEY OUTPUTS



Crop records, growth data, skills in production management



CONNECT TO MARKET

Always link production to the market. Students learn best when they see the purpose behind their work.

PHASE 4

HARVEST & MARKET
Months 7-8



HARVEST & BRING TO MARKET

- Harvest, wash, & store produce
- Develop branding, pricing, & packaging
- Market to community & partners
- Practice sales, customer service, & communication

KEY OUTPUTS



Harvested products, sales, customer feedback



BUILD COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Work with schools, local organizations, and food access programs to extend impact.

PHASE 5

REFLECT & GROW
Months 9-10



REFLECT, SHARE & PLAN NEXT STEPS

- Review what worked & what to improve
- Calculate profits & analyze results
- Explore career pathways & next steps
- Student presentations & community celebration

KEY OUTPUTS



Business results, presentations, reflection, next steps

WHAT WE LEARNED

- ✓ Start with marketing & planning so students know the "why" behind what they grow.
- ✓ Flexibility is key—student interests drive engagement.
- ✓ Hands-on learning creates confidence and real skills.
- ✓ Agriculture is more than growing food—it's a business, a career, and a community solution.



Every phase connects to the next: Students see agriculture as a **business**, a **career**, and a way to strengthen their **community**.

