



# Connecting New Farmers with Mentors

*This series of interactive online learning opportunities will help educators to start*

## TEACHING OBJECTIVES: WHY DO THIS?

- Mentors matter!
  - New farmers learn best from connections with experienced farmers and their peers
  - Mentors support farms' business success, profitability, soil health as well as the work/life balance and mental health of new farmers
- Many options!
  - Farm educators can facilitate formal and informal mentorships
- Remember...
  - ... not all farmers have easy access to advice and support from family
  - ... even farmers with a family farms may need farming support

## BEST LOCATION

Online, in-person or on-farm

## BEST TIME OF YEAR

Connecting mentors with farmers is best in fall or early winter. Trainings for educators can happen year-round.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES: WHAT CAN PARTICIPANTS LEARN?

- The Educator training will include:
  - How to start and manage a formal mentorship program
  - How to facilitate informal mentorships
  - How to fund mentorships
  - Where to find mentoring resources
- Educators learn about local beginning farmer's needs by working with mentees. Educators also learn about the wealth of knowledgeable, experienced farmers by working with mentors. Both networks often become a source of guest speakers, farm tours and project partners.
- Mentor support will focus on:
  - Introductions to get to know the other mentors
  - Brainstorming discussion prompts to ask mentees
  - Communication techniques
- The Meet & Greet will:
  - Welcome everyone!
  - Connect mentors with mentees in breakout rooms to decide on goals for learning and communication
- The Evaluation Charrette is a good way for mentees and mentors to share successes and suggest changes for future years.



## IMPORTANCE FOR BEGINNING FARMERS

New farmers with mentors are more confident, successful and knowledgeable than farmers without a network.

Experienced farmers are inspired and feel fulfilled by connecting with a mentee.

## UNIQUE ASPECTS OF THE CURRICULUM

This module is interactive and focuses on peer-to-peer learning.

This module has activities directed to mentorship organizers, mentors and mentees.

## Facilitator Planning & Preparation

Activity	Est. Prep Time	Est. Instructional Time
Primary Activity 1	X Hrs, X Min	X Hrs, X Min
Primary Activity 2	X Hrs, X Min	X Hrs, X Min
Primary Activity 3	X Hrs, X Min	X Hrs, X Min
Additional Activity (if you don't have any, delete this)	X Hrs, X Min	X Hrs, X Min



## Technical Content

### KEY WORDS:

<b>Mentor</b>	An experienced farmer who supports a beginning farmer by answering questions, offering insights and helping the beginning farmer to set and achieve their goals.
<b>Mentee</b>	A farmer who is connected with a mentor to learn skills, answer questions and help them to move their farm forward.
<b>Peer</b>	Farmers who are supporting each other through sharing knowledge with each other.
<b>Mentorship Organizer</b>	Farm educator, farmer or advocate who connects mentors & mentees, offers trainings and checks in with mentors & mentees regularly.

### FACILITATOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Thank you for taking on the important work of starting a farm mentorship project! You may want to check out these resources to learn more about mentorship before moving forward:

- Data about beginning farmer challenges (NYFC) [Building a Future with Farmers 2022](#)
- Data about success of mentorships

Items to consider:

- What challenges are new farmers facing in your region?
- How long/how much work do you have to organize a mentorship?
- Who might be good to have on the team as organizers, mentors and mentees?
- Do you need funding to organize this mentorship? What funding sources exist?



## KWL Process

*Know, Want to Know, Learn*

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### Questions for farmers seeking a mentor:

- Why do you want a mentor?
- What characteristics or skills would be important for your mentor to help you meet your goals?
- Do you have any mentors now?
- Is there anyone you know who would could be a great mentor if you reached out to them?
- Who have been your mentors in the past?



### Questions for mentors:

- Why do you want to be a mentor?
- What would help you be a better mentor?
- Have you been a mentor?
- Are there any beginning farmers you know that you would like to mentor?
- What mentors have been most helpful to you in the past?



## Primary Activities

*Overview of the main activities in this module*

### Planning a Mentorship Project

#### Brainstorming how to design mentorship for local communities

How do you start a mentorship program that is right for the beginning farmers you are working with? How do you stay in touch with mentors and mentees to make sure they are actively communicating?

### Supporting Mentors

#### Getting experienced farmers ready to connect with a mentee

Preparing experienced farmers to connect positively with a mentee. This includes brainstorming discussion prompts, practicing reflective listening and more.

### Supporting Mentees

#### Connecting Mentors with Mentees

Check-ins! Peer

### Connecting Mentor Pairs

#### Connecting Mentors with Mentees

Welcome to the Mentorship! Explaining the mentorship expectations and timeline, then facilitating breakout rooms where each mentor-mentee pair can set goals for learning and communication.

### Evaluation Charrette

#### Gather success stories & recommend improvements

Charrettes work well online or in-person. For an online charrette, breakout rooms and shared note-taking will allow all participants to contribute on 4 aspects of the mentorship. An introduction prompt will offer time to share successes with the full group.



## Additional Resources/Activities

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### Resource 1

#### Mentorship Programs

##### One on One Mentorship Programs

- [Cultivate Growth Mentorship](#)
- [Transition to Organic Partnership Program \(TOPP\)](#)
- [SCORE business mentor matching](#)
- [Begin Farming Mentorship Program](#)
- [Farmer-to-Farmer Mentoring](#)
- [Mi. Sheep Breeders Association](#)

##### Group Networking & Informal Mentors

- Crosshatch Guilds
- Keep Growing Detroit - GID & GRP
- MIFFS Networks for Veterans, Women, Spanish Speaking Farmers
- West Michigan Growers Group

##### Apprenticeships & On-Farm Learning

- Hunter Park GardenHouse
- Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship
- [Fair Share Apprenticeship](#)
- Grow Benzie
- Growing Hope
- Keep Growing Detroit
- MSU Beginning Grazing School
- MSU North Farm (UPREC)
- MSU Organic Farmer Training Program

### Resource 2

#### Toolkit for Starting a Great Farm Mentorship

A shared drive of resources created for the Michigan Sustainable Farm Mentors project, including:

- Mentor & Mentee resource folders
- Signup forms
- Agendas for mentor meetings, trainings and charrettes

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/toolkit-for-starting-a-great-farm-mentorship-program>

### Resource 3

#### Funding for Mentorships

- SARE Partnership Grant
- SARE Research & Education Grant
- Beginning Farmer Rancher Development Program
- 2501 - Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers
- Many other grants could fund mentorship projects....



## **Review and Encouraging Further Learning**

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### **Module Review and Evaluation Questions:**

- Educator wrap up meeting to discuss the year, the surveys and the charrette
- Loop back to other mentorship programs to find ideas to address challenges
- Were you able to successful connect beginning farmers with experienced farm mentors?
- What would you change if you did this again?

### **Activities for Review:**

- Charrette
- Mentorship organizer wrap-up meeting



# Planning a Mentorship Project

Brainstorming how to design mentorship for local communities

## OVERVIEW

How do you start a mentorship program that is right for the beginning farmers you are working with? How do you stay in touch with mentors and mentees to make sure they are actively communicating?

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- 3 to 8 farm educators/advocates
- Meeting space (online link or in-person room)
- (Online) Shared document to take notes; ability to create zoom breakout rooms
- (In-person) Poster paper, markers, pens

## FACILITATOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Activities:

- Mentorship Planning Meeting
- How to start and manage a formal mentorship program
- Facilitating mentorships
- How to fund mentorships
- Where to find mentoring resources





# 1. Planning a Mentorship: Mentorship Planning Meeting

## PROCEDURE

### Planning to start a mentorship!

- **Introduction Prompt:** Describe one of your mentors and how they've impacted you.
- **Brainstorming:** Create a shared online document, posters or whiteboards to brainstorm for a mentorship program.
  - **Full Group:**
    - **Who?** What types of beginning farmers or group(s) do we want to connect with mentors? What are their needs? Who might make great mentors?
  - **Breakout Groups:**
    - **What?** What topics (eg soil, financials, up to 4 focus areas) should be the focus for the mentorship? Should mentors and mentees sign a contract with best contact info, when they will meet, the mentee's learning goals for the mentorship, etc.?
    - **Where?** Should meetings be online, in-person, on-farms, at existing conferences or in several of those locations? Should mentors and mentees be from a particular region? How often should mentors & mentees meet?
    - **How?** Should we seek funding for the mentorship? Should mentors or mentees be paid? What organizations could partner to lead the project?
  - **Full Group:**
    - **When?** Make a timeline for marketing, matching mentor/mentee pairs, hosting the meet & greet, check-ins and evaluation charrette
- **Signup & Delegate!**
  - Using the timeline, educators in the meeting are each encouraged to lead one aspect of the mentorship by signing up for an item above by highlighting and/or adding their initials to items they can lead. Examples:
    - Making a signup form (30 minutes)
    - Reaching out to mentors (10 minutes per mentor)
    - Planning & Facilitating a training (training time x 3 + travel)
    - Planning & Facilitating a meeting (meeting time x 1.5 + travel)
    - Writing an Article to promote the mentorship (2 hours)
    - Matching mentors with mentees (30 minutes per pair)
    - Quarterly check-ins individually with a mentor and mentee (4 hours/year)
    - Keeping everyone on track with their tasks (12 hours per year)



# 1. Planning a Mentorship: Facilitating Mentorships

Figure out how the mentorship organizers will facilitate the mentor pairs:

- Use a survey
- Meet online or in-person to discuss

## PROCEDURE

### Pairing Mentees with Mentors

- How will you decide which mentor is best for each mentee?
  - Geography
  - Learning Goals & Skills
  - Farm Enterprises
  - Etc.

### How will you connect mentor pairs for their first meeting?

- Email/Text/Phone call
- Meet & Greet (See Activity 3 for a full description)
  - In-person event
  - Online

### Check-ins with Mentees and Mentors

- Frequency (Monthly, quarterly, etc.)
- Meetings of all 3: organizer, mentor and mentee
- 1:1 Meetings:
  - Organizer meets with mentor
  - Organizer meets with mentee

### Check-in with Mentorship Organizers on Delegated Tasks

- Frequency (monthly, quarterly, etc.)
- What will you want to discuss?

### Wrap-up Meeting

- Discuss results of survey
- Discuss recommendations and feedback from charrette
- Planning for another year of mentorship
  - What worked?
  - What didn't work?
  - What should be changed for future years?
  - Which pairs want to continue together?



# 1. Planning a Mentorship: Funding Mentorships

## EXTENSIONS

Research the following grants that could fund farmer mentorships

- SARE Partnership Grant
- SARE Research & Education Grant
- Beginning Farmer Rancher Development Program
- 2501 - Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers
- Many other grants could fund mentorship projects....

Which grants seem like a good fit for this project?

What would you want to fund?

- Organizer time
- Mentor time
- Mentee stipend
- Travel
- Other?

## VARIATIONS

### In-person

- All planning meetings and mentoring are in-person
- Most meetings are in-person

### Online

- All planning meetings and mentoring are online or by phone, email, text, etc.
- Most meetings are online

### Hybrid

- Mix of online and in-person

## CONNECTIONS

Connections would depend on mentee needs and program focus area.



## CONNECTING NEW FARMERS WITH MENTORS

# 1. Planning a Mentorship: Mentee Signup Forms: Example questions

Choose Questions that you want to include in your form:

- Email Address
- Name
- Mentor
- Peer
- Phone
- Are you a beginning or aspiring farmer?
- Choose up to 4 topics that you would like to focus on with your mentor (eg. Land, Loans, Business Planning, Soils, Marketing)
- Choose up to 3 farm enterprises that are now or will be most important on your farm
- Choose up to 3 documents that you might want your Mentor to review (these can be documents that you already have or items you plan to create during 2022)
- How would you like to communicate with your mentor?
- How many years of experience do you have in the following?
- Suggest a mentor you would like to work with
- Demographics (Race, gender, age, location, limited resource producer, veteran)
- Choose up to 3 farm enterprises that are now or will be most important on your farm
- How would you like to communicate with your mentor?
- Other questions relevant to your mentorship project.....

*Example Mentee signup forms: Michigan Sustainable Farm Mentors and Transition to Organic Partnership Program*



# CONNECTING NEW FARMERS WITH MENTORS

## 1. Planning a Mentorship Project Mentorship Toolkit

### Toolkit to Create a Great Farm Mentorship

- START HERE! Tour video & Table of Contents
  - Toolkit Table of Contents
  - Video Tour of the Toolkit
  - Link to CC video with captions and website
- Full SARE Grant Proposal
  - Full SARE Partnership Grant
- Outreach, Articles and Slide Sets
  - Link to website and CC video with captions
  - Toolkit Poster
- Beginning Farmer Mentee Resources
  - Goal setting and planning documents
    - Goal Setting Worksheet!
    - To Do List + Goals
    - Farm Journal
  - Call #1: Introductions and Resource Assessment
    - Resource assessment
  - Call #2: Financial Viability
    - Schedule F, Enterprise Budgets, Cash Flow
- Call #3: Environmental Sustainability
- Call #4 Community connections & work-life balance
- Call #5: Wrap Up
  - Goal Setting Worksheet Review
  - To Do List + Goals Review



# 1. Planning a Mentorship Project

## Mentorship Toolkit

### Toolkit to Create a Great Farm Mentorship

- Signup Forms
- Marketing Examples
- Email Templates for Communication
- Training Agendas, & Brainstorming Discussion Notes
  - Meet & Greet Agendas
- Training Mentors
  - Mentor Training Curriculum
  - Discussion Prompt Brainstorming
  - Document Review Mentor Training
- Training Peer Mentees
  - Mentee Training Curriculum
- Document Review Examples
  - Business Plan – Christina Bultinck
  - Christina Bultinck - Your Soil Test Results \_ MSU Soil Test
  - Greens Budget – BFG
  - HH Tomato Budget BFG
  - Income and Expense
- Timelines and Checklists
  - To Do - Mentorship Checklist
- Mentee & Mentor Pre/Post Surveys
- Evaluation Charrette Agenda and Documents
- Results!



## 2. Supporting Mentors

Getting experienced farmers ready to connect with a mentee

### OVERVIEW

Preparing experienced farmers to connect positively with a mentee. This includes brainstorming discussion prompts, practicing reflective listening and discussing diversity and inclusion.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- 4 to 25 farm mentors
- 1 or more facilitators
- Meeting space
  - (Online) Shared document to take notes; ability to create zoom breakout rooms
  - (In-person) White board or poster paper, markers, pens; comfortable space with chairs & tables

### FACILITATOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Rely on the collective knowledge of experienced farmers!

Many farmers:

- Have been mentors in the past
- Have great mentors themselves
- Can help to plan and ensure success of the mentorship program
- Know other farmers who can be great mentors
- Want to see new farmers get started with all the help they can get
- Understand the challenges and barriers facing new farmers
- Have great information to share with new farmers about farming, marketing, recordkeeping, soil management, conservation programs, loans, financials, etc.

Before the meeting, mentorship organizers should decide if they want to set the 4 topics or if farmers should set those.



## 2. Supporting Mentors: Mentor Planning Meeting

### PROCEDURE

Gather up to 25 mentors & facilitator(s) together online, in-person or on-farm

- Technology Intro – Mute/Unmute, Share Screen, Video On/Off, Recording in Zoom, etc. (5 minutes)
- Introductions (Full Group or Breakouts of 8 - 12 people)
  - Name, Farm Name, Farm Enterprises
  - Have you been able to Mentor farmers before? (15 minutes)
- Mentorship Organizer describes this Mentorship Program (5 minutes)
- Brainstorm Prompts for Mentorship discussions
  - Full Group (15 minutes)
    - Prompts to ask at every mentorship meeting
    - Examples:
      - @ start of mentorship meeting:
        - Example: Hello! Updates? How are you doing? Challenges?
        - *Ask for group suggestions & write on a shared document or poster*
      - @ end of mentorship meeting
        - Example: Action steps! List 3 things you're going to try on your farm
        - *Ask for group suggestions & write on a shared document or poster*
    - Breakout Groups (15 minutes) (2 to 5 people per breakout room)
      - Topic 1 (Example topic: Goal setting)
      - Topic 2 (Example topic: Soils & Conservation)
      - Topic 3 (Example Topic: Work Life Balance & Farmer Quality of Life)
      - Topic 4 (Example Topic: Financials & Marketing)
  - Diversity & Inclusion: Matrix of Privilege Chart
  - Giving Positive, Actionable Feedback
    - CAST! (Complement, Ask, Suggest, offer to Teach)
    - Compliment Sandwich
    - Rose - Thorn - Bud
  - Communication: 5 Why's Activity
  - Reflective Listening
  - Mentor Pre-Survey
  - Thank you!





## 2. Supporting Mentors: Brainstorming Discussion Prompts

### PROCEDURE

Use the following format on a shared document for online meeting. For in-person meetings, use one poster paper for small groups and 1 poster or a white board for full group brainstorming.

**1. Discussion prompts for every meeting (full group brainstorming):**

- a.
- b.
- c.

**2. Discussion prompts for topic 1 (full group brainstorming):**

- a.
- b.
- c.

**3. Discussion prompts for topic 2 (small groups of about 4 people):**

- a.
- b.
- c.

**4. Discussion prompts for topic 3 (small groups of about 4 people):**

- a.
- b.
- c.

**5. Discussion prompts for topic 4 (small groups of about 4 people):**

- a.
- b.
- c.

**6. Discussion prompts for topic 5 (small groups of about 4 people):**

- a.
- b.
- c.



## 2. Supporting Mentors: Matrix of Privilege

1. Have mentors look through the list for themselves and ponder the times they have felt targeted and the ways they experience privilege.
2. Have mentors consider people they know who have suffered bias in several of the categories below.
3. Ask if anyone has anything they would like to share.
4. Ask if anyone sees a group that should be listed but is not.
5. How will thinking about privilege and bias help you to be a better mentor?

Social Identity	Privileged Social Groups	Border Social Groups	Targeted Social Groups	Ism
Race & Ethnicity	White People, People perceived as white	Biracial People	Asian, Black, Latinx, Middle Eastern/Arab people, Native People	Racism & Ethnocentrism
Sex	Men		Women	Sexism
Gender	Cisgender and Gender Conforming Men and Women	Gender Ambiguous Men and Women	Transgender, Genderqueer, Intersex People	Transgender Oppression
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual People	Bisexual People	Lesbians, Gay Men	Heterosexism
Class/Income	Wealthy and Upper Class People	Middle Class and Middle Income People	Working Class and Poor People	Classism
Ability/Disability	Temporarily Able Bodied People	People with Temporary or Invisible Disabilities	People with visible and/or permanent Disabilities	Ableism
Religion	Christians who attend church	Non-church going Christians	Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Atheist and other religions	Religious oppression
Age	Adults	Young Adults	Youth, Elders	Ageism/Adulthood
Weight	Thin	Healthy weight, Overweight	Obese	Weight Bias
Mental Health	Temporarily Mentally Healthy	Past Mental Health Challenges or Managed Addictions	Mental Health Challenges or Addictions	Mental Health Stigma
Farm Background	Raised on a family farm and continuing tradition	First-generation, traditional Farmers; non-traditional farmers raised on farms	First-generation, non-traditional farmers	





## 2. Supporting Mentors: Feedback, Listening & Communication

### EXTENSIONS

#### Positive Actionable Feedback

**Describe** a few feedback formats:

- **CAST!**
  - Complement
  - Ask
  - Suggest
  - offer to Teach
- **Rose - Thorn - Bud**
  - **Rose** = Something awesome
  - **Thorn** = Something challenging
  - **Bud** = Something to expand on
- Compliment Sandwich

**Examples:** Soil test, budget, website, etc.

**Review:** Have mentors review examples and give CAST!, Rose-Thorn-Bud and Compliment Sandwich feedback

**Ask:** Was feedback positive? Actionable? Helpful?

### CONNECTIONS

#### Five Why's

**Pair:** Explain how you will communicate with mentees.

**Ask why** 5 times.

- Why do you think/do/say/prefer that?
- Why would that help mentees?

### VARIATIONS

#### Reflective Listening

Describe reflective listening

- I will listen fully
- At breaks in your story, I will repeat the essence of your story in my own words
- Let me know if I'm on track and continue your story
- I may ask questions, like:
  - What did that mean to you?
  - How did that make you feel?
  - Why did you think that?
  - What would you say to your mentor if they were here?

Ask for a volunteer to **tell you about a mentor that was important to them.**

- At each break in their story, reflect back what you have heard.
- Let the volunteer keep talking
- Ask one or 2 questions

**Try:** Have mentors break into pairs to try reflective listening describing a mentor who was important to them.



## CONNECTING NEW FARMERS WITH MENTORS

# Mentor Planning Meeting Survey

*See the Mentor Pre-Survey in part 5*

***Create a survey or have a discussion with mentors to ask any of the following questions after their planning meeting:***

- What activities were most useful for you?
    - Meeting the other mentors
    - Hearing about the mentorship project
    - Brainstorming discussion prompts (full group)
    - Brainstorming discussion prompts (small group)
    - Matrix of Privilege
    - Positive Actionable Feedback
    - 5 Why's
    - Reflective Listening
  - What will you do differently based on what you learned today?
  - Do you have any questions?
  - What do you want to do or ask before meeting with your mentee?
- Other questions that make sense for your mentorship project.



## 3. Supporting Mentees

### OVERVIEW

Welcome to the Mentorship! Explaining the mentorship expectations and timeline, then facilitating breakout rooms where each mentor-mentee pair can set goals for learning and communication.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Goal setting shared document for each mentee-mentor pair
- Mentor-mentee contract (if using one)
- 4 to 25 farm mentors
- 1 or more facilitators
- Meeting space
- (Online) Shared document to take notes; ability to create zoom breakout rooms
- (In-person) White board or poster paper, markers, pens; comfortable space with chairs & tables

### FACILITATOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Insert background information for the facilitator to know that is specific to this activity. Explanation of scientific concepts, etc.



## 3. Supporting Mentees

### PROCEDURE

- Housekeeping/Technology
  - (Online) Mute/Unmute, Share Screen, Video On/Off, Recording in Zoom, etc.
  - (In-Person) Location of bathrooms, water fountain, etc.
- **Introductions:** Name, Farm Name and what you want to learn from a mentor
- **Describe the Mentorship Program** in 5 minutes
- **Resources Tour:** Walk through binder of printed materials, google drive or website of resources
  - Goal Setting Document
  - Mentor-Mentee Contract
  - Discussion Prompts
  - Other Resources
  - Feedback on the resources
- **Think - Pair - Share**
  - **Think:** Spend 5 to 10 minutes starting to work on your **Goal Setting Document**
  - **Pair:** Breakout Sessions for Peer Mentees
    - Review each others' Goal Setting Documents
    - Giving Positive, Actionable Feedback
      - CAST! Complement, Ask, Suggest, offer to Teach
      - Compliment Sandwich
      - Rose - Thorn - Bud
  - **Share:** Share one piece of advice from your peer that you are excited to try
- **Matrix of Privilege** - Page XX in Section 3 or [HERE](#)
  - No need to share! This is for your own learning 😊
  - Questions/Feedback/Thoughts?
- **Reflective Listening**
  - Share a story about a mentor who positively influenced you
- 5 Why's
  - Describe one thing you want to do to improve your farm.
- Pre-Survey
- Thank you!
- Questions?



## 3. Supporting Mentees

### PROCEDURE

#### Goal Setting Worksheet

When Will I meet with my mentor? (Months/Days/Times and/or dates)

- Mentee:
- Mentor response:

How do we each prefer to communicate? (Phone, Zoom, Skype, Email, Social Media, Text)

- Mentee:
- Mentor response:

What questions do I want to work on with my mentor?

- Mentee:
- Mentor response:

What farm goals would I like my mentor to advise me on?

- Mentee:
- Mentor response:

What documents do I want to share with my mentor?

- Mentee:
- Mentor response:

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#### To Do:

- 
- 
- 

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#### Goals!

This year:

Next year:

5 years:





## 2. Supporting Mentors: Feedback, Listening & Communication

### EXTENSIONS

#### Positive Actionable Feedback

**Describe** a few feedback formats:

- **CAST!**
  - Complement
  - Ask
  - Suggest
  - offer to Teach
- **Rose - Thorn - Bud**
  - Rose = Something awesome
  - Thorn = Something challenging
  - Bud = Something to expand on
- Compliment Sandwich

**Examples:** Share farm document examples

- soil test, budget, website, etc.

**Review:** Have peers review Goal Setting Worksheets and give CAST!, Rose-Thorn-Bud and Compliment Sandwich feedback

**Ask:** Was feedback positive? Actionable? Helpful?

### CONNECTIONS

#### Five Why's

**Pair:** Explain one thing you want to do to improve your farm.

**Ask why** 5 times.

- Why do you think/do/say/prefer that?
- Why would that help your farm?

### VARIATIONS

#### Reflective Listening

Describe reflective listening

- I will listen fully
- At breaks in your story, I will repeat the essence of your story in my own words
- Let me know if I'm on track and continue your story
- I may ask questions, like:
  - What did that mean to you?
  - How did that make you feel?
  - Why did you think that?
  - What would you say to your mentor if they were here?

Ask for a volunteer to **tell you about a mentor that was important to them.**

- At each break in their story, reflect back what you have heard.
- Let the volunteer keep talking
- Ask one or 2 questions

**Try:** Have mentors break into pairs to try reflective listening describing a mentor who was important to them.



## 4. Connecting Mentor Pairs

### OVERVIEW

Welcome to the Mentorship! Explaining the mentorship expectations and timeline, then facilitating breakout rooms where each mentor-mentee pair can set goals for learning and communication.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Goal setting shared document for each mentee-mentor pair
- Mentor-mentee contract (if using one)
- 4 to 25 farmers seeking a mentor
- 1 or more facilitators
- Meeting space
- (Online) Shared document to take notes; ability to create zoom breakout rooms
- (In-person) White board or poster paper, markers, pens; comfortable space with chairs & tables

### FACILITATOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Connecting Mentee-Mentor Pairs:

- Review mentor/mentee signup forms
- Pair by region, learning goals, farm enterprises, skill level, etc.
- Connect! Notify mentors and mentees they have been paired. Include contact information for each other, next steps and the date of the Meet & Greet.

The Meet & Greet will:

- Welcome everyone!
- Connect mentors with mentees in breakout rooms to set goals for learning and communication

Mentee/Mentor Check-ins will:

- Ensure that mentees have questions about the mentorship answered
- Ensure the mentees and mentors are in communication
- Make it simple to share concerns about their mentor or the mentee

Mentorship Resources will include:

- Goal-setting documents
- Mentor-Mentee contact
- Resources on relevant topics
- Pre- and Post-Survey for Mentees



## 4. Connecting Mentor Pairs Pair Up!

### PROCEDURE

#### Select & Notify Mentor Pairs

Review mentor/mentee signup forms

- Use a spreadsheet of form results
  - Pair by region, learning goals, farm enterprises, skill level, etc.
  - Sort and highlight to show pairs

Connect! Notify mentors and mentees they have been paired. Include contact information for each other, next steps and the date of the Meet & Greet.

- Example email:  
Title: Connecting with Your Mentor!

Hi **Name**,

Your mentor will be **Name** from **Farm Name**. I have included them on this email so you have their email address and can begin to plan for a time to start talking.

Below is a sample schedule, so you can schedule your year of meetings on your first call. I recommend spacing out the calls by about 3 weeks or a month so you can have time to implement recommendations, search for information and get the most out of the mentorship.

You are both welcome to contact me at any time if you have questions about the mentorship, beginning farmer resources or farming questions.

- **November:** Meet & Greet - Introductions & Goal-setting
- **December:** Call #1 - Virtual Farm Tour (photos & Google Maps) & Goal-setting
- **January:** Call #2 - Resource Assessment
- **February:** Call #3 - Financial Viability
- **March:** Call #4 - Soils & Environmental Sustainability
- **April:** Call #5 - Community Connections and Marketing
- **May:** Call #6 - Work-Life Balance
- **June, July, August, September:** Answer questions that arise during the farm season
- **October:** Wrap-up! Review goals from before season & set next steps



# 4. Connecting Mentor Pairs Pair Up!

Below are suggestions for Call #2 and the Resource List

- **Each Mentee-Mentor meeting**
  - **Hello!** Updates? How are you doing? Challenges? Successes?
  - **Topic of the day** - Resource List
  - **Action steps! What 3 things** are you going to try on your farm?

## PROCEDURE

Resource List	Name:	Farm Name:
Leave blank if you prefer to keep info private!		
	Now	Can leverage in future <input type="checkbox"/>
Money		
Loans and/or Grants		
Land & Soils		
Infrastructure, buildings, hoop houses		
Wells and Water		
Tools & Equipment		
Skills & Training - Person 1		
Skills & Training - Person 2		
Professional and Social Networks		



## 4. Connecting Mentor Pairs

### Meet & Greet

#### PROCEDURE

Insert the steps on how to do the activity here. It can be in a bulleted list.

- Introductions
  - Name, Farm Name, Farm Enterprises
  - If time: Why did you want to be part of this mentorship project?
- Explain the mentorship program
  - Timeline
- Breakout rooms for Mentee-Mentor Pairs
  - Set farm & learning goals
    - To Do:
      - List items
    - Goals!
      - This year:
      - Next year:
      - 5 years:
  - Mentorship Agreements
    - When Will I meet with my mentor?
      - Schedule at least 2 meetings
      - Discuss Months/Days/Times and/or dates that tend to work
    - How do we each prefer to communicate? (Phone, Zoom, Skype, Text, Other)
    - What questions do I want to work on with my mentor?
    - What farm goals would I like my mentor to advise me on?
    - What documents do I want to share with my mentor?
    - Etc.
- Full Group discussion
  - Mentorship pairs: What is one goal that you plan to work on together?



## 4. Connecting Mentor Pairs

### CHECK-INS

Check-in calls can be informal or formal. Here are some questions that may be useful:

- Have you been able to connect with your mentor (mentee)?
- Has the mentorship been useful to you?
- Do you have any concerns about your mentor (mentee) that you want to share?
- What topics have you discussed?
- Do you need any resources to help the mentee (you) move forward?
- Do you have any questions about the program?
- Do you have any suggestions for the program?
- Are there any questions you would like us to ask your mentor (mentee)?

### TRACKING MENTOR PAIRS

Mentor tracking: Use a shared spreadsheet, an online form or another system to track meetings for each mentor pair.

call	call	call	call	call
1	2	3	4	5
X	X	X	X	later date
x	x	x	x	x
x	x	x	x	later date
texts/email	one time			
x	x	x	x	x
x	x	x	x	x
x	x	x	x	x

### CONNECTIONS

Pairing beginning farmers with a peer or a group of beginning farmers may be very helpful! Think about



## CONNECTING NEW FARMERS WITH MENTORS

### 4. Connecting Mentor Pairs Resources

*Resources for mentors and mentees:*

- *Website or Documents describing your mentorship program*
- *Goal-setting documents*
- *Mentor-Mentee contact*
- *Resources on relevant topics*
- *Pre- and Post-Survey for Mentees*



# 5. Evaluation & Charrette

## OVERVIEW

Try to see feedback as a gift! Using insights from surveys, charrettes and informal conversations is hands down the best way to improve mentor programs. Knowing that mentorship organizers listen and are open to recommended changes keeps mentees and mentors engaged year after year. And, of course, success stories and survey data are important to get and keep funding.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Mentor and Mentee Pre/Post Survey
- Agenda for Community Input Charrette
- 4 to 25 mentor & mentees
- 1 or more facilitators
- Meeting space
- (Online) Shared document to take notes; ability to create zoom breakout rooms
- (In-person) White board or poster paper, markers, pens; comfortable space with chairs & tables
- A way to share data and success stories

## FACILITATOR BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Pre/Post Surveys

- Sample Questions
- Link to [survey form to copy & edit](#)

### Community Input Charrette

- Invite mentors & mentees
- Agenda
- Shared documents for brainstorming
- Example of shared documents

### Sharing Success Stories

- How to share success stories
- Links to Article, Poster and slide sets

### Learning from Surveys & Charrette recommendations

- Being flexible
-





## CONNECTING NEW FARMERS WITH MENTORS

### 5. Evaluation & Charrette

#### Mentee (& Mentor) Pre/Post Survey

*Create a survey or have a discussion with mentees to ask any of the following questions after their planning meeting. Plan to repeat the same questions at the end of the mentorship project or annually. Once you create your mentee survey, copy it to make a few language edits, but otherwise gather similar information from both groups:*

##### Sample Questions:

- Email Address
  - Consider sending responders a copy of their response
- Name
- Share examples of how trainings/meetings for this project have influenced what you plan to DO to improve your farm.
- How have trainings/meetings/mentorship influenced you, your knowledge, attitudes or skills in farming business management.
- What are the 3 biggest challenges for your farm or for you as a farmer?
- Have you overcome any challenges due to your mentor's advice?
- How would you rate your understanding of your financials?
- How would you rate your farm's profitability?
- How would you rate your understanding of your soils and on-farm sustainability practices?
- How would you rate your soil health?
- How would your rate your farm's environmental sustainability?
- How would you rate your work-life balance?
- How would you rate your farm's ability to meet the needs of your community?
- If you have land, how well does it meet your needs?
- If you have a loan, how well does it meet your needs?



## CONNECTING NEW FARMERS WITH MENTORS

# Mentee (& Mentor) Pre/Post Survey

- If you have taken farmer training programs, how well did it prepare you to start a farm?
- If you've taken a business training class, how well did it prepare you for starting your farm business?
- Describe your farm's financials and profitability.
- Describe your farm's environmental sustainability (soil quality, habitat, etc)
- Describe your work-life balance.
- Describe your farm's community connections.
- What is the biggest barrier to your farm's success? (Farmland, Access to credit, Low profit-margins, Availability of markets, Poor soil quality, Environmental challenges, Labor, Burnout and lack of work-life balance, Need for better community engagement, Lack of farm skills, Lack of business and financial skills)
- Which farm enterprises make up 20% or more of your current or planned farm sales?
- How has the mentor program been MOST helpful to you?
- What could the mentor program have done better?
- What could your mentor (mentee) have done better?
- What suggestions do you have to improve this mentorship program?
- Please share up to 3 successes or examples of improved knowledge, attitudes, skills or awareness due to this mentorship.
- Do you have any suggestions on how to help you and other mentees (mentors) prepare for a 2nd year of mentoring?
- Any other comments?



## 5. Evaluation & Charrette Charrette Agenda

### PROCEDURE

#### Sample Charrette Agenda

- **Introductions**
  - Name, Farm Name, Farm Enterprises
  - Share one success! (Use chat chat box or small groups if over 12 people)
- **Full Group: Brainstorm ways to improve the mentorship**
  - Type in your suggestions, ideas and feedback!
  - 
  - 
  - Highlight ~3 ideas to share out with the full group & decide who will share
- **Breakout Sessions: Choose a focus area**
  - **Meetings - Zoom, phone, text, email, farm visits.....**what is the best way to meet with your mentor/mentee? Are there better ways to schedule these?
  - **Needs** - What resources or assistance do you need?
  - **Meeting Topics & Discussion Prompts** - are these useful? Would you recommend new topics or ways to support discussions?
  - **Peer Mentee Pairs & Network Meetings**
  - **Other?** We can add more breakouts or adjust as recommended by the group!
  - Explain that each breakout group will have a white board or poster paper for notes. If meeting online, a shared document will copy these lines for each topic:
    - Type in your suggestions, ideas and feedback!
    - 
    - 
    - Highlight ~3 ideas to share out with the full group & decide who will share
- Thank you!
- Questions

Example [Charrette Notes Document](#) from 2022



# **5. Evaluation & Charrette Sharing Success Stories**

## **PROCEDURE**

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Sharing Success Stories



## 5. Evaluation & Charrette

### **EXTENSIONS**

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Insert ideas here for expanding the lesson (i.e. videos, discussion, questions and prompts, podcasts, etc.)

### **VARIATIONS**

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Insert different ways to deliver the activity (for example, in a barn vs. a classroom with internet.)

### **CONNECTIONS**

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Insert connections to other modules or programs (for example, soil health and land access.)



***Optional: Infographic***

- Delete this text and insert your infographic here
- Duplicate this page for additional infographics, or delete this page if not needed