



White River Natural Resources Conservation District

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NRCD Farm Team Owner/Manager Self-Assessment

This is a tool designed for use by farm owners and managers to self-evaluate their farms in a broad range of management areas. Items scoring 2 or less are prime targets for change and should become

topics to be discussed at Farm Team meetings. Determine how the various management areas of your farm rate using this 1-4 score. Provide a rating to the left of each sub-heading. Be critical – it's your assessment of your business!

1 = Needs improvement 2 = Fair 3 = Good 4 = Excellent

Farm Overview

1 2 3 4

- Facilities – condition & efficiency of barns, sheds, shops, outbuildings, etc.
- Land – sufficient total acreage and tillable land to support the enterprise
- Machinery and Equipment
- Machinery and equipment storage
- Livestock
- Labor to meet operational needs (including family and employees)
- Labor pay & benefits (Fair pay? Health or other insurance? Other benefits?)
- Environmental – environmentally sound practices and water quality considerations
- Farmer/Farm family quality of life, satisfaction with lifestyle

Environmental/Conservation

1 2 3 4

- Compliance with Vermont RAPs and/or other environmental regulations
- Adequate farmstead drainage
- Protecting waterways from pollution and erosion
- Water conservation practices
- Cover cropping and/or mulching
- No-till seeding
- Contour plowing, terracing
- Rotating crops
- Supporting pollinators and wildlife
- Current and approved Nutrient Management Plan (NMP)
- Following a conservation plan
- Following a grazing plan
- Wetlands protected/managed



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This material is based upon work supported by USDA/NIFA under Award Number 2021-70027-34693.



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Farm Business

1 2 3 4

- Recordkeeping
- Financials
- Human resource management – scheduling and time off, insurance, benefits, etc.
- Resiliency (e.g., options to respond to markets and/or market fluctuations, crop or revenue insurance, diversification, etc.)
- Access/Utilization of support services (e.g., Extension advisors, business and technical consultants, grants, federal services and programs, etc.)
- Compliance with business regulatory requirements
- Business management (price setting, customer service, marketing & promotions, distribution, shipping, etc.)
- Business Plan for current enterprise
- Branding/Farm name recognition
- Long-term plans – 5 years, 10 years, succession planning, etc.
- Other farm resources that contribute to total farm income (e.g., sugarbush/sugaring facilities, farm stand, guest/farmstay accommodations, etc.)

Dairy and Other Livestock

Assess all areas that apply to your farm. Skip or cross out items that do not apply to your farm.

1 = Needs improvement 2 = Fair 3 = Good 4 = Excellent

Animal Housing

1 2 3 4

- Location
- Ventilation (air flow, odor, moisture, condensation)
- Grouping
- Traffic flow (alleys, floor surface, animal flow)
- Water system (access, quantity and quality, etc.)
- Lighting
- Animal handling facilities/equipment (head locks, hospital/treatment pens, etc.)
- Space – sufficient for number of animals – enough stalls?
- Bedding
- Other health/comfort features (i.e., foot bath, insect control, misting system, etc.)

Milking System

1 2 3 4

- Milking facility
- Milking equipment
- Parlor/Barn routine
- Milking procedure



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Dairy and Other Livestock (continued)

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Feeding System

1 2 3 4

- Fresh and sufficient feed
- Feed quality
- Feeders (troughs, linear feet of bunk, number of head locks, hay racks, etc.)
- Space for animals to eat
- Access time for animals to eat
- Cleaning management of feeding area (daily?)

Silo(s)

1 2 3 4

- Size
- Face area
- Removal rate
- Pak
- Face Management
- Covering
- Moisture
- Odor / pH
- Particle size (can use forage shaker box)
- Kernel evaluation (hard, soft, grind size)

Animals

1 2 3 4

- Body condition
- General health
- Animal cleanliness
- Sufficient time and space to access feed and water
- Sufficient rest time
- Sufficient access to foot bath
- Fecal scores
- Cud chewing
- Growth rate/rate of gain



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Dairy and Other Livestock (continued)

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Dry Cow Management

1 2 3 4

- Housing facilities
- Maternity facilities
- Grouping
- Dry cow cleanliness
- Body condition

Young Stock Management

1 2 3 4

- Calf/young stock housing
- Calf/young stock environment
- Calf/young stock health & growth
- Grouping by age and size
- Heifer/adolescent stock cleanliness
- Body condition

Livestock Waste Management

1 2 3 4

- Daily waste management / removal
- Waste storage / application system
- Nutrient Management Plan

Dairy Efficiency Factors

1 2 3 4

- Cows per full time equivalent (FTE) (actual _____)
- Pounds of milk per year for each FTE (actual _____)
- Production cost per cwt (actual _____)
- Feed cost per cwt (actual _____)
- Income Over Feed Cost (IOFC) (actual _____)



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Vegetable, Fruit, Berry, Nursery and Other Growers

Assess all areas that apply to your operation. Skip or cross out items that do not apply to your enterprise.

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2 = Fair

3 = Good

4 = Excellent

The Farm, Layout and Buildings

1 2 3 4

- Location (e.g., proximity to markets, transport to processors, accessibility for customers/patrons, etc.)
- Building Ventilation / Climate control
- Work space – Sufficient space? Efficient layout?
- Traffic flow (Employees, Customers)
- Water system (access, quantity and quality, etc.)
- Lighting
- Washing area for produce
- Packing area for produce
- Processing area for produce
- Washing/sanitizing area for employees

Comments:

Customers on site for U-Pick, Farm Stand, etc.

1 2 3 4

- Parking
- Signage –parking area(s), hours of operation, where to pick, amenities, etc.
- Accessibility and Safety on premises
- Public rest room
- Accessibility to staff/personnel for information / assistance

Comments:

Food Safety and Traceability

1 2 3 4

- Risk analysis plan completed
- "Seed to sale" or "feed to sale" product tracking system in place
- Consequence management plan (how to deal with food safety or traceability problems)
- Food safety record keeping archive (with digital or paper backups to prevent data loss)
- Food/product sanitizing or cleaning practices appropriate to type(s) of production
- Appropriate and safe storage/refrigeration of products on farm

Comments:



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Owner/Manager Self-Assessment**

Occupational Health and Safety

**This applies to ALL who work on this farm,
including the owner/operator, family members and outside employees.**

Assess all areas that apply to your operation. Skip or cross out items that do not apply to your enterprise.

1 = Need improvement 2 = Fair 3 = Good 4 = Excellent

1 2 3 4

- Adequate housing
- Adequate pay
- Benefits (time off, health care, etc)
- Training (pesticide application, equipment operation, job responsibilities, ergonomics)
- Worker conditions (air quality, safety, personal protective equipment (PPE), ergonomic equipment)
- Stress management

Other

Comment on any aspects of this enterprise that you feel need attention or could benefit from assistance from advisors on your Farm Team.



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