



WSU EXTENSION
Kitsap County



Farm Mentor Program Toolkit

- Kitsap County - Building Group Intern Learning Models

Developed by Jess Sappington and Clare Menard, Washington State University Kitsap Extension.
Contributions from participating farm mentors in the Kitsap Farm Mentor Program

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Kitsap Farm Mentor Program	2
Farm Mentors – Best Practices for Engaging with Interns	3
Intern Group Classes	5
Tips for Teaching Adult Learners	7
Closing: Building Stronger Farms Through Shared Learning	8
Appendices.....	9
• Appendix A: Farm Internship Resources	9
• Appendix B: Weekly On-Farm Curriculum Resources	10
• Appendix C: Weekly On-Farm Curriculum Template	24
• Appendix D: Sample Intern Skills & Learning Interest Survey	25
• Appendix E: Intern Group Classes – Examples	27
• Appendix F: Intern Group Class – Planning Template	39

This toolkit is intended as an educational resource. It does not constitute legal guidance. Farmers are responsible for complying with all applicable labor laws and regulations.

WSU Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local WSU Extension office.

Introduction

This toolkit is designed to support Extension professionals, agricultural educators, and farmer groups who want to build or strengthen farmer-led mentorship programs that prepare the next generation of farmers. It also serves as a practical resource for farms that collaborate to provide share educational opportunities for interns.

The material draws on the experience of the Kitsap Farm Mentor Program, developed by Washington State University (WSU) Kitsap Extension. Since its launch in 2015, this program has successfully operated with a dedicated network of farm mentors committed to teaching future farmers. The model emphasizes farmers as primary educators, supported by the local Extension office to coordinate group classes for interns—creating benefits for all participating farms.

Kitsap County is home to many small-acreage, diversified farms. This approach recognizes that no single farm operation can provide comprehensive training alone, but through cooperation, farms can expose interns to a broader range of production systems, marketing strategies, and niche agricultural practices. This collaborative approach ensures interns gain well-rounded, practical experience while strengthening the local farming community as a whole.

The toolkit includes the following sections:

- **Kitsap Farm Mentor Program:** An overview of the program framework, history, and key components that inform this toolkit.
- **Farm Mentors – Best Practices for Engaging with Interns:** Guidance for mentor farmers on preparing for interns, establishing expectations, creating a positive learning environment, and operating successful on-farm internships.
- **Intern Group Classes:** Strategies and examples for designing effective group learning experiences, including core elements of high-quality classes and tips for coordination among farms.
- **Tips for Teaching Adult Learners:** A brief set of practical insights to help farmer-educators teach adults more effectively.
- **Appendices:** A collection of templates, examples, and tools to support farms and partner organizations in assisting farms to strengthen on-farm internship offerings and intern group class models.

Kitsap Farm Mentor Program

The Kitsap Farm Mentor Program is a collaborative effort that supports farmers training interns through hands-on experience and shared educational resources. It began before 2015 as a grassroots network of farmers who supported each other in teaching farm interns and initially was informed by the Jefferson County FIELD program. In 2015, farmers partnered with WSU Kitsap Extension to provide coordination, resources, and structured group classes, strengthening their ability to deliver high-quality education.

Today, the program emphasizes the farmer as the primary educator. Each mentor teaches interns on their own farm through daily, real-world tasks, using the farm as the classroom. This practical training is supplemented by group classes and workshops coordinated with Extension support. These classes cover essential topics such as:

- Soil health
- Crop planning
- Pest management
- Business and marketing skills



This blended on-farm and group learning approach benefits everyone involved. Farmers gain resources, collaboration, and shared teaching responsibilities, while interns receive a well-rounded education and a strong peer network within the local farming community.

Key Principles of the Program:

- **Farmer-Led Mentorship:** Farmers share their expertise directly with interns through on-farm training and practical application.
- **Extension Support:** WSU Kitsap Extension provides administrative assistance and helps coordinate group classes and technical resources but does not oversee interns or manage farm-intern agreements.
- **Independent Farm Agreements:** Interns are engaged directly by farms under their own agreements; WSU has no role in contracting, vetting, or supervising interns.
- **Collaborative Learning:** Mentor farmers work together to create a seasonal curriculum, sharing teaching responsibilities, and host classes that expand interns' exposure to diverse farming systems and approaches.

This model offers a **low-input, high-return framework** for farmer groups and Extension professionals seeking to build community-based mentorship programs that strengthen local food systems and cultivate skilled, sustainable farmers.

By becoming farm mentors and offering internships, farmers have a unique opportunity to shape the future of agriculture. They provide new and aspiring farmers with not only technical and business expertise but also vision, inspiration, and a strong sense of community. Farm-based experiential learning has proven to be one of the most effective methods for ensuring the viability of small farms, preserving farmland, advancing food sovereignty, and fostering community engagement around agriculture.

Farm Mentors - Best Practices for Engaging with Interns

The “group intern class” model described in this toolkit differs a bit from traditional farm internships because it involves an outside organization (such as Extension) that supports multiple farmers (mentors) by coordinating additional shared group classes. This organization *does not* manage interns directly, *does not* handle internship agreements (which remain between interns and their farm mentors), nor does it oversee day-to-day on-farm learning. The organization is simply a support for the farm mentor group in delivering high-quality group classes to their already existing intern cohort.

However, the organization should still ensure that farm mentors receive resources, training, and guidance on best practices for adult education, labor-related issues with interns, and other areas of liability or support needed for a successful internship experience.

When a group of farmers organizes and leads their own shared classes, it is also recommended that they connect with their local Extension agent or another agricultural resource specialist. These professionals can provide valuable support, guidance, and resources to strengthen the effort and promote best practices being followed, even if the organization is not directly involved in programming.

This section outlines best practices for farms that plan to incorporate interns as part of their farm business operations. These guidelines are **separate from the farm mentor group class model** discussed elsewhere in this toolkit. They focus on practical steps and resources that individual farmers should know leading up to and when hosting interns. Having these processes in place is critical—if the



Farm interns at Persephone Farm, Indianola, WA taking part in Growing Cut Flowers group class.

internship itself is not well-structured, the farm mentor will struggle to engage interns effectively, both on the farm and within any broader mentor group program.

Leading up to the Internship:

- **Understand Rules Around Internships:** Farmers interested in hosting interns should understand state and federal labor laws. Washington farmers should also explore Washington's [Farm Internship Program](#), offered through the Department of Labor & Industries (L&I). This program, now available statewide, is designed for small farms and provides important benefits: it ensures legal compliance by exempting interns from minimum wage requirements while offering industrial insurance coverage, reducing liability for farmers. It also requires a structured educational component, helping interns gain practical skills and hands-on experience. Farmers can host up to three interns per year under this program.
- **Posting Open Internships:** Create a clear, detailed job description that explains the internship role, expected responsibilities, and learning goals. This helps set accurate expectations for prospective interns.
- **Intern Application Process:** Develop a straightforward application form and process for candidates to apply.
- **Internship Agreement:** Draft a written agreement that includes duties, expectations, farm rules, probationary period, and any compensation details (stipends, housing, food shares, bonuses). This serves as a reference point throughout the internship. *(See Appendix A: Farm Internship Resources)*
- **Orientation & Onboarding:** Establish a consistent orientation process for new interns. Ensure all interns receive the same foundational information and experience.
- **Weekly Educational Curriculum:** Create a simple, structured plan for on-farm learning objectives. It doesn't need to be elaborate—just a clear roadmap for weekly topics and skills *(See Appendix B: Weekly On-Farm Curriculum – Resources AND Appendix C: Weekly On-Farm Curriculum Template)*

After selecting an intern:

- **Assess Goals:** Review the intern's personal learning objectives and adjust your on-farm educational plan as needed.
- **Regular Check-ins:** Schedule meetings to review tasks, expectations, and progress toward learning outcomes.
- **Hands-On Mentorship:** Work alongside interns, demonstrate tasks, explain their importance, and remain available for questions.
- **Encourage Broader Learning:** Support interns attending agricultural classes, workshops, and events, and allow time for these activities as part of their internship.

Once a farmer has the structure in place to host interns, they then have the ability to collaborate with other farms and partner with local extension offices and/or agricultural organizations to provide group learning opportunities. This shared model reduces the burden on individual farmers to teach every aspect of farming, while leveraging the expertise of multiple farm mentors to fill educational gaps. Additionally, interns gain access to a broader social support network of peers who are also new to farming, creating a richer and more connected learning experience. Overall, this approach strengthens education for interns and eases responsibilities for farm mentors.

Intern Group Classes

Group learning supports skill development, builds peer connections, and creates a shared understanding of farm practices and farming concepts. When thoughtfully designed, these classes become a reliable addition to the already existing weekly on-farm learning that deepens interns' confidence and integrates their hands-on work with broader production knowledge.

Key Elements of High-Quality Intern Group Classes:

1. Understand the Audience

To design meaningful and relevant group classes, farm mentors should begin by gathering early feedback from their interns. Understanding each intern's current skill level and learning interests allows mentors to shape a class schedule that is well-rounded and directly applicable to that season's cohort. Before group instruction begins, mentors (or farmers collaborating to teach) should ask interns to share their prior experience, comfort levels, and areas they're eager to develop. This early insight helps mentors select and prioritize class topics that best support the group's growth. *(See Appendix D: Intern Skills & Learning Interest Survey as a tool for gathering feedback).*

2. Relevant and Timely Topics

Choose topics that connect directly to the current season and the intern's day-to-day work. Adult learners engage best when they understand *why* the material matters and can apply it immediately. Examples include:

- Soil preparation and planting during early spring



Farm interns taking part in a small ruminant class at Sage & Willow Farm, Poulsbo, WA.

- Pest and disease scouting during peak season
- Livestock handling and pasture planning aligned with current rotations
- Post-harvest handling during high-volume weeks

See Appendix E: Intern Group Class Examples for sample topics your group can adopt or adapt AND Appendix F: Intern Group Class – Planning Template.

3. Appropriate Length and Pacing

Aim for **90 to 120-minute classes** balancing information with practice. Intern group classes are meant to be more in-depth on a specific subject. Depending on the topic, the class may be longer. No matter the length of the class, keep topic sections short and varied:

- A brief introduction or framing
- A demonstration or hands-on skill
- Discussion, reflection, or Q&A
- Clear takeaways or next steps

Adult learners benefit from both structure and clarity—knowing what to expect helps them stay engaged.



Farm interns learning about compost system at Roots Farm, Poulsbo, WA

4. Intentional Use of Hands-On and in-Person Approaches

Agricultural skills are best learned through doing. Whenever possible:

- Incorporate field demonstrations
- Use real tools, real plants, real animals, and real tasks
- Invite interns to try skills immediately after seeing them modeled
- Encourage small-group problem-solving (“How would you set up this wash line for efficiency?”)

These approaches honor diverse learning styles and reinforce muscle memory.

5. Leveraging the Mentor’s Skills and Strengths

Mentors will generally be the ones teaching group classes. Every farm mentor brings unique expertise. Some excel at demonstrations, some at storytelling, and others at guiding analysis. Make the most of your strengths by:

- Teaching topics you feel confident in
- Using examples from your own farm experiences
- Structuring activities that match your communication style

- Inviting guest instructors when a topic is outside your comfort zone

Interns benefit most when mentors teach authentically and from experience.

Tips for Teaching Adult Learners

Whether you are teaching your intern on-farm or as part of a group class, farm mentors need to be aware of how adult learners learn best. Adult education principles in this toolkit are informed by resources such as the WSU Cultivating Success™ Mentor Handbook and other agricultural education resources, adapted for practical on-farm application.

Below are some helpful tips to think about as you enter into teaching adult learners.



Farm interns at GRACE Garden in Poulsbo, WA, learning about season extension techniques

1. **Tie Learning to Purpose**

Open each lesson by explaining why the skill matters, when the interns will use it, and how it fits into the whole-farm system.

2. **Acknowledge Existing Experience**

Invite interns to share what they already know on the subject. This builds respect, activates prior knowledge, and supports collaborative learning.

3. **Keep Information Manageable**

Use short explanations paired with demonstrations. Alternate between hands on learning and offering simple reference tools like checklists or diagrams if able.

4. **Teach Through Real Work**

Prioritize learning by doing. Examples include seed trays in the greenhouse, walk pasture rotations in the field, or practice harvest timing with actual crops.

5. **Make Space for Questions and Reflection**

Pause throughout the class to ask what learners noticed, what felt challenging, or how they might approach the task differently. Always build in time for questions. Reflection strengthens intern learning.

6. **Give Clear, Timely Feedback**

Offer immediate, specific, and supportive guidance. For example, suggesting a small adjustment to a technique. This helps build confidence and skill quickly and in the moment.

Closing: Building Stronger Farms Through Shared Learning



Farm interns at Full Tilth Farm in Poulsbo, WA, learning about Body Mechanics and Farm Efficiency tips.

Farmer-led mentorship programs offer a powerful pathway for strengthening local agriculture, supporting beginning farmers, and building resilient food systems. The Kitsap Farm Mentor Program demonstrates that when farmers collaborate—sharing both the responsibility and the opportunity to teach—the result is a richer, more effective learning experience for interns and a stronger farming community overall.

This toolkit is not intended to be a rigid model, but rather a flexible guide. Every region, farm network, and cohort of interns will have different needs, strengths, and goals. The most successful mentor groups will adapt these ideas to reflect their own farming practices, community values, and available resources.

At its core, this model depends on a few key elements:

- Farmers who are willing to teach and share openly
- A commitment to structured, intentional learning
- Collaboration across farms to expand what any one farm can offer
- A focus on real-world, hands-on education grounded in daily farm work

Whether supported by Extension or organized independently, farmer mentor groups have the ability to create meaningful educational opportunities that extend far beyond individual farms. By working together, mentors can reduce their individual burden, improve the quality of training, and foster a supportive network for the next generation of growers.

Ultimately, investing in interns is an investment in the future of agriculture. Through shared knowledge, mentorship, and community, farmer-led education models can help ensure that small farms continue to thrive, innovate, and sustain the land and people they serve.

APPENDIX A: Farm Internship Resources

National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) – [Farm Apprenticeship and Internship Resource Guide](#)

Agricultural Justice Project – [Resources & Sample Documents for Apprenticeships and Internships](#)

Seed Your Future – [Internship Resources for Employers](#)

Farm Commons - [Building a Legally Sound Intern and Volunteer Program](#) (video) and [Farmers' Legal Guide to Intern and Volunteer Programs](#)

Washington State University Regional Small Farms – [Farm Labor Resources](#)

Washington Labor & Industries - [Farm Internship Program](#)

APPENDIX B: Weekly On-Farm Curriculum Resources

Beyond the intern group classes it is important that the farm intern is learning daily on farm alongside their farm mentor. This weekly on-farm curriculum resource sheet is meant as a starting point for farm mentors to build out their own curriculum tailored to their specific farm internship. Farmers are encouraged to use these topics as a framework, adapting and expanding them to reflect the unique skills, production systems, and learning opportunities on their farm. The resources included are designed to help guide that process, offering reference materials and educational support that mentors can share directly with their interns.

This resource is meant to help farmers:

- Brainstorm topic ideas based on the season
- Align lessons with actual farm workflows
- Pull in relevant articles, videos, worksheets, or demonstrations as added resources
- Customize instruction based on their interns' specific needs

The on-farm curriculum that a farmer provides to their individual interns is separate from the monthly group intern classes offered collectively.

Note: Some of the resources are redundant and just a different format (article vs. video) to suit different learning styles. Others are complementary. All are from trusted resources: universities, agricultural organizations, established agricultural businesses, or vetted and experienced farmers.

Resources are sorted into columns under each topic heading, by time commitment (small= 1-9 min, medium= 10-30 min, deep dive = 31+ min). Farmers should consider their individual farm interns learning objectives when putting together their weekly curriculum at the beginning of each farming season.

Seeds and Transplants

Topic	Small (1-9 min)	Medium (10-30 min)	Deep Dive (31+ min)
Starting seeds in the greenhouse	Each One Teach One, Seeding in the Greenhouse (0:45 sec watch) Soul Fire Farm Diagnosing and Treating Germination and Seedling Problems (9 min read) Growing for Market Other related resources: 6 Keys to Damping Off (5:15 min watch) Fruition Seeds How Long Do Seeds Last? (4:31 min watch) Fruition Seeds	Floret Farm Tour: Seed-Starting in the Greenhouse (13:53 min watch) Floret Farm Starting Crops from Seed: A Complete Grower's Guide (19:41 min watch) No-Till Growers	<i>New Organic Grower</i> by Eliot Coleman, Chapter 12 & 13 <i>Market Gardener</i> by Jean Martin Fortier, Chapter 7 & 8 <i>Growing Vegetables West of the Cascades</i> by Steve Solomon, Seeds Chapter Page 123 Johnny's Seed-Starting Calculator
Potting up	Potting Up: When and Why Your Seedlings Need a Bigger Space (5 min read) Sow Right Seeds		

Topic	Small (1-9 min)	Medium (10-30 min)	Deep Dive (31+ min)
Direct seeding and transplanting	How to Start Your Garden: Seeds vs. Transplants (2:36 watch) NC Cooperative Extension Tour of our February Starts- What's Growing in the Prop House? (7:26 min watch) Neversink Farm Direct Sow Like a Pro (6 min read) High Mowing Seeds	Selecting the Right Seeding and Transplanting Strategies (10 min read) PennState Extension Direct Seeding Guidelines from Johnny's (10 minute read) Johnny's Seeds	
Watering seeds and starts, in greenhouse and in field	Lean Farm on Bottom Watering (2:35 min watch) Claybottom Farm Watering Tips on the Farm (8:30 min watch) Neversink Farm		

Soil Health

Topic	Small (1-9 min)	Medium (10-30 min)	Deep Dive (31+ min)
Composting	Compost: Small Farm Style (9 min read) Chelsea Green Publishing The Phases of Composting (9 min read) Chelsea Green Publishing 6 Easy Steps to Setting Up a Worm Bin (2 min read) Cornell University Static Aerated Compost Pile Heats Right Up Without Turning (7 min read) Growing for Market Magazine	Backyard Composting (18 min read) WSU Extension, Composting for Beginners (20:21 min watch) No-Till Growers	Dirt Talk: On-Farm Composting (1:33:21 min watch) WSU Extension Composting on Organic Farms (31 min read) Center for Environmental Farming Systems
Assessing Soil Health	Soil Health (6 min read) NRCS A Guide to Collecting Soil Samples for Farms and Gardens (7 min read) OSU Extension	Compost and Soil Health (28:49 min watch) University of Utah Extension Liberation on Land Series- Soil Carbon Part 1//Carbon del Suelo parte 1 (12:12 min watch) Soul Fire Farm Soil Fertility in Organic Systems (14 pages) PNW Extension	Soil Test Interpretation Guide (18 pages) OSU Extension

Topic	Small (1-9 min)	Medium (10-30 min)	Deep Dive (31+ min)
Cover crop	What is Sustainable Agriculture? Episode 2: Cover Crops and Soil Health (2:27 min watch) SARE Outreach Quick-Turn Cover Crops on an Intensive Market Farm (8 min read) Growing for Market Magazine	Cover Crops for Home Gardens West of the Cascades (15 min read) WSU Extension No-Till Growers, cover crop videos: Cover Cropping for Soil Health (16:57 min watch) Summer Cover Cropping Guide (18:50 min watch) Fall Cover Cropping Simplified (12:40 min watch)	

Integrated Pest Management

Topic	Small (1-9 min)	Medium (10-30 min)	Deep Dive (31+ min)
Introduction to Integrated Pest Management	5 IPM Strategies to Keep Your Garden Pest Free! (8:31 min watch) MU Extension		Ecological Pest Management, (interactive tutorial) ATTRA NCAT Organic IPM Field Guide (21 pages) ATTRA NCAT
General pest and disease guides, tools			Resource Guide for Organic Insect and Disease Management (203 page book) SARE

WSU Kitsap Extension – Kitsap Farm Mentor Program 2026

Topic	Small (1-9 min)	Medium (10-30 min)	Deep Dive (31+ min)
			Hortsense (tool) WSU Extension Pacific Northwest Pest Management Handbooks (tool) Pacific Northwest Extension Publication Plant Pest Diagnostic Clinic (service) WSU Extension
Weed management			Sustainable Weed Management for Small and Medium-Scale Farms (16 pages) SARE Steel in the Field (128 pages) SARE
Insecticides for organic farming		Natural Insecticides (22 min read) WSU Extension	Sustainable Pest and Weed Control Database (tool) ATTRA NCAT

Common pests and diseases in the PNW

Pest/disease	Resource
Aphids	Pests in Gardens and Landscapes (13 min read) University of California
Cabbage maggot	Cabbage Maggot in the Home Garden (3 min read) WSU Extension

WSU Kitsap Extension – Kitsap Farm Mentor Program 2026

Pest/disease	Resource
Carrot rust fly	Carrot rust fly IPM (4 min read) BC Climate Change Adaptation
Club root	Dirt Talk, Integrated Pest Management: Clubroot (1:24:30 min watch) WSU Regional Small Farms
Cumber beetle	Dirt Talk: Cucumber beetles (57:14 watch) WSU Regional Small Farms
Cutworm	Cutworm (3 min read) Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Cut worms, cabbage maggot, and carrot rust fly (1:20:45 watch) WSU Regional Small Farms
Downy mildew	Dirt Talk: Downy Mildew (1:00:22 min watch)) WSU Regional Small Farms
Flea beetle	Organic Management of Flea Beetles (12 min read) WSU Extension
Slugs and snails	Dirt Talk: Slugs and Snails (1:24:20 watch)
Spotted wing drosophila	Spotted wing drosophila (10 min read) University of Minnesota Extension
Wireworms	Managing Wireworms in Root Crops (17:31 min watch) Vermont Vegetable & Berry Growers Association

Crop Planning

Topic	Small (1-9 min)	Deep Dive (31+ min)
Using spreadsheets for planning	Growing for Market Magazine articles Mapping Crops on a Spreadsheet (8 min read) Tips on Using Spreadsheets for Crop Planning (9 min read) Spreadsheets Simplify Crop Planning, Record Keeping (10 min read)	Scheduling Vegetable Plantings for Continuous Harvest (20 min read) ATTRA NCAT Accompanied by The Succession Planting Spreadsheet ATTRA NCAT
Methods of crop planning		Crop Planning for Vegetable Growers, Purdue University Extension Part 1 (1:58:02 watch) Part 2 (1:29:13 watch) Part 3 (1:41:14 watch)

Introduction to Animal Care and Livestock Systems

Topic	Small (1-9 min)	Medium (10-30 min)	Deep Dive (31+ min)
Chicken and Poultry	Raising Baby Chicks (7 min read) Oregon State University Using Chickens to Enrich the Garden (4:00 min watch) No-Till Growers How to Choose the Right Breed for Your Poultry Flock (6 min read) Chelsea Green Publishing	Chickens in Your Backyard (26:29 min watch) Utah State University Extension Management Guide for the Backyard Flock (13 min read) University of Georgia Extension	Chicken Keeping 101 (1:24:16 min watch) WSU Extension
Pigs	Off to the Right Start: Baby Pig Basics (7 min read) Texas Agricultural Extension Service	Care of Newborn Pigs and Post-Farrowing Sows (presentation slides) OSU Extension So You Want to Raise Hogs (13 min read) PennState Extension Care and Management of New Feeder Pigs (18 min read) OSU Extension	Profitable Pork: Strategies for Hog Producers (16 pages) SARE

Topic	Deep Dive (31+ min)
Small Ruminants	Living on the Land: Small Ruminant Care for Beginners (2 hour watch) WSU Extension Maryland Small Ruminant Page (website) University of Maryland Sheep 101 & Sheep 201 (website) Susan Schoenian Small Ruminant Toolbox (website) SARE American Consortium for Small Ruminant Parasite Control (website)

Season Extension and Growing in Winter

Topic	Small (1-9 min)	Medium (10-30 min)	Deep Dive (31+ min)
Season Extension/ Winter Growing	How Small Farms Make a Profit- Season Extension (7:58 min watch) Market Gardener Institute Low-Tunnel Tutorial: Winter Growing DIY (6 min read) Bryan O'Hara LowCat Low Tunnel Assembly (6:54 min watch) Neversink Farm	High Tunnels and Other Season Extension Techniques (12 min read) SARE Caterpillar Assembly Video (11:27 min watch) Farmers Friend	Season Extension (44 pages) New Entry Sustainable Farming Project High Tunnel Resources for Organic Growers (website) Northeast Organic Farming Association

Topic	Small (1-9 min)	Medium (10-30 min)	Deep Dive (31+ min)
Winter crops	Winter Crop Planning (9 min read) Growing for Market Magazine Easy Winter Crops, No Heat Required (10:51 watch) No-Till Growers	Best Crops for this Winter (15:30 watch) No-Till Growers	

Business of Farming

Topic	Small (1-9 min)	Medium (10-30 min)	Deep Dive (31+ min)
Farm planning			Plan Your Farm (free, self-paced online course) Cornell Small Farms
Business planning template	Business Plans (5 min read) Cornell Small Farms		AgPlan (website) University of Minnesota Free software to develop an agricultural business plan Building a Sustainable Business: A Guide to Developing A Business Plan for Farms and Rural Businesses (280 pages) SARE Sample Business Plans (website) OSU Extension

Topic	Small (1-9 min)	Medium (10-30 min)	Deep Dive (31+ min)
Enterprise budgets	Enterprise Budgeting (4 minute read) University of Wisconsin-Madison Extension	Enterprise Budgeting for New Farmer School (10:42 watch) UNH Extension	Enterprise Budgets (webpage) Kwantlen Polytechnic University
Financial statements		Preparing Ag Financial Docs (15 min read) AgWest	Business Plan: Budgeting (webpage) OSU Extension Basic Accounting: Guidance for Beginning Farmers (12 pages) ATTRACAT AgWest: Balance Sheet 101 (1:05:47 watch) Cash Flow Budget Basics (1:02:00 watch) Income Statement Basics (59:30 watch)
Insurance and Washington State Regulations	Farm Insurance (5 min read) Cornell Small Farms		Handbook for Small and Direct Marketing Farms: Regulations and Strategies for Farm and Food Businesses (webpage and downloadable PDF) WSDA

Workplace Considerations and Safety

Topic	Small (1-9 min)	Medium (10-30 min)	Deep Dive (31+ min)
Body Mechanics	Workplace Safety and Body Mechanics, Land Connection: Wrist (4:50 min watch) Bending (4:47 min watch) Tools (6:29 min watch)	Body Care Tip Sheet for Farmers (11 min read) The Flexible Farmer Yoga for Manual Labor (22 min watch) Yoga with Adrienne	Yoga for Farmers (playlist) Cornell Cooperative Extension
Efficiency	Ben Hartman, author of Lean Farmer books 5 Steps to Achieve a Lean Vegetable Farm. (10 min read) 10 Types of Farm Waste: Making and Maintaining a Lean Farm (10 min read)	How to Make Your Farm MORE EFFICIENT with Ben Hartman (18:22 min watch)	The Lean Farm with Ben Hartman (49:17 min watch) Oxford Real Farming
Tools	Reaping the Harvest: Tools for the Harvest (9 min read) Chelsea Green Publishing		

Topic	Small (1-9 min)
Working in the heat	Cooling Foods Poster (poster) Not Our Farm Prevent Heat Illness at Work (poster) OSHA Symptoms and Treatments for Heat Illness (poster) UW School of Public Health Why and How Farmers Protect Their Skin (9 min read) Growing for Market Magazine
Working in smoke	Smoke Exposure in the Workplace (poster) UC Davis Air Quality Index (AQI) data (tool) AirNow Wildfire Incident Map (tool) InciWeb What Agricultural Workers Need to Know About Wildfire Smoke (8:50 min watch) High Plains Intermountain Center for Agricultural Health and Safety

APPENDIX C: Weekly On-Farm Curriculum Template

Month:

Topics & Resources	
Week 1 Dates:	
Week 2 Dates:	
Week 3 Dates:	
Week 4 Dates:	
Week 5 Dates:	

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE Intern Skills & Learning Interest Survey

Purpose: This survey helps the farm mentor group understand your farming experience and what you'd like to learn during group intern classes this season, outside of your weekly on-farm training.

What are Farm Intern Group Classes?: Farm interns have the unique opportunity to step away from their individual internship farms and come together monthly—sometimes twice a month—during the farming season to learn as a group. These classes focus on topics relevant to new and beginning farmers and provide a collaborative learning environment. Sessions are often led by experienced farm mentors within the group and occasionally feature guest speakers from the community who bring expertise in specialized farming practices.

WSU Kitsap Extension supports the mentor group in organizing these classes and offers interns additional resources and educational opportunities as needed. Please note that WSU Kitsap Extension does **not** manage interns; that responsibility remains between each intern and their farm mentor or farm business.

Why this matters: These group classes are a great way to build community, share knowledge, and gain exposure to practices you might not encounter on your host farm.

Intern Name:

Farm Name:

1. Is this your first year farming?

☐ Yes

☐ No

2. If no, how long have you been farming?

Duration: _____

☐ Full-time

☐ Part-time

3. What skills do you bring with you?

(Examples: seeding, transplanting, weeding, farmers market sales, bookkeeping, carpentry, sales, manual labor, outdoor work, etc.)

4. Is there a crop, skill, or practice you'd like to learn more about in group classes?

(Examples: tomatoes, irrigation, no-till)

5. Is there a subject you'd like to learn that isn't part of your farm's activities?

(Examples: milking dairy goats, beekeeping, making kimchi)

6. Outside of hands-on learning, what is your favorite way to learn?

(Choose one or more)

☐ Videos (webinars, lectures)

☐ Short articles

☐ Podcasts

☐ Long articles/publications

☐ Tutorials

☐ Books

7. What are your long-term goals related to farming or agriculture?

(Examples: starting your own farm, working in food systems, learning homesteading skills)

8. What motivates you to farm?

(Examples: sustainability, food justice, personal interest, career change)

9. Any additional questions you would like to ask pertaining to the group intern classes this season?

APPENDIX E: Intern Group Classes – EXAMPLES

The following are example group intern classes developed by the farm mentors under the Kitsap Farm Mentor Program. These are meant to be helpful to farmer groups interested in creating their own group classes. Farm mentors should tailor their group classes to their specific skills and teaching abilities.

Class overview	Class details
Topic:	Body Mechanics
Instructor Info:	Name: INSERT NAME HERE Note: This can also be a physical therapist or some other specialist engaged to teach this class.
Class Setting:	Location: INSERT FARM NAME HERE Time of year best delivered: As close to the beginning of the program start as possible; ideally with a few weeks of experience so the content has context
Class Objective:	Understand and apply safe body mechanics techniques to prevent musculoskeletal injuries and improve efficiency during common farm tasks.
Instructional Focus / Learning Goals:	The focus will be hands on, demonstrating how to be aware of and how to protect your body during farming maneuvers. Goals with this instruction will be: • The form of a proper squat ○ Stress the importance of keeping the butt back to take strain off the knees ○ Show examples of improper squats and how and when they occur (ex: when fatigued, when lifting something that's too heavy) • How to keep a neutral back and neutral neck ○ Demonstrate how to maintain these: ▪ Keeping core tight; maintaining good posture: standing tall and long with no rounding of the shoulders ○ Stress importance of this is to protect the spine

	- o Show examples of a non-neutral back and neck (ex. when washing produce in pack shed, when harvesting, when trellising, etc.) • Provide daily stretches - o Ones that can be done throughout the workday are especially beneficial - o Opportunity for group interaction: farm mentors and interns can share and demonstrate their favorite stretches as well • Create systems of helping each other stay in good posture - o Normalize talking about good posture throughout the day - o Build stretch breaks into the schedule - o Switch up repetitive tasks
Additional Notes:	Helpful Resources: • WSU Agribility Stretching Brochure – Farmer Daily Stretching program • The Land Connection - Workplace Safety and Body Mechanics Videos Workplace Safety & Body Mechanics #1 - Wrist (4:50 min watch) Along with this, emphasize keeping wrist neutral Workplace Safety & Body Mechanics #2 - Bending (4:47 min watch) • Body Care Tip Sheet for Farmers, The Flexible Farmer

Class overview	Class details
Topic:	Farm Efficiency
Instructor Info:	Name: INSERT NAME HERE
Class Setting:	Location: INSERT FARM NAME HERE Time of year best delivered: This class is best provided a month or two into the farming season, once interns have several weeks of context for the principles being taught.
Class Objective:	Learn techniques to maximize efficiency on the farm and in production output.
Instructional Focus / Learning Goals:	Utilizing a round table and then hands-on demonstrations of specific tasks, the teachers will focus on the following learning goals: • Center importance of farm efficiency ◦ Round table will guide this discussion ◦ Efficiency has two purposes: ▪ Creating systems = less chaos and frustration = less stress for farmers ▪ Farm business has narrow profit margins and labor is highest cost on farm. Thus, tasks need to be as efficient as possible to maximize production. • Demonstrate different organizational structures that increase efficiency ◦ Methods of communication: harvest board, kanban board (moveable to-do lists). <i>See examples below</i> ◦ Flow of pack shed from field/harvest to ready for market ◦ All the tools you need, when and where you need them • Demonstrations of farm efficiencies ◦ Weeding: using two hands at a time, making big piles of weeds instead of several little ones, what tools to use for different sizes of crops and weeds (ex: colinear hoe for thread-stage

	weeds and very young, delicate plants, hula hoe for larger weeds and more mature plants) o Harvesting: field bunching instead of bunching in pack shed, harvest tools like orchard bags or Johnny's Harvest Basket, counting twist ties or rubber bands beforehand to track how much you harvest
Additional Notes:	Helpful Resources: Ben Hartman, author of Lean Farmer books, excerpts: • 5 Steps to Achieve a Lean Vegetable Farm, (10 min read) • 10 Types of Farm Waste: Making and Maintaining a Lean Farm (10 min read) How to Make Your Farm MORE EFFICIENT with Ben Hartman (18:22 min watch)
Round table Prompts & Notes:	• Small time savings add up; 12 minutes saved a day is an hour each week • Work/life balance; hit it hard then be finished at the end of the day which leads to less stress and more relaxation. • Think about efficiencies from very beginning of farmer-training; it's tough to unlearn inefficient patterns and behaviors. • Use the winter for planning out systems and to organize; the busy season is for minimal thought and high production output. • Think through steps before heading out to minimize forgetting things, avoid empty hands (ex. bring back tools left out by mistake, rolls of Remay, etc.), think ahead to the next step and what tools/supplies will be needed. • Why move something twice when you can move it once? - o Unload under farmers market tent, move weed piles to wheelbarrow or truck, etc. • If you can do it as a group, do it as a group. - o Transplanting: one person drops starts, other person plants - o Laying out beds or placing drip tape, covering beds with Remay • Always use two hands, when possible, because it's twice as fast. • Conserve motion; think about minimizing movements. • Set yourself up for flow from the beginning; spending two minutes to setup can decrease or eliminate several hours of bending, reaching or hunching over.

Class overview	Class details
Topic:	Growing Cut Flowers
Instructor Info:	Name: INSERT NAME HERE
Class Setting:	Location: INSERT FARM NAME HERE Time of year best delivered: June or July-September; Early in the morning for proper harvesting of flowers
Class Objective:	How to integrate cut flowers into your cropping systems and farm business.
Instructional Focus / Learning Goals:	In this class, interns will learn how to grow a well-balanced variety of flowers tailored to business needs. The session includes hands-on experience in harvesting cut flowers, with demonstrations of proper techniques and best practices for successful flower production. Interns will also explore the fundamentals of bouquet construction and floral design, along with essential marketing strategies to help promote and sell their arrangements. • Growing a balanced variety of flowers for bouquets - o Choosing varieties, includes a list of flowers grown on Persephone - o Ordering bulbs, tubers and corms, seeds - o Growing perennials vs. annuals - o Starting seeds properly at the right time, storing bulbs, tubers and corms through the winter - o Soil health and crop rotation with flowers • Harvesting flowers - o Tools: sharp pruning shears, clean buckets, water - o Proper timing, shade, cooling flowers in walk in/storing prior to making bouquets • Bouquet construction and marketing - o Focal flowers vs. flowers for scaffolding/structure

	- o Complementing color, using different textures - o How to hold flowers when making bouquets - o How to sell bouquets: market, CSA, educating customers on best practices for bouquet longevity - o Size and pricing
Additional Notes	Helpful Resources: • ATTRA – Specialty Cut Flower Production and Marketing • Cornell University Extension – Fact Sheet: Agritourism for Cut Flower Operations

Class overview	Class details
Topic:	Integrated Animal Systems & Alternative Composting
Instructor Info:	Name: INSERT NAME HERE
Class Setting:	Location: INSERT FARM NAME HERE Time of year best delivered: Any time of year is appropriate
Class Objective:	This class will demonstrate the importance of animal systems and composting as they pertain to soil health and crop management.
Instructional Focus / Learning Goals:	<u>Integrated Animal Systems</u> Depending on the farm location used, this class is well suited to be combined with an interactive farm tour component. The class highlights how animal systems are intentionally integrated into a diversified vegetable and livestock operation. Each species plays a unique role in soil building, weed and pest management, and nutrient cycling. Poultry: • Chickens are rotated through cover crops and recently harvested fields. • They consume food scraps, converting waste into nutrient-rich manure. • Ducks and geese graze and manage vegetation in areas unsuitable for crop production. • Together, these birds enrich soil, manage pests and weeds, support cover-crop breakdown, and provide eggs — and occasionally meat. Pigs: • Pigs help prepare ground for future planting through natural rooting and wallowing behavior. • They fertilize with manure and consume vegetables not suitable for human consumption. • Pigs contribute both soil improvement and meat production.

	Small Ruminants: • Goats maintain steep pastures not appropriate for vegetable crops. • Introduction of sheep to extend pasture management capabilities. <u>Alternative Composting Systems</u> This portion of the class utilized experiential learning for multiple on-farm composting methods, learning how to build, maintain, and harvest each system. Vermicomposting: • How to build a low-cost worm bin or a more technical large-scale system. • What to feed worms and how to source them — either buying online or finding them on the farm. JADAM Fertilizer: • How to make JADAM liquid fertilizers and how to apply them. • Discussion of plant and soil health benefits. Bokashi: • How to make and use Bokashi • Ways to keep the system low-cost and scalable. Application to Farming Systems: The class concludes with a discussion comparing all three soil-amendment methods — vermicompost, JADAM, and Bokashi — exploring how each supports soil health, nutrient cycling, and plant resilience. Emphasis is placed on how these systems enhance dry-farming and no-till practices by improving soil structure, moisture retention, and biological activity.
Additional Notes:	Helpful Resources: • Washington State University - Building system resilience through diversification: livestock integration This site houses many beneficial resource links for deeper dives into the subject.

Class overview	Class details
Topic:	Introduction to livestock management
Instructor Info:	Name: INSERT NAME HERE
Class Setting:	Location: INSERT FARM NAME HERE Time of year best delivered: Any time of year is suitable as livestock are cared for year-round. The class can also be divided into two separate classes depending on the incoming intern group class knowledge level on the subject.
Class Objective:	To provide interns with a hands-on introduction to basic livestock care and management, emphasizing practical skills over theory. Participants will learn essential tasks such as milking, raising young animals, and performing routine health checks, while gaining confidence in safe animal handling and understanding the infrastructure and practices needed for healthy, productive livestock.
Instructional Focus / Learning Goals:	• This is an introductory class, as most interns (just like the general public) will have little to no livestock experience • Focus is up to the farmer. They should remember this is a hands-on classroom setting, so limit or eliminate any lecturing. • Class focus: ○ How to milk an animal ▪ Setup for food safety ▪ Considerations: halter-training, feeding on the stanchion, milking yard ▪ Let the interns try milking ○ Raising lambs/kids/piglets/calves ▪ Bringing home young animals- what infrastructure is needed? How to keep them safe and healthy? ▪ Raising them for slaughter or for breeding ▪ Housing, pasture ▪ Health considerations ○ General livestock interaction ideas- teach about general protocols of working with the animal while also teaching about a larger subject (pasture health and rotation, first aid, general animal health/health issues, etc.)

	▪ Moving them from one pasture to the next ▪ Setting up temporary fencing ▪ Doing body condition scoring and FAMACHA scoring ▪ Herding them into a chute and castrating, tagging, assessing health, etc. ▪ Trimming hooves, shearing, administering vaccines, etc.
Additional notes/resources:	Helpful Resources: • So You Want to Raise Beef Cattle?, PennState Extension (article) • Beef Production for Small Farms: An Overview, OSU (17 page publication) • WSU Extension – Animal Agriculture Resources

Class overview	Class details
Topic:	Soil fertility
Instructor Info:	Name: INSERT NAME HERE
Class Setting:	Location: INSERT FARM NAME HERE Time of year best delivered: Timing of this class is highly flexible as soil fertility is managed throughout every season by farmers
Class Objective:	Understand the basic principles of soil fertility and practical ways to manage soil fertility on a small farm
Instructional Focus / Learning Goals:	Composition of soil • Characteristics of sand, silt, and clay soils ◦ How do they affect water retention and nutrient retention • Soil pH and Cation Exchange Capacity • Macronutrients: NPK • Micronutrients: Sulfur, Calcium, Magnesium, Boron, Copper, Iron, etc. How to use soil testing on the farm • Teach how to take a soil test • Give examples of soil tests and give basic understanding of how to interpret them • What to do if need additional help interpreting them How to increase fertility of soil on the farm • Understand varying crop requirements ◦ Heavy feeders: corn, squash, tomatoes, etc. ◦ Nitrogen-fixing plants: legumes like peas or beans ◦ What micronutrients do they need? Example, boron for beets, celery, tomatoes, broccoli, etc. • Soil amendments ◦ Compost systems on the farm ◦ Integrating animals ▪ How do you increase soil fertility on a farm without animals?

	- o Adding lime, organic fertilizers (chicken manure, alfalfa meal, blood meal), foliar feeding, fertigating - o How to know which micronutrients to add; when and how to add them; where to source them
Additional notes/resources:	Helpful Resources: • A Guide to Collecting Soil Samples for Farms and Gardens, OSU • Soil Test Interpretation Guide, OSU • Soil Fertility in Organic Systems, Pacific Northwest Extension Depending on the farmer teaching the class and their farming system, they can teach about their own unique approach to managing soil fertility: biodynamics, no-till, integrated livestock, etc.

APPENDIX F: Intern Group Class – PLANNING TEMPLATE

Kitsap Farm Mentor – Group Intern Class: NAME OF CLASS

How to Use This Template: This template is designed to help farm mentors plan and organize group classes for their intern group. Fill out each section to create a clear, structured outline for the session you plan to teach. Each section below has helpful tips or prompts for filling out that section.

Use this template for each class to ensure consistency, clarity, and alignment with your farm mentor group goals.

Class overview	Class details
Topic:	NAME OF CLASS
Instructor Info:	Name: INSERT NAME HERE
Class Setting:	Location: INSERT FARM NAME HERE Describe where and how the class will take place (e.g., field, greenhouse, classroom) Time of year best delivered:
Class Objective:	State the main purpose of the class. Write a clear objective that describes what students will learning in the class. Use action verbs (e.g., analyze, create, explain) and specify the context or conditions under which the skill will be demonstrated.
Instructional Focus / Learning Goals:	List the key skills or knowledge areas the class will emphasize. The focus of this class will be ... Goals with this instruction will be: • INSERT GOAL • INSERT GOAL
Additional Notes:	Helpful Resources: Add any extra details, materials, or references that will support learning. • INSERT LINK TO RESOURCES • INSERT LINK TO RESOURCES INSERT ANY ADDITIONAL NOTES ABOUT THE CLASS