

# SMALL FARM EQUIPMENT SHARING HANDBOOK

*2016*

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With input from Dirk McCormick Brynside Branch Farms, Luke Bair Redwing Farms, Natan Harel, Standing Stone Farm, and Jennifer Gilkerson, Sunset Berry Farm.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT**

This project is part of a NE SARE Equipment Sharing Partnership Grant that was received in 2016. The purpose of this project is to explore farm equipment sharing models. Four Greenbrier Valley farms and the DS team developed this plan for a pilot farm equipment sharing program. The team has developed this plan and framework for ensuring the safety, efficacy, and fair distribution of shared resources among participants that includes strategies for acquiring new implements.

As part of the planning process, it was decided that not all equipment is worth sharing due to difficulty transporting, investment in equipment, and potential for breakdown. This project will not focus on heavy groundbreaking or clearing equipment. Additionally, due to cost and scheduling this program will not look at sharing tractors or hay equipment

## **PROJECT PLANNING TEAM**

Project Team was made up of

- Annie Stroud, Downstream Strategies
- Fritz Boettner, Downstream Strategies
- Dirk McCormick, Byrnside Branch Farm
- Luke Bair, Redwing Farm
- Natan Harel, Standing Stone Farm
- Jennifer Gilkerson, Sunset Berry Farm
- Wayne Peers, SARE Equipment Sharing Manager

The project team met 3 times over the course of planning to develop these ideas and plans outlined below. These will be revisited mid-season with a Pilot project participant meeting.

## **PROJECT MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS**

General notes:

To be successful, this program will require compatibility between member farms on a variety of levels. These include:

- Skill level and ability to safely operate equipment
- Types of production and equipment types needed
- Terrain of member farms
- Personalities
- Geographic area, due to the potential distances needed to transport.

**Farms are required to** hold Farm Liability Insurance and this project recommends that participating farms contact their insurance providers to ensure that their policies cover their equipment and/or borrowed equipment (more info below).

### **Insurance to inquire about:**

- Required:
  - Farm Liability Insurance – Required – Standard policy up to 1 million.
- Strongly suggested:
  - Equipment Insurance – check with your policy to see if your equipment is covered.
  - Rent/Borrow Insurance – check policy to see if you are covered if you are using rented/borrowed equipment on-farm, or if your equipment is being used off-farm. Can be added to farm policies.

### **SIGN UP AND PARTICIPATION PROCESS**

The first step for participation in the Small Farm Equipment Share program is for potential producers should fill out the Equipment Sharing Survey: (See Appendices for form)

Once potential producers have responded the team and/or Equipment Share manager will review their needs and interests and develop a list of equipment farms indicated they could share.

Next, each farm will be contacted by the team and/or Manager to confirm interest, officially sign them up, and begin the process of confirming insurance and collecting equipment sheets and schedules. The manager will work with farms to identify the equipment most useful to share based on identified needs from the equipment sharing survey.

Once equipment sheets, schedules have been collected, the manager will post the list of available implements to all members.

### **COST /MAINTENANCE FEE**

There are no rental costs associated with the program, however, to help cover the costs of repair or maintenance, each time farms use a piece of equipment, they will pay into the maintenance fund for that piece of equipment. Cost breakdown as follows:

- \$20 – small equipment – low maintenance
- \$30 – middle range equipment, regular maintenance
- \$50 – equipment with high wear/tear and maintenance costs, expensive equipment

Equipment owners will indicate the maintenance cost level on the profile sheets.

### **EQUIPMENT SHARING PROCESS**

#### **COMMUNICATION**

There will be an email and contact list with all project farms. This is how the Manager will disseminate the equipment directory.

There will also be a master contact list of each participating farm and team member, their email, phone, and cell, and an emergency contact that will be shared with all members in case of emergency.

The manager will be the main contact for scheduling/sharing: <insert contact info>

The DS project team is the secondary contact in case of emergency: <insert contact info>

### **EQUIPMENT PROFILE SHEET AND LOG BOOKS**

(Profile Sheets are attached in the Appendix)

Farm Equipment profile sheets will include:

- Equipment Name
- Date put in service,
- Description/Specs
- Type / Age:
- Condition:
- Value:
- Equipment needed to run it/Size of tractor needed to operate
- What is needed to transport it (trailer, truck etc.)

- Quirks, things to watch out for while operating, adjustments needed
- Storage requirements (if applicable - under cover etc.)
- Training needed before operating (Y/N, what kind)
- Any supplies needed to run it (eg. Black plastic)
- Adjustment information (if applicable)
- Maintenance schedule and records.
- Repair preferences <see maintenance>

Each profile sheet will also include logbook with a calendar/maintenance schedule for the growing season.

- Calendar/Use Sheet
- Record of maintenance fees paid
- Maintenance Schedule

### **SCHEDULING**

Each piece of equipment will have a calendar where farms can sign up to use the equipment. Owners will block out their estimated usage times first before other producers are allowed to sign up for each piece.

Other farms who want to use a piece of equipment can sign up for specific days on a calendar. Initially farms can sign up at a meeting at the beginning of the season, after that, they will call coordinator to inquire about the availability.

Coordinator will keep track and remind people of when they're set for using and returning equipment.

### **Alternative Considerations: Timing/ Season, Geography**

Coordinator will help farms schedule based on timing and location.

### **BAD WEATHER/EMERGENCIES**

In case of an emergency or bad weather preventing the use of equipment during the scheduled time, the following steps will be taken:

1. Work with the next scheduled farm(s) and farm who's turn has passed to reschedule/compromise
2. If this is unsuccessful, then the equipment will be moved to the farm who is scheduled to use it and the original farm may reschedule for available days.

### **STORAGE**

Equipment will be stored on each owner's farm, except in the situation where equipment is moving directly from one farm to the next, in which case it will be stored on the borrowing farm's facilities.

#### **Standards for storage:**

Some equipment may include specific storage requirements (indicated on profile sheets). Member farms are responsible for storing equipment in the proper way.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Transportation will be arranged by the Manager among the farms. The Manager will work with member farms and others with hauling equipment/trailers to arrange for the safe transport of equipment to borrowing farms. This may include assisting directly with the transportation of the equipment depending on the Manager's availability.

## **MAINTENANCE**

The Manager is responsible for working with each farm to ensure that equipment is in operating order before transporting.

The Manager is required to travel to each farm to inspect equipment, check off on any maintenance performed, and do any repair/upkeep necessary to keep it running after each use.

### **Regular maintenance**

Regular maintenance is responsibility of the equipment user – ie. Oil, cleaning after use, etc.

### **For all Repairs**

Farm using the equipment should contact the owner .

Repairs will be paid for/partially paid for from the equipment maintenance fund for each piece of equipment (\* up until fund for that equipment is emptied)

### ***Small Repairs***

Depending on the owner's wishes, borrowing farms may make small repairs and be reimbursed up to \$50.00

### ***Large repairs***

Depending on the owner's wishes, if an issue is identified, the Manager will work with the farm owner, and DS to facilitate and pay for repairs.

### **Breakdown cause**

For large repairs the Manager will work to identify the cause of breakdown.

## **CLEANING**

The Manager is responsible for working with each farm to ensure that equipment has been thoroughly cleaned to prevent bio-contamination between farms.

## **RECORDS**

The Coordinator will keep track of all of the scheduling/equipment profile information as well as equipment logbook and maintenance records.

### **Log book**

The coordinator will make sure to update the log book after each use with the following information:

- how much the equipment was used ( hours and/or acres)
- the date and time of any breakdowns or any anomalies;
- the date, time, and nature of any repairs or maintenance performed.
- (if applicable) fueling amount.

## **MAINTENANCE ACCOUNT**

An Equipment Sharing account will be established. Equipment Share manager will be able to deposit funds for equipment maintenance

This account will hold maintenance fees collected for equipment use. If this program is successful it will be used and saved for future maintenance costs on each piece of equipment. If this program

does not continue, maintenance funds will be distributed to the equipment's owners for future repairs.

#### **MISCELLANEOUS:**

##### **LEAVING THE PROGRAM**

Farmers can extract themselves and their equipment from the program at any time. If they wish to remove equipment from rotation they can contact the Manager and request that it be taken off.

If equipment is already scheduled, the farmer should contact the Manager and the scheduled farms in advance so the scheduled farmer can make adequate preparations. Preferably with a 2-week courtesy notice.

If a farmer pulls equipment from the program, they can choose to receive the equipment maintenance fees at the time that they leave, or can choose to leave it in the project account to cover unexpected costs on future equipment. This can be discussed as a group when/if this occurs.

##### **BULK PURCHASING**

If multiple farms have similar needs, or if the program has equipment that requires supplies (ie drip tape/plastic mulch) the Manager can help farmers coordinate to take advantage of bulk buying savings.

##### **TUTORIALS**

If there are farms that would like a tutorial or explanation on how to use a piece of equipment, they will contact the manager who can see if they can arrange for coordinated training.

Additionally, most manufacturers have videos outlining the use of their equipment.

##### **NEW EQUIPMENT**

If several farmers all have a need for a particular piece of equipment, the DS and the Manager will work with the farms to help coordinate the purchase/agreements. These pieces of equipment could be added to the Equipment Share List of equipment if desired.

## **BEYOND 2016**

### **DECISION-MAKING**

The project team and the member farms will decide which aspects of the program were successful at the end of the season. DS staff will conduct evaluation surveys with all participants to identify the success/challenges.

### **If challenging**

The project team will write up the process, what challenges were faced, what could have changed the outcomes and recommendations for future projects in the region.

### **IF successful**

The project team will write up the process, what worked and what didn't, what would have improved the program, and work with the group to plan for future sharing.

### **ESTABLISHING A STRUCTURE**

If the program is successful, the team will work with project farmers to find a way to continue the program beyond 2016.

This could include:

- Forming a cooperative
- Merging with another organization such as MFM or Sprouting Farms
- Reaching out the WVCA to help coordinate

### **FUTURE POSSIBILITIES/THINGS TO CONSIDER:**

- Replacement fund
- Depreciation
- Financing or leasing payments
- "Trial use" Things farmers would buy for themselves if they were able to rent or try one out first. (Ie Mulch Puller)
- Bulk Purchasing for the supplies needed for the equipment (potential for project to purchase bulk and sell at cost?)
- Rental Model - working with Conservation District
- Labor is something else that everyone needs/wants – future option?

### **AGREEMENTS: EVERYTHING OUT IN THE OPEN AND ACCESSIBLE**

- Clear rules
- Legally binding contracts with members that spell out the rights and obligations as well as the details about
  - use,
  - fees,
  - insurance,
  - repairs,
  - maintenance,
  - records,
  - transfer among farms,
  - storage,
  - labor, etc.

## **APPENDIX:**

### **EQUIPMENT PROFILE SHEET / LOGBOOK SHEET**

Farm Equipment profile sheets will include:

- Equipment Name
- Date put in service,
- Description/Specs
- Type / Age:
- Condition:
- Value:
- Equipment needed to run it/Size of tractor needed to operate
- What is needed to transport it (trailer, truck etc.)
- Quirks, things to watch out for while operating, adjustments needed
- Storage requirements (if applicable - under cover etc.)
- Training needed before operating
- Any supplies needed to run it (eg. Black plastic)
- Adjustment information (if applicable)
- Maintenance schedule and records.
- Repair preferences
- 

Each profile sheet will also include logbook with a calendar/maintenance schedule for the growing season.

- Calendar/Use Sheet
- Record of maintenance fees paid
- Maintenance Schedule

## EXISTING EQUIPMENT

### List of equipment from Greenbrier Valley Conservation District

- No-till seeders: \$12/acre, 5 acre min.
- Lime Spreaders: \$72/day
- Litter Spreaders: \$72/day
- Post Drivers: \$72/day
- Chemical Sprayer: \$54/day
- Pull-Behind Aerator: \$72/day
- Pasture Drag: \$50/day
- Portable Livestock Scales: \$25/day
- Weed Wiper: \$25/day
- Tree Planting Bar: \$1.00/day
- Soil Sampling Probe: Free upon return

### List of equipment Surveyed farms may be interested in sharing with other farms:

- bed shaper
- 3 bottom plow
- 8 ft disc
- Rear tine tiller
- maybe a mulch layer but this is an important, expensive piece of equipment (we definitely would share with producers we have excellent relationship with)
- Almost any thing I have\* list
  - Cultivator,
  - Potato plow
  - potato planters
  - Seed cutter
  - Potato harvester – small
  - Tiller
  - Disc
  - Mulch Layer
  - Seed drill
  - Broadcast spreader
  - walk-behind tractor
  - auger / skid loader
  - Trailer- animals
  - trailer - equipment
- Bedder
- plastic layer
- I have hand tools that I am willing to share when I'm not using them (if that's helpful),
- other than that I don't really feel free to offer any of the equipment I use (because I don't own much of it).

## **LIST OF NEEDED EQUIPMENT**

Survey is making a list of equipment farms in the area are interested in –anything to add?

### **Top Equipment Needs**

- Transplanter
- one row green bean harvester
- sweet corn picker
- Portable fencing, portable watering stations
- Planting and harvesting
- washing salad greens

### **What equipment do you need access to that you do not have on-farm?**

- Transplanter (4)
- Lettuce/greens harvester (4)
- Lettuce washer (4)
- Greenhouse for transplants (3)
- Seed drill (3)
- trailer – equipment (3)
- Flash coolers (3)
- backhoe (2)
- auger / skid loader (2)
- Planter (2)
- No-till planter (2)
- Potato harvester – small (2)
- Mulch puller(2)
- Corn harvester
- Refrigerated truck
- post-hole driver
- cold storage
- Pinpoint seeder
- Cultivator,
- Potato plow
- chisel plow
- 4-bine plow
- potato planters
- Disc
- Bedshaper
- Mulch layer/shaper/drip tape
- Mulch Layer
- High/low tunnel benders
- Crimper
- Seed drill
- Broadcast spreader
- walk-behind tractor
- walk-behind tractor implements
- basket cultivator
- cultivating tractor

FUTURE: What is each farm's wish list? what might these items cost to acquire?



# Equipment Sharing Survey

Greetings! If you are interested in participating in the 2017-2018 Farm Resource Sharing program please fill out this survey/intake form.

Each piece of equipment will have a separate profile (specifications, maintenance needs etc.) and calendar (owner would get first choice of when to use) and the coordinator would help schedule each piece with farmers as requested throughout the season. The Equipment Sharing Manager will send out a weekly list of available equipment throughout the season.

Visit [www.sproutingfarms.org/resourceshare](http://www.sproutingfarms.org/resourceshare) for more information and for questions please contact Annie Stroud at [astroud@downstreamstrategies.com](mailto:astroud@downstreamstrategies.com).

\* Required

## 1. Farm Name

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## 2. Farm County

What county is your farm located in?

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## 3. Farm Size

Please indicate in acres

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## 4. Acres in production

Please indicate in acres

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## 5. If you knew you had a market for your products, what resources would you need to grow/produce more than last year?

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## 6. Do you have access to all the equipment you need on your farm? \*

Mark only one oval.

Yes      *Skip to question 7.*

No

## Equipment Types

**7. What farm equipment do you already have on your farm?**

Select as many as apply

*Check all that apply.*

- Cultivator
- Potato plow
- chisel plow
- 4-bine plow
- potato planters
- Pinpoint seeder
- Seed cutter
- Planter
- Transplanter
- Corn harvester
- Potato harvester - small
- Potato harvester - large
- Lettuce/greens harvester
- Lettuce washer
- Tiller
- Flash coolers
- Disc
- Bedshaper
- Mulch layer/shaper/drip tape
- Mulch Layer
- Mulch puller
- High/low tunnel benders
- Refrigerated truck
- Greenhouse for transplants
- No-till planter
- Crimper
- Seed drill
- Broadcast spreader
- Broadcast seeder
- post-hole driver
- walk-behind tractor
- walk-behind tractor implements
- tractor
- bush hog
- backhoe
- auger / skid loader

- Trailer- animals
- trailer - equipment
- Haybaler
- Hay Rake
- Mower
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**8. Approximately how much do you spend per year on maintaining and repairing your existing equipment?**

(If applicable)

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**9. Approximately how much do you spend each year on new equipment?**

(If applicable)

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**10. What equipment do you need access to that you do not have on-farm?**

Select as many as apply

*Check all that apply.*

- Cultivator
- Potato plow
- chisel plow
- 4-bine plow
- potato planters
- Pinpoint seeder
- Seed cutter
- Planter
- Transplanter
- Corn harvester
- Potato harvester - small
- Potato harvester - large
- Lettuce/greens harvester
- Lettuce washer
- Tiller
- Flash coolers
- Disc
- Bedshaper
- Mulch layer/shaper/drip tape
- Mulch Layer
- Mulch puller
- High/low tunnel benders
- Refrigerated truck
- Greenhouse for transplants
- No-till planter
- Crimper
- Seed drill
- Broadcast spreader
- Broadcast seeder
- post-hole driver
- walk-behind tractor
- walk-behind tractor implements
- tractor
- bush hog
- backhoe
- auger / skid loader

- Trailer- animals
- trailer - equipment
- Haybaler
- Hay Rake
- Mower
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Participation in Equipment Sharing Programs

This project is looking into how we could all benefit from sharing equipment that isn't in use all the time with each other instead of all purchasing duplicate implements. Additionally, this could allow for cooperative purchasing of equipment in the future. (Example: if 4 farms all could use a good transplanter, they could cooperatively purchase one as a group and defray the purchase and maintenance costs)

### 11. Would you be interested in sharing equipment with other farms in your area?

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

### 12. Comments?

Why? Why not? Any important considerations?

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### 13. What are you interested in?

*Mark only one oval.*

- Sharing equipment I have already
- Sharing equipment I have already, and borrowing equipment from other farms
- Borrowing equipment from other farms
- I might be interested in one of these but would need more information
- I am not interested in sharing or borrowing equipment from other farms

14. **If you have equipment/tools you may be interested in sharing with other farms, please list below:**

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15. **Are you interested in any particular models for sharing equipment?**

(Select all that apply)

*Check all that apply.*

- Equipment cooperative (membership based - group ownership)
- Rent/use models (like conservation district)
- Shared-ownership with other farm (individual farms with shared ownership agreements)
- Lending-library / machinery link (linking available farm equipment to lease/rent)
- Informal sharing with neighbors
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

16. **Comments?**

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17. **What is your top equipment need on your farm?**

What equipment/resource would most help you increase your production/sales or profits?

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**18. How much do you value the time/labor savings this equipment would offer you?**

ie. How much would you be able/willing to pay in rent, maintenance fee, etc.

*Check all that apply.*

- \$10-\$50
- \$50-\$100
- \$100-\$200
- \$200-\$300
- \$300-\$800
- Over \$800

**19. Do you have the ability to transport equipment or implements yourself, or would you need assistance?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes, I have a hauling vehicle and/or trailer
- Yes, I have a hauling vehicle, but would need a trailer for some items
- I do not have a suitable vehicle but I have a trailer
- No, I would need assistance transporting equipment
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**20. Are you interested in learning more about the project or getting involved?**

*Mark only one oval.*

- Yes     *Skip to question 21.*
- No     *Skip to "Thank You! ."*

## Contact information

Yes I'm interested! Tell us the best way to get a hold of you:

**21. Name**

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**22. Address**

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**23. Phone**

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**24. Email Address**

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**25. What are you most interested in with this project?**

Sharing equipment, models, being part of it, providing more input, etc.

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**Thank You!**

Thank you for your participation! If you have any questions, please contact Annie Stroud, [astroud@downstreamstrategies.com](mailto:astroud@downstreamstrategies.com) 304-445-5538.

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