

Determining your skills and resources:

Worksheet #2:

This worksheet will help you assess your skills or resources in areas which are important to operating a farm. The next worksheet, #3, will help you outline some practical steps to take in order to strengthen areas which “Need attention” that you identify in this worksheet.

For each skill or resource area, check the column which is most appropriate to your skills or resources. For example, if you enjoy working and interacting with people, you might check “Excellent” on the “People skills” line. However, if you are shy, and find working with people challenging, you might check, “Needs attention” on the “People skills”.

Personal Resources:	Rating:	Needs attention	Acceptable	Excellent
A clear sense of your goals				
“People skills”				
Language skills (can you communicate with your customers effectively?)				
Financial backing or resources				
Management skills (managed a business in the past?)				
Mechanical/ construction/ maintenance skills				
Land--own or rent				
Equipment, Hand tools				
Equipment, Machines (tractors, coolers, discs, etc)				
Production Experience:	Rating:	Needs attention	Acceptable	Excellent
Garden experience				
On-farm experience				
Experience operating equipment				
Personal Preferences:	Rating:	Needs attention	Acceptable	Excellent
I like hard work				
I like taking risks				
I am a good problem solver				
I enjoy an outdoor and physical lifestyle				
I have a long-term commitment to my job				
Farm Site Characteristics	Rating:	Needs attention	Acceptable	Excellent
Note: If you are looking for land this can be used as a check sheet when you are evaluating each property OR rate the importance of these characteristics to your future farm operation.				
Soil Quality (Important!! : drainage, slope of land, soil depth and type (clay, loam, sand), organic matter content)				
Length of growing season/ frost susceptibility				
Availability and access to irrigation water				
Structures on the farm-for storage, sales and washing.				
Accessibility to major roadways				

Prior land use (soil fertility, water quality, on-site wastes)			
Wildlife issues (fencing, deer population)			
Market Potential/ demographics Rating: For beginning famers: Evaluate the following criteria according to how strongly you feel each element has influence on the success of your (future) farm operation.	Needs attention	Acceptable	Excellent
Local population (within 30 miles)			
Relative income level of this population			
Nearby farmers markets, co-op, grower co-ops, restaurants.			
Potential for market niches (organic, pick-your-own, specialty crops/ livestock)			
Your commitment to product quality and customer satisfaction.			
Infrastructure and information support Rating: For beginning farmers: Rate the importance of each of these criteria to the success of your (future) farm operation.	Needs attention	Acceptable	Excellent
Availability and quality of labor			
Local property taxes and zoning for agriculture			
Proximity of farm supply stores, dealers, and ag agencies			
Local grower organizations and their activities			
Supportiveness of nearby farms and neighbors			

If you checked “Needs attention” on a skill or resource, it may indicate that you may need:

1. Additional training;
2. Improvements should be made or alternative plans developed to address this skill/resource;
3. Different farming sites should be explored