



Farm Management Team Producer Application Information

A Farm Management Team provides assistance for Vermont farms to improve their enterprise and increase profitability by working with a farm advisory and diagnostic team that will support management decision-making and practices based on farm and family goals. The Farm Management Team (FMT) program is designed to serve self-motivated Vermont producers by engaging facilitated management teams who can help producers make strategic planning decisions.

How the program works

UVM's Agricultural Risk Management and Crop Insurance Education Program coordinates the Farm Management Team program. The program coordinator and an individual trained to work as a facilitator work with you to develop your management team of between 4 and 8 members; advisors can include crop consultants, accountants, nutritionists, veterinarians, fellow producers or any other person you consider to be a trusted advisor. The team operates as an advisory board that can give you advice and direction for you to use in the growth of your operation. The facilitator takes notes, develops agendas and minutes, and serves as a link to tools and people you want to work with to create solutions to management challenges.

Efficient problem solving teams create proactive environments that help producers keep up with needed changes, learn more about their business, and gain skills through collaborative efforts. When properly managed, teams can outperform individuals when completing a task.

Direct any questions to Jake Jacobs, contact information provided below. To apply for the Farm Management Team Program, you can complete and submit your application online using the link on the UVM Agricultural Risk Management Education website: <http://go.uvm.edu/ag-risk>
OR you can print the application, complete it and return it to:

Jake Jacobs, Farm Management Team Program Coordinator
University of Vermont, 108 Morrill Hall, 146 University Place
Burlington, VT 05405
Email: jake.jacobs@uvm.edu



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What is a Farm Management Team?

Farm Management Teams (FMTs) offer a management strategy for Vermont farms that employ a team approach to problem solving. Farmers select their own team of professionals to provide information and advice in all areas of farm management. Team input helps the producer set priorities and implement changes to improve practices, efficiency and profitability. Farmers develop goals and present farm challenges to the group and, in concert with each other, team members help identify potential solutions and offer recommendations based on each team member's specific area of expertise. The producer then decides on the best course of action. The farmers and their teams work with a trained facilitator who assists with managing the team meetings, taking notes, assigning tasks, following up and monitoring progress.

- A Farm Management Team is an advisory group that meets periodically, made up of a farmer and their most trusted advisors and consultants.
- The team's primary purpose is problem solving for any farm related challenges.
- The core team typically has 4-8 team members.
- Additional experts may be invited to participate in a meeting to help address some specific problem or issue.
- All team members commit to keeping team information confidential.
- There is no cost to the farmer.

Team meetings

- Regular, scheduled meetings, usually 1 - 1.5 hours in length; Meetings are typically held quarterly, as determined by the farmer and facilitator.
- Written, shared agenda
- Structured format
- Focused, productive discussion
- Systems for monitoring progress/performance

TEAM GUIDELINES

Expectations

- All ideas need to be discussed freely and openly
- Team members are to respect ideas/input of other members of the team – not everyone will always agree; focus is on issue, not on individuals
- The producer has the final say
- The producer assumes ownership of goals and priorities
- Must maintain confidentiality
- Be on time
- Come prepared with your reports and any necessary information to contribute



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Duration of the team

- The team will continue to meet at agreed-upon intervals until the producer decides that their objectives have been met.

Team Meetings

- Meetings will be every two to six months, once the team is established. In the beginning, the team may meet more frequently to establish the group's dynamic and start the process. Meeting frequency is determined by the producer and the program coordinator.
- If the producer or a team member feel that something needs to be discussed before the date of a regularly scheduled meeting, the meeting can be rescheduled.
- Regular, scheduled meetings will usually be 1 - 1.5 hours in length;
- Written, shared agenda, prepared by the facilitator
- Structured format, assuring opportunity for input by all team members
- Focused, productive discussion
- Systems for monitoring progress/performance

Team Process

- First Meeting = Diagnostic Meeting
 - Goals identified
 - Tour of Operation
 - Questions
 - Schedule second meeting
 - "Homework" – Producer/Manager Self Assessment
- Second Meeting
 - Identify focus areas/priorities
 - SWOT analysis
 - Suggestions
 - Present ideas to producer
 - Questions
 - Establish next meeting's agenda
 - Schedule next meeting

Do not attempt to come up with all solutions or plans for the entire farm enterprise!

Remember that changes come in the form of transition, not quantum leaps.



- Establish **S M A R T** Goals

Specific Measurable Achievable Rewarding Time Framed



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