



# 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](http://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.

# National Farmers Union

## 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)

# *National Farmers Union*

## *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?”

# *National Farmers Union*

## *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