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# Planting the First Seed

Creating Opportunities for Ethnic Farmers & Young Farmers in the Greenbelt

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The Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation is committed to promoting awareness and education about Ontario's Greenbelt. To this end we occasionally publish research and general interest papers that explore our three program areas: viable agriculture and viticulture; vibrant rural communities; and, a restored and protected natural environment.

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By Peter Mitchell, Stewart Hilts, Jennifer Asselin and Burkhard Mausberg  
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# Executive Summary

**T**he face of Ontarians is ever-changing: the latest statistics show that 54 per cent of Canada's visible minority population resides in Ontario. However, this is not mirrored in rural Ontario and hence the farming community. As a result, Canada's multi-ethnicity is not reflected in what is being grown in Ontario. Ontario's farming community is aging and younger farmers face great difficulty taking up farming as a career. And there are large and diverse communities of immigrants in the GTA, who do have a background in agriculture and would like to farm for niche ethnic markets but do not have the means to do so.

The purpose of this study is to determine the barriers that exist for both ethnic farmers and interested young farmers to work the land, and to develop market opportunities for farmers in the Greenbelt, an area of prime agricultural land surrounded by the Golden Horseshoe where many immigrants in Canada reside.

In order to complete this study, the *Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation* granted \$62,000 to the University of Guelph and their project, "Supporting New Farmers in the Greenbelt." Collaborators included FarmStart, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, CRAFT (Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training), and CEDIW (Community Economic Development for Immigrant Women).

Through this grant, the University of Guelph undertook three main projects that focused on the ethnic farmer and the young farmer:

- 1) Community consultations to discuss the topic of farming and immigration and to create a dialogue with immigrants who want to be farmers and with existing farmers who want to collaborate with new immigrants in order to grow new crops
- 2) A case study on the South Asian Pakistani community's interests and needs
- 3) A survey of young farmers to reveal barriers to establishing farm businesses.

The University of Guelph researchers found that a large interest exists among both youth and immigrants who would like to try farming for a local food market.

The projects undertaken by the University of Guelph and their collaborators assessed the barriers facing the new Canadian farmer. Whether an ethnic farmer or a young one, it is clear that both groups are dealing with similar barriers. Some of these apply also to existing farm families, particularly young farmers hoping to take over the family farm.

The following five barriers exist:

- A lack of access to land due to high land prices and insufficient lease term agreements for rented land. Short-term leases are seen as too high risk to support significant long term investment by potential farmers.
- A lack of access to capital and credit as lenders are more reluctant to give loans to start up farming enterprises. Insufficient finances result in the inability to purchase machinery meaning that farms are left with inadequate supplies and equipment.
- A lack of access to practical educational training that includes business planning, marketing, and familiarization with Ontario agriculture. University level agricultural programs assume students know the practical side of farming, and focus on the advanced science.
- A lack of a unified farming community among interested immigrants, the majority of whom reside in cities, often in high-rise apartments and who work in other occupations, in spite of their own agricultural background. They simply lack links to rural Ontario.
- A lack of resources being put toward research on growing and marketing of new crops in Ontario.

With the number of farms, farmland and farmers dwindling, the importance of creating opportunities for a new generation of ethnically diverse farmers and young farmers, and of helping young farm family members to take over their farm, becomes exceedingly more important and urgent.

## Recommendations:

- 1) Establishing a partnership between CLAWS, FarmStart and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority is needed to develop two training farms and other support programs, which can provide a focus for encouraging immigrant communities to get involved in Ontario agriculture.
- 2) Creating a program of links to rural Ontario and existing farmers and farm organizations is necessary to support interested new farmers, to provide new crop possibilities, and to enable the development of rural ethnic communities.
- 3) Continuing the collaboration with potential new farmers and immigrant communities is important in order to build new kinds of farms, farmers and food production including ethnic food in the Greenbelt.
- 4) Placing a priority on convincing the government to create new land ownership and renting opportunities is needed, as well as resources for more equipment, training, market development and partnerships between farmers.
- 5) Challenging the agricultural sector and organizations to help lead the way in creating opportunities for both the ethnic farmer and the young farmer is crucial. Opportunities include giving farmers access to credit and low interest loans similar to the start-up grants widely provided in Europe.
- 6) Training and incubator farms for new farmers are needed as well as business training in order for farmers to make a smooth transition from trying out crops to building their own farm successfully.
- 7) Creating links between academic institutions in Ontario and in the country of origin for immigrants is required for groups to work together with existing Ontario farmers and new immigrants to research the suitability of potential new crops to southern Ontario's soil and climate.
- 8) Generating better access to markets for farmers (including existing farmers) is of the utmost importance. Farmers get a considerably better price for their products when they sell directly to the consumer instead of the wholesaler. For this reason, there is a significant need to rebuild the supply chain so that small and medium size farmers in the Greenbelt can sell locally in order to get the best price possible for their products.
- 9) Developing partnerships between organizations such as CEDIW in Ajax is needed to embed the establishment of training farms in the ethnic communities themselves.

10) Enhanced interest in the Greenbelt on the part of new Canadians and their leaders results in the need to answer their questions about the Greenbelt such as:

- Where is it?
- What does it look like?
- What can we do?
- How do we get there?
- Can we live and work there?

This report outlines the above projects, the methods used, findings and subsequent recommendations.



The number of farms, farmers and farmland is dwindling. With this in mind, an increased importance is placed on creating opportunities for a new generation of ethnically diverse farmers and young farmers.

The more chances we have for new farmers to farm their own land, the more opportunities people of all cultures will have to take advantage of local crops.

# Introduction

**T**he Greenbelt is an area of permanently protected land spanning 1.8 million acres across Southern Ontario. The area stretches from Niagara Falls to Tobermory to Peterborough and encompasses green space, farmland, vibrant communities, forests, wetlands and watersheds. It surrounds the province's Golden Horseshoe – the most populated area of Canada, and is vital to the quality of life in southern Ontario.

The Greenbelt was created by legislation in February of 2005. The purpose of the Greenbelt is to protect key environmentally sensitive land and farmlands from urban development and sprawl.

The *Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation* began its work in June 2005 as a charitable foundation with a mandate to fund organizations in support of farming, the environment and rural communities located in Ontario's Greenbelt.

In June 2006, the *Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation* granted \$62,000 to the Centre for Land and Water Stewardship at the University of Guelph. The "Supporting New Farmers in the Greenbelt" project assessed current farming opportunities for immigrant and new young farmers and develops a collaborative strategy for supporting these farmers in the Greenbelt.

The motivation for the project is in response to a high demand for agricultural careers from



# 2

## Community Consultations

Community consultations with existing farmers in the Greenbelt, young would-be farmers, and immigrants in the GTA were held throughout 2006 and 2007. The six ethnic communities noted below were the focus. The consultations concentrated on the needs, ideas and interests of these groups related to farming. Both formal and informal meetings, tours, and interviews were held as a means to get collective input. Special mention should be made of CRAFT and CEDIW, two case studies described in detail below.

In addition, consultations were held with most major farm organizations, a number of urban-oriented local food groups, and others interested in supporting young people wishing to get into farming or having land that could be used on a trial basis. These included both FarmStart and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. These two organizations ended up being the other key members of the consortium who will continue this work.

### **2.1 Methodology**

Consultations among community members took many forms:

- Focus groups
- Tours
- Visits to immigrant community centres
- Farm kitchen meetings
- Tours of Black Creek Pioneer Village and Everdale Organic Farm
- Discussion at events and workshops including:
  - World Food Day
  - Latomell Symposium
  - Canadian Organic Growers Conference
  - Ontario Farmland Trust Workshop
  - Places to Grow Food Workshop
  - Toronto Food Policy Council Meetings

Two focus groups were held as a means of direct engagement. The first focus group with existing farmers was held in February 2007. It provided an opportunity for critical comment from the farm sector. Participants included several Toronto area farm leaders and individual active farmers from the GTA region. Issues discussed included how current farmers could be supporters “and co-learners” in new Greenbelt agricultural ventures.

The second focus group was held with conservationists, consumers and immigrants at a workshop on “Places to Grow... Food” held at the Ontario Farmland Trust Meeting in April 2007. The session, ‘Supporting New and Young Farmers’ focused on barriers to farming opportunities for new and young farmers. A virtual tour of five farms on Toronto and Region Conservation Authority lands focused on the needs and interests of representatives of the Pakistani community in Greenbelt farming.

## **2.2 Findings**

What stood out most in conversations that took place during the focus groups and tours was the number of barriers new Canadian farmers and young would-be farmers face. Some of these barriers also apply to the younger generation trying to inherit existing farms and continue a viable farm business.

These include:

- A lack of access to land due to high land prices and insufficient lease term agreements for rented land. Short-term leases are seen as too high risk to support significant long term investment by potential farmers.
- A lack of access to capital and credit as lenders are more reluctant to give loans to start up farming enterprises. Insufficient finances result in the inability to purchase machinery meaning that farms are left with inadequate supplies and equipment.
- A lack of access to practical educational training that includes business planning, marketing, and familiarization with Ontario agriculture. University level agricultural

programs assume students know the practical side of farming, and focus on the advanced science.

- A lack of a unified farming community among interested immigrants, the majority of whom reside in cities, often in high-rise apartments and who work in other occupations, in spite of their own agricultural background. They simply lack links to rural Ontario.
- A lack of resources being put toward research on growing and marketing of new crops in Ontario.

Positive feedback that came from the focus groups and tours showed that existing farmers are open to growing new crops that will enhance their farm income. Both existing farmers and immigrant farmers agreed that sharing land and experience in growing certain crops is mutually beneficial. Another optimistic finding is that Greenbelt land is slowly being used to grow more diverse crops by some current farmers.

Also emphasized is the need for major support from institutions such as the University of Guelph, major farming associations and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to create opportunities for new kinds of farming or to support these partnerships among existing farmers, new farmers and immigrants.

### **2.3 Culture Specific Observations**

The needs and interests of immigrants vary among the different ethno-cultural communities. Also, the length of time immigrants have spent in Canada may influence their interest in and availability for farming and food production as the first several years are dedicated to making basic adjustments with the language and culture. Many immigrants retain a strong interest in maintaining food and food-culture related habits and pastimes. And there are a surprising number of immigrants who either have a farming background, or have university level training in agriculture from their home country.

South Asian community:

In the GTA, the Pakistani community in Ajax and the Sikh community in Brampton are both proposing to work with FarmStart to develop training or incubator farms. FarmStart is a key partner in future proposed work, a not-for-profit organization that works with the next generation of farmers to develop economically viable projects within the agricultural industry. They are currently looking for resources to get these projects off the ground. In British Columbia, a large South Asian immigrant population is the only example in Canada of an immigrant community that is already involved in large scale collective food production development.

African community:

Many in the African community are eager to learn about farming opportunities in the Greenbelt. They want to facilitate discussion and share information about the Greenbelt

and the opportunities for agriculture and urban/rural exchange including visits to rural farms and markets.

The African Food Basket and the African Canadian Cultural Collective have expressed interest in coming together on a community farming project in the Greenbelt and in making better urban/rural connections. They are already involved in a food production effort on an ‘urban farm’ at Black Creek Pioneer Village, working with youth in their community.

#### Chinese community:

One success story is that a variety of Asian vegetables like bok choy and nappa cabbage are already being grown in the Greenbelt – some by immigrant farmers. A well established Chinese community within the GTA allows for a great opportunity to build connections between immigrants and the Greenbelt.

The Chinese Canadian National Council supports making these connections and enhancing the Chinese community’s awareness and experience with the Greenbelt and growing new crops. Their interest includes recreation in the Greenbelt.

#### Korean Community:

The Korean community wants to take advantage of Koreans already farming in the Greenbelt by creating links between new immigrants and these farmers including excursions into the Greenbelt.

#### Hispanic community:

The Hispanic Development Council’s Executive Director has also expressed interest in discussing future opportunities for Greenbelt gatherings and farm related opportunities with Mexican, Central and South American constituents.

# 3

## Case Study on South Asian Community's Farming Interests and Needs

**C**ommunity Economic Development for Immigrant Women (CEDIW) is an organization based in Ajax that creates social and economic opportunities for those who might otherwise be limited from fully participating in the economic life of the community. Their case study is a result of extensive consultations, tours and project development brainstorming sessions. Iffat Zehra, Executive Director of CEDIW, conducted the case study and provided background data, a plan for a training farm in the region, as well as research on new products and new markets to serve the South Asian community.

### **3.1 Methodology**

Interviews were held with South Asian immigrants in the nearby York and Durham Regions. Members of CEDIW visited many South Asian ethnic grocery stores selling vegetables, herbs and spices catered to South Asian customers in the Toronto area. These customers completed a one-on-one survey. Interviews took place with suppliers and the organization participated in an exhibition of Ethnic Food in Toronto attended by suppliers, importers and food processors.

### 3.2 Findings

There is a great demand for South Asian produce in the South Asian community. That demand is not satisfactorily met with the existing system of supply from India and Pakistan through Pakistan International Airline and Air India. Customs issues, the small amount and variety of food actually being imported and the poor quality of imports are all concerns related to flying food in from other countries. In order to meet the demand for ethnically diverse crops, the alternative is to grow these foods locally. There is an opportunity to test new vegetables and new varieties of existing vegetables, flowers, decorative plants and herbs. For example, the varieties of bitter melon, okra, eggplant, green chilies, beans, yam and sweet potato which South Asian people enjoy in their home countries are not available in big grocery stores, so they are buying them from ethnic stores that import produce from India or Pakistan.

The cultural values of these types of exotic plants are also important. Many South Asian community festivals are connected to certain plants. If these plants are not available then the cultural life of South Asian Canadians suffers. Basent, Devali, Mandi, Eid are some of the festivals connected to plants and certain animals. Thus the interest of some ethnic communities in food production is



A young couple enjoys the variety of ethnic fruits and vegetables available at an Ontario market.

Unfortunately there are not enough locally grown ethnic foods to support demand. In order to meet the demand for ethnically diverse crops, the most logical alternative is to grow these foods locally.

strongly tied to their culture.

CEDIW is attempting to secure a permit to import seeds and bulbs from Pakistan to test grow plants in the GTA. Connections are being made in Pakistan to meet the officials of Seed Corporation, National Agriculture Research Centre and Pakistan Agriculture Research Centre. Through these meetings, information has been collected on the procedures to import certain kinds of seeds and plants, and the varieties, which are more suitable for the cold climate of Ontario.

To start testing these plants around the GTA, resources such as land, expert guidance and partnerships with local farmers and immigrants are needed. CEDIW hopes the collaboration with the University of Guelph, connections with agricultural institutes in Pakistan and proper funding from concerned funders will help achieve the mission of a training farm for South Asian Canadians.

Such a training farm would serve several purposes. It would provide a context for participants to become familiar with the soil and climate resources of southern Ontario. Training would include familiarization with Ontario's agricultural industry, including processing and marketing opportunities. It would function as an incubator farm for trials of crops and markets to help new farmers get started on a small scale. In a variety of ways it could support programs to link immigrant communities to rural Ontario, including direct partnerships with and mentorships with individual existing Canadian farmers.

# 4

## Young Farmers

**T**he group Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training (CRAFT) Ontario provides training to would-be new farmers in organic agriculture through season-long on-farm internships. In partnership with University of Guelph, the organization surveyed its alumni on their experiences, expectations and outcomes.

### **4.1 Methodology**

Ninety-five CRAFT interns (63 per cent of total interns) received an Internet survey in February 2007. Fifty-six interns responded. The survey included 38 questions, containing a mix of closed-ended and open-ended questions. Percentages refer to the proportion of respondents that provided a particular answer (note that respondents would often give more than one answer). Appendix A presents the complete findings from the survey.

## 4.2 Findings

The most significant finding from the survey is that 36 per cent of CRAFT alumni are currently farming. Of those who are currently farming, only 25 per cent own their own land. Seventy per cent of those currently farming are farming tiny plots of 1 to 5 acres and they are not making a living from farming. This is a considerable disappointment for those involved in the program with 97 per cent saying they want to be farming. This gap in numbers indicates a lack of resources and shows that barriers do exist for those young farmers who want to be farming local land.

The biggest barrier concerns accessing land and securing start-up costs. Being able to finance a farm is worrisome because while new farmers are trying to generate income during internships, they are also paying off student loans.

Those who are farming are renting land and farming with partners. However, this land is difficult to find. Most have had to find an off-farm source of income but feel the farm will eventually support them in three years or less.

Almost all respondents dream of a small-scale diversified farm with a focus on direct sales through Community Shared Agriculture (CSAs) or farmers' markets, often with small scale livestock incorporated. Many want to include educational programming or social outreach into their farming but finances are the main barrier preventing these alumni from doing so.



Young farmers need to be given a chance to carry on the farming tradition within their families.

Although they have access to the land on family farms, next generation farmers still face a significant financial burden.

New farmers want a more engaged network of farmers to facilitate farm visits and resource sharing and a better variety of services and programs such as business planning and start-up grants.

Despite the stereotype that the average individual interested in farming is a rural male and in his 50s, the survey shows the typical CRAFT participant is 26, female (68%) and grew up in the city (43%).

According to the survey, about half have at least a few months of on-farm experience though very few have had the opportunity to spend an entire season on one.

Alumni realize the importance of building relationships in the farming community and feel their internship was most helpful for building a network of farmers and interns, for introducing them to the big picture of farming and for giving them a hands-on immersion into farming, which is why programs like CRAFT are so important to the livelihood of farming.

The study also shows that since their internship, alumni have remained very engaged in food and farming activities. Many have taken on related jobs, are involved in community organizations, are working on other organic farms or have attended workshops/conferences. It is clear the interest in farming is there, it is the lack of resources and government initiatives that is attributing to the decline in the physical number of farms.

The challenges these young people face in starting a farm are mirrored in part by similar challenges facing the children of existing farmers. While they have access to land on the family farms, their financial challenges are particularly significant. The Ontario Cattlemen's Association is currently leading a project to examine the challenges facing young people on existing farm who wish to inherit and take over the family farm.

# 5

## Conclusions

**T**hrough the three elements of this project, community consultations, the study of would-be ethnic farmers, and would-be young farmers, we have established that there is a strong interest in farming among immigrant communities in Toronto and young people. However, a lack of resources, particularly access to land and a lack of connections to Ontario agriculture are major limitations.

For the ethnic community and young farmers, the introduction of one or more training/incubator farms providing land and equipment for trial crops, as well as crop and market development strategies will engage these groups in project development. Development of links to rural Ontario and its agricultural community will build connections between existing and new farmers and farm organizations.

Recommendations:

- 1) Establishing a partnership between CLAWS, FarmStart and the Toronto and Re-

gion Conservation Authority is needed to develop two training farms and other support programs, which can provide a focus for encouraging immigrant communities to get involved in Ontario agriculture.

2) Creating a program of links to rural Ontario and existing farmers and farm organizations is necessary to support interested new farmers, to provide new crop possibilities, and to enable the development of rural ethnic communities.

3) Continuing the collaboration with potential new farmers and immigrant communities is important in order to build new kinds of farms, farmers and food production including ethnic food in the Greenbelt.

4) Placing a priority on convincing the government to create new land ownership and renting opportunities is needed, as well as resources for more equipment, training, market development and partnerships between farmers.

5) Challenging the agricultural sector and organizations to help lead the way in creating opportunities for both the ethnic farmer and the young farmer is crucial. Opportunities include giving farmers access to credit and low interest loans similar to the start-up grants widely provided in Europe.

6) Training and incubator farms for new farmers are needed as well as business training in order for farmers to make a smooth transition from trying out crops to building their own farm successfully.

7) Creating links between academic institutions in Ontario and in the country of origin for immigrants is required for groups to work together with existing Ontario farmers and new immigrants to research the suitability of potential new crops to southern Ontario's soil and climate.

8) Generating better access to markets for farmers (including existing farmers) is of the utmost importance. Farmers get a considerably better price for their products when they sell directly to the consumer instead of the wholesaler. For this reason, there is a significant need to rebuild the supply chain so that small and medium size farmers in the Greenbelt can sell locally in order to get the best price possible for their products.

9) Developing partnerships between organizations such as CEDIW in Ajax is needed to embed the establishment of training farms in the ethnic communities themselves.

10) Enhanced interest in the Greenbelt on the part of new Canadians and their leaders results in the need to answer their questions about the Greenbelt such as:

- Where is it?
- What does it look like?
- What can we do?

- How do we get there?
- Can we live and work there?

These steps will produce opportunities to allow the businesses of immigrant farmers and young farmers to flourish and eventually generate more opportunities for future Canadian farmers, while introducing new crops for the ethnic market to Ontario.

Through the research completed it is clear the interest exists. The next step is finding the resources. Planting the first seed is always the challenge but with the enthusiasm of community leaders and the farmers themselves, progress will be made toward an ever more diverse agriculture sector in the Greenbelt.



A great emphasis needs to be placed on creating a program of links to rural Ontario and existing farmers and farm organizations to support interested new farmers, to provide new crop possibilities, and to enable the development of rural ethnic communities.

This is just one of the many recommendations put forth in order to create a more diverse agriculture in the Greenbelt.

## Appendix A: CRAFT Alumni Survey Findings

Survey sent to 95 interns, 56 responded (59% response rate)

The average respondent is twenty-six years old and female (68%). Sixty-four per cent of respondents say they are not currently farming. Of those who are not farming, 97% say they want to be. Most were raised in the city (43%) with only 7 per cent of respondents raised on a farm. Eighty-one per cent say their highest level of education is university with 37% studying arts/humanities. Prior experience ranges from home gardening/occasional farm visit (31%), employment, family farm or internship (31%), intensive volunteering or Willing Workers on Organic Farms (WWOOF) (20%), research or landscaping (9%) or none at all (13%). According to the survey, about 50% have at least a few months of experience on farms, though very few have spent an entire season on one farm.

Skills the respondents would have liked to have developed (51 respondents)	Skills related to business and gardening	33%
	Skills related to tractor or other farm machinery work	16%
	Skills related to livestock care or working with horses	14%
	Skills related to construction/carpentry	6%
	Skills related to self-sufficiency of small-scale gardening	6%
	No skills they would have liked to have developed - satisfied	27%

How did your internship most help support your needs as a new farmer? (51 respondents)	The network of farmers and new farmers we were able to meet	37%
	Knowledge base/intro to big picture of farming/figure out if this is for me/know how to go about starting own farm	29%
	Hands on experience/immersion into farming	20%
	Confidence to farm	16%
	Given responsibility	14%
	Practical skills	14%
	Big picture understanding	8%
	CRAFT farmers' commitment to learning	14%

How could your internship have better served your needs as a new farmer? (40 respondents)	Nothing	15%
	Planning/finances/business development	15%
	Don't know	10%
	Higher wage	8%
	More responsibility	8%
	More theory/formal learning	8%
	Follow-up learning/networking	8%
	Closer connection with other CRAFT farms	5%

What farming and/or food-related experiences have you had since CRAFT? (55 respondents)	Attending conferences/workshops	40%
	Jobs	35%
	Community engagement	35%
	Work on other farms	33%
	Food/agriculture education	25%
	School work/research	22%
	Community gardens	11%

Are you currently farming? (54 respondents)	Yes	36%
	No	64%

**Results for those currently farming:**

Please provide a detailed account of your role and farm operation. (20 respondents)	Market garden	72%
	Market garden also including livestock on a small scale	46%
	Market gardens also sell to restaurants	31%
	Educational component to farm	22%

Size of farm? (20 respondents)	1-5 acres	70%
	5-10 acres	25%
	+10 acres	5%

How long with current farm? (20 respondents)	1-2 years	60%
	3-5 years	40%

Who are you working for? (20 respondents)	Running own business	80%
	NGO	15%
	Working for a wage	5%

Those running their own business are: (20 respondents)	Farming with partners	88%
	Farming alone	12%
	Renting	75%
	Own land	25%

Would you consider your farm to economically support you: (20 respondents)	Now	35%
	In one year	5%
	In 3 years	30%
	In 10 years	5%
	Working for a wage (someone else's farm or a non-profit)	20%
	Don't know	5%

Do you have an off-farm source of income?	Yes	65%
	No	35%

As a new farmer, what resources are you drawing on? (17 respondents)	Books/magazines	82%
	Other farmers	82%
	Workshops/conferences	24%
	Organization	18%
	Family	12%
	Online resources	12%

What experiences and/or resources have been most useful in helping you learn to farm? (16 respondents)	CRAFT internship	75%
	Hands-on learning/trial and error	50%
	Other farmers	19%
	Books/ Resources	19%
	Family	13%

What are the most significant challenges you have encountered while pursuing farming? (17 respondents)	Financial viability	35%
	Work-life balance	12%
	High capital costs	12%
	Seeming lack of knowledge	12%
	Access to land	12%
	Business partnerships	12%
	How much to grow	12%

As a new farmer, what help would you currently like? (16 respondents)	Network of farmers	56%
	Support programs	36%
	Access to land	31%
	Extension agent/organization/hotline	19%

What are you currently pursuing? (33 respondents)	Work	33%
	School	30%
	Food-related activism	21%
	Internship, volunteering on a farm or gardening	18%
	Agricultural education	12%

**Results for those not currently farming:**

How has your CRAFT internship helped you in this work (or other activity)? (33 respondents)	“Eye opener” to the issues facing today’s food and farming systems	44%
	Filled them with passion for food and farming, and helped have confidence to focus their energies and interests	40%
	Gave them the skills and direction to move towards a farming lifestyle	30%
	Helped them in their current jobs or studies	18%
	Importance of connecting to the local organic community	15%

Would you like to farm? (35 respondents)	Yes	97%
	No	3%

**Results from those interested in farming:**

What experiences and/or resources have been most useful in helping you learn to farm? (29 respondents)

All respondents mention the CRAFT internship as their most valuable experience, referring to the hands-on immersion into farm life. Of specific note are the networks formed, allowing participants to draw on the knowledge of experienced farmers, the intentional learning activities (workshops, farm visits) and being given responsibility. Books are noted by 28% of people. Other answers noted by 2 to 4 respondents included the organic agriculture conference, academia, websites and other on-farm work experiences.

What are the most significant challenges you have encountered while pursuing farming? (31 respondents)

By far the biggest concern relates to finances (61%), especially with regards to accessing land and securing start-up costs. Also noted is the lack of income generated during internships, while still having to pay off student loans. Mentioned by 3 or 4 respondents is the physical exhaustion, isolation of farm settings, not having enough experience, and the relationship dynamics. Other answers included the difficulty of forming partnerships, developing markets, the socio-political environment, the unpredictability of weather and the fear of failure.

What would your dream farm operation look like? (32 respondents)

Almost all respondents are dreaming of a small-scale diversified farm with a focus on direct sales through CSA or farmers markets (41%). Sixteen per cent of individuals suggest that their farming would be only for self-sustenance, 50% want to include live-stock and occasionally dairy, honey and grains, 47% want to incorporate educational programming or social outreach, 16% mention wanting only to farm part-time, and 28% mention wanting to farm in community or with partners. Nine per cent mention wanting to farm with draft horses, 9% mention wanting to use sustainable technologies and only one person wants to have a purely livestock operation and two want some kind of added value production.

Is anything preventing you from farming? (33 respondents)	Finances	42%
	Pay off student loan/tuition	18%
	Still in school or enjoying work	15%
	Want to do other things first	15%
	Need more experience	12%
	Access to land	9%
	Rural lifestyle	9%
	Fear of failure	6%

What would make it possible for you to farm? (29 respondents)	Financial security	62%
	More experience	28%
	Access to land	21%
	Supportive rural/farm community	17%

**Results from everyone:**

In the future, how do you hope to apply your experience and interest in farming? (50 respondents)

Almost everyone intends to farm. Many (26%) also want to pursue education ventures: train new farmers how to farm or teach the general public about food and agriculture. Many respondents also mentioned wanting to be involved in advocacy, food security issues and community development around food.

What advice would you give to other new farmers considering farming as a livelihood? (45 respondents)

The most common pieces of advice:

- Do as many internships as you can (for the entire seasons)
- Find creative ways to farm that don't involve buying land right away (start business on someone else's farm; get paid position; rent land...)
- Be part of a network of other farmers
- Start slowly/small
- Maintain an off-farm source of income (especially at the beginning)
- Find partners to farm with
- Always keep furthering your education