



FARM BEGINNINGS



Qualified applicants do not need to own land, but some farming or production experience is required for acceptance to the program.

Program starts October 2018

OrganicGrowersSchool.org/Farmers/Farm-Beginnings

Farm Beginnings®—a 12-month, part-time training program to help new or expanding farmers plan a profitable and sustainable farm business—includes farmer-led classroom sessions, on-farm tours, field days, and an extensive farmer network. Through Farm Beginnings®, you will:

1. Gain insight from innovative and skilled farmers operating in WNC.
2. Build a strong farmer-to-farmer network for skill sharing, mentoring, etc.
3. Learn critical farm management skills such as creating financing.
4. Experience sustainable practices on WNC farms under a variety of conditions.
5. Learn to view the farm as an interconnected system and how holistic goals help determine success.
6. Craft YOUR tailor-made farm plan.



We are proud to partner with Growing Rural Opportunities to host the farmer-led classroom sessions at Mill Spring Agricultural Center, 156 School Road, Mill Spring, NC 28756.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Small Class Size: 20 participants.

Year-Round Education: 12–20 hours per month dedicated to classroom or field experience.

Winter Courses: 13 whole farm business planning sessions.

Production Training: 8 CRAFT tours on sustainable WNC farms, 6 farmer workshops at the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy Incubator Farm.

Conference Admissions: OGS conferences and ASAP's Business of Farming Conference.

CRAFT Membership: a full year of mentorship through the WNC CRAFT Farmer Network.

Mentoring: Each participant is paired with an experienced farmer for 10–15 hours of one-on-one support and skill building.

Materials: A program binder and digital access to curriculum, readings, and resources.

Core Concepts: Soil health, ecosystem processes, holistic goal setting, whole-farm planning, business planning, enterprise planning, budgeting and record keeping, financial planning, determining scale, certifications, land access and use, wholesale, direct marketing, CSAs, farmers markets, and sustainable and organic techniques.