



**Horn Farm**  
*Center for*  
*Agricultural Education*

**Horn Farm Center for Agricultural Education**  
**Incubator Farm Project**  
**Farmer Handbook**

The purpose of the Horn Farm Center Farmer Handbook is to provide you with information you need to participate in our Incubator Farm Project. Here you will find general information about the Horn Farm Center and Incubator Farmers' rights and responsibilities. We require each Incubator Farmer to read and adhere to these standards, policies, and procedures.

This handbook is a living document and will be updated as the program continues to be refined. Incubator Farm participants will be notified of any changes or revisions.

## Program description

In a food economy that favors large and industrialized farming, it can be challenging to successfully start a small, sustainable farm. Equipping, supporting, and educating aspiring farmers is at the core of the Incubator Farm Project. The project is structured to bridge the gap between a farmer's current knowledge and the knowledge necessary to create and sustain a profitable small farm business.

Horn Farm Center provides the opportunity for independent farmers to create and operate small-scale sustainable farm businesses on prime farmland and to develop local markets for his/her products. The project provides land, infrastructure, educational opportunities, marketing resources, and business planning assistance.

Education takes several forms within this program - from the experiential, hands-on aspect of designing and operating the incubator farmer's own enterprise, to more formalized class and workshop sessions. Classes are designed to enhance the technical knowledge of the farmer and to provide a framework for understanding the practical business needs of an agricultural operation. Participants commit to taking part in a number of required classes and will also have the opportunity to select from a schedule of optional offerings. These will be scheduled out in advance of the program year so that participants can make appropriate plans. Farmers are expected to be proactive in seeking assistance from Horn Farm Center staff regarding farming and business skills.

The Horn Farm Center Incubator Farm Project is a three to five year program. Creation of an exit strategy and path for establishing an agricultural operation outside of the program is a key part of the process. Horn Farm Center will assist

farmers in the search for available farmland in York County and the surrounding region.

Program participation requirements:

- Minimum of two seasons of farming experience
- Knowledge of sustainable and conservation farming practices
- Skills necessary to develop a viable business plan and to maintain financial and farming records
- Familiarity with all aspects of running a small-scale intensive organic farm - e.g., irrigation, greenhouse maintenance, seeding, transplanting, bed preparation, composting, weed control, insect control
- Commitment to attend mandatory educational workshops, classes, and meetings
- Commitment to contributing to a local living economy
- Commitment to developing local markets for product sales
- Ability to communicate effectively and work collaboratively with Horn Farm Center staff, volunteers, and fellow project participants

## Land Use

One of the primary responsibilities of the farmer is to leave the land in better condition than how it was found. This requires observation and awareness of the health of the soil, responsible and conscientious use of water resources, and supporting and coexisting with the natural systems that surround and interact with the farm. Given the reality of climate change and the uncertain times in which we live, the role of the farmer becomes one not only of stewardship, but as an agent of restoration, a healer of damaged landscapes.

### Water Use and Irrigation

Water access is provided at several faucets along the incubator farm fields. It is each farmer's responsibility to provide above ground lines from the faucet to his/her plot. When needed, farmers will need to coordinate connections and line placement so that all farmers are accommodated on the limited access points. Farmers may also need to coordinate irrigation timing with one another.

Water is currently sourced via building rain catchment and spring and gravity fed to the storage pond onsite. From here it is pumped to the faucet heads when in use. While the intention is to provide adequate irrigation flow throughout the farm season, Horn Farm Center does not guarantee access to water. If an event beyond the financial or physical control of Horn Farm Center occurs that limits access to farm site water, Horn Farm Center can not assume liability. Farmers are expected to use water resources in a responsible, conservative manner.

### Soil Management

Long-term health of the soil is a primary concern in agricultural systems. This is one measure that Horn Farm Center looks at to determine how an

Incubator Farmer is progressing in the program. Reading and understanding a soil test and knowing how to respond is an important part of a farmer's planning process. Each fall, Incubator Farmers are required to obtain and submit a soil test of his/her plot. Soil tests are done at the farmer's expense and can be done through a number of different testing outlets. Horn Farm Center can recommend testing outlets and procedures as needed. Incubator Farmers should keep a copy of the test for his/her own records as well as submitting a copy for Horn Farm Center.

### Organic Guidelines

Incubator Farmers are required to farm using organic standards. Chemical herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers are not permitted.

### Conservation Plan

Horn Farm Center has an existing Conservation Plan associated with the Incubator Farm Project fields. Incubator Farmers are required to read and adhere to the guidelines set out within. Each farmer will receive a copy of the plan for his/her records.

### Weed Management

- Horn Farm Center defines a weed as any plant that inhibits the desired function of an area. While each farmer may view various 'weeds' differently, it is important to prevent the spread of plants that other farmers may find undesirable or disruptive to his/her growing styles.
- Horn Farm Center will monitor plots on a regular basis and bring any problem areas to the attention of the farmer. If a case of failure to manage a problem plant species arises, Horn Farm Center reserves the right to mow that area of the Incubator Farmer's field.
- Some specific examples of problem species are Canada Thistle (*Cirsium arvens*) and Jimson Weed (*Datura stramonium*). These species should not be allowed to flower and go to seed.

### Pest Management

- Chemical pesticides are not permitted. Only products or methods that would be in line with organic growing methods are allowed. Preventative methods and practices to deter insect damage is best - Plantings and habitat creation to promote beneficial insect species are encouraged.
- Some farmers may choose use of a firearm as a method of controlling groundhogs. This option is restricted to use of a .22 rifle. Incubator Farmers wishing to use this option must contact the Education Director for permission. Firearms may not be stored onsite.
- Havahart traps are allowed but must be checked on a daily basis to avoid unnecessary suffering of an enclosed animal.
- Leg traps are not permitted.
- Standard snapping mouse or rat traps are permitted. Mouse or rat poisons of any kind are not allowed.

- Other methods of control not specified here should be cleared by Horn Farm Center prior to use.

### Hedgerows

Hedgerows on the Horn Farm are managed by the Horn Farm Center in accordance with the Horn Farm Land Use Management Plan. Hedgerows are not included in the lease between farmers and the Horn Farm Center. Farmers will not place anything in or take anything from the hedgerows.

## Building Use

Farm Building Usage Fee. This fee includes designated shelf and floor space in the pole barn, designated shelf space in the corn barn, use of pole barn wash area, and cost of trash and recycling removal. Limited overflow storage space is available for an additional fee.

### Pole Barn

- Designated shelf and floor space in the pole barn will be marked for use in storing supplies and materials needed to run the farming operation.
- Non-farm related and personal items may not be stored in the barn.
- Any seed, food, or other pest-sensitive items must be stored in sealed containers to prevent encouraging mice, etc
- Storage areas should be kept orderly and tidy
- Any fuel or other flammable items should be stored in a sensible non-hazardous manner
- Additional space required for storage can be arranged with the Education Director

### Wash Station

- The wash station area is for use by Incubator Farmers to clean and prepare produce for sale or distribution.
- Area should be kept clean and tidy between use. Incubator Farmers are expected to clean area after use, including emptying wash bins, sweeping any debris from floor, and removing any compost.
- The faucet stands at the corner of the pole barn need to be turned off after use and any hoses rolled and stored in a non-hazardous way.

### Cooler

- Cooler space is available for rental. Each unit consists of approximately 6 feet wide by 5 shelves tall.
- Items in cooler should be stored on shelves when possible.
- Items may be stored in front of your assigned shelves, but may not be placed directly on the floor.

### Corn Barn

- There is shelf space in the corn barn that will be allocated to farmers as part of the Farm Building usage fee. Shelf space will be assigned by the Education Director.
- Additional space along the interior sides of the corn barn are available for use at the discretion of the Education Director.
- Hanging drying crops such as garlic is also permitted.

## Greenhouses

### Space allocation

- Space is rented to incubator farmers by the square foot per year (rented by table units) - this fee covers cost of propane, electric, water and maintenance needs.
- Most tables are 4x10' in size
- Incubator Farmers will estimate use through the season to reserve appropriate space at the beginning of the season. Additional space (if available) may be added during the season and will be charged at full season rate. Tables will be labeled with farm names.

### Greenhouse practices

- New farmers are required to attend a greenhouse information session prior to being able to use the greenhouse space. Information sessions may be scheduled with Education Director
- All users will respect the needs and property of his/her fellow users of this shared resource. Users will maintain his/her space in a clean and orderly fashion avoiding interference with other users. Trash and other messes should be cleaned up before leaving the greenhouse.
- Use space efficiently. You may not move another farmers plants without his/her permission.
- Any sprays, be it fertilizer or a pest management system must follow the organic certification (NOP) rules and regulations carefully. Only OMRI sprays should be used. Be respectful of other farmers plants near your own when you are spraying.
- Carefully monitor your plants for disease or pest infection. Any infected plants must be treated or removed from the greenhouse immediately.
- Any flats that have contained diseased plants must be sterilized.
- In an effort to reduce possibility of disease or pest infection no outside plants are allowed in the greenhouse.
- Greenhouse space is for Incubator Farm Project participants only. Any exceptions to this will be at the discretion of Horn Farm Center staff.
- Horn Farm Center does not supply any greenhouse supplies. All seeds, trays, and soil are the responsibility of the farmers.
- The greenhouse air temperature will be set to 55 degrees. This is the lowest temperature that allows for plant growth. Do not change the thermostat.

- Your plants are your own responsibility. Horn Farm Center encourages cooperation between farmers in the creation of a watering schedule. Do not water, spray or fertilize another farmer's plants without his/her permission.
- No smoking in or within 25 feet of the greenhouse.
- When leaving the greenhouse, ensure the water has been turned off.
- Communication is essential. Please communicate your fellow farmers to coordinate watering schedules and the opening and closing of the greenhouse each day.
- Any visitors or farm help you bring into the greenhouse are your responsibility. Please make sure they understand the rules and are respectful of the other farmers plants.
- Users are responsible for cleaning his/her rented space at the end of the season. This includes sweeping the floor and removing any leftover soil, flats or supplies.

#### Damages

- Damage that occurs due to minor accidents and/or normal wear and tear is to be repaired by Horn Farm Center. Users who are responsible for minor damage should notify Education Director for repairs as quickly as possible to minimize any future compounding of the damage. Damage that is more serious and is possible to have been caused by severe negligence or malice may be determined by the consideration of Horn Farm Center staff.
- Damage determined by Horn Farm Center to have been caused by actions outside of normal wear and tear or by negligence or malice will be subject to remediation by the individual responsible. Horn Farm Center retains the right to require responsible party to take steps to repair and make right any damage.

#### Farm House

Horn Farm Center farm house is reserved for staff, office, meeting, and classroom space. Incubator Farmers do not have general access to farm house. Should Incubator Farmers require use of farm house for any reason, arrangements can be made with the Executive Director. Depending on use and needs, additional rental fees may or may not apply.

#### Porto-pottys

There are two porto-pottys available for use by farmers while on the property, one is next to the greenhouse and a second is located in the community gardens area. Please alert Horn Farm Center staff of any maintenance needs.

#### Keys

Incubator Farmers will be issued a key for appropriate access to buildings and other locked areas (i.e. Dumpster, Water Faucets). Keys will need to be returned upon completion or early exit of program. Loss of key will result in a \$20.00 replacement fee.

### Smoking

Smoking is not permitted in or near the farm fields or farm buildings.

### Public Events

Incubator Farmers wishing to hold public events on his/her farm (i.e. workshops, classes, public tours, etc) are required to notify Horn Farm Staff and complete Event Checklist and Site Rental Agreement to ensure proper notifications are in order. Depending on type and scope of event an additional rental fee may or may not apply. Any such event would need to be in line with Horn Farm Center's vision and values and needs to be complementary, rather than competing with Horn Farm Center's own programming.

## Equipment Use

Horn Farm Center provides a variety of equipment and machinery for rent by the Incubator Farmers. Use of equipment should always be done in a way that is safe and responsible.

### Requirements for use

- Farmers wishing to use equipment must schedule a training session with the Education Director or other trainer appointed by the Horn Farm Center. It is up to the discretion of the Horn Farm Center whether the Incubator Farmer has the appropriate level of skill and knowledge to rent and use equipment. Additional training and supervision may be required.
- Farmers are expected to use equipment only for intended use and within the guidelines of the training. Upon completion of use, equipment should be cleaned as needed and returned to appropriate storage area.

### Reporting damage or issue

- Mechanical issues and any type of damage to equipment should be reported immediately to the Education Director.
- Damage that occurs due to minor accidents and/or normal wear and tear is to be repaired by Horn Farm Center. Users who are responsible for minor damage should take steps to notify Education Director for repairs as quickly as possible to minimize any future compounding of the damage. Damage that is more serious and is possible to have been

caused by severe negligence or malice may be determined as such by the consideration of Horn Farm Center staff.

- Damage determined by Horn Farm Center to have been caused by actions outside of normal wear and tear or by negligence or malice will be subject to remediation by the individual responsible. Horn Farm Center retains the right to require responsible party to take steps to repair and make right any damage.

## Fuel

Horn Farm Center will keep a supply of fuel on hand for equipment needs. In time of need, Incubator Farmers may purchase fuel and submit receipts along with reimbursement form to office to be compensated for cost of fuel.

## Reporting of injuries

Any injuries occurring on the property, either incurred by incubator farmers or by farmer's employees, volunteers, or visitors, need to be reported immediately to Horn Farm Center staff. Appropriate forms need to be completed.

## Cooperative spirit

We expect participants of the Incubator Farm Program to have a positive, cooperative spirit. There are many areas of shared space and equipment that will require communication between participants. There are also many opportunities for collaboration and support among participants. If conflict arises, we believe in participants' abilities to work out issues in an amicable way. Horn Farm Center staff can be engaged if necessary.

## Insurance Requirements

Incubator Farmers are required to carry a liability insurance policy with a minimum of \$1,000,000 coverage. A certificate of insurance listing Horn Farm Center as additional insured needs to be submitted each season prior to participation in the program.

## Startup Costs

Incubator Farmers are responsible for his/her own start-up costs and determining the level of financial investment in his/her farm operation. Should the participant leave the program either voluntarily, involuntarily, or because of lease not being renewed, Horn Farm Center is not responsible for any startup costs or financial investment put into the farm business.

## Consequences and Probation

Failure to follow the guidelines in the Horn Farm Center Farmer Handbook may result in a farmer being asked to leave the farm and the Incubator Farm Project. No refunds of fees will be issued if a farmer is asked to leave the program.

A farmer will be placed on probation if he or she:

- Misses more than 2 mandatory workshops or meetings.
- Does not complete record-keeping materials.
- Does not follow all the program requirements contained in this Farmer Handbook.
- Fails to pay program fees in a timely manner

Horn Farm Center staff will meet with a farmer put on probation to discuss the reasons for and to set the terms of probation. To continue in the program, a farmer will have to agree to the terms of probation.

A farmer will be removed from the incubator Farm Program if he or she:

- Does not meet the terms of probation.
- Does not cooperate with other farmers or Horn Farm Center.
- Disrespects the farm property - such as damaging or neglecting equipment or littering.
- Uses non-organic pesticides or fertilizers.
- Steals from farm sites, other farmers, or neighbors.
- Is violent or aggressive toward others.

## Complaints and Appeals (Grievances)

STEP 1) You can file a complaint against another farmer or Horn Farm Center. Your complaint should be in writing if possible. Write or speak your complaint as soon as possible after the problem happens.

STEP 2): Horn Farm Center staff will try to fix the problem directly with you, and/or seek other staff help to resolve the situation.

## Continuing in the Program

Since the primary goal of the Incubator Farm Project is to incubate and foster viable new farm businesses, Horn Farm Center staff will conduct a yearly review of all incubator farmers. This process will involve an interview, application/business plan submission, and financial records review. The evaluation process will serve to identify any adjustments that should be made to the following season's business plan.

The evaluation process will look at the following criteria:

1. Did the farm meet the financial goals expressed in its business plan? Business plan goals will be structured toward enhancing farm profitability.
2. Did the farm meet the production goals set by its business plan?
3. If either goal was not met, does the farm have a realistic plan to improve production or income? Horn Farm Center staff will review the plan to ensure that the farmer will be using a sound fundamental approach to meet business plan goals. All parties acknowledge that farming has many variables that can disrupt a realistic plan. Horn Farm Center can seek outside counsel if necessary.
4. Does the farmer feel satisfied with the financial return from his/her time and financial investment in the business?
5. If the farmer is not satisfied, do they have plans to achieve a satisfactory return in the future? This may include financial or non-financial considerations. However, since Horn Farm Center is interested in fostering viable farm businesses, some measure of financial return is expected from each farm.
6. Has the farm achieved a level of financial stability? Each farm defines his/her level of financial stability. The following data will be collected annually in our farm reports. Measurable criteria will include: Gross Sales/Income Total Expense Cost of Goods (if appropriate) Net Profit Net Equity
7. How has the farm interacted with the other farms at Horn Farm Center? Have there been equipment conflicts, land issues, etc.?
8. Has the farm been consistently meeting its production and financial goals as set by its previous business plans?
9. Has the farm been consistent in its soil management and in meeting the land management guidelines?
10. Is the farm current on all fees and other program requirements?
11. Did the farm adhere to all other policies and procedures?

If a farm fails to meet the above criteria and has no realistic plan to more successfully meet its own goals, Horn Farm Center may decide not to renew the lease for the following season.

## Payments/Recordkeeping/Reporting

There are payment, recordkeeping, and reporting requirements in the program. The reports help Horn Farm Center to assess individual farmer progress through the program, and are an important part of compiling data that helps with acquiring funding, monitoring overall program effectiveness, and collaborating with regional farmer training organizations.

### Due Dates:

- January 1 - First quarterly payment due
- March 31 - Business Plan
- April 1 - Second quarterly payment due
- June 30 - Financial reports
  - Cash flow budget (Jan-June actual & July-Dec projected)
  - List of farming and marketing successes and challenges
- July 1 - Third quarterly payment due
- September 30 - Applications for next season due
- October 1 - Final quarterly payment due
- November 30 - Soil Test Results
- December 31 - Financial reports
  - Balance Sheet
  - Profit & Loss Statement
  - IRS Tax Form Schedule-F
  - List of farming and marketing successes and challenges
  - Cash flow budget (Year end actual & following year projected)

# 2017 Fees

Fees listed below are determined based on actual costs incurred by Horn Farm Center and will be re-assessed on an annual basis.

**Program fee: \$1000 (annual flat fee)**

This fee covers administration costs, land management, and classroom opportunities

**Land lease: \$150 per acre (annual flat fee)**

**Farm Building usage fee: \$150 per farm (annual flat fee)**

This fee includes designated shelf and floor space in the pole barn, designated shelf space in the corn barn, use of pole barn wash area, and cost of trash and recycling removal **(Additional space at \$1/sq foot)**

**Water access: \$175 per farm (annual flat fee)**

This fee covers water access, pump electricity, quarterly water testing, and maintenance needs

**Cooler storage: \$150 per unit (annual fee)**

A unit consists of shelving approximately 6 feet wide by 5 shelves tall. There are 8 available units in the cooler.

**Greenhouse usage: \$0.55 per square foot per year (rented by table units)**

This fee covers cost of electric, propane, and maintenance needs

Most tables are 4x10' in size with a rental cost of \$22 per year.

Participants will need to estimate expected use through season to reserve appropriately at the beginning of the season.

Additional space may be added mid-year based on availability. These will be charged at the full year rate.

**Equipment rental fees:**

**Case Tractor: \$25/Hour**

**Front End Loader: \$25/Hour**

**Cub Cultivating Tractor: \$20/Hour**

**BCS Tiller: \$15/Hour**

**DR Trimmer Mower: \$15/Hour**

**3-Point Tractor Implements: \$10/Day**

Above fees include fuel and maintenance

**Payment schedule:**

Total fees will be payable quarterly in equal amounts, due January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1. Fees must be paid in full to be eligible to reapply for program.