



## Business Planning For Hmong Farmers

### Curriculum

This course is taught as part of the *Cultivating Success* Sustainable Small Farming Education Program, developed collaboratively by Washington State University, University of Idaho and Rural Roots. More information on Cultivating Success can be found at <http://cultivatingsuccess.org>

Curriculum developed and adapted by Theresa Beaver, Marcy Ostrom, Dave Muelheisen, and Malaquias Flores, WSU Small Farms Program



## Business Planning for Hmong Farmers

# Business Planning For Hmong Farmers

- Course is taught as a 6-8 part weekly series of two hours each.
- All classes are taught in Hmong or with Hmong translation.
- Farmers receive a certificate for attending at least 3/4 of the classes.
- Instructor should plan time for following up one-on-one with each student on their farm to write the business plan together.
- Instructor will need “Building a Sustainable Business: A Guide to Developing a Business Plan” from the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture as a reference book ([www.misa.umn.edu/publications/bizplan.html](http://www.misa.umn.edu/publications/bizplan.html)).

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## **Business Planning for Hmong Farmers**

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**Record Keeping Templates**

## Business Planning for Hmong Farmers

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### Learning Objectives

- Understand the course format
  - Learn what a business plan is
  - Learn the importance of business planning and management
  - Develop a goal statement
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## 1. Business Planning Basics

### Introducing the Business Plan Developing a Vision and Goals

### Getting the Class Started

- Introductions
- Discuss reasons for class
- Get input from class on format, schedule, and location
- Projects will be done working in small groups, with partners, and individually with instructors
- Organize a system of taking turns for bringing in snacks
- Talk about whether there are transportation or childcare issues
- Give out student notebooks and business planning worksheets
- Discussion about primary language to use in class—Hmong, English, or both? Try to informally assess language and reading skills. Is there someone in the family who reads and writes in English who could help with the plan? Could they come to class as well?

### Instructor Presentation (in Hmong)

- Importance of having a plan
- Show a sample business plan and explain the different parts
- Introduce concept of goal setting (see pages 90-96 in *Building a Sustainable Business*)

### Break

### Guest Speaker (optional)

A perfect choice for a guest speaker for this session would be a Hmong farmer who has developed a business plan that could be shared. This is a great introduction to business planning and a class motivator. If a Hmong farmer cannot be located, an English-speaking farmer could be used with a translator.

### Class Activity

- Individuals work on stating goals for farm and farm family
- Can break up into pairs, small or family-sized groups
- Can provide drawing or collage materials and do this visually
- Finish with full class discussion
  
- Introduce and hand and out Business Planning Worksheet (with assurance of instructor assistance).

## Business Planning for Hmong Farmers

### Closing

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#### Learning Objectives

- Learn to evaluate farm resources
  - Learn to evaluate family resources
  - Learn about community resources
  - Learn about farming as a business and different business structures
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## 2. Product and Farm Description

#### Instructor Presentation (in Hmong)

How to develop a product description

Pros and Cons of different business structures

How to evaluate your farm and family resources (For background, instructor can read Task Two, page 27 in Building a Sustainable Business).

#### Class Activity:

- **Review and discussion** of the University of Wisconsin Extension CD in Hmong and English **PLANNING YOUR BUSINESS**

#### Break (10 min)

#### Class Discussion Topics

- Small groups or whole class.
- What is your “product”?
- How is it unique?
- What resources do you have?
- What is your current farm business structure?
- How would you describe or assess your current farm situation?

### Closing

### 3. Market Analysis

#### Learning Objectives

- Learn about market research and its importance
  - Learn about consumer trends
  - Assess competition
  - Understand the idea of a market niche
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#### Instructor Presentation (in Hmong):

Analyzing consumers and determining your target audience:

- Why it is important to know your market
- Different ways of doing market research
- What is known about Farmers' Market customers
- What is known about consumer preferences

#### Guest Speaker Suggestions (with translation):

*Karen Kinney, Seattle Neighborhood Farmers' Markets.* Talk about current niche opportunities in Seattle Neighborhood Farmers' Markets. Which products are in short supply? Where are potential growth areas? What kinds of customers are we seeing at the different markets?

#### Break (10 mins)

#### Class Activity:

University of Wisconsin Extension CD THE FARMERS' MARKET

Use computer lab to introduce the concept of the internet

#### Class Discussion:

- Who exactly is buying your products: Young, Old, Latino? Hmong? White? Parents?
- Is there a specific market you are trying to target? Currently? In the future?
- What information do you need?
- What do you need to do research on?
- Has anyone in your family ever used the internet to access information?

#### Closing

## 4. Marketing

### Learning Objectives

- Learn about promotion and placement strategies
  - Understand a variety direct marketing strategies
  - Gain an understanding of pricing
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### Instructor Presentation (in Hmong):

#### 1: The 5-P's

Packaging  
Pricing  
Promotion  
Placement (distribution)  
People (relationships)

#### 2: Succeeding at the Farmers' Market

Designing an attractive display  
Communicating with managers  
Product quality  
Communicating with customers  
Developing a farm identity  
How to set a fair price for your products

### Guest Speaker Suggestions:

Kate Halstead, Farmers' Market manager (with translator): show slides about what makes a successful display.

### Break

### Class Activities

- Students work together to design their own banners, signage and business cards, with assistance from banner makers and computer operators (instructors and assistants can set up computer stations with printers and make business cards on the spot).
- Students design their own labels for their market displays.
- Class discusses the importance of "Getting your name out" to your customers and developing a farm identity.
- Visit a farmers' market together and assess the displays.

### Closing

### Learning Objectives

- Gain an understanding of employee management and payroll taxes
  - Learn about business licensing, zoning regulations, permits, insurance and risk management issues
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## 5. Management and Operations

### Instructor Presentation:

Introduce topics of:

- Zoning
- Farm and Marketing Regulations
- Business permits

(read WSDA Handbook of Regulations for Direct Marketing as background)

Discuss farm management issues:

Legal and record-keeping requirements of farm businesses

Workman's Compensation

Payroll taxes

Insurance

Defining and discussing risk management as a concept

### Guest Speaker Suggestions (with translation):

A CPA to explain issues such as tax reporting and employee issues such as workmen's compensation, etc.

An insurance agent who has experience with agricultural and small businesses.

A representative from the Risk Management Agency

### Break (10 min)

### In-Class Activity

- Look at tax forms together
- Discuss with your "Discussion Partner" how best to manage your business.
- Look at the Management and Operations section of your business plan (with individual assistance from instructors)

## **6. Finances**

### **Learning Objectives**

- Gain an understanding of the importance of record-keeping
  - Students will be exposed to recordkeeping systems
  - Gain an understanding of how production and financial records inform pricing, production efficiency and feasibility.
  - Students will be introduced to financial concepts such as cash flow, income statements and balance sheets.
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### **Instructor Topics**

Class 1. Introduce general concepts and importance of recordkeeping.

(For background, visit website for Rural Coalition and review "A Guide to Financial Record Keeping for Farmers and Ranchers" <http://www.ruralco.org/index.html>)

Class 2. Hand out record-keeping worksheets and introduce more complex topics of:

- Enterprise Budgets
- Cash Flow Projections
- Balance Sheets
- Income Statement

This material should be spread over at least two weeks, giving students a chance to think it over, ask questions and discuss their ideas in class.

### **10 minute Break**

### **Guest Speaker Suggestion**

Small Business Development Center Counselor (with translation) or Successful Hmong Business Operator

### **Class Activity**

- Review and discuss University of Wisconsin Extension CD DOLLAR DECISIONS
- Work on record-keeping worksheets with assistance from instructor.
- Discuss the different ways that you could monitor your cash flow and keep records on your farm.
- Small group discussions about different system that people currently use for keeping records.

### **Closing**

## Business Planning for Hmong Farmers

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### Learning Objectives

- Gain a sense of accomplishment from completing course
  - Learn to share business ideas with others
  - Develop leadership and presentation skills
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## 7. Graduation and Presentation of Certificates

### Class Activities

- Organize a potluck with favorite foods from farms.
- Have different families present the business ideas that they developed during class.
- Have a formal presentation of graduation certificates
- Invite local politicians, WSU administrators, and leaders of Hmong organizations to say a few words of congratulations.

**Business Planning for Hmong Farmers**

**Farm Business Plan Worksheet  
Hmong Farmers**

**1. Name of Farm:**

**2. Vision and Goals:**

**3. Products:**

**4. Business Structure:**

## **Business Planning for Hmong Farmers**

### **5. Market Analysis**

Market Size:

Target Market:

Competition:

Market Trends:

### **6. Marketing Plan**

Current Markets:

Target Markets for Future:

Pricing Strategy:

Promotion Strategy:

Legal and Regulatory Needs:

## **Business Planning for Hmong Farmers**

### **7. Management and Operations**

Facilities and Location:

Labor:

Farm Management Team:

Insurance:

Risk Management Strategies:

Legal and Regulatory Needs:

### **8. Financials**

Record Keeping System:

Cash Flow Projections (attach)

Projected Balance Sheet (attach)

Projected Income Statement (attach)