

New Farmer Typology



Prospective farmers have not begun to farm independently.

"**Recruits**" might consider a career in production agriculture.

"**Explorers**" are investigating a farming future, and may be gathering information.

"**Aspiring**" actively committed to becoming a farmer through engagement in training and planning.

Beginning farmers fall into several categories based on their stage of commitment and their competency in various aspects of farm management.

"**Start-ups**" have been farming for three years or less.

"**Establishing**" farmers are investing in infrastructure and have chosen enterprises and markets

"**Re-strategizer**" farmers are making adjustments to their enterprises, sales channels or business in general. These farmers are accessing advanced mentorship, financial analysis and advising.

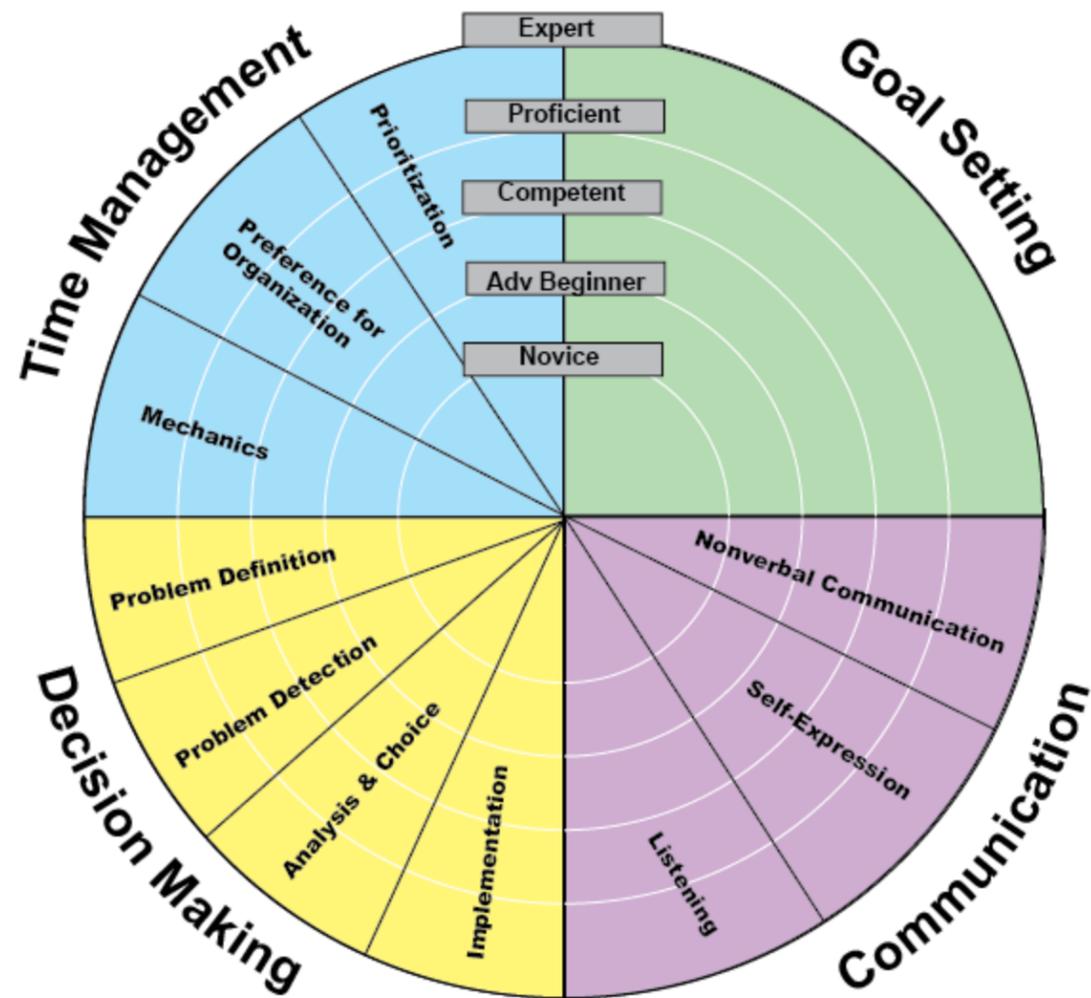
"**Refining**" farmers have likely gone through at least one "re-strategizer" phase. Their business is established and stable. They are still in their first 10 years of farming.

New Farmer Learning Stages

Farmer learning stages describe the level of skill and competence in relationship to a task or enterprise. The learning stages range from "novice" to "expert."



Novice	Advanced Beginner	Competent	Proficient	Expert
<p>A novice has limited exposure to the strategies related to communication, decision making, goal setting, or time management in the context of farming.</p> <p>This group may include both farmers and farm workers in the first 5 years of farming.</p> <p>This group may also include new farmers who have had other career experience that did not draw deeply on the four skill areas.</p>	<p>An advanced beginner has developed some skills in communication, decision making, goal setting, or time management in the context of farming.</p> <p>This group may include farmers, farm workers and farm managers. It may also include new farmers who had other employment experience that required them to develop in the four skill areas.</p>	<p>Someone who is competent has gained experience in communication, decision making, goal setting, or time management in the context of farming.</p> <p>This group may have explored various approaches to the skill areas and is beginning to find what works for them.</p> <p>This group may include farmers, workers and managers. It may also include new farmers who had previous experiences to develop strengths in the four skill areas.</p>	<p>Someone who is proficient has gained experience, implemented and evaluated tools in communication, decision making, goal setting, or time management.</p> <p>This person is ready to share this information with others, and hone their skills further.</p> <p>This group may include farmers, farm workers and farm managers who have developed strengths in the four skill areas within the course of their farming career.</p>	<p>An expert has tried and true techniques in communication, decision making, goal setting, or time management.</p> <p>This person models good behavior for their employees and integrates teaching these skills into their day-to-day operations.</p> <p>In general this group will not include beginning farmers in their first 10 years.</p>



The Conceptual Framework:

The goal of the project is to help service providers better understand the development of new farmers (New Farmer Learning Stages) and how skill acquisition in the four project areas is related. In the image at left, the Conceptual Framework is laid out. Included are the farmer learning stages, the four project areas and the categories of skill within each. This nested model implies that skills learned at the novice level become the basis for a cumulative skill acquisition. The model also reflects the reality that some new farmers may have higher levels of skill acquisition in some areas versus others and that this level of skill may or may not be typical of their learning stage.

The Four Project Areas:

Communication: Identifying the relationships and roles on the farm and tools to improve communication between family members, farm partners, employees, customers and other decision makers.

Decision-making: Utilizing existing tools to prioritize tasks and plan in advance

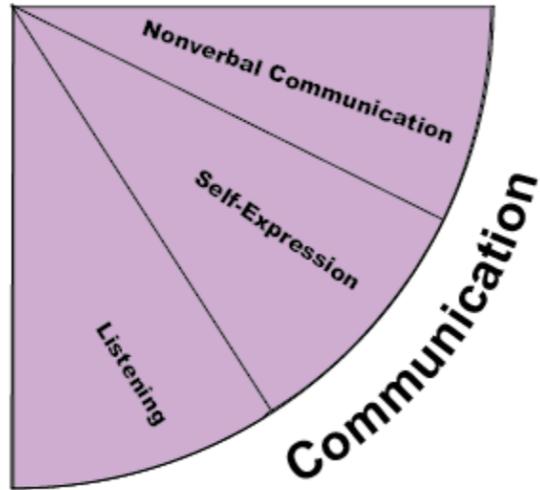
Goal-setting: Developing tools for assisting farmers in prioritization of farm, business and family goals.

Time Management: Utilizing existing resources to assist farmers in optimizing farm roles and responsibilities.

Within each of the four project areas there are categories into which the skill areas can be divided. On the following pages there is a chart for each of the project areas, categories and the skills listed by competency level.

Communication

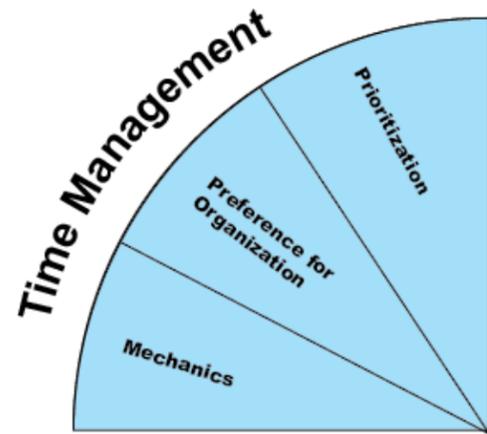
Bulletin #6103 Effective Communication <https://extension.umaine.edu/publications/6103e/>



Communication: Categories	Listening (the ability to listen to others as well as being self-aware of one's own needs and wants)	Self-Expression (Verbal and written communication)	Nonverbal Communication (How an individual communicates receptively and actively without words)
Novice	Listen Objectively - listening to what is being said Self awareness of one's own communication strengths & weaknesses Interpreting feedback objectively	Clear intention for conversation (question, goal or plan) Respect for difference Use of grammar in spoken and written communication Having regular check-ins (with others and self) Emergency calls to network or ASPs	Eye contact Body language Demonstrate willingness to listen Cleanliness & clothing, tone
Adv Beginner	Allow silence during a conversation Willingness to consider both sides of a disagreement Awareness of timing before beginning/introducing a conversation Seek feedback from others Listen to understand	Technical vocabulary to communicate to ASPs and other farmers Non-technical vocabulary to communicate to non-farmers Ability to explain one's own thought process Ask questions to increase understanding Re-state the goal, issue, or purpose State willingness to discuss issues, problems, challenges Share farm story and mission with clarity Use of objective (non-assuming, non-inflammatory) language Communicate directly as issues arise Clearly articulate expectations of customers, employees, policies via SOPs Outreach to establish relationships Establish connection with ASPs	Awareness of own body language Physical proximity Personal space
Competent	Attend to/noting items for discussion Create opportunities to listen Willingness to hear conflicting opinions Include and considering multiple perspectives	Cultural awareness of self and others (customers, agencies, fellow farmers, employees) Reflect back what is heard Effectively communicate w/ different/various communication modes Establish comfortable personal and professional boundaries Request permission before beginning a difficult conversation Outreach to maintain relationship	Ability to interpret others' body language Cultural awareness of self and others (customers, agencies, fellow farmers, employees)
Proficient	Reflect on needs and selecting ways to refine communication with employees, providers, customers, others	Persuasive skills to self-advocate (agencies, customers) Negotiation skills to develop contracts, leases, etc. Familiar relationships with ASPs	
Expert		Set the tone for others - modeling best practices Teach effective communication to other	Set the tone for others - modeling best practices Reinforcing boundaries set for personal and professional communication

Time Management

Hoff Macan, T. (1994). Time Management-Test of a Process Model. <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B6217as399zVWkhtTHFPUGdkdTg>



Time Mgmt Categories	Prioritization (Prioritization of Tasks to Achieve Goals)	Preference for Organization (Approach & Maintenance)	Mechanics (Behaviors)
Novice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read & Research Track daily activities for a year on urgent/important template Keep basic records Learn Necessary Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create To-Do List Basic Records Observation - Learn day to day life on the farm, attention to what is working and what isn't Test Organizational Systems (ie white board, daily task list, action plan) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write down goals Plan Your Day Plan Your Week Record how long things take (ie tasks) Plan Time Off Review Your Year Create a Routine Keep Records Plan Time Off Ask For Help Create a Learning Plan Do a skill assessment Observe (Farm, Family, Environment) Explore various modes of communication (family, farm, customers)
Advanced Beginner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many years to become profitable; learn from experienced farmers Triage for Emergent Issues Set guidelines for communication Practice & Refine necessary skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Calendar Urgent/Important Template Business Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Records Write A Business Plan and/or Goals Reflect on Observations Anticipate Time Needed Reduce Distractions Reflect & Refine Routine Utilize Appropriate Resources Plan for Skill Acquisition Create boundaries between personal & farming communication
Competent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look at the future of the business - forward, larger picture thinking Estimate How Long a Task will take Refine farm enterprises Maintain a Routine and manage time Design Training for Workers System development, "This is how ___" every time! Prepared for when things go wrong Time for professional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard Operating Principles SOP Refining recordkeeping Worker Handbook Basic Worker Mgmt Seasonal flow and preparedness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan Your Growing Season Work Plan for Farmers and/or employees Review Business Plan Create or modify systems based on reflections & observations Recordkeeping to satisfy legal requirements and communication Implement plan for skill development Train Workers Review Progress toward Goals Consider business, family, community and land in balance

Proficient	Begin to understand value (\$) of time management Meet financial needs Eliminate not important activities Identify Log Jams Work on delegation skills Eliminate not important activities Long-term future planning; retirement, farm succession	Organized & Maintain Effective Systems Innovate Pre-plan such as having tools and supplies for upcoming tasks	Review Growing Plan Revise Business Plan and/or Goals Review systems Generate periodic reports from excellent recordkeeping Delegate to Workers Hire Professionals Look at expansion onto more land or into more enterprises Articulate work/life balance for farm & family life
Expert	Balance work-life	Reassess expectations and protocols with customers Know when it is most efficient & productive to hire help (and how much help) Determine what the value of your time is (ie to repair or hire repair)	Innovate Streamline systems Professional Development Recordkeeping to Fit Farm Needs, Legal, Compliance