TOOLBOX FOR FARM TRANSFER PLANNING



Welcome to a toolbox for farmers and farm families who are planning for — or thinking about — farm succession and transfer. If you are in the beginning stages of thinking about retirement, looking for a successor, have an identified successor or are a part of a farm family in transition, this toolbox offers guides, worksheets, articles, and other resources to inform your decision-making and guide your planning for transferring your farm. *Materials are most relevant to commercial farm succession and transfer in New England, but many may apply to other situations and geographies.*

Resources are organized by topic:

Familiarize yourself with the farm transfer process – get your bearings with these short guides
Explore resources and strategies for successful farm transfers – consult these guides, handbooks, and workshops before making your plan
Learn from other succession journeys – read and watch farmer stories
Develop your farm transfer plan – examine your current situation, uncover your goals, draft a plan
Find advisors – gather your team
Post your farm property on farm link programs – create an effective property listing to share widely

Key:
indicates Land For Good authored resource

Familiarize yourself with the farm transfer process

- The Farm Transfer Process.
  One-page diagram outlining the steps in the process of passing a farm from one generation or owner to another.
- Where Do I Start? Transferring the Farm.
  Uncover what you already know, consider the bigger picture, and get ready to take action with this helpful **guide**.
- Passing It On.
  Informative **article** about the farm transfer process. *Journal of Northeast Agriculture Farming Magazine* (Sept. 2013).

- Transferring the Farm video series.
  Short **videos** on many topics related to farm succession and transfer, including case studies. University of Vermont.

Explore resources and strategies for successful farm transfers

- Farm Succession and Transfer: Strategies for the Junior Generation.
  Guidebook for the next generation that presents the issues from the perspective of the incoming farmer.
- Successful Farm Transfer Planning for Farmers Without an Identified Successor.
  Handbook that addresses farm succession and transfer when there is no identified, agreeable and well prepared successor.
- **Webinar Series**: Farm Succession Planning.
  Learn the basics of farm succession planning, how to get started, where to find advisors and additional resources. Watch the full series or choose what support you need, and refer back to these as you work through your succession planning process.
  Part 1. Getting Started: Resources, Tips & Where to Get Assistance.
  Part 2. Financial Considerations: Taxes, Viability & Retirement.
  Part 3. Legal Considerations: Business Entities, Estate Planning.
- Webinar: Retirement Planning for Farmers.
  Do you plan to retire? Hear some important considerations **for farmers of all ages**.
- Retirement Budgeting Worksheet (or download as user-friendly Excel spreadsheet)
  A **first step** toward planning your retirement; examine your current and retirement budget.
- Webinar: Make Your Farm Available to a Successor.
  An overview of ways that farm or land owners can make their property available to a successive farmer, **particularly one who is not currently a part of the farm operation**. UNH Extension.
- Your Land, Your Legacy.
  Friendly **overview** of legacy and estate planning for farm and forest landowners, including landowner case studies. University of Amherst Massachusetts, Franklin Land Trust, North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership.
- Farm & Ranch Succession Guidebook.
  One of the most comprehensive **collections** of materials on farm succession, organized by topic. Center for Land-Based Learning, California Farm Link, University of California Cooperative Extension.
- Farmland Information Center.
  Directory of landowner options for farm transfer planning including information on how to get started. American Farmland Trust.
- Toolbox for Leasing Farmland.
  Leasing your land to another farmer is an option to consider; find more information in our Toolbox.

Learn from other succession journeys

- A farmer's personal reflection on transferring the farm.
  Read this **farmer's story** written for our blog.
- Maine Farms Podcast.
  Explores farm succession through **candid conversations** with Maine farmers – including Jo Barett, retired field agent for Land For Good. Maine Farmland Trust.
- Farm Transfer Stories and Lessons.
  Video of a farmer panel discussion of working through the farm transfer process with a multi-

generational farm succession, a transfer between unrelated parties, and a cooperative model that creates a pathway for succession. Maine Farmland Trust and Land For Good.
- Transferring the Family Farm: What Worked, What Didn't for 10 New Jersey Families.
  Poignant and **educational stories** that apply anywhere. New Jersey State Agriculture Development Committee.

Develop your farm transfer plan

- Planning the Future of Your Farm.
  Hands-on **workbook** for assessing your situation, evaluating assets and income, and preparing an estate plan. Virginia Cooperative Extension.
- AgTransitions.
  Interactive website where you can create your own farm succession plan, share with family and advisors, and learn as you go. Center for Farm Financial Management, University of Minnesota.
- Your Farmland and the Future: Setting Goals, Taking Action.
  A friendly combination of information, stories and **exercises** for farm families. Teresa Opheim, Practical Farmers of Iowa.
- Farm Succession Checklist.
  Questions to consider in four steps. Pennsylvania Farm Link.

Find advisors

- Farm Transfer Network of New England.
  Website listing advisors such as attorneys, financial planners and land use professionals, searchable by New England state and topic area.
- Mediation services for farm succession.
  State directory of no-cost or low-cost programs that offer dispute resolution through mediation to agricultural producers. USDA Agricultural Mediation Program.
- Legal Food Hub.
  A free service that connects eligible farmers and food businesses to volunteer attorneys in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Vermont.
- Maine Farm Link.
  A linking service with customized support that connects farm seekers with Maine farmland owners who are looking to sell or lease their land. Maine Farmland Trust.
- Vermont Land Link.
  A linking service with individualized technical assistance to help farm seekers and Vermont farm property holders find each other. Intervale Center.
- Vermont Farm Viability Program.
  Business advising for eligible farmers, agriculturally-related businesses, forest products enterprises, and forest landowners. Vermont Housing & Conservation Board.
- Connecticut Farm Link.
  A linking service with individualized technical assistance that connects farm seekers with Connecticut farmland owners who are looking to sell or lease their land. Connecticut Department of Agriculture, Connecticut Farmland Trust.

Post your farm property on farm link programs

- NewEnglandFarmlandFinder.org.
  Free website to post or search for farm properties for sale or lease, covering all six New England states. New England Farm Link Collaborative.
- New England Farm Link Program Guide.

Explains New England's four **farm link programs** (Vermont Land Link, Maine Farm Link, Connecticut Farm Link and New England Farmland Finder) and what they offer.

- How to Create Effective Online Property Postings for Farm Link Websites.
  Guide for landowners to create accurate and appealing online farm property postings specifically focusing on how to convey information most relevant for farmers.
- New England Farm Link Collaborative.
  Collaborative that builds awareness, farmer and landowner readiness, and connections among farm seekers, farmers and landowners of all types in all New England states. Connecticut Farm Link, Maine Farm Link, Land For Good, Vermont Land Link.

Looking for more? Dig deeper with these additional resources.

Need individual help? Contact us.

https://landforgood.org/resources/toolbox/toolbox-farm-families/