

## FARM BUSINESS START-UP CHECKLIST

*This checklist is derived from the “Occupational Profile for Northeast Small Scale ‘Sustainable’ Farmer.” It lists tasks that established farmers believe are important to do before you open for business on “day one.” See the complete profile at [www.smallfarm.org](http://www.smallfarm.org).*

- Secure farm business location(s) (i.e., purchase, rent or lease)
- Complete farm planning process (production, marketing and financial plans)
- Select and develop farm product and/or service mix
- Establish farm legal structure (e.g., sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation, cooperative)
- Register farm business; obtain business certificate
- Obtain tax identification numbers for the farm business:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Sales Tax
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Employer’s Tax
- Acquire necessary permits, licenses and certifications; prepare to comply with all relevant regulations
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Local
  - \_\_\_\_\_ State
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Federal
- Purchase necessary insurance (e.g., liability, property, workers’ compensation)
- Secure necessary financing (farm capitalization and operating); establish credit with key suppliers
- Establish farm management team and job descriptions (e.g., family members and partners; employees; lawyer, accountant, other consultant services)
- Open farm business bank account(s)
- Set up farm business office; obtain necessary supplies and equipment
- Set up farm bookkeeping and record keeping systems
- Establish farm policies (personnel, safety, visitor)
- Establish distribution channels/markets for farm products
- Produce promotional and advertising material
- Establish farm work plan; hire and schedule farm labor

**Are you in business?** You are if you answer yes to all the following:

- I have products and/or services to sell
- I have “announced” my presence (e.g., through signage, advertisements, word of mouth, attendance at a farmer’s market)
- I have customers
- I intend to make a profit from what I sell
- I intend to file taxes as a business
- I have chosen a legal structure for my business (e.g., sole proprietor, partnership, corporation, LLC) and have registered it as required
- I have acquired all licenses and/or permits required to operate my business

