

Program Components and Schedule

Stateline Farm Beginnings® Year 12: 2016-2017

A. Winter Course Sessions – October 2016 to March 2017

Please see details on each session below.

2016 Dates

1. Saturday, October 8 – 10:00am-4:00pm
2. Saturday, October 22 – 10:00am-4:00pm
3. Saturday, November 5 – 10:00am-4:00pm
4. Saturday, November 19 – 10:00am-4:00pm
5. Saturday, December 3 – 10:00am-4:00pm
6. Saturday, December 17 – 10:00am-4:00pm

2017 Dates

7. Saturday, January 14 – 10:00am-3:00pm
 8. Saturday, January 28 – 10:00am-3:00pm
 9. Saturday, February 11 – 10:00am-4:00pm*
 10. Saturday, February 18 – 10:00am-3:00pm*
- Saturday, March 5 – 10:00am-3:00pm (snow date)

* **Note these sessions have only one week in between them. Most other sessions have 2 or 3 weeks in between sessions.**

LOCATION: All sessions are held at Angelic Organics, 1547 Rockton Road, Caledonia, IL 61011

SNOW DATE: (*Please keep this date open. The snow date is often used.*): Saturday, March 5 – 10:00am-3:00pm

B. Field Day Workshops - January to November 2017

Stateline Farm Beginnings® participants take part in multiple field day workshops of their choice. Field days take place primarily from April to October, with a few winter field days sprinkled in. The workshops are hosted and led by member farmers in the Upper Midwest CRAFT (Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training-Northern Illinois and Southern Wisconsin), and are included in the course fee.

C. One-on-One Mentoring - April to September 2017

Stateline Farm Beginnings® participants are paired with mentor farmers on a case-by-case basis. The Stateline Farm Beginnings® facilitator helps each student assess his or her mentoring needs and helps the student establish a relationship with a mentor. A \$200 fee is available to be paid to the mentor of their choice.

D. Last Meeting and Graduation Event - mid-September, 2017

All Stateline Farm Beginnings participants meet to share and evaluate their experience during the growing season AND to celebrate with a graduation potluck picnic at the Angelic Organics Learning Center picnic shelter.

WINTER COURSE SESSION DETAILS 2016-2017 (From item "A" above)

Session #1 Saturday, October 8, 10am-4pm—Starting on Solid Ground: Integrating Values and Goals

Presenters: AOLC Farmer Training Program Director, Sheri Doyel (Program Facilitator), Panel of 3 Beginning Farmers. We will introduce the framework of the Stateline Farm Beginnings® course and hear from Stateline Farm Beginning Graduates. During the class students will gain a better sense of personal values, goals, and how they relate to starting a farm business. Activities/Assignments: goals clarification; skills assessment; personal aim.

Session #2 Saturday, October 22, 10am-4pm—The Whole Farm: Envisioning and Analyzing the Situation

Presenters: Meet the Farmer: John Peterson (Angelic Organics)
Important in your planning is establishing your strategic objective and personal aim. You will actively envision your farm, hear plans from fellow students, and consider the farm as an integrated system. Activities/Assignments: share strategic objective/personal aim; map your farm; develop mission and goals.

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Session #3 Saturday, November 5, 10am-4pm — Land Access and Preservation

Presenters: Land conservation and preservation professionals TBA

Learn about the pros and cons of various land access options, alternative arrangements, as well as conservation easements and land trusts. Assessment tools presented for the both the land owner and those looking for land.

Activities: Group projects on assessing strengths of land, real and hypothetical

Session #4 Saturday, November 19, 10am-4pm — Planning for Market and Record Keeping Strategies

Presenters: AOLC Farm Asset Builder coordinator, Meet the Farmer TBA.

Learn about whole farm planning and the integral relationship between your product and your market. Tools will be introduced to begin assessing your marketing strategy, and multiple record keeping tools will be introduced. Activities: share mission and goals; target market and competitive advantage exercises.

Session #5 Saturday, December 3, 10am-4pm — Defining Pricing and Distribution Strategy

Presenters: Beth and Jody Osmund (Cedar Valley Sustainable Farm), Meet the Farmer, TBA. All speakers yet to be confirmed.

Hear the successful marketing and distribution strategies of 3 different farmers, including a vegetable farm that sells at farmers markets, a meat CSA, and a value added producer. Activity: share and refine marketing and distribution strategy.

Session #6 Saturday, December 17, 10am-4pm — Assembling Financial Data and Developing Organizational Structure

Presenters: John Hendrickson (Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems)

Learn about benchmark numbers based on research on 3 small farms; hear how other farms prioritized scaling up decisions; go further in understanding multiple record keeping tools, both on-line and other. Organizational strategies for human resources will be introduced. Small-scale machinery presentation as well.

Activities: tour Angelic Organics Learning Center; organizational chart.

Session #7 Saturday, January 14, 10am-3pm — Building Your Business Plan: Positioning and Financials

Presenters: Paul Dietmann (Badgerland Financial); Meet the Farmer: TBA In depth discussion of farm financials, and the elements of a successful strategic business plan. Cash flow and records analysis will be practiced. Farm Skills Evaluation and the Growing Season Learning Plan will be introduced. Activity: work on business plan worksheet (marketing, distribution, production, and financials).

Session #8 Saturday, January 28, 10am-3pm — From Field to Fridge to Fork: What the Buyers Have to Say

Buyer Panel: Irv Cernauskus (Irv and Shelly's Fresh Picks), Rich Horbaczewski (Grass Is Greener/Bushel & Peck), Amber Zook (Dill Pickle), and others TBA. All speakers yet to be confirmed. Learn about the buying practices of retailers, what farmers markets might expect from you as a vendor, and what strategies to use to enter markets. Students are encouraged to study businesses and prepare questions ahead of time.

Session #9 Saturday, February 11, 10am-4pm — Connecting with Resources and Building a Mentoring Plan

Presenters: Phil Lehman (Harvard State Bank), Rachel Armstrong (Farm Commons), Insurance specialist TBA, Andrew Larson (University of Illinois Extension), USDA Farm Service Agency and more. All speakers yet to be confirmed.

Resources will be introduced regarding legal issues, insurance, trademarks, taxes, and business name. Regional educational resources discussed, as well as mentorship guidelines for the upcoming growing season.

Session #10 Saturday, February 18, 10am-3pm — Class Presentations

This session will provide the synthesis of the class and the work you have done throughout the course. Activity: Participants will have an opportunity to present their strategic business plans to the rest of the class including where they started, where they are now and share their next steps.