

Measuring Profitability and Success

A Northeast SARE Funded Project

Quick Overview

Key Points

- Sales more than doubled to \$52,000+ over two years
- Obtained \$80,000 in financing for new equipment and infrastructure
- Opened a \$7,000 line of credit to manage cash flow
- Used scenario planning, SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis, and cash flow planning to test market options

During the course of two years of farm business coaching, Bella Farm made investments in equipment and infrastructure that more-than-doubled sales. Careful analysis of production costs and product mix guided this growth. Business coaching provided financial education that allowed the owner, Rachel Schattman, to evaluate the business from multiple directions.

Bella Farm

Monkton, VT
Rachel Schattman
bellapesto.com



Farm Snapshot

Bella Farm is an organic vegetable farm focusing on diversified vegetables, garlic, and pesto production.

With a total of 20 acres, Bella Farm grows vegetables on 3 acres and manages 1 additional acre of cover crops.

The remainder of the acreage is wooded or contains the farmstead.

Measuring Profitability and Success

Business Results

- Updated budget projections regularly using a cash flow spreadsheet
- Incorporated budget analysis into management practices
- Made key investments
- Identified need for operating capital and opened a \$7,000 line of credit
- Expanded vegetable production, rather than value-added products, on the basis of budget analysis with advisor

Farm Financial Highlights

2013 - 2014

GROSS SALES: increased by \$29,293 or 127%

PROFIT MARGIN: increased from -23% to 1.1%

NET INCOME: increased from a loss of \$5,310 to a positive \$592

OWNER INCOME: no payments to owner.

EXPENSES: increase of \$22,000 or 104%; 56% of this increase was for payroll

CASH: doubled cash on hand to \$4,434

LABOR: one managing owner worked 60 hours per week for 42 weeks per year (a total of 2,520 annual hours). Payroll for hired labor increased from \$5,483 to \$20,669, representing a change from 1 to 2.5 seasonal full-time employees (FTEs) working a total of 100 hours per week for 30 weeks (a total of 3,000 annual hours of hired labor).

GROSS SALES: Gross sales per full time employee, inclusive of both owner and employees, was \$13,000 in 2011 and \$19,000 in 2013.

INVESTMENTS: \$80,000; equipment and infrastructure.

Key Numbers	2011	2013	CHANGE
Return on Equity (ROE)	-29%	1.1%	104%
Cash Flow Operations	-\$5,310	\$145	103%
Profit Margin	-23%	1.1%	105%
Gross Sales	\$23,115	\$52,408	127%

Defining Success

"Success would mean managing the farm with environmental sustainability in mind, drawing a modest salary, and having a high quality of life, including being a part of my community or doing something besides farming that supports my mental and emotional well-being."

Measuring Profitability and Success

Details

Rachel Schattman started farming in 2009 at the Intervale Center's Farms Program, a business incubator targeting small-to-midscale farm businesses. Bella Farm started as a small farm focused on growing a pesto enterprise. Eager to scale up the business, in 2011 the farm moved to 20 acres in Monkton, Vermont. Bella Farm now grows a variety of vegetables, herbs, and greens on two acres, and rotates to additional cover-cropped acres. The farm operation includes 5,600 sq. ft. of greenhouses.

In its startup years, the business grossed under \$25,000; sales more than doubled to over \$52,000 in 2013, after two years of business management coaching, during which strategic investments were identified.

Guiding Principles:

- Added 4,000 sq. ft. of greenhouse/tunnel space
- Invested in tractor with ancillary equipment
- Installed wash station
- Expanded cooler and freezer space

Critical Skills

- Use of QuickBooks data in financial analyses
- Use of projections when making production, market, and investment decisions
- Integration of QuickBooks data for budgeting and evaluation of enterprises and markets
- Regular market and product assessment and analysis

Farm Mission

Our mission is threefold:

- 1) To seek continuously the information, knowledge and experiences that help us improve our ability to care for our land and community.
- 2) To manage our land in a way that ensures the future health and vitality of the soil.
- 3) To work actively against hunger in Vermont by making sure that food that is available and accessible to all members of our community, and by supporting the efforts of other farms and organizations that seek to do the same."

Business and Management Education

Access to business management education and advisement has "given me better targets to shoot for, and a better understanding of financial planning tools," noted Rachel. Investing her time in business education and working with financial tools to analyze the farm business have benefited Bella Farm by refining the product mix based on profitability. Careful analysis of production costs and product mix guided the farm in this investment and growth. "I worked with a business coach to evaluate the business in a couple of different ways," Rachel says. These analyses shifted strategic focus, from

Measuring Profitability and Success

the original plan to grow the pesto product line rapidly, to the subsequent, revised trajectory of increased vegetable sales.

Bella Farm's investment in equipment and infrastructure helped sales more than double, with vegetable sales increasing from \$2,000 to \$29,000. Says Rachel, "We had major growth in production and gross sales. This was a positive thing." This 12-fold increase accounts for most of the increase in sales overall. Despite investment and growth, the low level of overall sales (\$52,000 in 2013) is not a scale that generates enough income for a sufficient owner's draw. However, payroll did grow by \$15,000, reflecting a change from 1 to 2.5 FTE during peak growing season. Increased labor was needed to grow production while balancing off-farm commitments. A production increase was also supported by equipment and infrastructure investment. Funds from a line of credit helped to relieve the stress of starting the farm in the spring, before the farm had cash flow but needed to purchase supplies and cover payroll.

Looking Ahead: Upcoming Changes

Due to the arrival of the next generation at Bella Farm, Rachel will scale back dramatically in 2016, focusing in particular on selling wholesale garlic to regional Vermont markets. She plans to expand again strategically as family commitments decrease in future years.



Measuring Profitability and Success

A Northeast SARE Funded Project

Quick Overview

Skinny Dip Farm

Westport, MA
Hannah and Ben Wolbach
skinnydipfarm.blogspot.com

Key Points

- Prioritization of financial management helped increase gross sales by 65%
- Obtained \$30,000 in financing from two different sources and \$31,160 from four different grants for capital expenses
- Increased owners' income from \$0 to \$35,000

Over their two years of work with The Carrot Project, Hannah and Ben Wolbach of Skinny Dip Farm gained confidence in their financial planning and projections. As a result, they were able to grow their gross profits and owner's draw, support increased payroll, and make capital investments.



Farm Snapshot

Skinny Dip Farm is a certified organic farm using both leased and owned land in Westport, MA and Little Compton, RI. Founded in 2011 by Hannah and Ben Wolbach, the farm sells vegetables, flowers, and herbs wholesale to restaurant and retail venues, and direct to consumers through a CSA [community supported agriculture] program and at farmers' markets. They also have a small broiler enterprise.

Measuring Profitability and Success

Business Results

- Practiced iterative budgeting using a dynamic cash flow statement
- Established a QuickBooks accounting system
- Made key investments through appropriate financing

Farm Financial Highlights

2013 - 2014

- **GROSS SALES:** Grew from \$81,000 to \$134,000
- **PROFIT MARGIN:** Decreased from 36% to 25%
- **NET INCOME:** Increased from \$25,000 to \$35,000
- **OWNER INCOME:** Did not take owner's draw in 2012; took net income of \$35,000 as payment in 2014.
- **EXPENSES:** \$47,000 or 89% increase in expenses
- **CASH:** Averaged \$62,288 in working capital
- **LABOR:** Both owners worked full-time on the farm from 2012 to 2014, except for part of 2014.
- **INVESTMENTS:** A \$20,000 private loan, a \$10,000 Matching Enterprise Grants for Agriculture matching grant from the State of Massachusetts, a \$4,410 NCRS grant, and two NRCS high tunnel grants totaling \$16,750.

Key Numbers	2012	2014	CHANGE
Return on Equity (ROE)	16.64%	16.54%	+0.1%
Cash Flow Operations	\$28,497	\$33,750	+\$5,253
Profit Margin	36%	25%	-11%
Gross Sales	\$81,000	\$134,000	+65%

Defining Success

During the early stages of their farm, the Wolbachs stated, "We are successful if we are continuing to make investments to improve our operation, while covering our living expenses and not going into debt. Long-term success will be a farm that is ecologically responsible, producing high-quality produce for our customers, and sustaining our family financially." In 2014, the Wolbachs changed their stance on debt financing: "We did take on a loan in the past year (to put up a heated propagation greenhouse). We felt confident doing this because of our increased confidence in our financial standing."

Farm Philosophy

Skinny Dip Farm offers its customers freshness, quality, and authenticity, which the farmers maintain by tackling all farm work and marketing themselves. They chose their scale very deliberately: "We stay small enough to ensure the highest quality and a personal touch in all that we do."

Measuring Profitability and Success

Details

Hannah and Ben Wolbach have been farming for about 15 years. They started Skinny Dip Farm in 2011 after spending the previous five years managing Holly Hill Farm in Cohasset, Massachusetts. Skinny Dip Farm includes four acres of leased land in Westport, Massachusetts, and about one acre and greenhouse space at their home in Little Compton, Rhode Island.

Skinny Dip Farm raises broilers and grows 30 different certified organic vegetables, from fennel and sugar snap peas to cherry tomatoes and beets. They specialize in baby salad greens (lettuces, mustards, arugula, cress), and aim to offer salad greens every week of the growing season. In addition to vegetables, the pair grows 75 varieties of beautiful cut flower to sell as mixed bouquets. All products are marketed locally through a CSA, farmer's markets, restaurants, and caterers. They also sell bulk flowers to wedding parties who want to arrange their own flowers. They sought help with their taxes and payroll, but completed the rest of their bookkeeping themselves.

In 2012, Hannah and Ben received the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources MEGA grant for \$10,000, which they matched with \$10,000 of their savings, which was helpful in their relatively quick capitalization. This grant was put towards many capital expenses such as a walk in cooler, fertilizer spreader, tool bar and cultivator, animal housing and fencing, and a potato digger. That same year, they also received a \$4,410 grant from NCRS to install a well in their leased property. They have also received two high tunnel grants from NCRS, one in 2012 for \$6,752 and one in 2014 for \$9,998. This significant amount of grant financing helped increase production and maximize labor hours.

The broiler enterprise started in 2012 with 150 birds, and increased by 2014 to 300 birds. The farmers carefully tracked expenses and income to determine their net profit, which is \$13 per bird. They view the birds as an important piece of the farm's fertility program — one that does not require a huge amount of labor. Hannah and Ben raise them on cover-cropped ground each year, and find that the crops grown in that soil in the following year grow really well. So, while they are not making a living purely as poultry farmers currently, the birds fit nicely into Skinny Dip's fertility management and diversification goals.

From 2012-2014, payroll for hired labor increased from \$4,552 to \$11,642. This represents a change in hired labor from two part-time employees, working a total of 500 hours per year at \$8 per hour, to three part-time employees, working a total of 1,300 hours per year at \$10 per hour.

Gross Sales per full time employee, inclusive of both owners and employees, was approximately \$46,300 in 2012 and \$62,300 in 2014.

Measuring Profitability and Success

Critical Skills

- Regular bookkeeping in QuickBooks and integrating records for budgeting
- Use of financial projections when making production and market decisions
- Used cash planning tools to test budget and capital expense assumptions
- Continual market and product assessment/analysis and willingness to evolve crops and markets

Business and Management Education

Ben and Hannah significantly increased management confidence, which allowed for more strategic decision-making focused on positive cash flow and profitability. They invested significant effort in setting up bookkeeping in QuickBooks with an advisor familiar with farm bookkeeping and accounting, learned budgeting techniques, and actively planned for and managed the financial impacts of production and market decisions. Initially debt-averse, their increased confidence in projecting their future financial position changed their minds. Being able to project how payments could be supported by cash flow was central to their decision. Skinny Dip Farm illustrates how bringing business and financial management to the table can help a farm meet its goals, and how financing can play a role in growth.

Looking Ahead: Upcoming Changes

In the short term, Hannah and Ben are looking “to have a smooth transition onto a new piece of leased land by 2017” and “to have a better home/work balance.” In the longer term, they aim to become more efficient, particularly in their marketing, and to focus on a few niches and become less generalist in crop choice. They also hope to “to employ some good people full time, including at least one year round employee.”



Measuring Profitability and Success

A Northeast SARE Funded Project

Quick Overview

Key Points

- Successfully planned and executed a \$50,000 startup, using \$20,000 in owner capital and \$30,000 in financing from two different sources
- Increased sales from \$0.00 to \$130,000+ in 48 months
- Leased land to lower startup costs
- Obtained a \$20,000 line of credit established for operating expenses
- Used farm mentors and other advisory services

Two Farmers Farm

Scarborough, ME
Kelsey Herrington
& Dominic Pascarelli
twofarmersfarm.com

Kelsey and Dominic Pascarelli spent 2011 and 2012 searching for land, carefully planning a four-season farm, researching markets, and growing a limited amount of greens on a smaller parcel of family-owned land. Their effort paid off, and in 2013, the couple moved their operation to the farm now under lease in Scarborough, ME.

Startup plans and projections proved sufficiently conservative and attainable. In their first year of operation on the leased land, Two Farmers Farm exceeded income estimates by over \$15,000 while expenses exceeded projections by less than \$2,000. "We have done all the planning ourselves, with help from SCORE and some valuable farmer mentors."



Business Results

- Made key investments with capital financing
- Profitable year round crops were correctly identified
- Financed new equipment that "helped us speed up fieldwork."
- Exceeded financial goals

Measuring Profitability and Success

Farm Financial Highlights

2013 - 2014

- **GROSS SALES** grew from \$50,000 to \$132,000
- **PROFIT MARGIN** before owner draw, averaged 26%
- **NET INCOME:** grew 400%+ from \$11,000 to \$59,000.
- **OWNER INCOME:** \$15,000 in 2014
- **EXPENSES:** \$78,000 increase in expenses
- **CASH:** Maintained sufficient cash reserves and utilized \$20,000 line of credit as needed through the MOFGA Organic Loan Fund
- **LABOR:** Two managing owners worked 2,880 hours in 2012, with much of that time spent seeking land. They had no hired help. Their hours increased to 5,800 hours in 2014 and they took an owners draw of \$15,000. Payroll expenses also increased to \$11,000, representing 2,100 hours of hired labor.
- **GROSS SALES:** Gross sales per full time employee was approximately \$34,000 in each year, representing that Two Farmers did an excellent job budgeting accurately for labor needs through changes and increases in production each year.
- **INVESTMENTS:** \$24,000 USDA-FSA loan and a \$6,000 loan from No Small Potatoes, a Slow Money investment club for equipment and infrastructure.

Farm Snapshot

Two Farmers Farm is a certified organic, four-season vegetable farm founded in Scarborough, ME in 2013. It specializes in winter-harvested leafy greens and other fresh winter produce, offering flavor, health, and beautifully fresh food for every season.

Key Numbers	2013	2014	CHANGE
Return on Equity (ROE)	29%	121%	322%
Cash Flow Operations	\$9,876	\$57,130	478%
Profit Margin	22%	45%	103%
Gross Sales	\$50,594	\$131,587	240%

Defining Success

Kelsey and Dominic desire to earn a living with both of them working full-time on the farm and maintaining a high quality of life.

Farm Philosophy

"We are young farmers excited about growing a healthy, robust, and ecologically sustainable local food system."

Details

Two Farmers Farm started on family land in the fall of 2011. The young couple began with a vision of a four-season farm with organic products produced year round. They planned

Measuring Profitability and Success

to include winter salad greens in the mix with the intention of achieving a balance between summer and winter work. During the winter of 2012-13, the farmers obtained a lease on a property south of Portland and close to expanding farmers' markets, allowing them to increase their land from 1/10th acre to 1.5 from acres. The farmers spent 2012 growing greens January to March on family land, which they sold wholesale and through farmers' markets. "We basically took over all the gardens," commented Kelsey. A deliberate planning process for this leased land led to investments in equipment and infrastructure. Improvements included putting up two small hoop houses, temporary shelters for seedlings, and a washing and cooling station for produce. Additionally, a tractor, tractor tools, and a delivery vehicle were purchased.

2013 was the first full production year for Two Farmers Farm and net income exceeded projections by \$5,000. For startup financing, Two Farmers Farm paired \$20,000 in owner capital with \$30,000 in loans — a \$24,000 USDA-FSA loan and a \$6,000 loan from No Small Potatoes, a Slow Money investment club. Anticipating cash shortfalls, a \$20,000 line of credit was also secured from the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners' Association (MOFGA) Organic Loan Fund, which they ultimately discontinued. One major goal was to have no off-farm income, and they achieved that from May 2013 onward.

Since they chose to farm on leased land, the couple does not currently have a mortgage, which has helped them maintain profit margins and pay themselves during the startup years. Self-identifying as risk averse, the farmers constantly evaluated actuals against their original plan and kept a list of a wide ranging list of 20 obstacles that stood, or could stand, in their way of success, such as access to qualified help or drought-resistant water sources. "Knowing what could go wrong helps us build contingency plans and think critically about which investments are most important for risk management."

Guiding Principles:

- Regular and careful planning & record-keeping
- Leased farmland
- Four-season farm
- Financial sustainability

Critical Skills

- Continual market and product assessment/analysis
- Business planning
- Sought advice and resources
- Identified niche of local, organic winter greens

Farm Mission

To provide a fulfilling lifestyle and livelihood for our family, by producing nourishing foods and engaging in face-to-face marketing within our community.

We strive to exemplify the potential for farm families to maintain a high quality of life while achieving excellent land stewardship, adequately supporting their employees, preserving rural heritage, and furthering the movement for a more sustainable food system.

Measuring Profitability and Success

Business and Management Education

Upon leaving college, the farmers apprenticed for 1.5 years, including 1 full year on a farm similar to what they envisioned their startup farm would be. Becoming more serious in their intent, Kelsey and Domenic joined the MOFGA Journeyperson program, a mentorship program, in 2011. This experience grounded their business planning process. “We worked full time all winter making plans, budgets, procuring equipment, etc. (while also growing and selling winter produce) – this preparation set us up well for the first season.” Two Farmers Farm opened fully for operation in 2013. Outside advisors provided a sounding board for decision making as the startup farm put plans to action. From 2013-2014, their management confidence grew. “Yes overall my skills have improved. I have learned by doing, with insight from farmer mentors. We have done all the planning ourselves, with help from SCORE and farmer mentors.

Looking Ahead: Upcoming Changes

Two Farmers Farm is considering when to build out additional farm infrastructure and how to access the necessary capital. Some additional equipment purchases, such as a plastic mulch layer, are listed in their Capital Plan as the next investments. The focus will continue to be on determining what scale makes economic sense for the farm. They are not planning on increasing in acreage under management in the coming season. They will increase their labor budget and adjust their crop mix, including the addition of strawberries and garlic.



Measuring Profitability and Success

A Northeast SARE Funded Project

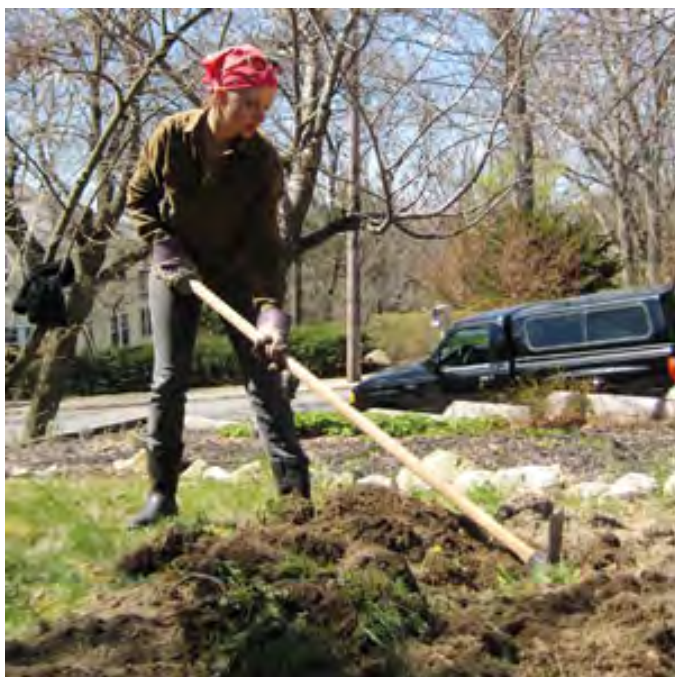
Quick Overview

Yard Birds Farm

Montague, MA
Angela Roell & Brian Kline
yardbirdsfarm.com

Key Points

- Farmed in Boston for one season before transitioning to land in Western Massachusetts
- Expanded beekeeping enterprise with \$5,000 Matching Enterprise Grants for Agriculture grant
- Actively sought farm advisory services
- Started the small farm with personal savings supported by off-farm income



Farm Snapshot

Yard Birds Farm is a small-scale farm that originated in Boston in 2012 and relocated to Williamsburg, MA in 2013.

Maximizing yield on small plots through succession and companion planting, the farm builds soil health by cover cropping, and using organic mineral amendments.

The couple transitioned to land in Montague, MA in 2014, using sustainable forest management practices to support their beekeeping enterprise.

After they had started Yard Birds Farm in Boston in 2012, Brian and Angela soon had a shift in mindset: “As momentum grew, we realized that our dream of conducting place-based education on a farm meant we’d need a ‘place,’ and that our ‘place’ wasn’t urban.” In 2013, the farmers moved to land in Williamsburg, Massachusetts, where

Measuring Profitability and Success

they farmed as a team, switching between full-time and part-time roles, and used income from off-farm jobs as supplementary revenue streams. With the move to Western Massachusetts, the couple also switched focus from vegetables to beekeeping and beeswax products.

Business Results

- Made key strategic decisions to align farm with mission and values
- Reduced product line after careful profitability analysis of products
- Secured land on which to expand the farm
- Technical assistance increased financial management confidence

Farm Financial Highlights

2013–2014

- **GROSS SALES:** fell from \$23,430 to \$6,864 as a result of farmland transition
- **PROFIT MARGIN:** loss for entire period
- **NET INCOME:** loss during both 2013 and 2014
- **OWNER INCOME:** no owner income
- **EXPENSES:** \$3,898 increase in expenses
- **CASH:** Used off-farm income to support cash flow
- **LABOR:** Both managing owners worked 50+ hours per week in 2012. This changed in 2014 when the two began to alternate between part-time and full-time roles (i.e., Angela worked full-time on the farm in spring 2015, and Brian worked full time in fall 2015) for better balance of their off-farm job commitments. They had no hired help or payroll, though they hired interns for credit in 2013 and 2014 to help meet labor demands. They have taken no owner's draw but use farm income to cover expenses for cars, insurance, etc.
- **GROSS SALES:** Gross sales per full time employee was approximately \$8,444 in 2013 and \$5,491 in 2014.
- **INVESTMENTS:** \$5,000 Matching Enterprise Grant for Agriculture (MEGA) awarded from the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture for beekeeping equipment and supplies. \$1,000 Natural Resources Conservation Service grant awarded in 2014 from the USDA to develop a sustainable forest management plan.

Key Numbers	2013	2014	CHANGE
Return on Equity (ROE)	-2%	-137%	-53%
Cash Flow Operations	\$560	\$6,047	\$4,269
Profit Margin	-2%	-88%	-174%
Gross Sales	\$23,430	\$6,864	-71%

Measuring Profitability and Success

Defining Success

For Angela and Brian, success is being financially solvent, finding personal satisfaction with the farm work, and developing strong relationships in their hill town community.

Details

While living in the Boston area, Angela and Brian started a small urban farm using personal savings: “We began our farm with some seed money, and the objective of engaging our local community in food. We participated in garden build outs, panel discussions, and volunteer days to generate buzz about our farm in the Jamaica Plain neighborhood.” However, the couple realized that their “place” wasn’t urban, and in 2013 moved to a small five-acre farm in Williamsburg, Massachusetts. In the first season, their farm brought in gross sales of \$23,430 for bee related products — including honey, queen bees, and beeswax products — and for the seed garlic and greens the farmers grew.

The next year (2014) was a transition year, as the couple moved to a 20-acre farm in Montague, Massachusetts. They received a \$1,000 grant from USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service to work with a forester to develop a sustainable forest management plan, with a focus on increasing pollinator-beneficial hardwood plantings and on managing invasive species. In mid-summer, they closed on the 20-acre farm in Montague, and moved onto the property on November 1. They have transported some of their existing farm infrastructure to the new property, such as the walk-in cooler, and will transport the high tunnel before spring 2015. This move, in combination with maintenance of off-farm jobs to support their income, limited the number of hours the two could dedicate to their Williamsburg farm, and 2014 sales and net income suffered as a result.

Farm goals shifted when they transitioned to their new land from quickly building a large number of vegetable enterprises for wholesale markets, to a focus on stewardship of the land and pollinators, and on simultaneously increasing on- and off-farm education opportunities. The farm is also being developed to serve as a community gathering space for outdoor events, overnight stays, workshops, and summer programs. Angela and Brian say, “Taking a huge step back from vegetables was a BIG and scary step for us. Moving

Farm Mission

To integrate sustainable practices to grow fresh food on a small farm, nourish neighborhood connections, and promote nutritional education, we:

- utilize innovative practices to provide access to high quality food.
- work for social justice by providing access to nutritious local food.
- facilitate educational programming and on-farm research.
- develop strong partnerships in order to improve the health of our community and planet.
- invite suggestions to promote creative discussion to improve our work.

Measuring Profitability and Success

slowly and learning about our land before beginning to pile on inputs and amendments was an exercise outside of our comfort zone. It has meant re-envisioning our brand and changing how we conduct our business in some radical ways. It is a risk, but it helps us to realign our farm with our long-term goals.” Goals for 2015 and 2016 include expansion of the small orchard on their new farmland to produce plums, apples, pears, peaches, pawpaw, peppercorn, hazelnuts, apricots, and sour cherries in small rounds.

Business and Management Education

For the Yard Birds farmers, income expectations reduced as the farm model was refined. They redefine “financially solvent” to mean that “the farm pays its own expenses and covers costs of maintenance and repairs, eventually generating a portion of our income, but not [as much as] 50%.” Technical assistance provided Yard Birds Farm with QuickBooks set-up and cash flow planning, which they found a useful tool, but have not used consistently. They will make this a greater priority in the coming years as they settle onto their new land.

The farmers report: “Technical assistance has greatly improved our quality of life by giving us tools to track finances and make educated decisions based on financial viability. Our skills in analyzing enterprises and developing a long-range goal have improved due to technical assistance, courses, and workshops we've participated in.”

Critical Skills

- Business planning
- Advice and resource utilization
- Continual market and product assessment/analysis
- Careful build-out of farm after move

Looking Ahead: Upcoming Changes

In five years, the farm aims to increase its holdings to 100 well-managed hives and 25–30 queen-rearing colonies to produce an annual crop of honey, queen bees for sale, and beeswax-based products. These products will be sold via retail and wholesale channels. The farm plans to harvest firewood from its woodland, and support other local farmers interested in running woodland enterprises (e.g., hog production or mushroom cultivation) by leasing land. They aim to reclaim the forest edges and plant pollinator-beneficial perennials along the borders. On- and off-farm education opportunities will include on-farm workshops, events for children, summer programming, and farm dinners. Production will focus on perennial herbs, fruits and nuts, and a small handful of annual vegetables. The farmers will distribute these via wholesale channels [local food cooperatives and restaurants].