Educational programs of the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service serve all people regardless of race, color, age, sex, religion, disability, or national origin.

Kentucky’s Beginning Farmer Program — KyFarmStart

Introduction
This profile is intended to answer some general questions about Kentucky’s beginning farmer program. Specifics of the program could be subject to change so interested persons should refer to the KyFarmStart Web site for the latest information. Your county Extension agent can provide information on enrollment and the training schedule for your area.

What is KyFarmStart?
KyFarmStart is a comprehensive whole farm management education program designed for beginning farmers (farming less than 10 years as a primary operator), as well as those considering farming in the future. The program offers multiple educational opportunities, including classroom instruction, field days, farm demonstrations, and Web-based training materials and resources.

Sponsored by the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture and the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service, KyFarmStart is funded by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture Beginning Farmer Rancher Program. Collaborators include Kentucky Center for Agriculture and Rural Development, Community Farm Alliance, Kentucky Dairy Development Counsel, and Catholic Charities of Louisville: Refugee Agricultural Partnership Program.

What are the goals of this program?
KyFarmStart was developed to provide beginning farmers with a basic foundation of production, marketing, management, and networking information needed to develop a successful farm enterprise. Because each farmer and farm is unique, there are no step-by-step instructions for starting a farm. Rather, this process will depend on a number of factors, such as the farmer’s current situation, primary goal(s), level of farming experience, financing, land to be farmed, and the amount of time the farmer wants to devote to the enterprise. Many of the decisions facing new and future farmers can seem overwhelming. KyFarmStart seeks to provide beginning farmers with the “tools” they will need to evaluate their own situation and to make wise management decisions. One of the primary goals of this program is to assist producers in developing a whole farm management plan.

How is training conducted?
KyFarmStart gives participants the opportunity to be involved in 12 face-to-face educational sessions. Nine of these sessions occur in traditional classroom settings.
scheduled at county Extension offices throughout the state. The other 3 sessions take place at field days and/or at on-farm demonstrations. Online worksheets and resources can be used to supplement the classroom experience.

**What topics are covered?**
The program covers a number of issues of interest to future and beginning farmers. Some required business skills are typically incorporated into the sessions; however, instructors try to accommodate the needs of the group as a whole. Topics can include: farm record keeping, marketing, enterprise evaluation, nutrient management, evaluation of natural resources, legal risk, government resources, business plans, production, farmstead management, and leadership development.

**How long does it take to complete the program?**
KyFarmStart is designed as a one-year education program. However, the actual length of the program could vary, depending on the individual group. For the most part, the program is offered during the week, either during the day or in the evening. Sessions last about 3 hours each.

**Contact Information**

*Web site*  
http://www.ca.uky.edu/KyFarmStart/

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*Additional Resources*  
- County Extension Offices in Kentucky  
http://www.ca.uky.edu/county/  
- Crop Diversification and Biofuel Research and Education Center  
http://www.uky.edu/ag/cdbrec  
- Kentucky Department of Agriculture  
http://www.kyagr.com/  
- Beginning/New Farmers (USDA)  
- Start2Farm (USDA)  
http://www.start2farm.gov/new-to-farming