

Supporting Success: Coaching, Mentorship and Advising for New Farmers in Ontario

*How farmers are passing on business 'know-how',
technical production knowledge and moral support
to a new generation.*

A FarmON Publication

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A FarmON Publication



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Introduction

The path to becoming a farmer is no longer just for those who were raised on a family farm or in a rural area. Many new farmers are coming from urban areas or are changing careers later in life. Those who do come from a family farm often choose to shift the focus of the farm to something that better suits their interests or needs. A growing interest for many farmers is diversified ecological production. Those farmers require a unique set of skills that are not easily found in traditional agriculture training. Ontario is fortunate to have a many training opportunities available for new farmers, including assistance that is relevant for ecological farmers. Of course, even with the training opportunities that do exist, there are still training and skills-building needs that are not yet being met. In some cases new training opportunities need to be developed, and in other cases beginning or re-strategizing farmers need assistance connecting with existing opportunities to learn.

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of one-on-one coaching, mentoring and advising (CMA) assistance available to new farmers in Ontario. The study is not intended to be a comprehensive listing of all forms of assistance, but rather an overview of the major types of one-on-one assistance currently available in Ontario, along with a few useful examples from other locations.

The training and knowledge needs of prospective and new farmers evolve as they transition from a recruit to established farmer. The needs of each new farm are unique and benefit from different combinations of one-on-one forms of support. Initially introduced in a report from the New England Small Farm Institute in 2001, the spectrum shown in Figure 1 was adapted by FarmStart to include the inverted triangle.

This diagram provides a framework for discussing and developing programs to support prospective and new farmers.

As illustrated in *Figure 1*, the focus of new farmers progressively becomes more refined and the training and resources become more targeted as prospective farmers move through the various stages of farm experience.

New farmers tend to gain skills and information from a wide diversity of sources. As a farmer gains experience, the type of skills and information required

Figure 1. New Farmers Spectrum – (FarmStart and New England Small Farm Institute)



becomes less general and more specific. As a new farmer progresses through the stages of development they increasingly turn to their communities and known resources to address their farm plans and problems. CMA services can play a valuable role providing support to new or re-strategizing farmers. These farmers can learn from the experiences of other farmers and can integrate successful practices seen on a mentor's farm. Often the new skills and knowledge gained through CMA assistance can save time, labour, and money. *Figure 2* illustrates the types of learning and support commonly used at each stage of farmer development.

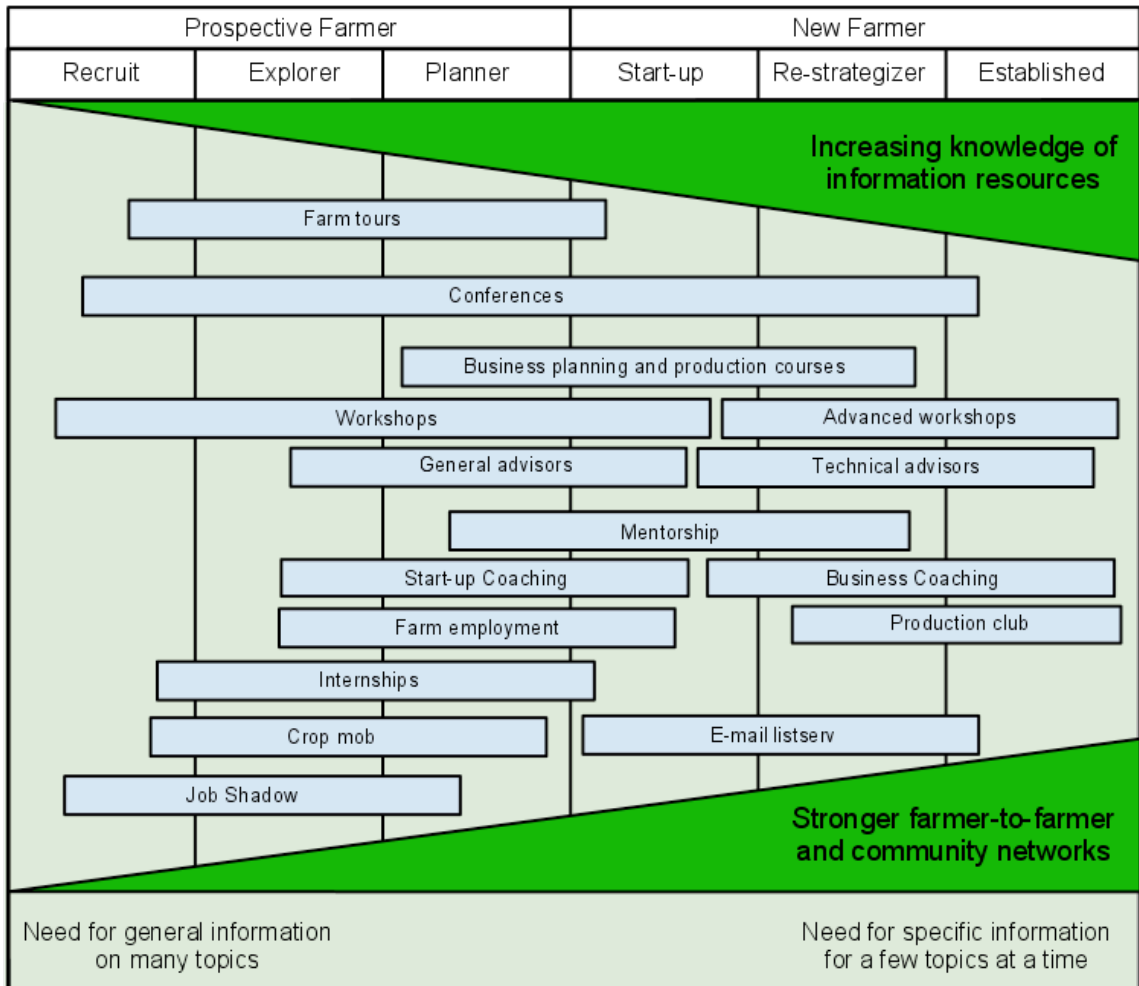


Figure 2. Knowledge and Skill Sources used by Farmer Development Stage

Individualized support through formal coaching, mentoring and advising programs to help new farmers understand and access the right kinds of training and resources at the right time is critical for successful and professional farm business development. However, often it is the informal farmer-to-farmer learning opportunities that are the best ways to provide tested and true business 'know how', practical production knowledge and trouble shooting, as well as guidance and moral support for a new generation of farmers. By creating and facilitating informal opportunities for beginning and established farmers to connect with one another outside of formal CMA matching

programs. For example, by referring an individual who calls their office looking for information to another experienced farmer involved in their area of production, or by hosting a conference or workshop that includes social time or meal time around conference meetings, organizations play an important role in helping new farmers find the right mentors and advisors.

Methodology

This exploratory study compiles information from companies and organizations currently involved in one-on-one knowledge transfer through on-line research and interviews. The profiles were supplied or verified by the participating organizations.

Interviews were conducted with 26 individuals representing organizations or businesses working in the CMA sector. The interviews took place from November 2011 to January 2012 and were semi-structured to allow for broader discussions on challenges and opportunities with CMA forms of assistance. Appendix 1 contains a summary of all projects or programs interviewed.

There are many different kinds of learning opportunities for new farmers. This report does not extensively review group learning opportunities like workshops, courses or production clubs; the main focus is on assistance and support that is provided in one-on-one coaching, mentoring or advising scenarios. In some instances this one-on-one support has been incorporated as a component of a course or workshop, often as a follow-up component; these examples are included. Similarly, the report presents the perspectives of the service providers rather than the viewpoint of the client or farmer.



Definitions: Coaching, Mentoring and Advising

There are some clear distinctions between coaching, mentoring and advising. The distinction can be attributed to the skills and knowledge a coach, mentor or advisor provides and the way in which the information is communicated. The following definitions presented in *Table 1* are based on a report by Matt Starceвич available at www.coachingandmentoring.com/Articles/mentoring.html and have been refined through feedback during the interview process. These definitions are meant only to clarify the differences between coaching, mentoring and advising. The interviews revealed that often coach, mentor and advisor roles adapt to the needs of the new farmer and over time may evolve from one form of assistance to another. For example, when a farmer works with the same general advisor multiple times, their relationship may shift towards mentorship.

Table 1. Defining a Coach, Mentor and Advisor for the Farmer Training Sector

Factors	Coach	Mentor	Advisor
Roles	Client-directed process to define and support achievement of client defined goals.	Holistic support for mentee farmer based on on-going relationships that have a personal quality.	Specific knowledge to help accomplish a specific goal or solve a specific problem.
Examples	Business coach, Local organization.	Farmer neighbour, Workshop facilitator, Internship host farmer.	Experienced farmer, lawyer, accountant, agronomist, consultant.
Provides	Network building, Goal setting, Support to achieve goals, Business building support, Referrals to appropriate resources and training.	Guidance, Longterm perspective, A “big picture view,” Hands-on skills, Relevant experience, Lifestyle advice, Regional farm knowledge.	Specific knowledge, Specific skills, Relevant experience.

The following section provides a glimpse of the major types of CMA assistance in Ontario while the full and detailed profiles are listed in *Appendix A*. In addition to these formal CMA programs, there are numerous informal mentorship opportunities based on the inherent generosity of generations of farmers sharing and teaching each other.

It can be assumed that many farmers will find local mentors or advisors through their own networks; these examples are difficult to track.

Examples of successful programs from the North East and North Central United States are included to provide some understanding of potential opportunities. Categorization of the programs is provided here as a way to provide some structure and clarity to the overview and should be viewed as a general guideline.

Coaching

Coaching is a client-directed process in which the coach helps define and support the process of achieving client defined goals. Unlike advisors or mentors, coaches typically do not offer advice or specific technical information. Instead they provide guidance, useful resources, and support. Coaches are vital in addressing the unique needs of a farmer during the planning, start-up and re-strategizing phases of farm development. Current examples use coaching primarily for targeted business planning support. Coaches provide:

- Networking opportunities
- Support in addressing individual barriers, questions and goals
- Guidance in the development of a comprehensive farm plan
- Assistance with finding a suitable mentor
- Guidance in finding appropriate resources and training
- Options for accessing land

Example: Enterprise Facilitators (Hastings, Lennox and Addington Counties and Kingston)

This program provides business coaching and one-on-one support for problem solving, networking and achieving business goals. This is a program that is unique to these three regions. Enterprise facilitators offer free access to professional support such as advising on banking arrangements, assistance in networking with other businesses, or guidance in finding support and resources as needed.

Example: FarmStart's Digging into Farming Course

The *Digging into Farming Course* is designed as a two-day course co-facilitated by an experienced farmer and a Regional FarmStart Coach. It is intended for those prospective farmers who are ready to start developing realistic goals, clarify their farm vision, evaluate their options, begin identifying the resources and knowledge they already have and those they need to acquire. The goal is to help them adopt an active planning approach, and to develop a strategy to pursue appropriate training and asset building before they jump into their farm business.

The *Digging into Farming Course* aims to:

- Provide a strong foundation for lifelong farm business planning and the benefits of consulting qualified professional advisors.
- Support each participant in the completion of a New Farm Action Plan, and

- Introduce participants to the resources and tools available to them from government, community and institutional providers to carry out their farm development plans.



FarmStart's Digging into Farming Course provide new farmers with the opportunity for self assessment and knowledge of resources, as well as writing Farm Development Action Plans

The central course outcome is a New Farm Action Plan reviewed and signed off by the course facilitator identifying next steps to be taken regarding 46 different business planning and production topics. This planning stage would be supported by a Regional FarmStart Coach connecting the participants to local resources and organizations and to a range of business planning, technical skills building, mentorship, financial planning and other training and development opportunities.

US Coaching Models

Land Stewardship Project's (LSP) Farm Beginnings

Graduates of this business planning course work with course facilitators to develop a learning action plan that focuses on three critical areas in which the farmers need to focus on after the course is finished. The facilitator knows the participants well and can draw from a variety of sources and connections to develop a customized plan that may include: workshops, job shadowing, farm tours, mentorship, relevant books and other resources for independent study. After the growing season an on-line survey is sent for evaluation and a potluck is held where informal check-ins are conducted.

Intervale Center – Success on Farms, VT

Success on Farms (SOF) is a two-year business planning program that helps Vermont farm operations improve their viability. They work one-on-one with selected farmers throughout the state providing specialized support and business planning assistance to help farmers expand their markets, increase revenues and achieve other quality of life goals that are critical to keeping them farming. In the first year, Intervale staff assists farmers in assessing their businesses, determine areas for action and create a team of advisors to work directly with the farmer in developing a detailed business plan. During year two, the effectiveness of the farmers' business planning is evaluated, updated and one to three aspects are implemented. The program works with farmers to identify funding to support both capital and operational costs required by their business plans. The program is free for farmers and funded by the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board.

Mentorship

Farm mentors provide vital skills and knowledge grounded in their own experience. Mentorship is a term reserved for ongoing types of relationships that have a personal quality and provide mutual benefits. Mentors provide moral support, wisdom, hands-on skills and a view of the big picture. Mentorship is most used in the start-up and establishing phases of starting a new farm business.

Mentors provide:

- An experienced perspective
- Skills transfer
- Regional knowledge and networks
- Access to equipment and assistance with maintenance
- Technical advice
- Immediate assistance when needed
- Mentors may shift into advisor roles at time

Example: CFBMC Step-Up

This program is a national bilingual on-farm mentorship opportunity open to any kind of farming. The program connects mentors and mentees from across the country for on-farm experiences lasting a minimum of eight weeks. The program is open to new as well as transitioning farmers and focuses mentoring relationships on farm business management skill transfer. In 2011 Step-Up was re-visioned and is looking to offer an increased number of opportunities across the country.

Example: Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training (CRAFT)

The CRAFT program offers over one-hundred full-season internships across Ontario on approximately 60 ecological farms. Farms offer education and training in exchange for labour on the farm. Many graduates of CRAFT internships go on to begin their own farms and maintain the relationship they developed during their internships in a mentorship capacity.



Ken and Martha Laing of Orchard Hill Farm, often act as mentors for interns and other new farmers

US Mentorship Models

Midwest Organic & Sustainable Education Service (MOSES), WI, USA

MOSES provides a variety of ecological agriculture education opportunities. The most important is the MOSES Conference, the largest ecological agriculture conference in North America where many new farmers meet potential mentors. Beyond the conference, the MOSES Farmer-to-Farmer Mentoring Program pairs experienced organic farmers with transitioning organic farmers to promote the successful adoption of organic methods through one-on-one interaction. The program accepts applicants including new farmers, who pay \$200 and in return receive two annual farm visits from a mentor, two conference passes and admission to training events coordinated by MOSES throughout the growing season.

Maine Organic Farming & Gardeners Association (MOFGA) ME, USA

The Journeyperson Program provides hands-on, mentored farming opportunities and training for people who are serious about pursuing careers in organic farming in Maine. Mentees must apply and be accepted to receive mentorship, access to MOFGA advisors and resources, admission to MOFGA events, education stipend of \$500 a year, farm business planning course, and support in finding land. The program is two years long and mentees are able to choose their mentor

Advising

Farm and business advisors provide specific knowledge as needed in response to questions from their clients. The appropriate advisor is determined by the nature of the problem or goal to be addressed. Advisors typically have taken training related to their services or develop skill sets from many years of experience. Advisors offer specialized knowledge and information and are used throughout the start-up to established phases. Advisors may provide information on:

- Advanced production techniques
- Agronomy
- Livestock nutrition and husbandry
- Detailed planning
- Regulations
- Certification
- Legal issues
- Insurance
- Financial matters and financing
- All aspects of farm management
- Equipment and technology choices, utilization, and maintenance

US Advising Models

Land Stewardship Project 4 - Advisor Support Pilot MN, USA

Farmers who receive a loan also receive quarterly on-farm visits from production specialists. Last year two vegetable and two livestock farms each received two hours of on-farm consulting from an appropriate advisor. The Land Stewardship project is currently considering a program for all ecological farms which provides on-farm visits from a production specialist, LSP staff person and a financial person.

Example: Ecological Farmers of Ontario (EFO)

EFO's telephone advisory service is free for all farmers and receives approximately four hundred calls per year. This service allows farmers to make direct calls to advisors they have used previously after initially being referred from the EFO office. In addition, new farmers can request on-farm advising for a subsidized rate of \$100 for a three hour visit. The future of this program is in jeopardy as funding for the program is uncertain.

Example: Canadian Organic Growers – Perth Waterloo Wellington Chapter (COG PWW)

COG PWW developed a Transition Advisory Service which aims to provide access to organic certification specialists to assist with any question related to transitioning to and becoming organically certified. Farmers can contact advisors directly by phone and receive simple and straight forward advice. As of Jan 2013, the project funding will have come to an end. COG National is currently working with the EFO's advisory service to provide support for farmers transitioning to organic production.



Lorne Jaimeson, of Ignatius Farm provides consultation for organic apple orchards

Discussion

Places to Connect

A key aspect in the development of CMA relationships is creating formal or informal opportunities for new farmers to connect with potential mentors and advisors. The most common ways for new farmers to meet potential CMA providers is through other training opportunities such as farm tours, informal gatherings, conferences, and courses or workshops. The following examples are some of the activities occurring in Ontario that lead to CMA relationships.

Regional Organizations and Projects

There are a variety of regional initiatives that are providing a first point of contact for new farmers. These are important entry points for new farmers looking to create peer and mentor networks and access appropriate resources.

For example, many new farmers are directed to **Farms at Work**, an organization located in the Kawarthas, which can support connections with a regional network of farms that are mostly producing for the local market and usually have selected for that market by using “marketable” ecological practices. Regional events and opportunities for farms at every stage are promoted through Farms at Work’s networks. First line “coaching” occurs with organization staff at the time of first contact, which may be by telephone or during promotion at a public event such as a farm show or local food event. New farmers may be directed towards next steps in education or farm planning, and toward local mentors or advisors. Local projects are usually the focus for farm tours and workshops, both on practical as well as business planning topics.

Another example is **Everdale’s Farmers Growing Farmers Planner Course**, an eight-day course spread over four months. Participants develop turn-key farm plans with the support of farmers and other coaches. Coaching occurs in class with farmers and other experts coming into give presentations and help participants develop specific aspects of their farm plans (e.g., marketing, capital/equipment, risk management, record keeping, etc.). One-on-one coaching also takes place in-between classes over the phone and through on-farm visits. Over 45 new farms were launched in the first three years of Farmers Growing Farmers. Everdale’s Farm Planning Course makes a point of bringing in farmer advisors into the course so participants can get to know them, therefore, increasing the likelihood of ongoing relationships. These programs provide the opportunity for new farmers to build relationships on their own terms.

Local Meetings and Farm Tours

Local gatherings, either through association meetings, kitchen table talks, or informal farm tours are very important ways for new farmers to create and establish informal relationships with existing farmers and potential mentors or advisors.

The regional committees of the **Ecological Farmers of Ontario** organize kitchen table meetings as a way to connect with local farmers and neighbours in the ecological farming community. Members exchange information and support on specific topics in a small group setting. They also organize informal farm tours when a farmer offers to host and share their experience with production practices, equipment or techniques. Newer members gain the benefit of knowledge and skills shared by more experienced farmers and gain personal connections with potential advisors or mentors.

Farm tours provide the opportunity to visit a variety of different farm businesses, learn from experienced farmers, and connect with other farmers. **FarmStart** offers a series of different **Skills Building Farm Tours** (e.g., vegetables and pastured livestock) featuring a wide range of ecological farms in Southern Ontario. These farm tour days allow new farmers to meet established farmers in a formal and focused way. The new farmer is able to connect and get to know potential mentors and networks of established farmers. This can lead to more informal CMA relationships over time.



*Jeff Boesch
of Cedar
Down Farm,
offers a Weed
Management
Skills Building
Farm Tour*

Incubator Farms

Incubator arrangements usually involve some level of coaching, mentorship, land, equipment and infrastructure for a new farmer to start a business on an existing farm or a shared farm facility. New farmers benefit from equipment and building use, shared markets and mentorship in the form of an experienced farmer or group of farmers close by who have an interest in the success of the new farm business.

FarmStart's McVean Start-Up Farm is a 45 acre farm that houses 21 new farm businesses at all stages, with farmers coming from 16 different countries. This peer group of farmers often informally share production techniques, marketing strategies and business ideas. FarmStart also provides more structured support to connect the start-up farmers with a relevant mentor farm or other advisors through their business start-up phase.

There are new incubator farm initiatives developing across the province, for example, in 2013 **Just Food's Farm Supports Initiative** is opening an incubator farm located on 85 acres in the National Capital Commission's Greenbelt within the City of Ottawa. The Initiative also includes graduated farmer-to-farmer business and production training, as well as assistance in finding mentors and advisors in the region.

Other new farmers have negotiated a wide range of **incubator arrangements with established farm businesses**, such as ReRoot Farm's vegetable CSA start-up at Mapleton's Organic Dairy, or an 'incubator' arrangement at GreenBeing Farm that offers a prospective farmer an 'internship' with an opportunity to run their own business. Often the host farmer has a close relationship with the start-up farmer and a genuine and vested interest in the success of the incubating farmer and farm business.



Caitlin Hall started her CSA (ReRoot) at Mapleton's Organic Dairy. She now owns her own farm.

Finding the Right Match

Finding the right coach, mentor or advisor at the right time in the process of starting a new farm business can make a world of difference to the beginning or re-strategizing farmer. The successful matching of a mentor, coach or advisor with a farmer is a similar process regardless of the type of assistance. Interviewees stressed the importance of a personal connection in the CMA relationship. Based on interview responses, good mentors are farmers who possess key mentorship characteristics: a willingness to help, provide guidance and who have relevant experience applicable to the mentee's farm. Repeated opportunities to meet potential coaches, advisors and mentors informally allow both parties to build a relationship over time. A regional community of farmers is very important in providing those opportunities. For some programs offering arranged mentorships there is a screening or application process.

Of the organizations that offer formal mentorship programs, many often match potential mentors with prospective new farmers through applications and then initiate a facilitated introductory phone call to help get the conversation going. In other programs, the interns or mentees receive contact information for farms that suit their interests based on their application. It is up to the mentee in this program to choose a suitable CMA farm and make the initial contact. Often mentorship and coaching programs tend to tie one-on-one assistance to other incentives such as loans. Some programs set up a 'fee structure' for the mentors and offer financial support for the mentee.

No ecological farming-based models were found in Ontario for matching of a mentor and mentee for a flexible ongoing relationship outside of full season, on-farm internship programs. Finding the right mentor continues to be a challenge, especially for farmers in start-up and re-strategizing stages.

Challenges

There are challenges for start-up or re-strategizing farmers seeking to connect with the right coach, mentor, or advisor. The more opportunities a new or re-strategizing farmer has to connect with other experienced farmers and advisors, the more likely they are to be able to find the appropriate guidance or advice that will benefit their farm business at the time they need it. Removing barriers to participating in CMA programs is important for start-up and re-strategizing farmers seeking advice or guidance on their start-up initiatives.



Angie Koch, of Fertile Ground CSA, shows a new farmer her favorite seeding implements

Simplicity and ease of access are key factors for success in CMA matchmaking programs. While the less paperwork and fewer steps before assistance is available increases program use, respondents often commented that their matching systems have become less complicated over time, typically leading to them having less control over the process which in turn makes evaluating the program more difficult.

"Something that didn't work was trying too hard to oversee the mentor-mentee relationship. When we backed off, we found farmers and interns worked arrangements out themselves, to the benefit of all involved. Our role became one of providing resources and being there if our help was needed." - Sharon Taylor, Program Coordinator, Manitoba Farm Mentorship, January 2012

Advisor interviews attributed farmer reluctance to using advisory services to a lack of awareness or experience with advisory services, as well as a lack of understanding of the value of the service. To temporarily overcome these challenges, several programs have made technical and general advising free or significantly cost shared for ecological farmers in Ontario. Farm advisors who work primarily with conventional farm businesses tend to not understand the nature of the economics and operations of ecological, locally oriented and diversified farms, thus more specialize support is needed.

Another challenge facing organizations who wish to facilitate the process of helping new farmers find access to CMA assistance is ongoing financial assistance to administer the programs. A small amount of current funding has come from private charitable foundations or government grant programs, but this funding is limited in scope and longevity. Many organizations are using other sources of revenue such as membership fees to subsidize the programs. To date, no CMA program is operating at a profit from a fee-for-service approach.

It is difficult to create a successful revenue generating model within the new farmer CMA support sector. New farmers are reluctant to pay fees for coaching or mentorship without clear outcomes, and often do not yet have enough knowledge or experience to know what the value could be or what it could mean in their business development. While some very specific advising arrangements can be assigned an hourly fee, it is hard to put a price on coaching and mentorship, in part because of it's informal nature. Thus, the organizations facilitating CMA relationships are hard pressed to justify fees for service for what is largely a non-monetized relationship between farmers.



Conclusion

Coaching, mentorship and advising services can play a valuable role providing support to new or restructurizing farmers. These farmers can learn from the experiences of other farmers and can integrate successful practices seen on a mentor's farm. Often the new skills and knowledge gained through CMA assistance can save time, labour, and money.

Individualized support to help new farmers understand and access the right kinds of training and resources at the right time is critical for successful and professional farm business development. However, more often than not, it is the informal farmer-to-farmer learning opportunities that are the best ways to provide tested and true business 'know how', practical production knowledge and trouble shooting, as well as guidance and moral support for a new generation of farmers. Organizations can play an important role in this informal learning by creating opportunities for farmers to meet and by helping new farmers find the right mentors and advisors.

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Coaching

1.1 Custom one-to-one training, Business Development for Farm Businesses (BDFB) Program

Program contact: Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA), www.ontariosoilcrop.org/, (519) 826-4214

Region: Ontario

Services offered: Cost share funding for customized one-to-one training, including the instructor/trainer's fee (time only), costs of training resources, and travel costs.

Description of program: Custom one-to-one training (ASD – 02), one of the types of training activities within the Business Development for Farm Businesses (BDFB) program, allows eligible participants to work with a trainer to develop a program to meet specific learning objectives. Activities such as job shadowing, coaching or mentoring may all be considered. An established farm business may be eligible for cost-share funding up to 50 per cent of the costs to a maximum of \$500. A new farm business may be eligible for cost share funding up to 75 per cent to a maximum of \$750.

Target age group	All ages above 18.
Types of farming	All types
Skill & Topic areas	Custom one-to-one training may be in any commodity or enterprise, on an as-needed basis.
Best suited for	Established, restrategizers and start-up farmers. To be eligible to access cost-share funding new farm businesses must meet eligibility criteria which include taking the Growing Your Farm Profits (GYFP) workshop, receiving sign-off on an action plan, and having an FBRN or having control of agricultural assets and able to demonstrate annual gross income of \$7,000 or more.
Program Strengths	Lack of criteria for vetting mentors/trainers/instructors.
Program Challenges	Financial sustainability for covering full program costs Lack of prior experience of many farmers who prefer to jump in rather than spend time learning from successful farmers Ensuring adequate level of technical and business training of participants
Program's Future	Federal-provincial negotiations are underway, which will determine future BDFB funding categories and amounts.

Partnership opportunities	Interest from FarmStart and other organizations working with new farmers to help further develop criteria for screening mentors and clarify guidelines for Custom one-to-one training.
Program requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Actively farming or new farmers - Farm business registration number or if animal production a premise ID - Completion and approval of an action plan through the GYFP workshop

1.2 Everdale: Farmers Growing Farmers suite of new farmer training programs

Contact:

Gavin Dandy
gavin@everdale.org
(519) 855-4859
<http://farmertraining.everdale.org/>

Services offered: Training new farmers in two streams: food growing skills and farm visioning/planning, coaching, mentorship and advising.

Two streams:

- > *Food Growing Skills training: Sustainable Farming Certificate (SFC) program*
- > *Farm Visioning and Planning: Pathways and Planner courses*

Region: Southern Ontario

Streams	Food Growing Skills training: The Sustainable Farming Certificate (SFC) program	Farm Visioning and Planning: Pathways and Planner courses
Target age group	18 – 45	18 – 55
Types of farming	All types, sustainable and vegetable focus	All types, sustainable focus
Skill & Topic areas	Farm operations, production	Business planning, business operations
Best suited for	Explorer, Planner, Start-up	Planner, Start-up, Re-strategizer

<p>Program Strengths</p>	<p>Hands on skills and farm immersion</p> <p>Curriculum based nature Field trip component</p> <p>Flexibility of the program to cater to individual needs</p> <p>Balance of structure and flexibility in curriculum</p> <p>Transformative effect and group dynamic</p>	<p>Coaching from course coordinator to connect participants with mentors and advisors</p> <p>Connection process and initial hours with advisors can lead to successful mentorship</p> <p>Immediate feedback on their plans</p> <p>Positive realizations for the mentors new ideas and improvements in own farm planning</p> <p>Having core mentors x 4 involved in the course. Familiarizes participants, builds trust and networks.</p>
<p>Program Challenges</p>	<p>Cost to participants</p> <p>Funding to reduce cost to increase access to more potential farmers.</p> <p>Time commitment for potential participants with careers and families</p> <p>Promotion - Ensuring the right people hear about our programs</p>	<p>Participants understanding that their tuition is paying their advisors. Participants become hesitant to connect with mentors</p> <p>Little awareness of new farmers with few small, ecological and diversified farms in the province.</p> <p>Getting farmers to see the value</p> <p>Finding the advanced production advisors to match the needs with participants – limited advisor roster</p> <p>Promotion - Ensuring the right people hear about our programs</p>
<p>Program's Future</p>	<p>Sharing of SFC curriculum through partnerships</p> <p>Discussions with university / college regarding accreditation</p>	<p>Supporting participants in timely accessing of GYFP funding to reduce course costs and advocate for the additional opportunities they can access.</p> <p>Continue to build mentor roster with product specialists</p> <p>Possible launch of provincial network of farm business courses.</p> <p>Providing more structure around advisor program</p>

Partnership opportunities	Partnerships with colleges, universities and non-profits for accreditation of SFC Partnerships with other farmer training organizations to offer their own adaptations of Everdale's program	Sharing of advisors with other organizations to increase the advisor's opportunities, work towards increased coordination and support for their work.
Program requirements	Tuition, timing: annually in spring summer fall. GYFP eligible	Tuition, timing: annually in winter. GYFP eligible
Resources	Workshops, farm tours and events, farm to school program, food hub, and multi-farm CSA.	Workshops, farm tours and events, farm to school program, food hub, and multi-farm CSA.

1.3 FarmStart, McVean Start-Up Farm

Program contact:

Sri Sethuratnam

sri@farmstart.ca

(519) 835-7046

<http://www.farmstart.ca/programs/start-up-farms/>

Services offered: Access to land, infrastructure and equipment as well as training and mentoring.

Region: Brampton, Ontario.

FarmStart is currently developing another Start-UP farm near Hamilton and there are several new Start-Up Farms in development in Ontario: eg. Just Food is building a Incubator Farm on the National Capital Commission's Greens Creek Farm in Ottawa

Description of program: The McVean Farm is the first of what appears will be a number of Start-Up Farms in Ontario. Farmers at McVean are provided with access to land, infrastructure, and equipment as well training and mentoring during the first 6 years of their enterprise start-up. Our farm model incorporates the following groups of participants:

Test Farmers: These potential farmers can access 1/4 acre of land while exploring, researching and developing their business goals and plans. Test farmers are expected to stay at this stage for only one year. In terms of training, these farmers are required to attend FarmStart's Explorer course, 3 technical workshops and four Skills Building Field days.

Start-Up Farms: New farms are able to apply to manage and maintain their own farm plots ranging from 500 sq feet (eg. for a bee keeper) to 4 acres (eg. a market garden) or more depending on the land available and the operation. They are considered “Start-Up farms” for the first 3 years – in which they will receive a 20% cost sharing during this period. For 2012 new start-up farmers are being paired with a mentor farmer and are required to work on their farm once a month, receive one visit from them and 8 hours of mentoring over the season (ex: phone, email, in person).
Enterprise Farms – After the 3rd season, the farm operations will provide us with a renewed business plan. At this point they will be allowed to expand their acreage and stay for 2 more years, during which time they pay full costs.

Some farms may be able to stay on as “*Mentor farms*” and will agree to provide mentorship and a greater level of involvement in the running of the farm facility.

Target age group	All ages
Types of farming	Ecological. Enterprise types are dependent on the nature of the site. At McVean there are primarily market gardens as well as a mushroom grower and several beekeepers. This particular site cannot accommodate livestock.
Skill & Topic areas	Hands-on experience with all aspects of running your own farm business.
Best suited for	Participants who live near the start-up farm and who are not yet ready to commit to a long term land access arrangement (ex: still exploring business enterprises, not enough experience, need to maintain off-farm job in city)
Program Strengths	Hands-on learning that comes from running own business Supportive community of peers Required training opportunities from FarmStart Mentoring from farm manager and farmer mentors Ability to “try out” farming before investing substantially
Program Challenges	Financial sustainability for covering full program costs Lack of prior experience of many farmers who prefer to jump in rather than spend time learning from successful farmers Ensuring adequate level of technical and business training of participants
Program's Future	FarmStart is currently in the process of developing new Start-Up Farms and supporting other organizations in Ontario (ex: Just Food in Ottawa) and across the country to develop similar programs.

Partnership opportunities	FarmStart currently has some funding from the McConnell Foundation to support other groups in Ontario or across Canada to develop similar programs, through consultations and/or visits to the McVean Farm. An application process is currently being put in place to respond to such interest.
Program requirements	Test Croppers and Start-Up Farms must complete two different application forms that outline their farm production and marketing plans. Enterprise Farms must submit a full business plan. All documents are reviewed by FarmStart's Land Committee.
Resources	<p>Many FarmStart courses and workshops (and associated materials) are available to McVean farmers.</p> <p>The FarmLINK website (http://www.farmlink.net/) resource allows users to not only list/find land but also to list themselves as mentors/looking for a mentoring. As of January 2012, 35% of farm owners (out of 125) offer mentoring, and 37% of farm seekers (out of 336) are seeking mentoring. However, a 2011 survey of users suggested that mentoring arrangements were not being made through the website, suggesting the need for more support in the process.</p>

1.4 Enterprise Facilitators - Hastings, Lennox and Addington Counties and the Kingston Region

Program contacts:

Mark Hanley – Kingston Region – (613) 544-2725 ext.7229

Tracy Snow – Lennox and Addington - (613) 561-6310

Darcelle Runciman – Hastings - (613) 391-0350

** Note: This profile is based on an interview with Tracey Snow. Details of the other two regions may differ.*

Services offered: Business coaching and 1-on-1 support for problem solving, networking and achieving business goals

Region: Lennox and Addington County, Hastings County and the Kingston region.

Description of program:

A provincially unique program to these three regions, Enterprise facilitators offer free access to professional support with no strings attached. The business coaches listen to hear the business owners' problem or goal and then assist them to achieve it. They may accompany a farmer to a bank, help them network with other businesses, or provide advice and applicable resources as needed.

Target age group	Starting and currently operating businesses
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Types of farming	All
Skill & Topic areas	Business management, planning, problem solving, marketing, strengthening regional networks for the client
Best suited for	Start-up, re-strategizer and established farmers
Program Strengths	Free one-on-one support Facilitators have a broad mandate to support the success of local businesses Meetings occur on the clients schedule and choice of location Services offered are entirely based on clients needs
Program Challenges	Regional availability Funding of program costs. Two of the programs currently have on-going funding from regional townships for the service. Some government funding was used to get the programs up and running.
Partnership opportunities	Local farm organizations can connect directly with the enterprise facilitators to help enhance their farmer networks and promote the program to regional farmers.
Program requirements	Business based within program catchment area.
Resources	Access to large local networks of other businesses and resources.

1.5 Ministry of Training College and Universities, Ontario Self Employment Benefit Program (OSEB)

Program contact:

See website to find the appropriate regional partner.

<http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/employees/selfEmployment.html>

Contact interviewed: Ian Armatige - Regional OSEB Coordinator for Prince Edward and Lennox and Addington Counties - (613) 354-0162 - ia@pelacfdc.ca

Services offered: 42-week living allowance, intensive business planning training, 42-week of one-on-one support in starting a business.

Region: Ontario

Description of program: OSEB is a job creation program intended to support individuals well suited and motivated to start their own small businesses. Individual

regions offer the program to suit the needs of the participants. Core components are: intensive business planning training, one-on-one support through monthly meetings with an advisor and a significant living allowance.

Target age group	18 – 60
Types of farming	Open to all types of farming – program requires a full-time business plan
Skill & Topic areas	Business planning and management, business start-up
Best suited for	New farmers
Program Strengths	<p>1 on 1 meetings and support</p> <p>Access to networks and resources through your regional organization</p> <p>Providing the time and resources to develop a sound business plan</p> <p>Funding - living allowance</p> <p>Regional program control and flexibility to adapt to local needs</p> <p>Program actually creates employment</p> <p>Provincially available</p>
Program Challenges	<p>Timing of program acceptance and intake with life circumstances. Some programs have continuous intake some are bi-annually.</p> <p>Meeting the eligibility criteria</p> <p>Helping clients become aware of their own weaknesses</p> <p>Duration of the program does not provide support for a full annual cycle</p> <p>Potential participants are refused if they have had a business in the past</p> <p>Continued funding and support of tax payers in current political climate</p>
Program's Future	<p>Funding has been renewed for 2012 – 2013</p> <p>Improvements in accountability</p>
Partnership opportunities	Specific to each region. No known examples of partnerships related directly to the OSEB program.

Program requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Currently receive Employment Insurance Benefits; or - Have received Employment Insurance Benefits in the past three years; or - Have received Maternity/Parental Benefits within the last five years. - Have not run a business in the past - Have not started their planned business - Successful referral by employment agency for entry into the program
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1.6 FarmStart's Digging into Farming Program

Contact

Alexandra English

Training and Resources Manager, FarmStart

(519) 836-7046

ali@farmstart.ca

<http://www.farmstart.ca/programs/training/digging-into-farming/>

Region: Pilots have been held in the Spring of 2012 in Peterborough and Guelph, and planned for Eastern Ontario, London and Hamilton in the Fall 2012. The goal is for the Program to be delivered across the province.

Services Offered: The *Digging into Farming Course* is designed as a two-day course co-facilitated by an experienced farmer and a Regional FarmStart Coach.

Program Description:

The "Digger" is intended for those prospective farmers who are ready to stop dreaming and start developing realistic goals, clarify their farm vision, evaluate their options, begin identifying the resources and knowledge they already have and those they need to acquire. The goal is to help them to adopt an active planning approach, and to develop a strategy to pursue appropriate training and asset building before they jump into their farm business.

The central course outcome is a New Farm Action Plan reviewed and signed off by the course facilitator identifying next steps to be taken with regards to 46 different business planning and production topics. This planning stage would be supported by a Regional FarmStart Coach and followed by a range of business planning, technical skills building, mentorship, financial planning and other training and development opportunities.

The hope is that this Action Plan once approved by the Regional Coach will enable access to small grants or cost-share funding for these planning farmers.

Target age group	All ages
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Types of farming	All
Skill & Topic areas	Farm business goals and planning, farm products options, marketing, production, HR, land, financing, management and Start-Up
Best suited for	Planning and restructurizing farmers
Program Strengths	<p>Provides a strong foundation for lifelong farm business planning and the benefits of consulting qualified professional advisors.</p> <p>Support each participant in the completion of a New Farm Action Plan, and</p> <p>Introduce participants to the resources and tools available to them from government, community and institutional providers to carry out their farm development plans.</p>
Program Challenges	<p>Funding of program costs and Regional Coaches not secured</p> <p>Access to cost-sharing for training and mentorship will encourage participation</p>
Partnership opportunities	Goal is to provide this program in partnership with OMAFRA and regional organizations.
Program requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have undertaken an informed assessment of what it means to farm, and have made a decision to farm commercially (full time or part time) - Do not yet have an FBRN (usually) - Do not have a farm business to “assess” (or it is too young to assess meaningfully) - May or may not have access to farming assets such as land - Have never completed a comprehensive farm business plan
Resources	<p>A regionally based Coach to help planning farmers access local networks of mentors and peers and appropriate resources and services.</p> <p>FarmStart Resource webpage. www.farmstart.ca/resources</p>

Mentorship

2.1 Farm Management Canada, Step UP

Formally the Canadian Farm Business Management Council (CFBMC)

Program contact:

Jennifer Hardy-Parr, Step Up Program Coordinator

<http://www.farmcentre.com/features/thenewfarmer/Resources/StepUp/>
 1-888-232-3262
 stepup@cfbmc.com

Services offered: National internship program focused on farm business management skills.

Region: Canada

Description of program: Step Up is a national program providing promotion and coordination of farm business skill focused internships on all types of farms. Mentees and mentors fill applications out and are initially matched based on interests. A three way call with the coordinator of the program takes place for the mentor and mentee to get to know each other and decide whether they want to proceed in developing a mentorship contract outlining the details of the internship. These include: learning goals, work expectations, housing, compensation etc. Mentors are paid \$2000 for their involvement in the program and mentees receive up to \$1000 for travel to and from their internship.

Step Up was recently enhanced, re-visioned and is now offered in partnership by the CFBMC and Canadian 4-H Council, Canadian Young Farmers' Forum, and Canada's Outstanding Young Farmers' Program.

Target age group	All ages
Types of farming	Open to all types of farming
Skill & Topic areas	Broad business management focus and day-to-day operations
Best suited for	Beginning farms with some experience, farmers looking to transition
Program Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hands on learning Partners are able to promote the program to a wide national audience Currently offered at no cost to mentor or mentee Successful approach to mentor / mentee pairing Encourages mentees to travel to a different areas of Canada Reporting and evaluating process for ongoing program improvements

Program Challenges	<p>Developing a sustainable funding model</p> <p>Connecting mentees together to share their experiences</p> <p>Seems to be more mentors than mentees</p> <p>Promoting the program beyond students – opportunities for transitioning and re-strategizing existing producers.</p> <p>Maintaining connections with mentees after the internship.</p> <p>Balance of quantity of intern placements with the quality of their learning and Step Ups ability to successfully coordinate and manage.</p>
Program's Future	<p>Provide resources to maintain connections between mentees and their mentors as well as Step Up and other mentee alumni.</p> <p>Possible use of Agri-webinar for mentees during and post Step Up</p> <p>More part-time internships options. The current minimum of 8 consecutive weeks could change and needs to be discussed with partners.</p> <p>Possible pilot of part-time internship for 2012</p> <p>Considering changing program requirement that participants are Canadian Citizens to allow Permanent Residents to participate. Revamping a mentorship handbook.</p>
Partnership opportunities	<p>Lots of potential, open to many options and types of partners. There is a possibility to work closely under-resourced mentorship programs that have started up across the country.</p>
Program requirements	<p>Mentors and mentees must be: Canadian Citizens, 18 years of age or older, mentees: demonstrated interest in agriculture. Mentees must commit to eight consecutive weeks of time and the completion of two progress reports. The program is funded through current partners and the CFBMC.</p>
Resources	<p>Mentorship handbook when finished, excellent links and resources webpage. The CFBMC has extensive resources to support farmers. For the national advisors database see www.farmcentre.com.</p>

2.2 Canadian Youth Business Foundation (CYBF), Mentoring

Program contact:

Norm Grey
www.cybf.ca

wngrey@cybf.ca
(416) 408-2923 ext.2901

Services Offered: Pre-launch coaching, financing, business start-up mentorship, entrepreneurial on-line business discussion forum

Region: National program; head office in Toronto

Description of program: Canada's Entrepreneur Gateway: The Canadian Youth Business Foundation (CYBF) is the 'go to' place for youth entrepreneurship. As a national charity, we are dedicated to growing Canada's economy one young entrepreneur at a time. We look at character not collateral, when providing youth, age 18-34, with pre-launch coaching, business resources, start-up financing and mentoring, to help them launch and sustain a successful entrepreneurial business.

Founded in 1996, CYBF has invested to date in more than 4,750 young entrepreneurs, whose businesses have created more than 18,600 new jobs, \$129 million in tax revenue and hundreds of millions of dollars in sales and export revenue. CYBF delivers its program coast to coast through a national network of 180 community partners and 3,800 volunteers including business mentors.

Target age group	18 – 34 years
Types of farming	Entrepreneurially focused full time
Skill & Topic areas	Mentorship available in: business planning, start-up, finance, marketing, management, human resources, legal, leadership and information technology.
Best suited for	Start-ups
Program Strengths	180 community partners across Canada On-line mentor / mentee orientation and training High success rate of mentorship 94% loan repayment success rate Character focused evaluation of participants and financing applications Access up to \$55,000 in financing
Partnership opportunities	Open to partnership possibilities with the agricultural sector.
Program requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 18 – 34 years old - Viable business plan - Business is new or under a year old - Business will be a full-time career - Eligible to work in Canada - Agree to work with a mentor for a minimum of 2 years.

2.3 C.R.A.F.T. Ontario (Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training)

Program contact:

<http://www.craftontario.ca/>

To discuss CRAFT directly with a farmer who has helped develop the collaborative you may contact: Gavin Dandy (519) 855-4859 (Southwest node).

Services offered: Coordination of over sixty annual full season internships across the province.

Region: Ontario

Description of program:

CRAFT internships vary greatly depending on the farm they take place on. All farms commit to offering an exchange of education for farm labour. Farms tend to provide room and board and may offer wages or stipends. Typically internships are intensive 5-6 month experiences where the intern lives on the farm. CRAFT Ontario is a collection of five nodes covering much of Southern and Central Ontario. Each node is independent and composed of the farms offering internships in the region. Typically CRAFT internships include field trips (often once month) to another CRAFT farm known as a “CRAFT day”; usually starting with a work project then potluck lunch and a skill workshop or discussion in the afternoon CRAFT farms practice ecological farming methods.

Some farms offer senior internships for returning interns or people with appropriate experience. These internships tend to have a greater financial compensation and involve management tasks on the farm.

Target age group	18 – 35
Types of farming	All types, focus is on work related tasks in the field and at market
Skill & Topic areas	Production focused for all types of farming
Best suited for	Recruits, Explorers, Planners

Program Strengths	<p>Affordable</p> <p>Hands on work experience</p> <p>In-field mentorship</p> <p>Builds networks for farmers to share information beyond the internship</p> <p>Builds networks of farmer interns with other interns and CRAFT farmers</p> <p>Has led to lasting mentorships for some interns with CRAFT farmers</p> <p>Adaptable to variety of farming interests and motivations from homesteading, lifestyle to starting one's own farm.</p>
Program Challenges	<p>Insuring internship quality without formal processes for accepting new farms or and excluding problematic existing farms</p> <p>Focusing on farm interns for labour provides an inconsistent untrained source of labour for hosting farms</p> <p>No formal way to maintain seasonal mentor-intern relationships off-season</p>
Partnership opportunities	<p>Collaborate across groups to host website</p>
Program requirements	<p>Vary depending on the farm</p> <p>Significant time commitment</p> <p>Cooperative attitude</p>
Resources	<p>Two publications enhancing on-farm internship experiences:</p> <p>Oh to grow - A Sustainable farming primer</p> <p>Nurturing New Farmers – A comprehensive guide to providing quality on-farm internships</p>

2.4 Farms at Work

Program contact: Pat Learmonth, Project Director

Region: East Central Ontario: Peterborough County, City of Kawartha Lakes, Northumberland County, Hastings County, Durham Region, Haliburton County.

Services offered: Farms at Work facilitates the establishment of one on one mentoring within the region, and works to ensure fair compensation and recognition of mentors. FAW is also developing a guided mentorship model in which small groups of

mentees will participate in a series of hands-on opportunities to work with experienced farmers, coupled with in-class time. The pilot project is a beekeeping mentorship program which will begin in 2013.

Description of program: Farms at Work's overall mission is to keep farmland active and healthy on our region.

Target age group	All ages
Types of farming	All
Skill & Topic areas	Guided mentorship model is currently restricted to beekeeping. One-on-one mentorships may be in any commodity or enterprise, on an as-needed basis
Best suited for	New farm businesses or businesses that are restrategizing
Program Strengths	Ability to connect people to mentors, resources and supports within their own geographical area. This enables social connections, informal farm visits and development of one-on-one mentorships that are crucial to new farm businesses.
Program Challenges	Still in pilot stage
Program Future	Programming is expected to result in an annual mentorship schedule for beekeeping and then to expand to include guided mentorships in other types of farm enterprises.
Partnership opportunities	Farms at Work is partnered with the Central Ontario Beekeepers Association and many other programs in its work to promote protection of wild pollinators and of honeybees. Future mentorship programs will include appropriate commodity partner groups. Farms at Work plans to share this model with partners across the province through the FarmON Alliance.
Program requirements	Business based within program catchment area.

2.5 Stewards of Irreplaceable Land (S.O.I.L.)

Program contact:

Yoko Hayakawa
yoko@soilapprenticeships.org
<http://www.soilapprenticeships.org/>

Services offered: National internship opportunity promotion and placement, peer-to-mentee ambassador program.

Region: Canada

Description of program: SOIL is a small non-profit organization running on minimal resources initiated to encourage the growth of sustainable agriculture. For this reason, SOIL is only offered to farms which emphasis organic techniques with little or no dependence on pesticides, herbicides, or fungicides.

Farms must make a commitment to provide a teaching component to the apprenticeship. They are encouraged to provide a monthly stipend or wage to the apprentice. If this is not practical, most apprentices agree to room & board and a productive learning experience in return for their labour.

Target age group	18 – 35 years
Types of farming	All-organic
Skill & Topic areas	Hands on production focus, some management tasks
Best suited for	Recruit, planner
Program Strengths	<p>Simple matching system</p> <p>Organization has been around for a long time and operates efficiently</p> <p>Ambassador program (see below for description)</p> <p>Program development has been taken on by past interns</p>
Program Challenges	Soil doesn't have a system to interview and know the farmer mentors well as they are spread out across the country
Program Future	Possible development of off-season workshops / discussion forums to keep connections and learning going.
Partnership opportunities	Open to possibilities. Currently partnering with ACORN (Atlantic Canadian Organic Regional Network) and Alberta Sustainable Agriculture Apprenticeship Program (ASAAP). Looking for program stability through partnership.
Program requirements	18 years of age, healthy, eager and motivated to learn
Resources	<p>SOIL has developed a complaint process which can lead to the removal of membership of a host farm.</p> <p>The Ambassador program pairs new mentees with willing and exemplary past interns to find the right farm, deal with expectations, and how to negotiate contracts with their host farm. Typically, support is provided over the phone or by e-mail.</p> <p>SOIL manual for farmers and interns on sustainable farming and intern basics.</p>

2.5 World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms

Services offered: Promotion of organic farming volunteer opportunities

Region: Available nationally around the world in participating countries.

<http://www.wwoof.ca>

1-250-999-7131

admin@wwoof.ca

Description of program:

“Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms, Canada (WWOOF Canada™) is part of a world-wide effort to link volunteers with organic growers, promote an educational & cultural exchange, and build a global community who are passionate about sustainable organic stewardship of food, animals and land while respecting nature and protecting natural resources.”

Target age group	18 – 30
Types of farming	All kinds
Skill & Topic areas	Mostly introductory farm experiences, hands-on labour focused
Best suited for	Recruits and explorers
Program Strengths	Wide representation of small scale organic farms Provides introductory farm experiences with time flexibility Low commitment
Program Challenges	Inconsistency amongst host farmers
Program requirements	\$50/yr for membership providing access to the farmer mentor listing. Living on farm. Program works well for travellers.

Advising

3.1 Canadian Association of Farm Advisors (CAFA) Inc.

Program contact:

Liz Robertson, Executive Director

<http://www.cafanet.com>

Toll free: 1-877-474-2871

info@cafanet.com

Region: Canada

Description: CAFA is a national, non-profit, professional, self regulating organization for farm advisors. CAFA is dedicated to assisting farm families and businesses by increasing the skills and knowledge of farm advisors and consultants.

Target age group	All ages
Types of farming	All types
Skill & Topic areas	Accountants, lawyers, financial planners, bankers, insurance brokers, trust officers, agrologists, agriculture economists, educators, family coaches, insurance , human resources, risk management, marketing
Best suited for	Start-ups, restrategizers and established farmers
Program requirements	Fee for service. Government funding programs may apply, best to speak directly with the advisor you are interested in working with.
Resources	Farm advisor listing by province and region.

3.2 Canadian Organic Extension Network (COEN)

Contact

<http://organicalberta.org/organic-extension>
info@organicalberta.org
 (780) 271-1116

Region: National with main organizers currently in Alberta

Program contact: Becky Lipton

Services offered: National assessment and coordination of regional extension type services.

Description of program: COEN aims to drive continuous improvement and innovation of the Canadian Organic Agriculture and Food Systems through knowledge transfer.

Currently there are many pockets of organizations doing extension type services. COEN is a network with a broad scope to support organic farming knowledge transfer of all kinds. In 2009 the first meeting was held and since the network has developed a strategic plan. Currently partners are creating their own work plans to carry out the strategic plan of COEN as a network. Next is a national gap analysis to focus the funding efforts that will address the analysis' outcomes. The focus is not on organic certification.

Resources: National Organic Extension Personnel Directory – located at the bottom of the webpage. This is a work in progress

3.3 Canadian Organic Growers, Perth Waterloo-Wellington Chapter, Transition to Organic Advisor Program

Program contact:

<http://www.cogwaterloo.ca/growOrganic.php#handsonContent>
 outreach@cogwaterloo.ca

Services offered: Advisory services for the organic certification process. ** NO LONGER AVAILABLE **

Region: Ontario

Description of program:

Free access to advisory services for anything related to the organic certification process for any farmer in Ontario. From the website farmers can contact either a produce, crop or livestock advisor directly. The goal of the program is to advise farmers all the way through the transition process. Advising typically takes place over the phone and by e-mail. The advisors handle the calls tracking their time which is paid for by COG PWW.

Target age group	All farmers
Types of farming	Transitioning and farmers certifying for the first time
Skill & Topic areas	Organic certification process and related issues
Best suited for	Start-ups, re-strategizers
Program Strengths	Free for farmers accessing the program Ability for the farmer to connect directly with the advisor Provincially available Timely access for farmers Clear focus of what service is available

Program Challenges	<p>Publicity and outreach</p> <p>Providing clear options for farmers with so many fragmented programs across the province</p> <p>Low uptake</p> <p>Follow-up and evaluation are challenging when farmers can call directly to the advisors</p>
Program's Future	<p>Future is uncertain</p> <p>Intention was to expand program regionally and use as a model for possible replication across the country on a regional basis</p> <p>Obtaining more funding and achieving financial sustainability is necessary</p>
Partnership opportunities	<p>Would like to work towards greater provincial coordination amongst advisory and farmer training programs.</p> <p>Program is currently connected with the EFO advisory service.</p>
Program requirements	<p>Free, need of support in transitioning and/or achieving organic certification.</p>
Resources	<p>Resource library, organic and local food research, organic price tracker, organic seed database, workshops, publications.</p>

3.4 Ecological Farmers of Ontario, Telephone and On-Farm Advisory Service

Program contact:

Karen Maitland
 www.efao.ca
 Toll Free: 1-877-822-8606
 Direct: (519) 822-8606
 info@efao.ca

Services offered:

Telephone advisory - 15 minute phone calls with experienced farmer advisors
 On-Farm advisory - Experienced farmer travels to advisee's farm for a multi-hour visit.
 There is also an option for advisee to travel to an experienced farmer's farm for multi-hour visit.

Region: Provincial however stronger representation and advisor knowledge focused on Southern Ontario.

Description of program:

Telephone advisory - Open to any farmer, the program connects farmers with questions to experienced farmers to offer and discuss solutions. The program is coordinated through the EFO's main office using e-mail and phone. Some questions are answered by e-mail.

On-Farm Advisory - Open to any farmer, this program connects farmers with more complex questions (that will take more time and discussion to address than a phone call or email exchange will easily allow) with experienced farmers. The advisee can travel to the advisor's farm, or vice versa, depending on what will be of greater help to the advisee. The program is subsidized by EFO, with the advisee paying \$100 per advisory visit. Arrangements are coordinated through the EFO office.

Target age group	All farmers
Types of farming	All types of ecological farming
Skill & Topic areas	All topics, focused and most often used for production
Best suited for	Planner, Start-up, Re-strategizer
Program Strengths	<p>No or low cost to farmers, does not require EFO membership</p> <p>Open to any farmer</p> <p>Established and functioning well</p> <p>Specific questions, questions requiring feedback that addresses the current situation of the farmer</p> <p>Frequently with the telephone advisory program, on-going relationships can begin serving as an informal mentor matching system.</p> <p>Flexibility to allow farmers to call directly to advisors they have used in the past as needed</p> <p>Success in facilitating initial connections through advisory calls which turn into ongoing relationships between the advisor and the advisee</p>
Program Challenges	<p>Services are under promoted</p> <p>Difficult to cover all knowledge areas including business planning</p> <p>Current concentration of advisors in Southern Ontario</p> <p>Securing a stable source of funding</p> <p>No formal mechanism to spark on-going mentoring relationships</p> <p>Ability to follow-up and evaluate calls</p> <p>Provide support and professional development opportunities for advisors</p>

Program's Future	<p>Expanded list of advisors and sharing with other organizations</p> <p>Focus on having advisors in all regions across the province</p> <p>Develop profiles of mentors / advisors</p> <p>Possibility to focus on business planning and non-production topics</p> <p>An active approach for EFO's connection, communication and support of its advisors.</p>
Partnership opportunities	<p>FarmON Partners and other regional organizations working with farmers, to organize courses and workshops and to identify appropriate advisors.. FarmStart in collaboration on Farm Tours series. Organizations and individuals interested in developing a provincial Ecological Farmers Conference.</p>
Program requirements	<p>Test Croppers and Start-Up Farms must complete two different application forms that outline their farm production and marketing plans. Enterprise Farms must submit a full business plan. All documents are reviewed by FarmStart's Land Committee.</p>
Resources	<p>Membership to EFO or COG provides free access to a mail order library of ecological farming books and resources.</p>

3.5 Homestead Organics, Organic Agronomy & Livestock Services

Program contact:

Tom Manley
 www.homesteadorganics.ca
 (613) 984-0480
 tom@homesteadorganics.ca

Services offered: On-farm visits, soil, feed and crop analysis, agronomy reports: farm mapping, field history, field scouting for weeds, diseases and insect pests, crop rotation and nutrient balance; livestock performance including feeding programs, nutritional supplements, and herd condition
 Region: Eastern Ontario, Northern New York, Western Quebec

Description of program: Homestead Organics employs one livestock nutritionist, one full time agronomist, and one part-time agronomist. This team offers a full slate of nutrition and agronomy services in on-farm visits and lab analysis.

Target age group	All
Types of farming	All

Skill & Topic areas	Soil quality and amendment options, livestock nutrition and feeds and pest control,
Best suited for	Start-up, restructurizing and established farmers
Program Strengths	Focused on organic production Free livestock feed consulting for active feed and mineral clients Reasonable prices
Program Challenges	Avoiding perception of salesmen approach Tendency for some organic farmers to take a zero input approach to agriculture limiting the the farm's production and profit potential. Covering costs and developing enough momentum for the services to fully recover their costs
Program's Future	Important that it can cover it's costs to continue, either through the sale of consulting services and farm inputs or the increased production of organic crops that the company can take to market – currently subsidized by Homestead Organics
Partnership opportunities	Open to possibilities. Would like to see a provincial database of programs with increased partnerships between programs to be able to refer clients to relevant services as needed.
Program requirements	Active farm business with land. Free for active livestock feed customers. Fee for agronomic services as described on the website
Resources	The Homestead Organics website has many production resources to offer, in particular around livestock feeds and animal husbandry: http://www.homesteadorganics.ca/Field-to-Feeder.aspx Tom and Murray Manley have lived and breathed organic agriculture since 1988 and have a wealth of knowledge to share.

3.6 Independent Advisors, Farm Financial Advisory Program (FFA)

Within the Business Development for Farm Businesses (BDFB) Program

Program contact:

Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association (OSCIA),
www.ontariosoilcrop.org/,
 (519) 826-4214

Program requirements:

Actively farming or new farmers
 Farm business registration number or if animal production a premise ID
 Completion and approval of an action plan through the GYFP workshop

Description of program: FFA provides access to a professional Farm Financial Advisor who will review the farm business' past financial performance, analyze the current business situation, discuss objectives, and help to identify options to meet farm business profitability goals. The advisory service follows a detailed template used to provide the farmer with a summary of the analysis.

Program covers up to \$2500 (\$2000 for one week of advisors work including one visit to the farm and \$500 for a follow up visit after one year).

To hire an advisor, the participant pays \$100 plus \$260 HST on \$2000.

Program will cover the cost of developing an ABP (Advanced business plan) to 50% for existing farmers and 75% for new farmers.

More information: <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/busdev/growfwdffa.htm>

The following advisors have experience working as financial advisors for ecological and diversified farms:

Name	Wendell Joyce, P. Ag	Wayne Martin, P. Ag
Contact	613 482 9439 Wendell_hemlock.group@ripnet.com www.groupehemlockgroup.com	613-395-2480 twmartin@sympatico.ca
Services offered	Farm business coaching-Maude Roy, CMA, ICF member Farm financial advisory services	Farm financial advisory services
Region	Eastern Ontario	Belleville – Central Ontario

3.7 Organic Meadow, Member Extension Service

Program contact:

Shelly Juurlink

<http://organicmeadow.com/>

1-866-767-9694 ext.438

juurlink@organicmeadow.com

Services offered: Organic Extension for Coop Dairy Farmers

Region: South Central, Eastern and Western Ontario.

Description of program: Four regional managers provide traditional Ontario extension services to Organic Meadow farmers. These include: facilitating continuous improvement in all aspects of organic farm management, local networking, problem solving, feed, milk and soil analysis. An additional key task is the recruitment of new organic farmers to the coop. Each regional field manager has an area of specialty making for a strong extension team. In each region two kitchen table meetings are held each year bringing the producers together to share and discuss production issues, farm news and coop business. In addition, four to five workshops are offered in each

region on topics of interest; such as: cost of production and composting. Each farmer receives twice annually from their regional field manager. The program is industry funded. Farmers can call their regional field manager for advice at any time.

Professional development opportunities for farmers: Organic Meadow makes an annual trip to a premium conference in North America. Farmer members are invited and their costs are subsidized slightly by the coop. This year the members and staff of the coop attended the ACRES USA conference. Organic Meadow brings in specialists for speaking engagements and workshops. Some of these have had non-coop member attendance and lead to additional workshops while the speaker is in town.

Target age group	Determined by co-op membership
Types of farming	Dairy, field crop
Skill & Topic areas	Organic production of milk, livestock, eggs and field crops, business and succession planning
Best suited for	Dairy farmer member of Organic Meadow
Program Strengths	<p>Timely expert advice</p> <p>Regional field managers live in the region and farm themselves</p> <p>All inclusive adaptable service</p> <p>No mandatory requirements – focus is entirely on the farmers needs</p> <p>Provides a variety of services – workshop, advisor, kitchen table meetings</p> <p>Can help network the farmer</p> <p>Regional field managers have each other to work with</p>
Program Challenges	Establishing a sustainable funding model
Program's Future	Important that it can cover it's costs to continue, either through the sale of consulting services and farm inputs or the increased production of organic crops that the company can take to market – currently subsidized by Homestead Organics

Partnership opportunities	<p>No direct barriers to collaboration; for example: co-op membership or non-dairy farmers and there is interest in working with others</p> <p>Collaboration around the professional development trips Organic Meadow takes annually could provide momentum to bring other organizations and farmers from sectors other than dairy along.</p> <p>Explore the possibility of using Organic Meadow's existing field staff to provide services for other non-dairy ecological farmers especially in serving areas of the province low in advisory capacity – Central, Northern and Eastern Ontario.</p> <p>Possible collaboration for combined professional development opportunities of Organic Meadow regional field managers with non-dairy ecological farming advisors, mentors and trainers.</p>
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3.8 Ruth Knight BSc Agr, MSc, Organic Consultant Inc

Program contact:

Ruth Knight
 (519) 357-5224
 organicconsultantinc@gmail.com

Services offered: Testing: soil, tissue, compost, water. Management: grazing, nutrient, organic certification, recommendations for sourcing inputs, farm assessment, goal setting, test trials.

Region: Southern Ontario – Cookstown to Ridgeway to St Catharines to Hanover. Also works further afield by phone with the farmer doing much of the field observations.

Description of program:

Taking an analytical approach of establishing a starting point based on observations and tests. Recommendations are discussed with the client, implemented and tracked. “The answer to many aspects of the management approach is it depends on where you are at, where you want to go and how fast you want to get there.”

Target age group	25 – 60
Types of farming	Organic and conventional, Crops: forage, field, vegetable, fruit, vineyards and livestock.
Skill & Topic areas	Organic and conventional farming, focus on ecological production practices and tracking impacts of inputs and farm activities.

Best suited for	Start-up, restrategizer, established farmers
Program Strengths	<p>Focused on organic production</p> <p>Free livestock feed consulting for active feed and mineral clients</p> <p>Reasonable prices</p>
Program Challenges	<p>Avoiding perception of salesmen approach</p> <p>Tendency for some organic farmers to take a zero input approach to agriculture limiting the the farm's production and profit potential.</p> <p>Covering costs and developing enough momentum for the services to fully recover their costs</p>
Partnership opportunities	Open to working with organizations and on projects to move understanding and the opportunities presented by ecological advisory services forward specifically around: record keeping and establishing baselines and measuring impacts of production choices against them.
Program requirements	Fee for service

Other

4.1 Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council

Contact:

<http://www.cahrc-ccrha.ca/skills-training/work-experience-feasibility-study>

Tel: (613) 745-7457

Toll-free: 1-866-430-7457

Program name: Work Experience Feasibility Study

Region: Canada

Description of program:

To determine industry support for the potential structure and feasibility of a national on-farm work experience program that will facilitate matching the skills development needs of current and potential farm workers with labour needs of farm employers.

The feasibility study will be completed and posted at the link above in late March 2012.

Resources:

Agri-Leadership - Self assessment tool

Agri-Talent - Database of agricultural training

Agri-Guide - National database of agricultural organizations

Agricultural Human Resources Tool Kit - In development for 2013