



# Farm Seeker Primer

## *Getting Ready for Land*

If you're planning to access land through a sharing arrangement, it's important to put the time and effort into preparation before your search even begins. The information below will help you prepare and engage with Farm Opportunities.

### **ASSESS YOUR READINESS:**

Wait! Before you get onto land, ask yourself how ready you are. Think through your level of experience in farming, the skills and support you have now and will need, also reflect on your ability and willingness to make changes to your lifestyle in what lies ahead. Jot down a snapshot of your social, financial and familial needs. See FarmLINK's Farm Readiness Workbook for questions to work through.

### **ARTICULATE YOUR VISION & GOALS:**

Getting onto land is a big undertaking; you need to be clear on your goals and vision right from the start. You should be able to articulate what you hope to gain, the type of operation you want and practices that will guide it, the type of relationship with a land owner you envision, the type of agreement best suited, how much you can afford to give (both monetary and non-monetary) for that arrangement etc. Write down both the ultimate and "bottom line" plans. Having both helps you see your non-negotiable components that need to be in place and also the "would be nice" parts. Clarity now will help you evaluate opportunities as they arise; giving you a framework to see where there is alignment. Finding the right match takes time and energy, having cemented vision and goals, knowing they will shift slightly over time, will help you stay focused in the process.

### **CONSIDER LOCATION:**

Reflect on where you are looking for an opportunity. Is it in the community you are currently located or outside of it? If elsewhere, how far and how unique is that region? What are the nuances of the area that may impact your plans? Research the agricultural groups, markets, service providers, etc. in the area to learn more. Building a relationship with a region can be an essential component to feeling rooted and connected in a community.

### **CREATE YOUR PROFILE:**

The Farm Seeker profile questions on FarmLINK are specifically designed to pull key information about you and your farm plan into one place. As you work through the questions, be mindful of both your "ultimate" and "bottom line" farm vision. For the short answer questions provide as much detail as possible to illustrate to your experience, goals, commitment to a positive relationship, and anything else you want to convey that captures your individuality and seriousness. This info can be used as an elevator pitch when reaching out to potential matches.

## *Now you are ready to Connect!*

### **USE THE MATCHMAKER FILTER FUNCTIONS.**

They will help you see what's available based on your criteria.

### **REACH OUT.**

Proactively reaching out to Farm Opportunities and messaging about why you're interested and what you can bring, will differentiate you from other Farm Seekers and spark both conversation and connection.

## **USE FARMLINK'S MESSAGE SYSTEM.**

Use it to connect and share information until you're ready to share personal details; respect that Farm Opportunities often do not want to share their personal information right away.

## **USE YOUR ELEVATOR PITCH.**

In your first message share your short paragraph summary and why a particular opportunity appeals to you. Don't share too much more information until they respond. Short and clear messages are more successful.

## **BE PATIENT BUT KNOW WHEN TO FOLLOW-UP.**

Be patient, Farm Opportunities may or may not respond immediately. We all get busy and don't always respond promptly, it does not necessarily mean they are not interested. If a more than a week has gone by then consider sending a follow up message but don't be pushy - if you don't hear back after a follow-up, they are probably not interested.

## **BE CAUTIOUS & DO DUE DILIGENCE.**

If things seem promising, it's best to suggest connecting on the phone, and then consider meeting in person. If you are going to visit a property take someone with you and let other know where you're going. Remember, FarmLINK does not perform background checks on users, so be sure to sure to take whatever precautions you need to, to feel comfortable about who you are connecting with.

## ***Prepare to meet with a Farm Opportunity***

Think of the exploration of a land match as a job interview; get prepared, be professional, prepare questions and share your passion

### **COVERPAGE ABOUT YOU:**

Hone your profile info into a short paragraph, including your experiences, why the opportunity may be a fit for you both, and references. Include a description of your agricultural plan as some opportunities may be unfamiliar with the type of farming you plan to do.

### **KNOW WHAT TO ASK:**

Reference FarmLINK's [70 Considerations In Making a Land Share Agreement](#) and [Top 25 Questions for a Farm Opportunity](#) and FarmStart's [Accessing Land for Farming](#) guidebook so you know the key components that go into a strong agreement.

### **SITE VISIT CHECK-LIST:**

Build yourself a checklist of all your criteria to use when doing site visits, leave space to add notes.

## ***When meeting in person make time to:***

- Discuss any changes that have come up for either of you since listing your profile/opportunity
- Get a sense of synergy of potential match
- Walk the land and document with photos
- Take notes. Offer to share you notes with the land opportunity and/or ask them to share theirs with you. Having notes gives you a launching point to see what the other has understood.
- Decide on next actions for each of you and appropriate timeline. This could include further research, scheduling a next meeting, or drafting the beginnings of an agreement.
- Remember body language communicates over 50% of our messages. Be mindful of your body language, avoid interruption, respond with empathy and listen to ensure understanding.

## ***Don't be afraid to walk away.***

If at any point in the process you have doubts or bad feelings about the opportunity, regardless of how wonderful the situation may seem, know that deciding not to proceed can be the best course of action. This is harder after an agreement is signed so best to listen to that intuition along the way.