Farm Incubators 101

An Introduction to the National Beginning Farmer Technical Assistance Initiative

Made possible by generous support from the

CEDAR TREE FOUNDATION
Agenda

Technology Training (3 minutes)

Farm Incubators 101 (5 minutes)

National TA Project Overview (5 minutes)

Veteran Project Presentations (50 minutes)

Next Steps – Upcoming Events (5 minutes)

Q & A (20 minutes)
Technical Orientation

A quick overview of tools to help you get the most out of this webinar.

*Many thanks to the National Good Food Network and CFSC for this intro to the webinar software*
Your Starting Screen

Webinar Now

Audio: Use your microphone and speakers (VoIP) or call in using your telephone.

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Presentation

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System displays who is speaking
To Ask a Question

Type your question in the small box at the bottom of the Questions box.

Press **Send**.

You may want to specify to whom your question is addressed.
Question Submitted

Q: For panelist James: What are some methods you use to increase efficiency?
Questions May Be Answered in the Questions Box

Audience Question

Q: Will this presentation be recorded and archived?

A: The recording will be on the web at http://ngfn.org/clustercalls
Post-Webinar Survey

Farm Incubators 101: A webinar from the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project National Technical Assistance Initiative

Survey Form

We would appreciate your feedback about our webinar. Please complete the survey below.

Please let us know how we could have improved this webinar:

Please let us know what you liked about this webinar:

Rate the overall TA provider presentations:
- Not useful or interesting
- Somewhat useful and interesting
- Useful and interesting
- Very useful and interesting
- Extremely useful and interesting

Rate the organizer presentation:
- Not useful or interesting
- Somewhat useful and interesting
- Useful and interesting
- Very useful and interesting
- Extremely useful and interesting

How likely are you to participate in the National Beginning Farmer Technical Assistance Initiative?
- Not likely
- Somewhat likely
- Very likely
- Extremely likely
Agenda

Farm Incubators 101 (5 minutes)
National TA Project Overview (5 minutes)
Veteran Project Presentations (50 minutes)
Next Steps – Upcoming Events (5 minutes)
Q & A (20 minutes)
Demand for “local” food increasing
Renewed interest in farming
Federal support

- HHS Office of Refugee Resettlement
- USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program
- Community Food Projects
- Risk Management Agency
- USDA OASDFR

Farm Incubators 101

Trends: Rapid growth

Dozens of new projects in the past 5 years
Farm Incubators 101

Our shared mission

- Address the aging farmer population by training new farmers and providing them with the tools for success
- Foster national food security
- Create opportunities for economic development
- Empower our communities
Farmer education

Land access

Infrastructure/equipment access

Peer support

Marketing support

Access to capital

On-farm technical assistance
Farm Incubators 101 Challenges

- Loss of training infrastructure
- Access to land
- Limited funding and staffing
- Managing shared infrastructure
- Working with diverse groups
- A need for comprehensive programming
- Gardening vs. market farming
- Site development and infrastructure needs
- No two projects are the same
- No standardized toolkits or guidebooks
National TA Initiative

- National demand for new farmers and their products
- Proliferation of new incubator projects
- New Entry in operation since 1998
- Shared challenges
- Increasing requests for TA
- Veteran incubator partnership and collaboration
National TA Initiative: Partners and Technical Assistance (TA) Providers
National TA Initiative:
TA Providers Expertise

- Lease agreements
- Operational policies and procedures
- Managing shared infrastructure (land, equipment, etc)
- Product aggregation, distribution and marketing
- Negotiating regulatory requirements and certifications
- Working with diverse communities
- Funding (program and infrastructure)
- Low-income food access
- Transitioning farmers to their own land
- Farmer training curriculum
- Integrating livestock
National TA Initiative: Major Activities

- Webinars
  - Topics based on YOUR interests
  - 5 more in the next two years
- Field School (Fall, 2012)
  - In-Class Work
  - Networking
  - Field Trips
- One-on-one Technical Assistance
- Online Resources
- Community of Practice
National TA Initiative:
One-on-one TA Referrals

National Technical Assistance Referral Process Map

- Startup Incubator Project (SIP)
  - Initial Contact
  - Initial contact
  - Redirect SIP

- National TA Providers
  - Submit tracking info and evaluations
  - Track total time available for TA from providers
  - Track hours of TA provided
  - Pay TA providers

- National TA Providers
  - Ongoing admin
  - Track initial referral

- One-on-one referral process with SIPS
  - Gather info from SIP:
    - Type of project
    - Needs
  - Determine ideal TA provider for SIP to speak with
  - Explain process (services offered, initial and ongoing fees, and from whom they will receive TA)
  - Refer SIP to TA provider

- Submit tracking info and evaluations

TA

[Diagram showing the process flow between National TA Providers, Startup Incubator Project (SIP), and one-on-one referral process with SIPS]
National TA Initiative:
Contact Us!

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http://nesfp.nutrition.tufts.edu/resources/nta.html
Who is in the virtual room?

Where are you and your project located?

At what stage is your farm incubator project?
The Intervalle Center

Julie Ribaud – Farms Program Associate
Welcome to the Intervale!
350 acres of Winooski River bottom land
12 independent farms
600,000 lbs of produce
The Farms Program

Incubating New Farmers & Growing Food for Our Community
The roots of the Intervale were consumer based. The city government was very supportive, and there was clear, visionary leadership from a core group of founders.
New farmers need equipment. Sharing equipment and renting it by the hour is a great way to start out.
Community
Innovation...enterprises that open new markets for beginning and established farmers.
Partnership with other organizations offers/creates other forms of incubation
Education is an enhancement to incubation

Five year commitment
Increase viability: economic, social and environmental
Building skills and relationships
Farm by farm

Intervale
Farms
Consultants
Farmers receive customized technical assistance like:

- Accounting
- Recordkeeping
- Production
- Marketing
- Business planning
- Goal setting

...and, most importantly, a team of dedicated staff and consultants to help make it all happen.
Training materials

- Intervale Farmers Manual
- Tours
- Consulting Services

Come Visit!

Julie Rubaud
Farms Program Associate
Intervale Center

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The New Entry Sustainable Farming Project
Jennifer Hashley – Project Director
New Entry Sustainable Farming Project

Creating, cultivating, and conserving a new generation of farmers and food producers
Service Area - Massachusetts

Incubator Farm
Training Sites (3) + Food Hub

MASSACHUSETTS

POPULATED PLACES
- Boston
- Cambridge
- Northampton
- Hyannis

State capital
Urban areas
Our Mission

- To develop comprehensive strategies to assist limited resource individuals to successfully farm in Massachusetts, and

- (a) support the region's agriculture through diversified operation and ownership of farms;

- (b) build long-term farming capacity and economic self-reliance among disadvantaged participants through farming, including access to and use of federal and state farming programs and services; and,

- (c) expand access to high quality, culturally-appropriate foods in underserved areas through production of locally-grown foods by members of those communities.
Who We Serve

- Diverse range of growers
  - Age range
  - Nationality
  - Gender
  - Enterprise
Our Program Goals

- Remove barriers to help new entrants scale into farming by providing access to:
  - Training and education
  - Land
  - Capital
  - Markets
  - Farming experience
  - Reduced farmer isolation through built-in network

- Help build & sustain our local food system

- Keep farmland in active, ecologically sound production

- Preserve “agri-cultural” knowledge for future generations
Incubator Farm Program
Technical Assistance and Field-Based Trainings
Successes

- Developing 3 incubator farms (close proximity)
- Training and transitioning dozens of farmers
- Multi-producer marketing program (food hub)
- Business planning
  - Diverse curriculum
    - classroom, field, online
- Partnerships
- Continued support
Challenges

- Tragedy of the Commons
  - Shared infrastructure
  - Soil building/weed mgmt
- Insurance
- Scaling up
  - markets, labor, technology
- Transition to land ownership
  - Lease arrangements
  - Infrastructure
  - Capitalization
**Strengths – What we can offer**

- >12 years experience
- Multiple incubator sites
- Multi-ethnic/-cultural
- Curricula for all adult learning levels (working adults)
- Market focus: multi-producer food hub
- Land matching / transition
- Organizational development
Contact Information

Jennifer Hashley, Project Director

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617-636-3793  Boston Office
978-654-6745  Lowell Office

http://www.nesfp.org
Agriculture and Land Based Training Association (ALBA)

Gary Peterson – Development and Communications Director
ALBA’s Farm Business Incubation Cycles

1) Farmer Education Program (PEPA) – 195 hours / October-May
2) PEPA Phase II – Field Experience – 120+ hours / June-October
3) Farm Business Incubator – 20-100% of market rate over 6 years
4) Business Plan Update – condition of lease renewal (Nov - Dec)
5) Farmer Interviews – In-depth assessment of prior year (Feb - March)

Rural Development Center and Triple M Ranch – 150 acres / 35-50 farmers.
**ALBA Program Indicators**

- Target Groups (demographics and baseline data)
- Program Scale (numbers served)
- Farmer Education Program (student evaluation)
- Farmer Technical Assistance (volume, topics, time)
- Workshops and Field Days (continuing education hours earned)
- Business Financing (loans and other types of capital)
- Farm Business Incubation (years in/out of incubator)
- Economic and Community Outcomes (income, jobs, business, etc)
## Business Financing (loans and other types)

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<th>Business Financing &amp; Type</th>
<th>Loan</th>
<th>Ind Dev Acct</th>
<th>Other</th>
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2 Financing source

3 Applications submitted and approved

4 Success rate (%)

5 Financing Amount Rec'd
Economic and Community Outcomes
(income, business growth, jobs, wealth)

1. Business plans completed/updated

2. Number of jobs created and retained

3. Number of clients exercising philanthropy
Economic and Community Outcomes

4. Household Income by Year as Farmer

5. Clients Leaving Poverty

6. Wealth / Asset Creation – analyze balance sheet

7. Long-term Access to Land – lease / buy
Next Steps

update annual survey interview

design aggregate dashboard

maintain vigilance on data integrity

offer incubator “package” on start2farm.gov

Gary Peterson
gary@albafarmers.org

This project is supported by the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program of the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Grant #2009-49400-06025.
Grow NYC – New Farmer Development Project (NFDP)
Michelle Hughes – NFDP Director
New Farmer Development Project

Milestones:
- [Image 1] 10 graduates from 4-week training
- [Image 2] 100 acres of new production by 2025
- [Image 3] 100% of farmers participating in NICP

Missions:
- [Image 4] Personalized Assistance
- [Image 5] Loan Identification
- [Image 6] Microcredit Loan Fund

Training & Education

Marketing Support
Garden Teach Recycle
Grow NYC Greenmarket
Ne
Mission:

The New Farmer Development Project (NFDP) identifies, educates and supports immigrants with agricultural experience to establish their own economically and environmentally sustainable small farm businesses in the NYC region.
Training & Education

Introductory Workshops

La Nueva Siembra (LNS): Introductory farm business planning course offered simultaneously in English and Spanish

Mentorship Opportunities: With experienced immigrant farmers and other farmers in the region

Advanced Training Series

Regional Conference and Educational Scholarships:
- NOFA-NY Winter Conference
- NOFA-NJ Winter Conference
- PASA Annual Conference
- Black Farmers and Urban Gardeners Conference
- Pfieffer Center Biodynamic Training
- And Many More...
Marketing Support

- Connection to Greenmarket & other farmers markets
- Connection to Just Food & support for creating CSAs
- Greenmarket fee reduction for 1st & 2nd year farmers
- Free market & product liability insurance
- Microcredit loans for market equipment
- One-on-one assistance with product selection & development, display, labeling & promotional materials
"I believe in taking care of the land. I grow vegetables naturally, and they taste better!"

New Immigrant farmers bring fresh food to your neighborhood, introduce new products to the marketplace, preserve farmland, and help bring new farmers markets to NYC. The NFDP supports these farmers by providing:

- Hands-on workshops and training
- Microcredit loans
- Technical assistance
- Land identification
- Marketing assistance

"Creo en el cuidado de la tierra. Cultivo vegetales naturalmente, y su sabor es mejor!"

Los nuevos granjeros inmigrantes traen alimentos frescos a su vecindario, introducen nuevos productos al mercado, mantienen las tierras, y ayudan a traer nuevos mercados agrícolas a NYC. El NFDP apoya a estos granjeros por provenir:

- Taller y capacitación práctica
- Prestamos de microcredito
- Asistencia técnica
- Identificación de tierras
- Asistencia de mercadeo
Microcredit Loan Fund

- $90,000 initial funding from Heifer International in 2004
- Fund is peer-monitored by NFDP Advisory Committee
- Passing on the gift
- Maximum loan $10,000
- Eligibility: NFDP training course, and one year involvement in the Project
Land Identification

What do we look for?

- 2-50 acres
- Land for sale, or for long & short-term lease
- Creative tenure arrangements: Lease-to-own, owner-financed sales, etc.
- On-farm or nearby affordable housing
- Basic infrastructure (water, source, barns, greenhouses, etc.)

How do we look?

- Press and outreach through partners
- Partner organizations (State Farmlink programs, NOFA-NY, land trusts, etc.)
- Word of mouth (especially other farmers)

Where do we look?

- Within 100 miles of NYC
- In NY, NJ & PA
Personalized Assistance

- On-farm technical support
- Simultaneous interpretation for conferences and meetings
- Translation services
- Tax, legal and financial advising and referrals
- Personalized business support
Milestones:

- 25 graduates from 12 countries from 2011 training course;
- 22 immigrant-owned farms established since 2001;
- 385 acres of farmland in production by NFDP farmers;
- 6 NFDP farmers have purchased a combined 72 acres;
- NFDP farmers raise pastured poultry, eggs, and honey, and grow a wide variety of vegetables, herbs, heirlooms, specialty crops, cut flowers, plants and mushrooms that they sell at 62 farmers markets and 18 CSA's (1,100 shares) throughout New York City and the Hudson Valley;
- Last year alone, NFDP farmers had over $80,000 in EBT (SNAP) sales and $400,000 in Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) sales;
- The NFDP has made over 40 microcredit loans to immigrant farmers totaling approximately $160,000 since 2007.
Big River Farms Training Program
Glen Hill – Executive Director
To build a more sustainable food system through training, education, and partnerships
Farming trends since 1980s

- Loss of family farms – fewer farms, larger size, less diverse
- Farmers getting older, rural out-migration
- Resurgence in sustainable, organic
- Immigrants, Women getting into farming
Food System Changes

- 1940s – Fertilizer
- 1970s – Commodity policy
- Late 1970s – Corn syrup and products
- 1970s till Now – Centralization of Agro-business
We focus on soil, and building a proper soil fertility regime
We focus on producing for market in a systematic manner,
while still respecting traditional methods and crops.
Minnesota Food Association and Big River Farms History

- Morgan May started May Farm in 1891
- St Paul Farmers Market Closure(?– 1981
- MFA established in 1983; registered in 1985
- Advocacy, Lobbying, Building Networks and Awareness in beginning years
- Extension support work with Hmong and Latino farmers began in 1999
- On-the-Ground – Production, Training, Distribution and Education since 2005
- Big River Farms Integration. Marketing and Distribution
The Need

While there are many farmer support structures through a variety of state and federal agriculture agencies and land-grant universities, these tend to be structured for commodity crop farmers and a ‘western’ style of delivery and bureaucracy. The face and style of agriculture and farming is changing as more immigrants from agrarian societies become New Americans and want to continue to be farmers. Most of these farmers have a farming history in producing readily edible food – fruits, vegetables and livestock. They would like to continue this in their new home, but need assistance with understanding climate, production, marketing, rules and regulations, etc.
Growing Farmers, Growing Food

Our overarching goal is to grow new viable farming enterprises, that are financially and ecologically sustainable, and build local economy.
MFA initial approach was as an extension service to meet farmers in their fields from 1999 – 2004, but felt that this was not as effective in meeting the farmers needs, so in 2005, MFA started leasing land as a training and demonstration site and to operate a CSA. This quickly evolved into an integrated training and marketing service by 2008.
MFA conducts about 12 winter classroom sessions for new farmers on organic production and certification, farm business planning and marketing, to about 10 ‘farms’ each year, representing about 25 – 30 people. We also conduct about 10 in-field sessions and 3 – 4 field trips to other farms during the season.
The most significant part of our approach is working one-on-one with individual farmers from plot planning, production, marketing, food safety, organic certification, post-harvest handling, pest management, etc.
Connecting farmers with new resources

We aim to connect farmers with new resources that they have not traditionally or historically had access to or even knew about; including USDA, University Extension Services, state Dept of Ag, and local nonprofits.
MFA co-hosts and Annual Immigrant Farming Conference. The 7th Conference in Feb 2012 had about 200 farmer participants of 14 different ethnicities from 6 states.
Since 2006, all the farmers who have been through the program, about 100, are still farming in some capacity. Since 2007, we know of 8 principal operators who have established their own new independent farm enterprise. Farmers in the MFA program are the only Certified Organic Farmers in MN.
Challenges: Many challenges face the establishment and the sustainability of operating an incubator new farmer program for historically underserved farmers. Raising funds (money) and sustaining revenues is critical. Increasing competition for the same pool of funds and changing priorities of funders adds to the challenge.
Food Safety, Post-harvest Handling and Grading produce are difficult concepts and practices to teach and for new or beginning immigrant farmers to understand.
Understanding the requirements, nuances, advantages and disadvantages of different markets is also very challenging.
Gaining access to credit, developing business plans, budgeting and cash flow projections, investments in land (leased or owned) and in infrastructure are difficult processes and decisions for new farmers. USDA FSA or RD or private lenders can be both a benefit or added challenge in this process.
Working with a diverse array of ethnicities and languages is obviously a challenge, but also very rewarding.
Lessons Learned – There are many

Farmers readily respect other good farmers and those who can really ‘talk farming’, so very competent, knowledgeable, experienced technical staff is critical.
Organic Certification is an excellent tool and incentive for teaching record-keeping on other aspects of the farm operation. Post-harvest Handling training is an excellent tool for teaching food safety.
Having access to basic infrastructure is critical to new farms launching their independence; this doesn’t have to be owned but can be leased or contracted. Many farmers are looking for long-term leasing arrangements rather than ownership (and large debt and other risks).
In the midst of all the stressful fundraising, drought, heat, hail, and flea beetles, be sure to have fun, and share your joy with children.
Contact Information

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Next Steps

- **Technical Assistance**
  - A limited amount of TA is available through project partners
  - Initial intake and first 3 hours free
  - Contact New Entry for more info

- **Webinars**
  - Five more in the works
  - Next one in the late summer
  - Let us know if you have a topic you would like to see covered

- **Field School**
  - 3 days at the end of September
  - Class work
  - Sharing models
  - Field trips

- **Your input is critical!**
  - Please complete the evaluation after this webinar
  - Feel free to email with ideas, feedback or questions
Questions?
Thank you for attending

Please fill out your evaluations!

Contact us:

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