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 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.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Novice</th>
<th>Advanced Beginner</th>
<th>Competent</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Expert</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- **Novice**: A novice has limited exposure to the strategies related to communication, decision making, goal setting, or time management in the context of farming.
  - This group may include both farmers and farm workers in the first 5 years of farming.
  - This group may also include new farmers who have had other career experience that did not draw deeply on the four skill areas.

- **Advanced Beginner**: An advanced beginner has developed some skills in communication, decision making, goal setting, or time management in the context of farming.
  - 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.

- **Competent**: Someone who is competent has gained experience in communication, decision making, goal setting, or time management in the context of farming.
  - This group may have explored various approaches to the skill areas and is beginning to find what works for them.
  - 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.

- **Proficient**: Someone who is proficient has gained experience, implemented and evaluated tools in communication, decision making, goal setting, or time management.
  - This person is ready to share this information with others, and hone their skills further.
  - 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.

- **Expert**: An expert has tried and true techniques in communication, decision making, goal setting, or time management.
  - This person models good behavior for their employees and integrates teaching these skills into their day-to-day operations.
  - In general this group will not include beginning farmers in their first 10 years.
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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication: Categories</th>
<th>Listening (the ability to listen to others as well as being self-aware of one’s own needs and wants)</th>
<th>Self-Expression (Verbal and written communication)</th>
<th>Nonverbal Communication (How an individual communicates receptively and actively without words)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Novice</strong></td>
<td>Listen Objectively - listening to what is being said&lt;br&gt;Self awareness of one’s own communication strengths &amp; weaknesses&lt;br&gt;Interpreting feedback objectively</td>
<td>Clear intention for conversation (question, goal or plan)&lt;br&gt;Respect for difference&lt;br&gt;Use of grammar in spoken and written communication&lt;br&gt;Holding regular check-ins (with others and self)&lt;br&gt;Emergency calls to network or ASPs</td>
<td>Eye contact&lt;br&gt;Body language&lt;br&gt;Demonstrate willingness to listen&lt;br&gt;Cleanliness &amp; clothing, tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adv Beginner</strong></td>
<td>Allow silence during a conversation&lt;br&gt;Willingness to consider both sides of a disagreement&lt;br&gt;Awareness of timing before beginning/introducing a conversation&lt;br&gt;Seek feedback from others&lt;br&gt;Listen to understand</td>
<td>Technical vocabulary to communicate to ASPs and other farmers&lt;br&gt;Non-technical vocabulary to communicate to non-farmers&lt;br&gt;Ability to explain one’s own thought process&lt;br&gt;Ask questions to increase understanding&lt;br&gt;Re-state the goal, issue, or purpose&lt;br&gt;State willingness to discuss issues, problems, challenges&lt;br&gt;Share farm story and mission with clarity&lt;br&gt;Use of objective (non-assuming, non-inflammatory) language&lt;br&gt;Communicate directly as issues arise&lt;br&gt;Clearly articulate expectations of customers, employees, policies via SOPs&lt;br&gt;Outreach to establish relationships&lt;br&gt;Establish connection with ASPs</td>
<td>Awareness of own body language&lt;br&gt;Physical proximity&lt;br&gt;Personal space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competent</strong></td>
<td>Attend to/noting items for discussion&lt;br&gt;Create opportunities to listen&lt;br&gt;Willingness to hear conflicting opinions&lt;br&gt;Include and considering multiple perspectives</td>
<td>Cultural awareness of self and others (customers, agencies, fellow farmers, employees)&lt;br&gt;Reflect back what is heard&lt;br&gt;Effectively communicate w/ different/various communication modes&lt;br&gt;Establish comfortable personal and professional boundaries&lt;br&gt;Request permission before beginning a difficult conversation&lt;br&gt;Outreach to maintain relationship</td>
<td>Ability to interpret others’ body language&lt;br&gt;Cultural awareness of self and others (customers, agencies, fellow farmers, employees)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proficient</strong></td>
<td>Reflect on needs and selecting ways to refine communication with employees, providers, customers, others</td>
<td>Persuasive skills to self-advocate (agencies, customers)&lt;br&gt;Negotiation skills to develop contracts, leases, etc.&lt;br&gt;Familiar relationships with ASPs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expert</strong></td>
<td>Set the tone for others - modeling best practices&lt;br&gt;Teach effective communication to other</td>
<td>Set the tone for others - modeling best practices&lt;br&gt;Reinforcing boundaries set for personal and professional communication</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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## Time Management

**Hoff Macan, T. (1994). Time Management-Test of a Process Model.** [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B6217as399zVWhkTHFPUGkdTg](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B6217as399zVWhkTHFPUGkdTg)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Mgmt Categories</th>
<th>Prioritization (Prioritization of Tasks to Achieve Goals)</th>
<th>Preference for Organization (Approach &amp; Maintenance)</th>
<th>Mechanics (Behaviors)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Novice**           | Read & Research  
Track daily activities for a year on urgent/important template  
Keep basic records  
Learn Necessary Skills | 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) | 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** | How many years to become profitable; learn from experienced farmers  
Triage for Emergent Issues  
Set guidelines for communication  
Practice & Refine necessary skills | Annual Calendar  
Urgent/Important Template  
Business Plan | 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**        | 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 | Standard Operating Principles SOP  
Refining recordkeeping  
Worker Handbook  
Basic Worker Mgmt  
Seasonal flow and preparedness | 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 |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Expert</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Begin to understand value ($) of time management</td>
<td>Balance work-life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet financial needs</td>
<td>Reassess expectations and protocols with customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliminate not important activities</td>
<td>Know when it is most efficient &amp; productive to hire help (and how much help)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify Log Jams</td>
<td>Determine what the value of your time is (ie to repair or hire repair)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work on delegation skills</td>
<td>Innovate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliminate not important activities</td>
<td>Streamline systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term future planning; retirement, farm succession</td>
<td>Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recordkeeping to Fit Farm Needs, Legal, Compliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organized &amp; Maintain Effective Systems</td>
<td>Review Growing Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovate</td>
<td>Revise Business Plan and/or Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-plan such as having tools and supplies for upcoming tasks</td>
<td>Review systems</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Generate periodic reports from excellent recordkeeping</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Delegate to Workers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hire Professionals</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Look at expansion onto more land or into more enterprises</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Articulate work/life balance for farm &amp; family life</td>
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</tbody>
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