Dear Aspiring Farmer:

2020 has been a year of upheaval and awareness. This year has shown us how fundamental a healthy local food system is to the stability of our nation’s food supply. We need diverse urban & rural farms & farmers and we need eaters who wholeheartedly support them.

In 2020, so many of us were able (or forced) to slow down and ask ourselves the hard questions: What is essential? What do I need and value? How do I contribute to the kind of world I want to see in the future?

My guess is: If you are reading this, it is because some aspect of growing food for people was central in your answers. Welcome! You are in good company.

Angefic Organics Learning Center (AOLC) has also been asking the hard questions. How do we best support aspiring and beginnings farmers? What is essential, needed, and valued? What best supports farmers to create farm businesses that are joyful, profitable, and viable even in uncertain times. We re-envisioned Stateline Farm Beginnings© to better support you as you begin your farm journey.

AOLC is proud to offer this fresh approach as we enter our 16th year of Stateline Farm Beginnings®. I hope you will join us in building a solid vision and plan for realizing and sustaining your farm dream.

Sincerely,

Danica Hoehn
Program Director, Farmer Training Initiative

Here are some highlights:

- **We’re going virtual!** Winter and Fall classes will be offered online. No more long drives to and from class or rescheduling because of snow days!
- **A restructured approach** Connect with a farm mentor before starting work on your farm business plan. This will provide added farmer insight and support as you work through the logics of creating a farm business plan.
- **Pace Yourself** Not quite ready to commit to writing a business plan, but really need to focus on making your farm dream into a reality? Great! You can now enroll in the Farm Dreams Intensive, then take the Farm Business Intensive when you are ready. Ready to take the complete course? Enroll in the full SFB course and receive a tuition discount.

What remains the same?

- **Join a vibrant farmer alliance** By enrolling in Stateline Farm Beginnings®, tuition includes a yearlong membership to Upper Midwest CRAFT (Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training), the most robust network of sustainable farms in the region. You’ll have access to hands-on field days as well as a chance to connect with other farmers of all different experience levels.
- **Learn farm business planning from real farmers** Farmers training farmers is the education model behind Farm Beginnings®. You’ll get real-world, practical, and specialized knowledge from the farmers leading the local food movement in the Upper Midwest.
- **Focus exclusively on sustainable agriculture** Examples used in class materials are solely from Biodynamic, organic, and sustainable farm operations.
- **Leverage knowledge from across the country** Classes are facilitated by staff who network with and learn from 10 other Farm Beginnings® programs across the country.
“Stateline Farm Beginnings made us realistically look at farming as a business instead of a lifestyle. And we realize that we can eventually have both!”

- Angie Mitchell
  3 Flat Acres
Farm Dreams Intensive is focused on goal-setting, writing a mission & vision statement, marketing strategies, planning for profit, creating a personalized learning plan, and developing a farm proposal. As its name suggests, this course is intensive. Each week, you will have approximately four (4) hours of self guided work & homework + two (2) hours of optional enrichment, in addition to four-five (4-5) hours of class time and optional office hours with your facilitator. There will be a lot of deep digging into the realities that create barriers and/or opportunities to achieve your dreams (personal values, finances, skills, etc). Your experiences will culminate with a Farm Dream Proposal. This will help you clarify your vision for the future and talk with potential investors, customers, and stakeholders about your farm or future farm.

Each session is held two days per week, online via Zoom, on Thursdays 6:00pm-8:00pm & Saturdays 10:00 am-12:00 pm (some sessions may be extended by 1 hour. Notice will be provided in advance). Office hours are Wednesdays 6:00pm-8:00pm. Session content, dates, and times are subject to change, based on farmer availability.

### Session 100 Welcome to SFB: Farm Dreams Intensive
Understand the framework and course objectives of Stateline Farm Beginnings®. Get to know your fellow participants...this is your first farmer-network! Familiarize yourself with the online learning platforms used during the program. Take your first step in planning your farm business.

### Session 101 Farm Dreams Pt 1: Defining Your Dream*
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. Start developing holistic goals for your farm venture. Hear about farm startups from recent Stateline Farm Beginnings® graduates.

### Session 102 Planning for Profit I*
Brainstorm all products and services you’ve been considering so that your ideas are on paper. Begin assessing your resources. Assess your skills and connect them to enterprise ideas. Learn the purpose and importance of a mission statement & vision statement, then draft your own. Meet farmer John Peterson, founder of Angelic Organics Farm and hear about his enduring career in organic farming.

### Session 103 The History of Land & Land Access*
Investigate the history of land ownership in the United States, understand the intersections of land access and racial justice. Think about how your land is, or can be, an asset to your farm business goals. Understand the pros and cons of various land access options that go beyond ownership and renting. Learn basic farm math. Hear epic land access stories directly from your fellow UM CRAFT farmers.

### Session 104 Small Farm Economics & Infrastructure *
Hear about research farms scale, in terms of income potential, land use, and labor hours. Learn about the “front end” and “back end” of a direct market farm operation. Explore specialized equipment, and spending priorities. Then think deeply about what skills, resources, and services are necessary to bring your farm to fruition.

### Session 105 Marketing for a Small Farm*
Discover the successful strategies of three different 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 in more detail and identify your own marketing strategies.

### Session 106 Farm Dreams Part 2: Putting Dreams into Action*
Package the dreams you mapped out during the Farm Dream Intensive into a personalized farm proposal. Shape your personalized learning goals into a one-of-a-kind learning plan based on where you want your farm dreams to take you.

### Session 107 Feedback & Mentor Matching*
Meet with your Stateline Farm Beginnings® facilitator and get personalized feedback on your farm proposal. We’ll finalize the details of your learning plan and assess your goals for the growing season. You will explore the UM CRAFT network and if you are continuing into the Skill Building Practicum, you will springboard into a mentorship connection with a suitable farm mentor.
Skill Building Mentorship
Each Stateline Farm Beginnings® student will explore the wealth of knowledge, experience, and expertise available to them within the UM CRAFT network. Students select mentors who are best positioned to help them meet their growing season learning goal and inform the creation of their farm business plan. SFB® staff will help facilitate a successful mentorship match. Mentors are given a stipend for meeting with SFB® students during the growing session and an additional stipend for advising their mentor during the Farm Business Intensive, these stipends are included in the course fee. Mentorship specifics are decided between the mentor and mentee.

Upper Midwest CRAFT Field Days**
Each year 10 or more Upper Midwest CRAFT (Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training-Northern Illinois and Southern Wisconsin) farms invite the UM CRAFT network on to their farms to learn about a wide variety of farm topics. This is a great opportunity to connect with UM CRAFT farmers and learn from their amazing wealth of knowledge and experience. It is a perfect time to make progress on your learning goals or discover aspects of farming you never thought of before. Stateline Farm Beginnings® participants take part in field day workshops of their choice. UM CRAFT 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, and are included in the course fee.

For reference, here is a list of past Field Days:
- Spring Biodynamic Pick
- Livestock (Chickens & Sheep)
- Livestock (Cattle)
- Grazing & Regenerative Agriculture
- Using Hand Tools
- Soil Fertility & CSA Customization
- Post-Harvest & Winter Storage
- Hemp Production
- Urban Agriculture & Small-Scale Farming
- Fall Biodynamic Prep
- Extend Your Season with Alternative Income

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**Session 201: Farms as Living Organisms**
Visit Angelic Organics Farm and tour one of the largest CSA operations in the nation. Explore the basic principles and practices of Biodynamics on Angelic Organics Farm.

**Session 202: Soil Health and Farm Fertility**
At some point we will have to get our hands dirty! Learn about soil health and farm fertility from local experts. Find out the right way to test your farm’s soil. Understand how your farm’s soil impacts your farm business.

**Session 203: Farm Production Math**
Ever wonder how to factor in seed germination rate to your seed starting plan? Or how many seeds to order in order to meet your production goals? What about how to figure out bed feet or row spacing? What about compost per yard or acre? Or, if your focus is livestock- How many acres of pasture are needed per cow calf pair? How many large bales of hay do I need to ensure I can cover my feed needs through winter? This session will cover it all.
**Course Schedule & Session Details**

**Farm Business Intensive**

**September to December 2021**

Dive into budgeting, pricing strategies, completing and understanding financial statements, and developing a business plan. Learn how to build enterprise budgets. Understand how to evaluate profitability by comparing different enterprises you are considering on your farm. Practice using specific charts to plan everything from cover crop schedules to equipment pay off. 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. Each session helps you build and inform aspects of your farm’s business plan.

Each session is held two days per week, online via Zoom, on **Thursdays 6:00pm-8:00pm & Saturdays 10:00 am-12:00 pm** (some sessions may be extended by 1 hour. Notice will be provided in advance). Office hours are **Wednesdays 6:00pm-8:00pm**. Session content, dates, and times are subject to change, based on farmer availability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Session 210</td>
<td>Planning for Profit II</td>
<td>Thursday Class 10/07/2021  Saturday Class 10/09/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 211</td>
<td>Business Planning Part I: Enterprise Development*</td>
<td>Weds Office Hours 10/13/2021  Thursday Class 10/14/2021  Saturday Class 10/16/2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 212</td>
<td>Buyers &amp; Sellers: Product Distribution &amp; Relationships*</td>
<td>Weds Office Hours 10/20/2021  Thursday Class 10/21/2021  Saturday Class 10/23/2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 213</td>
<td>Recordkeeping: Making Sound Financial Decisions*</td>
<td>Weds Office Hours 10/27/2021  Thursday Class 10/28/2021  Saturday Class 10/30/2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 215</td>
<td>Business Planning Part II: Pulling it All Together*</td>
<td>Weds Office Hours 11/10/2021  Thursday Class 11/11/2021  Saturday Class 11/13/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 216</td>
<td>Resource Week*</td>
<td>Weds Office Hours 11/17/2021  Thursday Class 11/18/2021  Saturday Class 11/20/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session 217</td>
<td>Final Presentations &amp; Graduation**</td>
<td>Weds Office Hours 12/08/2021  Saturday Class 12/11/2021</td>
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</tbody>
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**Stateline Farm Beginnings® 2021**
Angelic Organics Learning Center is a member of the Farm Beginnings® Collaborative. The Farm Beginnings Collaborative is a national alliance of independent regional groups of farmers and farmer-training support organizations working together to promote Farm Beginnings, a farmer training model that is farmer led, community based and rooted in sustainable agriculture.

Farm Beginnings is now offered to people in: Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Indiana, Ohio, Missouri, Kentucky, North Carolina, New York, Vermont, and Maine.

Farm Beginnings was started by the Land Stewardship Project in Minnesota, in collaboration with a network of experienced farmers. To this day farmers participate at all levels, as steering committee members, classroom presenters, on-farm presenters, and on-farm mentors. Farm Beginnings offers new and beginning farmers a means to establish strong relationships with local farmers, businesses, resources, and consumers within a community network that supports and strengthens the local food and farming system. Farm Beginnings programs support sustainable farming by promoting farming practices that are ecologically sound, economically viable, socially just, and achievable for new and beginning farmers.

For a listing of all of the Farm Beginnings collaborators, please visit http://farmbeginningscollaborative.org/
**Scholarships** We encourage you to take the course in two sessions or arrange a payment plan as your first option towards financial support. If requesting funding from Angelic Organics Learning Center is necessary, we invite you to apply for a scholarship. We also have a limited number of specially designated scholarships for military veterans. Applications are due November 30, 2021.

**Payment Plans** We now offer the flexibility to take the course in two sessions. Start with the Farm Dreams Intensive, then take the Skill Building Practicum & Farm Business Intensive. We also allow you to divide your tuition into smaller payments, just pay in full prior to the first day of class.

**Application Review** begins October 20, 2020. Applications will be reviewed in the order received. We try to keep class sizes small to maintain strong connections between participants, facilitators, and guest speakers, therefore space is limited. If space allows, we will continue accepting applications through November 30, 2020. Once you submit the application form on our submission page, be sure to check your email for a confirmation and reserve a date/time for a phone interview.

**To apply**
1. Download the Stateline Farm Beginnings® [digital application](#).
2. Visit our [submission page](#), complete the brief form, and upload your course application (and [scholarship application](#), if applicable).
3. Pay the $75 application fee. We will review your application once we receive the fee.

**Refund Policy**
The Stateline Farm Beginnings® application fee is non-refundable. If accepted, this fee will be applied toward your tuition balance. Stateline Farm Beginnings® course tuition is non-refundable after the end of the first session (Saturday, January 8, 2021). After the end first session, if you are unable to attend for any reason, you will receive up to a 50% tuition credit toward the next Stateline Farm Beginnings® course, prorated based on your progress in the course. If you are unable to attend the follow year course, we will send you documentation so your tuition fee can be recorded as a tax deductible contribution to the ongoing work of Angelic Organics Learning Center.

The full cost of the program is more than $5,000 per participant. Through the generous support of our funding partners, we are able to offer this program to participants at a lower cost.

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### Application Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Farm Dreams Intensive</th>
<th>Skill Building Practicum</th>
<th>Farm Business Intensive</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jan - Mar</td>
<td>Mar - Oct</td>
<td>Sep - Dec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prerequisites</strong></td>
<td>A farm dream</td>
<td>Farm Dreams Intensive</td>
<td>Skill Building Practicum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Session Description</strong></td>
<td>Focus on goal-setting, writing a mission &amp; vision statement, marketing strategies, planning for profit, creating a personalized learning plan, and developing a farm proposal.</td>
<td>Visit local sustainable farms during UM CRAFT Field Days. Participants are matched in a 1-to-1 mentorship with an experienced sustainable farmer in their field of interest.</td>
<td>Dive into budgeting, pricing strategies, completing and understanding financial statements, and developing a business plan or 5-year strategic plan.</td>
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| Split Tuition* | $1,200 | $1,200 |
| Paid-in-Full Tuition* | $2,000  |

*Tuition includes: Online classroom, course files, mentorship, 1-year CRAFT membership, entry for up to 2 people as 1 business

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Stateline Farm Beginnings® 2021