



NFU's Beginning Farmer *Institute*

APPLICATION TIMELINE

- **APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED**
NFU's Beginning Farmer Institute (BFI) will accept applications Feb. 6, 2012.
- **DEADLINE**
Applications must be postmarked by March 14, 2012.
- **CLASS ANNOUNCEMENT**
The 2012 BFI Class will be announced on March 30, 2012.
- **SPONSORS**
This program is brought to you the National Farmers Union Foundation, Farm Credit and CHS Foundation.

'It's a Powerful Experience'

"National Farmers Union's ability to reach out to a broad cross section of farmers makes it different than other organizations. They teach at a level that opens eyes to a broader picture of where our farm fits into agriculture," says Erin, member of the NFU Beginning Farmer Institute (BFI) Class of 2011. "It's the content of their classes, the small group in a close-knit setting, visiting innovative farmers,

talking with experts and learning from my peers from a diverse variety of farms across the country that gives me the opportunity to learn different solutions. The NFU Institute makes a person think beyond their own farm. The NFU Institute is where 'top down and bottom up' come together. It's a powerful experience."

Apply today!

National Farmers Union Beginning Farmer Institute

Application and Selection Process

We are pleased that you are applying for the NFU Beginning Farmer Institute. Described below are the procedures for applying as well as the process for screening and selecting candidates for the program. Please read the directions carefully and be sure to return all required materials. All application materials must be submitted in a typed format. For your convenience, you may duplicate the pages of this application or recreate them on your computer. An editable PDF form is available for download at www.nfu.org/education. This program is open to applicants residing in the Continental United States, Hawaii, Alaska and Puerto Rico. Questions should be directed to Maria Miller at 202.697.0128.

Application

Each individual participant is required to submit a completed application, including a short essay on his or her beginning farming experience and why he or she would like to participate in this program. Those who apply as a partnership can submit one essay with separate applications. In addition to the completed application and typed essay, each applicant must also include the following:

- 1) A current resume that lists accomplishments.
 - 2) One letter of reference (in support of your candidacy for the NFU Beginning Farmer Institute) and the names of two additional references including their titles, organizations and telephone numbers.
- Application postmark deadline is March 14, 2012.

RETURN ALL MATERIALS TO: Beginning Farmer Program
Attn: NFU Education Director Maria Miller
P.O. Box 824
Windsor, CO 80550

Screening

Each application will be carefully reviewed and analyzed for content and completion by a screening committee. Applications will be scored by a team of people who have hands-on farming experience.

Selection, Expectations and Fees

Final selections for participation in the NFU Beginning Farmer Institute will be based on application analysis. Candidates will be notified of their status no later than March 30, 2012. Those selected to participate are required to attend three sessions. One session will be April 15-18, 2012 in Washington, DC. One session will be November 8-11, 2012 in Minneapolis, MN. One session will be March 2-5, 2013 in Springfield, MA. Please consider this commitment before applying. There will be a one-time \$25 registration fee per accepted candidate. NFU will cover the majority of the remaining costs of the NFU Beginning Farmer Institute including travel, lodging, and meals during the event. NFU's expectation is to have each institute graduate become an inspiration to and actively mentor similar individuals in their area, or to become candidates for local boards and other community opportunities. NFU plans to provide ongoing support to participants after they return to their farms.

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Beginning Farmer Institute Application

Are you applying as an individual or as a farm partnership (husband and wife, business partner, family members, etc.) Individual Partnership

If partnership, please provide separate applications for each person and mail them in the same envelope. Availability is limited. For example, if three family members apply, would you still be interested if we only had space for one of the applicants? Yes No

Name: _____

Farm operation name if applicable: _____

Is your farm incorporated? Yes No

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ County: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone #: _____ Cell #: _____ FAX #: _____

E-mail: _____ Website: _____

Education obtained: _____

Do you own or have you ever owned, directly or indirectly, an interest in a farm operation or farmland?
 Yes No Please describe. If you need additional space, please attach a separate page.

Have you farmed or raised livestock for less than 5 of the past 10 years? Yes No
Please describe. If you need additional space, please attach a separate paper.

Current Farm Acreage: owned _____ rented _____

Livestock: number of head _____

Number of Employees: _____

Type of Operation: Grain Farming (wheat, corn, soybeans, etc) Dairy Cattle Poultry
 Cotton Fruit Fishing Farmers Market Retail Vegetable Farming Other

Describe your farm operation. If you need additional space, please attach a separate page.

Are you or have you ever been a member of a cooperative? Yes No
If yes, please describe.

Are you a member of Farmers Union? Yes No (desired, but not required)

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Beginning Farmer Institute Application Essay

Directions

In narrative form, please respond to the essay questions below. If you are applying as partnership, only one essay is necessary.

Your essay should be from one to three pages (typed and double spaced). Responses must be in a typed format with the pages numbered and your name on each page in the upper right hand corner. Include your essay in your application packet. Please write an essay answering these questions:

“Why I should be selected for the Beginning Farmer Institute?”

“Where do I envision my farm operation in 5 years and how do I plan to achieve this goal?”

“What do I expect from this Institute?”

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Beginning Farmer Institute Program Sample Agenda

Each institute will be tailored to the participants' needs as determined by a pre-attendance survey.
Here is an sample of agenda topics:

Top Five Tips for Beginning Farmers
Business Planning: Plan Your Ag Business in its Entirety
New Opportunities in Agriculture
Organic and Local Food Systems
Sole Proprietorship, LLC or S Corp?
Record Keeping and Tax Preparation for Farmers
Taking the Reins: Direction After the Family Farm is Transitioned
Land Acquisition
What Insurance do I Need on My Farm?
Find a Mentor/Be a Mentor
Employee Hiring and Management
Financing 101: How to Sit Down With Your Banker and Ask for a Loan
Financing 101, Part 2: How to Plan For and Survive a Tough Year
How to Write a Business Plan
Profit = Volume x Price - Costs
Finding Capital
Cutting Costs, Reducing Inputs
Marketing Your Crop (Wholesale)
Direct Marketing Your Crop (Retail)
Marketing, Public Relations and Advertising Your Business
What is 'Sustainable Agriculture'?
Renewable Energy on Your Farm
Wind Power Basics
Cooperatives 101
How to Conduct Research
Understanding USDA Programs
How to be Effective on a Board of Directors and Why it is Important that Your Voice is Heard
Present Yourself Professionally and Influence Others
How to Increase Your Ability to Get Things Done
How to Improve Positive Thinking with New Visions, New Ambitions

Here is an example of tours*:

Farms that Found a Niche
Farms that Set an Example
Ag-focused Cooperatives
Wind farms

*as available and appropriate according to the demographics and interests of participants