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Values form the foundation of our lives. Generally, our core values are formed early in life, informed by family, teachers and/or other influential adults. This does not mean that values cannot be adopted or changed over time – they can! Major life events such as the birth of a child, a life-threatening illness, or a traumatic event can trigger a reorganization of our core values. It is normal and expected that, over the course of time, values may change in priority. For example, financial security may increase in importance after a period of unemployment or a divorce. Likewise health may not occur to you as a value until you have experienced serious illness or chronic disease. The process outlined below can help you determine your core values.

Instructions:

Below is a long list of values. Begin by placing a check next to those values that resonate with you. This exercise works best if you don't over-think it. Keep in mind these values do not necessarily reflect what you have in your life – they reflect what you *would like* to have in your life. If you think of a value that isn't listed feel free to add it to the list. Check everything that has meaning to you – some might have 10, others might have 20 or more. Many of the words below might feel very similar to you– in that case choose the *one* word that resonates most with you.

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Acceptance | <input type="checkbox"/> Calm | <input type="checkbox"/> Courage |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accomplishment | <input type="checkbox"/> Capable | <input type="checkbox"/> Creativity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accountability | <input type="checkbox"/> Careful | <input type="checkbox"/> Credibility |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accuracy | <input type="checkbox"/> Cleanliness | <input type="checkbox"/> Curiosity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Achievement | <input type="checkbox"/> Comfort | <input type="checkbox"/> Decisiveness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptability | <input type="checkbox"/> Common sense | <input type="checkbox"/> Dependability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ambition | <input type="checkbox"/> Community | <input type="checkbox"/> Determination |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assertiveness | <input type="checkbox"/> Compassion | <input type="checkbox"/> Discipline |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Balance | <input type="checkbox"/> Competence | <input type="checkbox"/> Effectiveness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beauty | <input type="checkbox"/> Confidence | <input type="checkbox"/> Efficiency |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boldness | <input type="checkbox"/> Control | <input type="checkbox"/> Empathy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bravery | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperation | <input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiasm |

___ Equality	___ Justice	___ Results-oriented
___ Ethical	___ Kindness	___ Satisfaction
___ Excellence	___ Knowledge	___ Security
___ Fairness	___ Leadership	___ Selfless
___ Family	___ Learning	___ Service
___ Fearless	___ Love	___ Skill
___ Freedom	___ Loyalty	___ Solitude
___ Friendship	___ Mastery	___ Spirituality
___ Fun	___ Maturity	___ Spontaneous
___ Generosity	___ Motivation	___ Stability
___ Grace	___ Optimism	___ Stewardship
___ Gratitude	___ Organization	___ Success
___ Growth	___ Originality	___ Support
___ Happiness	___ Passion	___ Sustainability
___ Hard work	___ Patience	___ Teamwork
___ Health	___ Peace	___ Thoughtful
___ Honesty	___ Persistence	___ Timeliness
___ Humility	___ Playfulness	___ Tolerance
___ Humor	___ Power	___ Toughness
___ Imagination	___ Productivity	___ Transparency
___ Independence	___ Professionalism	___ Trust
___ Individuality	___ Prosperity	___ Understanding
___ Innovation	___ Purpose	___ Uniqueness
___ Insightful	___ Quiet	___ Unity
___ Inspiring	___ Realistic	___ Vision
___ Integrity	___ Recognition	___ Vitality
___ Intelligence	___ Recreation	___ Wealth
___ Intuitive	___ Respect	___ Wisdom
___ Joy	___ Responsibility	___ Wonder

Refining and prioritizing

Now the hard part. If you selected more than 20 values from the previous list begin by circling the 20 that are most important to you.

On the following page arrange these values in order of their importance to *you* with 1 being the highest importance and 20 being the lowest in importance. If you have fewer than 20 just prioritize those you selected and leave the rest of the lines blank.

Keep in mind these words do not necessarily reflect what you have in your life right now – they reflect what you would like to have in your life. If you think of a unique value that is not listed feel free to add it to the list.

What do my values have to do with business planning?

It may seem a bit strange to begin your farm-planning journey with values clarification. In fact, it is the most important exercise you will do in your business development.

Clarifying your values ahead of time will:

- Provide guidance in what you produce, how you produce it and where you sell it.
- Offer guidance along the way when you are confronted with difficult decisions.
- Clarify your income needs and help determine the scope and scale of your business.
- Give customers and employees insight into who you are and what you stand for as a business.
- Provide indicators along the way when you're drifting away from your mission.
- Offer a reference point for you to track growth and changes along the way.

NOTE: This is not supposed to be an easy task. It is referred to as a 'forced choice' exercise because you are being asked to choose from a range of appealing values. Resist the urge to dwell too long on this—tap into your intuition and just do it! You can always make changes later.

Prioritized Core Values

1. _____

11. _____

2. _____

12. _____

3. _____

13. _____

4. _____

14. _____

5. _____

15. _____

6. _____

16. _____

7. _____

17. _____

8. _____

18. _____

9. _____

19. _____

10. _____

20. _____