

**Northeast Incubator Farm Training Initiative (NIFTI) – SARE Professional Development Project:
Improving the Viability of Beginning Farm Enterprises by Strengthening Northeast Farm Incubator Projects**

**Project Activities and Timeline
October 2014 – October 2016**

Performance target: 40 staff of 20 Farm Incubator Programs (FIPs) develop standardized performance metrics, evaluation tools and data collection methodology related to key program educational components, and use these tools to improve the quality/quantity of educational programs and resources provided to 250 farmers. 20 staff from 10 FIPs use the new tools and methods to document the progress towards independence of 100 farmers via established benchmarks re: sustainable practices, yields, incomes, and access to capital, infrastructure and farmland.

Milestones	Date completed
Participants receive notices about initiative 2-year activity timetables	June and October 2014
Program application, acceptance, and signed agreements to participate in 2-year program, including field schools, web meetings; implementation; consistent tracking, evaluation & reporting	October 2014
Project orientation meeting at NESAWG Conference	November 2014
Four in-person field schools over 2 years that address farmer transition (financial literacy, access to credit, access to land) and incubator and farmer metrics and evaluation. Hosted at various incubator sites throughout the Northeast (ME, VT, PA, NY)	Winter 2015; Spring 2015; Fall 2015; Spring 2016
Use NIFTI and participant developed tracking materials to establish baseline metrics on multiple project elements (programs, admin., farmer outcomes)	January, 2015
Develop farming transition goals and developmental benchmarks with farmers to track over project period & beyond	January - March 2015
Participate in web forums and technical assistance exchanges, to help implement multiple tracking metrics and farmer transition planning steps.	Ongoing
Use organized online and informal meetings and communications for shared learning and peer-based networking (Community of Practice)	Ongoing
Contribute content to be posted to centralized resources clearinghouse	Ongoing
Access and use downloadable manuals and toolkits, interactive forums, webinar recordings, and FAQs organized by topic area	Ongoing
Apply tools, skills, and other shared experiences to incubator and farmer development activities	Ongoing
Projects complete and submit tracking data and project reports on agreed-to schedules that show progress in multiple domains	Quarterly after Jan. 2015
Develop and circulate case studies and success stories demonstrating qualitative changes to projects and farmers' transitions' to independence	Sept. 2015 - Oct 2016
NIFTI collects final evaluation data and creates reports summarizing metrics and outcomes	Oct 2016 – March 2017