

Program Components and Schedule

Stateline Farm Beginnings Year 15: 2019-2020

Stateline Farm Beginnings features 4 program components:

1. **Winter Course Saturday Sessions** – October 2019 to March 2020
2. **Upper Midwest CRAFT Field Day Workshops** - October 2019 to October 2020
3. **One-on-One Mentoring** - April 2020 to October 2020
4. **Last Session and Graduation Event** - September 2020

Please see details on each of the four SFB Program Components below.

1. Winter Course Saturday Sessions – October 2019 to March 2020

2019 Dates	2020 Dates
Session 1. October 12 – 10:00am-4:00pm	Session 7. January 4 – 10:00am-3:00pm
Session 2. October 26 – 10:00am-4:00pm	Session 8. January 18 – 10:00am-3:00pm
Session 3. November 9 – 10:00am-4:00pm	Session 9. February 1 – 10:00am-4:00pm
Session 4. November 23 – 10:00am-4:00pm	Session 10. February 15 – 10:00am-3:00pm
Session 5. December 7 – 10:00am-4:00pm	
Session 6. December 21 – 10:00am-4:00pm*	

* Note these sessions have MORE than two weeks in between them and the next session.

LOCATION: TBD; Near Angelic Organics Learning Center, 1545 Rockton Rd., Caledonia, IL 61011

SNOW DATE (*Please keep this date open. The snow date is often used.*): **March 7, 2020 – 10:00am-3:00pm**

Session #1 Saturday, October 12, 10am-4pm – Starting on Solid Ground with Whole Farm Planning

Presenters: TBA

Understand the framework and course objectives of Stateline Farm Beginnings® and hear about recent farm start-ups from Stateline Farm Beginnings graduates. Get to know your fellow participants... this is your first farmer-network! Brainstorm all products and services you've been considering so that your ideas are on paper. Begin assessing your resources.

Session #2 Saturday, October 26, 10am-4pm – Whole Farm Planning Part 2

Presenter: TBA

Having a successful farm business depends on creating goals that consider long-term sustainability. Learn how clear and specific personal goals relate to a strong, viable farm business. Assess your skills and connect them to enterprise ideas. Tour Angelic Organics CSA farm with Farmer John Peterson and see a farm as an integrated system.

Session #3 Saturday, November 9, 10am-4pm – Right-sizing your Farm: Benchmarks and Scale

Presenter: TBA

Hear about research on what is possible on various size farms, in terms of income potential, land use, and labor hours. Learn about the "front end" and "back end" of a direct market farm operation, specialized equipment, and spending priorities. Learn how to categorize expenses. Write your farm's Mission Statement.

Session #4 Saturday, November 23, 10am-4pm – Land and Soils

Presenters: TBA

Learn about the pros and cons of various land access options that go beyond ownership and renting. Considering a farm as an ecological system will help you plan your business. Most farms depend on rich soil biology for successful production, and in this session you'll learn how to take a soil sample, read test results, and brush up on soil-health facts.

Session #5 Saturday, December 7, 10am-4pm – Planning for Market and Distribution

Presenters: TBA

Hear successful strategies of 3 farmers marketing different products through a variety of channels. Understand the difference between advertising, marketing, and public relations, and identify what's best for your enterprise. Consider your farm enterprise more specifically now and identify your own marketing strategies.

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Session #6 Saturday, December 21, 10am-4pm – Assembling Financial Data

Presenter: TBA

Learn how holistic financial planning will help you make better decisions on your farm. All aspects of preliminary planning, categorizing income and expense, developing annual cash flow, and identifying “wealth generating expenses” will be covered. Practice using specific charts to plan everything from cover crop schedules to equipment pay off.

Session #7 Saturday, January 4, 10am-3pm – Analyzing the Situation: Financial Tools

Presenter: TBA

Hear an in-depth presentation of farm financials from one of the best advisors in the region. Traditional tools such as balance sheets, profit and loss, and cash flow will be discussed with real-world examples. Understand the power in budgeting and creating solvency. Analyze your own production skills and identify immediate goals for the upcoming Growing Season.

Session #8 Saturday, January 18, 10am-3pm – Realities from the Market

Buyer Panel: TBA

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. Hear from buyers and farmers alike about “the other side” of the equation. Participants are encouraged to prepare questions ahead of time.

Session #9 Saturday, February 1, 10am-4pm – Connecting with Resources and Building a Mentoring Plan

Presenters: TBA

Local and regional resource people will present on financing options, legal issues, insurance, trademarks, taxes, and business names. Regional continuing-education resources available to new farmers will also be presented. Mentorship guidelines for the upcoming growing season will be discussed.

Session #10 Saturday, February 15, 10am-3pm – Class Presentations

Synthesize the work you've done throughout the course thus far into a presentation or final project. Hear strategic business plans, challenges, and changes to the “farm dream” from fellow participants, and identify “next steps” for yourself.

2. CRAFT Field Day Workshops - October 2020 to October 2020

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 farms in the Upper Midwest CRAFT (Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training-Northern Illinois and Southern Wisconsin), and are included in the course fee.

3. One-on-One Mentoring - April 2020 to October 2020

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 learning goals for the growing season and matches the participant with a mentor.

4. Last Session and Graduation Event - September 2020

Participants meet to share and reflect on their summer-time experiences at field days and with their farmer-mentor. This event celebrates the completion of Stateline Farm Beginnings® with a graduation potluck at the Angelic Organics Learning Center picnic shelter.