

FGF 2010 - 2011
Farm Business plan

Broadfork Farm



February 2011

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1. Executive Summary

Introduction

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Broadfork Farm is a small-scale sustainable farm that will be up and running in March 2011. We (Shannon Jones and Bryan Dyck) are young farmers starting our farm business on 2 acres of leased land from Windhorse Farm on the South Shore of Nova Scotia. We will be growing a variety of annual vegetables (2 acres in production) and slowly adding other complementary enterprises as time and resources permit, such as honey, seedlings, garlic planting stock, saved seeds, and medicinal herbs.

We are intending to both work full-time on the farm year-round with no off-farm income, the majority of our sales coming from two farmers markets (one a year-round market) with additional sales made through the on-farm store and on-farm catered events/workshops (through Windhorse Farm). We are committed to remaining in the area long-term and plan to look for land in the area to purchase or lease in perpetuity.

Our decision to farm in Lunenburg County was based on the following factors:

- land access (land we can afford)
- market access (proximity to markets, well-established farmers markets (including year-round))
- good growing conditions (mild climate, class 2 agricultural soils)
- social connection (have friends in the area, enjoy sense of community)
- environmental factors (want to live close to forests, ocean)



2. Farm vision

Personal Goals

1. Fulfilling job/do work we love
2. Continue to learn and be excited by our life and work
3. Be an example of a small-scale, profitable farm
4. Lead lives that contribute to our personal health (nutritious food, clean water, fresh air, frequent physical activity, beauty surrounding us, low stress, high enjoyment).
5. Sense of community/feeling connected with others around us.
6. To create 2 full-time incomes from the farm

7. Challenge ourselves and succeed in our pursuits.
8. Provide for most of our own food needs beyond what we are growing to sell.

Motto:

Hand-tended vegetables

Elevator Pitch:

We grow a variety of vegetables using organic methods and human power.

Vision statement:

At Broadfork farm, we use organic farming methods to grow high-quality vegetables. Our entire crop is hand-tended to achieve the highest standards of flavor and quality and to preserve the environment. We believe the health of communities is rooted in healthy people eating healthy food grown in healthy soil. We want to inspire our community to enjoy and share with us the abundance and wonder of organically grown, seasonal produce.

Our food is:

- Organic - it was grown without pesticides and other agricultural chemicals
- Seasonal - it's the best of what nature has to offer right now
- Local - it travels only a short distance from the field to your plate
- Healthy – it's grown and prepared using our best knowledge of what nourishes the whole person

Eating locally and seasonally means the food we grow takes less energy for growing, storing and transporting to the consumer than imported food found at the average grocery store. Growing food organically eliminates our use of harmful synthetic substances such as pesticides and herbicides commonly used in conventional vegetable farming operations. Purchasing local food supports a healthy and diverse local economy, which is good for small farmers, businesses and local communities.

Mission statement

Broadfork Farm's mission is to:

- provide a year-round, diverse selection of tasty and nutritious, hand-tended vegetables; carefully harvested to share with our community at local farmers' markets.
- use sustainable farming practices (following organic standards): minimizing the use of non-renewable resources; preserving and enhancing soil structure and fertility; expanding biological diversity on our farm through planting perennial crops, raising appropriate livestock, and creating wildlife habitats.
- maintain a farm scale that is manageable and inspiring for the labour on the farm, relying on the physical and intellectual power of human effort, being economically viable to sustain ourselves.
- contribute to the health and well-being of the community by empowering conscious eaters with sustainable and nourishing food choices and connections to their local food system; engage our community by providing information and inspiration for

healthy and local eating through excellent customer service, farm tours, and community events.

3. Background information

What's in a Name?



The naming of our farm business was a perplexing task. We wanted something that stood out and was symbolic of what we wanted to do. When a friend suggested the name Broadfork Farm, we delved into what that name could mean for us.

Our vision of a farm is to provide a variety of products that can supply for a full diet, broad in the scope of what goes on your fork. We both want to farm using a means of production that promotes good soil structure and isn't dependent on the use of machinery and fossil fuels for land preparation. Using the broadfork, a human-powered cultivation tool, is a way to deeply aerate and prepare land for planting, without inverting the soil or badly damaging the structure of the soil.



Who We Are: Bryan

I grew up with an interest in plants, garden design and horticulture, leading to studies at the University of Waterloo in Urban Planning, which includes information in environmental science and ecology. Inspired by the books *The Omnivore's Dilemma* (Michael Pollan), and *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* (Barbara Kingsolver), accumulated

interests lead me away from urban studies and into an internship at Whole Circle Farm near Acton, ON in 2008. Since that first season on a farm, I continued on to co-manage the 10-acre market garden at Whole Circle in 2009, which supplied a 135 member CSA and a stall at the Georgetown Farmers' Market (\$95000+ gross revenue), as well as manage a 1+acre garden in 2010 at Heartwood Farm (\$25,000+ gross revenue), supplying a 35 member CSA and a stall at the Brampton Farmers' Market.

I bring a passion for garlic growing, vegetable varieties, and design (building), as well as interests in soil, compost, permaculture and biodynamics. I have developed and nurtured a good work ethic, attention to detail, excellent motor skills, memory and physical strength from previous work experience in both vegetable and material production settings (cabinetry and finishing).

Who We Are: Shannon



My interest in farming stems from a passion for holistic health and nutrition, which led to a pursuit of studying medicinal herbs through on-farm herbal apprenticeships. Growing up with natural medicines and organic food, I deepened my connection with health and food by pursuing a career and lifestyle that accommodates both, and have since made every effort to broaden my education in these areas. These interests have led me to work and learn on farms from Canada to India to Latin America and back, the culmination of which has been manifest in a desire to start a farm of my own, Broadfork Farm. Having already established roots in Nova Scotia at Windhorse Farm in 2008, my dream is to make my second stint in the east coast an enduring one.

Past History and Experience: Shannon

Education: Registered Holistic Nutritionist

Background: 2010 Farmer at Everdale Organic Farm

winter 2009-2010: intern at Pleasant Valley Farm (winter greens production)

2009: intern at Everdale Organic Farm

winter 2008-2009: intern at Bee Heaven Farm (south Florida)

2008: farm manager at Windhorse farm (New Germany, NS)

2003- 2008: multiple other farms (Ecuador, Colombia, Panama, Costa Rica, Mexico, California, Oregon, India, Ottawa Valley), nutritionist at a clinic and health food store, sales associate at Holt Renfrew

The Land: Windhorse Farm



Windhorse Farm, in the LaHave River watershed, is right in the heart of the Acadian Forest, one of six endangered forests of North America. Settled in 1840 by the Conrad Wentzell family, the woodlot has been harvested each year for the last 170 years yet has the same volume of standing timber today as it had when the first axe bit wood in 1840. It is, in fact, the longest standing demonstration of forest sustainability in Canada.

The land hosts gardens, orchards, wetlands, woodlands, a sawmill, woodworking shop, and draft horses.

Part of the Windhorse mission is to introduce people to the possibility of a sustainable society through the lens of land stewardship. They offer educational programs and opportunities for individual or group retreats. They also operate a native plant nursery, and an Eco-Woodshop specializing in flooring, specialty hardwoods, and construction lumber. The garden area covers several acres at the edge of the ponds and marshlands near Wentzell Lake. The fertile sandy loam soils grow perennial flowers, annual and perennial vegetables, blueberries, raspberries, and a variety of tree fruit. The bounty feeds family, visitors, program participants, neighbours and customers.

In the past, the owners of Windhorse Farm, Jim and Margaret Drescher have hired a farm manager to manage their market garden, perennial fruit, seed-saving business, and food preservation. The 2010 season was their first year of leasing the market garden land out.

4. General Farm Objectives

One of our main objectives is to earn our livelihood from farming, and not subsidize the farm business with off-farm income. To make this a reality, in the first year of our business, we need to make a gross revenue of \$40,000. This is enough for us to live on for the season, have money to pay-back our start-up costs from this year, have cash on hand for other necessary purchases, and save for a down-payment on a property.

We will be starting with approximately 2 acres of annual vegetables, to sell on farm through Windhorse Farm's catered programs, on-farm retreatants and guests, as well as at the Lunenburg and Bridgewater Farmers' Markets. This is approximately the same amount of acreage devoted to annual vegetables that we plan on retaining for the duration of the business, adding space for perennial fruits and vegetables, as well as some livestock in the future when we have capital to invest and stability in our location.

In 10 years from now, we would like our main marketing channel to be a year-round, full-diet (vegetarian) CSA, with an on-farm or near-to-farm pick up location. The reason for waiting to start the CSA is to spend time building relationships with committed customers who know exactly what they want, and whether we can meet their needs in a mutually beneficial arrangement.

Once fully established, we would like to gross \$70-80,000, paying ourselves \$20-30,000 (each) per year to be able to save for retirement.

5. Current and Future Resources

5.1 Resources: Human

Current

We plan on dedicating our full-time availability to the farm business, averaging 60 hours per week, year-round. We would prefer to keep our labour force down to the two of us, there may be times when this isn't possible. In that case, we will look to hire casual labour.

We have compiled a list of friends, family and farmers to use as resources for guiding the development of our business in all facets (production, planning, and marketing). We plan on doing the book-keeping of the business ourselves, finding an accountant to work with in Nova Scotia who is familiar with farm accounting.

(see Appendix for list of advisers and mentors)

Future

We would like to maintain a similar scale throughout the duration of our business; we do not plan on offering internships or hiring outside labour regularly, but do consider it a possibility if the need is there. We only would consider taking an intern on a case by case basis.

We might consider expanding slightly in the future if we have children who wish to contribute to the business on a broader scale.

Shortfalls

Planning and compensating for periods when our working capacity is decreased due to sickness, injury, or other health concerns needs to be further addressed. More information on contributing to Employment Insurance in Nova Scotia or other support programs need to be researched.

5.2 Resources: Animal

Current

For the coming season we will have the care of 4 hives, 3 currently established at Windhorse Farm with all required equipment, and a top bar hive that we will purchase bees for. We also will be sharing barn chores which include caring for chickens as well as 2 horses, in return for access to eggs and manure for purposes of making compost.

Future

We would like to keep bees indefinitely, expanding the number of hives to between 5 and 10. The number of hives is dependent on how the first season goes, as well as what efficiencies exist in having more hives, and the amount of hives our land base can host.

If purchasing or settling on a property more permanently we would like to expand our livestock to include Ducks, for the use of their eggs, as well as pest control in the garden.

In the 5 to 10 year range: Once we have accumulated more equity, know our markets and time constraints, we would like to develop a small goat dairy for the purpose of cheese making. We will also consider keeping donkeys or mules for use as livestock guardian animals and/or draft/cart animals.

Shortfalls

Animals require daily attention and commitment. Until we are more permanently settled on a property this would be hard to provide. Once the 2011 season is over we will need to source equipment for beekeeping if we are not at Windhorse Farm for another season. The regulations surrounding selling goat cheese may prevent us from doing any more than we need to for self-sufficiency.

5.3 Resources: Land

Current

We have a one year lease at Windhorse Farm from March 2011 to March 2012, with the possibility of extension if both we and the land owners are happy with the arrangement. We have access to approximately 2 to 3 acres, located in different parcels on or adjacent to the property.

Windhorse Farm, in the LaHave River watershed, is the longest-standing experiment in sustainable forestry in Canada. They host numerous events, workshops and retreats throughout the year.

We chose Windhorse Farm as a location for our start-up year due to familiarity with the land and land-owners (Shannon was farm manager there in 2008), and the location is in the general area we wish to purchase land and develop a customer base.

Future

Ideally, we will have enough saved after the first or second year to purchase and mortgage a property that has 3 to 5 acres of cleared land suitable for vegetable production, 10 to 20 acres suitable for pasture, and 20+ acres in forest. If the right opportunity presents, we are open to a long-term lease situation that allows for stability and growth at that location. It is important to us to be land-secure so that we can invest in soil fertility and long-term crops such as perennials, orchard fruit and nuts.

Land prices for the area we are interested in, that have some of the desired features we want, currently run in the range of \$50,000 to \$150,000. It is unlikely that we would have the time and means to make a purchase and move after our first season at Windhorse. If we are able to make our projected revenue for the coming season, we will each have at least \$12,000. If we are able to replicate the same revenue stream the following year, and decrease our expenses, we should be able to retain an additional \$10,000 each as payment for labour. That would leave us in a position of having enough for more than a 10% down payment on a property.

Shortfalls

We may have a hard time securing a mortgage in the event we wish to purchase a property: unsure of what our credit rating will be (but we have kept on top of paying every credit card bill on time in full) and we don't have a large amount of equity. We may need to have someone co-sign for a mortgage or seek alternative avenues to acquire land (such as a longer term lease agreement).

5.4 Resources: Building

Current

We have access to a wash station and farm store area for post-harvest handling, and have purchased a 6'X12' cargo trailer for the purposes of converting to mobile cold storage (using A/C unit and CoolBot).



We are renting a cabin on site to live in and have access to internet and phone, washer and dryer, as well as a larger kitchen for processing. There is a large barn with space for curing (onions and garlic) as well as surplus storage of personal and business items.

We would like to be selling produce year-round and so require season extension structures. At present, we will have use of a 21' x 40' greenhouse with a heated bench (from an outdoor wood furnace) and a 21' x 40' field tunnel. We will need to put the plastic over these tunnels upon our arrival in late February to make them ready for seedling production and season extension use.

Future

Once we are farming on land with a more permanent situation, we would like to build some larger high tunnels and smaller moveable tunnels. We will also need to build our own greenhouse for seedling production. We would like to expand our season extension structures with “caterpillar” field tunnels. Depending on the land we lease or buy next, we may need to build a root cellar, wash station, storage facility and living quarters.

Shortfalls

Our current situation does not give us an ideal storage and curing area for our winter squash crop. However, we should be able to build a temporary structure in the barn (e.g. straw bales surrounding a large wooden “box” with a space heater set on a thermostat). It will take some time to ready the greenhouse and hoop house for use, as well as the wash-station and farm store area. The hoop house area is less than we were hoping for, so we are considering putting up temporary “caterpillar” tunnels this season if we are able to obtain a grant from Carrot Cache for the materials.

5.5 Equipment

Current

We personally own a van (2002 GMC Safari) that we will expense out to the business for use for going to market with the trailer/portable cooler. Our first season will be high in expenses to accumulate production equipment: wheel hoes, seeder, broadforks, bins, cold storage, seedling trays, hand tools, irrigation and harvest carts.

For any initial cultivating or land preparation we will hire out or borrow a tiller or tractor.

We have our own laptop computer for planning, record keeping, communication and web-based advertising.

Future

Further scale-appropriate, human-powered tools will we be acquired if time savings are substantial and the tools would pay for themselves quickly. We would like for such technology to be locally produced and easily replicable, if possible.

Shortfalls

We do not wish to own a tractor or rototiller in the future, so any work requiring this equipment will be hired out. That means we are dependent on the availability of the operator and the equipment. It is likely that we will be able to plan around peak times or have work done well in advanced.

5.6 Supplies

Current

We ordered all of the seed that we need from William Dam, Johnny's, and High Mowing Seeds. We will use Vesey's Seeds in emergency if we run out of seed that we need during the season (due to its proximity). We need a supplier for potting mix ingredients and other garden supplies, such as fish hydrolysate. We also need to locate a supplier in Nova Scotia for our market packaging needs (plastic and paper bag and container). Lee Valley, William Dam, and Johnny's are current sources for tools and garden supply. We have a local source for greenhouse supplies, as well as row cover and biodegradable black mulch.

Future

We would like to source all of our supplies as locally as possible. Where appropriate we will use seed from local small-scale seed companies, and save our own. As a fertility source we would like to use locally sourced ocean products, such as fish hydrolysate, kelp, and minerals. We want to use ProtekNet for flea beetle protection rather than row cover due to its decreased thermal properties on heat-sensitive crops (esp. arugula).

Shortfalls

Using small-scale companies as a source for seeds limits the selection of seed available. We may still have to order from larger seed companies for desired varieties. Some supplies might be more expensive if sourced based on location rather than low prices.

6. Selling strategy

6.1 Objectives

Goal:\$40,000+ Gross revenue from combined marketing outlets.

Our selling strategy for 2010 is to sell directly to consumers via two farmers markets (Thursdays and Saturdays) and on-farm sales at Windhorse Farm.

We want to make at least \$500 on each market day to feel that it's worth our while to attend. Our costs for attending the markets (vendor fees, market set-up, etc. laid out in our budget).

6.2 Product Descriptions

Vegetables, Herbs, and Seedlings retailed through the Farmers markets

- Primary enterprise for 2011.

- 30+ types of crops; standard market vegetables except sweet corn and potatoes
- Year-round selling through storage crops and winter-harvested greens
- Edible flowers and culinary herbs

Our Strengths and Advantages:

- knowledge of food preparation
- knowledge of nutrition
- human powered
- marketing advantage: attention to detail; beauty of food – aesthetically pleasing
- production knowledge (including year-round and storage requirements)

Vegetables and Herbs retailed on-farm and to event caterers

The program director at Windhorse Farm has provided us with the events schedule with details regarding caterers needs. We will remain in close contact with the program director as well as the caterers to best serve their needs.

A\$5 gift certificate will be given to people coming to WHF as part of an event or workshop or to do a retreat to encourage them to buy in the farm store. This gift certificate will be added to the cost of attending the program, paid to Windhorse Farm by the participant, and (if used) paid to Broadfork Farm.

Honey

Sold in glass jars with labels of our logo and farm name. Sold mostly on-farm, maybe to some customers at market. Honey will be raw, unheated, unfiltered to retain enzymes. We will meet with Jim Drescher in March to discuss the cost-share of the honey (rental of the bees, hives, extractor).

Vegetable and Herb Seedlings

Our focus will be on having seedlings ready for sale in May, and into June, bringing them to farmers markets as well as selling them on-farm during events. We are also growing some to give to local community gardens, school gardens, or other outlets for Passing on the Gift (Heifer Grant). We have contacted a few organizations already about this and have a growing list of others to contact.

Seed Production for Seed Companies

We have been in discussion with Windhorse Farm and Annapolis Seeds to grow seed crops for selling through their existing seed sale outlets.

We are considering also passing on some of our Heifer Gift by giving our saved seeds to others.

We might consider making our own packets with our logo on the front and selling at winter/spring markets and Seedy Saturdays.

Farm Tours

No charge. To build community, show transparency of farm practices, repay Heifer's gift (\$4,000 each=\$8000). Contacted SOIL apprenticeship organization about us giving farm tours to interns from other farms, need to contact Slow Food Nova Scotia and students from the Nova Scotia Agricultural College. Depending on the type of farm tour (or open house) we will offer some products for sale (produce, honey, seedlings) or offer items to Pass On our Heifer Gift (seedlings, saved seed).

6.3 The Opportunity

People have never been so interested in high-quality, local food and how it is produced, in freshness and in traceability. Customers are seeking out specialist producers and some have a desire to reduce food miles.

Market Segments/Niches/Target Market

- Young families, moms
- People interested in health: Raw foodists/Vegetarian/Vegan, Slow Food, Holistic nutritionists, naturopathic doctors (and their clients)
- Shambhala Buddhist Community (fairly extensive in Nova Scotia and connected with Windhorse Farm)
- Health conscious foodies, Scuppies (socially conscious yuppies)
- Restaurants/caterers (already connected with Conscious Caterers, caterers for Windhorse Farms events/workshops)
- Vacationers wanting convenient, local food option

Industry trends

- Farmers' Market and organics are popular
- awareness of environmental problems – climate change, fossil fuels
- nutrition, healthy living
- supporting local farmers (especially new and young!)
- slow food / know your food movement
- 2011 “Hot trends” List from the National Restaurant Association listed Locally grown produce as #2, Sustainability as #3, Simplicity/back to basics as #9, Farm branded ingredients as #10, Organic produce as #14, Nutrition/health as #15.

6.4 Market Research Summary

In talking with organic producers in the area, and attending one of the markets that we plan on attending, we found that it is possible for a small scale grower to make \$1500+ per week at the Lunenburg market. The potential of the Bridgewater Market and the on-farm sales are still unknown. By having a diversity of outlets we hope to mitigate any shortfalls that any particular one may have.

On both Farmers' Market websites, we have looked at pictures of other vendor's stalls and have a sense of what is currently being offered. We feel our experience and aptitude for marketing vegetables will allow us to be competitive and attractive in those settings.

Here are 2 examples of the differential strengths (s) and weaknesses (w) of 2 competitors we saw at the Lunenburg Farmers' Market and their product/offering:

Competitor #1 (name not shown)

- conventional (w)
- wide variety (s)
- market stand looks (w)
- grower not always at stand (w)
- longevity/reputation (s)

Competitor #2 (name not shown)

- certified organic (s)
- availability of product (s)
- presentation and signage (w)

6.5 Description of Markets

- Farmer's Markets
 1. Our Thursday market (Lunenburg) is well established year-round market. We intend to be year-round vendors there for the long-term. We will attend as long as possible into the winter of 2011-12, but are unsure at this point whether we will extend our lease another year at Windhorse Farm (affecting our storage and growing capabilities).
 2. Our Saturday market (Bridgewater) is a newer market. We are unsure of how much traffic and sales to expect but see great potential for that market and hope to help build up its success.
- On-farm
 1. Participants coming to farm for events, workshops, retreats
(we would like to have a broad offering from the farm store so retreatants have all their needs met)
 2. Caterers providing meals on-site to workshop participants

Risks of Markets

1) Farmers' Markets:

- low attendance = low sales
- need more produce than we can sell in a day to maintain look of abundance
- increased labour cost to harvest additional produce

Every week, we'll be harvesting crops in anticipation of a high-volume sales day but there will always be the risk that the market's attendance on a given day will be low (=low sales) due to outside factors such as weather. Some studies have shown these losses to be as much as 20% or more of the produce brought to market. We will also want to keep our table stocked well, giving the impression of abundance so we will be inclined to bring more than we expect to sell. This increases our labour costs for the additional production, harvest, and preparation for market. However, because we are attending 2 farmer's markets (that are only 2 days apart) and are selling on-farm as well, we are hoping this will reduce the amount of unsold harvested produce. We have also found a food bank in the community that we are hoping to donate excess throughout the year.

2) Farm Store

- need regularity in hours and product availability for repeat/steady customers
- unestablished market for the area
- either need to staff store or work by honour system
- sales may not justify time taken to staff store
- possibility of theft if not staffed
- not enough produce or time to have store stocked every day

6.6 Promotion Strategy

Web-based Advertising and Communication

- develop website, facebook page, and twitter account. Operational by March 2011.
- work on regularly updating, posting photos, info and recipes
- press releases: to newspapers, radio, web blogs for events at farm or farmers market. We have found a few contacts through online social media and will continue to build media contacts in the future.
- develop customer database: offer incentives (like free gift card emailed) to customers who give us their email address or mailing address

Farmers Markets/Word of Mouth

- be reliable (always show up at market)
- provide a good selection each week
- offer unbeatable quality, stand behind quality
- develop loyal customers
- recipe cards handed out each week
- aesthetically pleasing and abundant market stand set up

Packaging

- clean, neat and abundant
- greens in plastic bags or bag your own
- roots in bunches first, then in quarts later on in the season
- consistent labeling - on bags: logo and website
- paper bags (large grocery)– stamp with logo and website
- convenience packages: ex. stir fry bag, salad bag, soup bag (all ingredients and a recipe)

Special incentives

- farmers market CSA/ gift certificate:10% discount for supporting us at beginning of season (beginning fall 2011)

Community Reputation Building

- support local causes: food bank and community events
- Customer satisfaction guarantee: money back or product to replace

Other

- Connect newcomers to the community with the farm and farmer's markets: they want to feel connected
- On-farm or at the market: promote special events
- Recognition with chefs/restaurants in the area

Branding

- brand name, logo, tagline, typography, colours, attitude/voice
- branding rules: be unique, think long-term, be consistent

6.7 Pricing Strategy

We have already set our intended prices and unit sizes for each crop we are growing based on our current knowledge from having worked at many different farmer's markets throughout the years.

However, these prices and sizes will likely change as we become more familiar with our markets, customer base and cost of production.

These are the various factors we have kept in mind and will continue to think about as we fine-tune our prices.

- above average cost but not too high – highest price at market for similar produce, (we don't want to have the lowest prices at market, we want our prices to be on the high end to give the customer the perception of quality and reflect true value)
- check out other farmer's pricing (need to know what the range of prices is at both markets we're attending to see what people are used to)
- check out other outlet pricing – grocery stores, co-op....(see what the perceived value for vegetables is in the marketplace/community)
- what would we pay for this item? (based on our perceptions from working/living in various communities and selling/buying produce)
- what do we want to make? what should the farm be making? (take into account our target sales per week to be on target + how much we have to bring to market)
- was the crop grown in a tunnel or out in the field? tunnel crops should get a higher price, higher cost of “rent” in the tunnel and customers are likely getting product earlier or later in the growing season (customers will often pay more for a product that no one else is offering).
- traditional pricing strategy – factor in cost of production + farm profit (will figure out cost of production during this season and adjust prices/size per unit accordingly)

7. Production strategy

Vegetables

- Non-certified organic, no chemical pesticides, herbicides.
- Low/No Input: Long Term fertility is maintained on site through cover crops and low till practices.
- Low Pest: Ecological Farming practices implemented to reduce pest pressure by attracting and keeping on site populations of beneficial organisms with heavy emphasis on healthy soil for healthy plants.
- Low Tech: Site to be managed with hand tools instead of rototillers. This improves soil structure, cuts start up costs and reduces carbon footprint. This does, however, increase labour costs/time.
- Stay small enough that our own labour is sufficient to run our business without burning us out.

- Work weeks will be limited to 60 hours per week, with the exception of peak harvest and planting seasons when we will set the maximum to 75 hours per week
- Have time budgeted out to various tasks to know that we do not have more scheduled work hours than we can feasibly do.
- Most bed preparation will be done with a broadfork, wheel hoe, and rake.
- After first season, based on record keeping, we will determine which crops we want to focus on growing based on marketability + profitability. Profitability indicators will be: harvest time (\$40/hr+), profit per bed foot, and profit per acre once extrapolated (\$30,000/ac)
- We will also base our crop selection on land based barriers (soil fertility, tilth, stoniness, drainage, slope, proximity to markets, irrigation)
- Our limiting factors : time and growing space
- we will keep a weekly schedule, will change throughout year
- we have set up areas of expertise
- time is more critical than money, time management crucial
- cost of production is largely based on time, not input costs

See attached Time budget/ labour flow (like a cash flow but for our time).

Crops that take longer to harvest, but are nice to have at market (peas, beans), will be harvested only as much as time allows, and not be too fixed on a needed amount (lower harvest priority).

Season extension: We are going to use row cover for the purposes of season extension as well as pest control on brassicas and cucurbits (until flowering). We will use biodegradable black plastic mulch under heat loving crops that stay in the ground for awhile to increase soil temperature, preserve moisture and surface biological activity (earthworms) and reduce weeding time.

We will continue to grow, harvest and sell crops in the winter months (incl storage crops, greens (spinach, lettuce mix, mustard greens, rapini), hakurei turnips)

Pest control: use compost tea as a fungal disease preventative measure, beneficial insects (ladybugs), cultural practices (proper watering, attainment of right humidity levels in tunnels) and soil nutrients/amendments for insect pest, fungal/ bacterial problems and salt/nutrient imbalances.

We will irrigate using a combination of overhead sprinklers and soaker hoses. Our water will be drawn from the well with a back-up strategy of pumped lake water.

Seedlings



- produced in the greenhouse with bench heating, an extra layer of 6 mil poly covering 1 ft above plants and row cover to retain heat. No air heating.
- vegetables, herbs and some flowers will be started in small soil blocks and potted up and sold in jiffy pots (we have 300) or other plastic containers (we have ~1000) that we purchased for seedling sales.
- soil mix will be the same for the transplants we're growing for ourselves and the ones we are selling. We will mix our potting soil ourselves (compost, peat, sand, kelp).
- we have located Seedy Saturdays in the area we might attend where we could sell seedlings

Beekeeping



- following Demeter standards for beekeeping and hive products (biodynamic beekeeping)
- would like to move toward more top bar hives in the future (starting off with one this year) and also trying the Warre design of top bar hive (moving away from the Langstroth hives we will be mostly using this first season due to accessibility and familiarity)
- Shannon has took a natural beekeeping course in 2008, will be taking an advanced natural beekeeping course this summer with the same instructor.
- will join the Beekeepers Assoc. of Nova Scotia and contact Demeter certified beekeepers for advice.

- presently have 2 beekeeping mentors: one is the landowner of Windhorse farm who has been keeping bees for many years, the other is a local beekeeper who mentored Shannon 3 years ago when she was taking care of 2 beehives at Windhorse Farm.
- Shannon has the contact information for all the participants of the beekeeping course she attended 3 years ago at Windhorse Farm and can contact them for support and information sharing.

Saved Seeds

- we will focus on crops with shorter isolation distances and reduced labour requirements for cleaning (tomatoes, ground cherries)

Farm Tours

- offer tours that are tailored to the group (farm interns, horticultural society, produce customers...)
- offer add-ons if group shows interest in advance (picnic lunches, farm store”market” set-up, take home items like garlic cloves for backyard planting)

8. Financial strategy

Current Financial Position:

Shannon:

- Liquid Assets: \$12000

Bryan

- Liquid Assets: \$4000
- Owns a van, trailer
- Credit: 6800 limit on credit card
- Line of Credit: 5200 available from Credit Union

We are planning to hire an accountant (helpful to figure out tax rebates, ins and outs of farming finance)

We will do research to find out the incentives offered for registering with the Department of Agriculture in Nova Scotia as a formal business in reference to taxes, RRSPs, and other programs available. We are interested in taking advantage of grants and subsidies available and plan on taking measures to be eligible for these programs.

Choosing what to buy: We will invest in small tools that will save us time and money, (seeders, wheel hoe...) that are reliable and appropriate to scale. We will prioritize items to purchase, based on that criteria, researching extensively before making the purchase.

See attached Budget and Cashflow.

Future Financial Strategy

The first season will be very investment intensive. We are planning to pay back ourselves the personal start-up loans we put into the business so that we will have funds available to have liquid assets on hand to re-invest in the business, or keep aside for a down payment on a farm property.

Once fully established, we would like to gross \$70-80,000, paying ourselves \$20-30,000 (each) per year to be able to save for retirement.

9. Whole Farm Strategy

9.1 Constraints

- We are setting up the business as a partnership between Shannon and Bryan. See Appendix 10.3 for our partnership agreement.
- In the future, we are interested in exploring worker co-operative models if we find the right people/situation for it to work.
- Ideally, we want our farm to be a two person operation and for those two people to be us (Bryan and Shannon). We don't intend to have any employees for the first couple of years at least. If need be, we will look to hire casual contractual labour. We are open to volunteer help in exchange for vegetables or education but we aren't making plans to be reliant on that kind of labour.
- We have a written lease agreement with the land owners for one year. See in Appendix 10.5.
- We won't pay into EI this first season but would like to start paying into it as quickly as possible (hopefully in the 2nd season).
- We will apply for our farm registration number at the end of the 2011 year.
- We will have an accountant who understands farm business to help us with our taxes.
- We are getting liability insurance which is required for attending the farmer's markets.
- We don't want to become certified organic at this point since we aren't sure if it will be worth the time and expense for a direct marketing approach in Lunenburg County. Once this first season is over, we will have a better idea whether it is important for our customers. We are interested in other certification options especially Certified Naturally Grown because we like the grassroots, small-scale nature of this certification and that farmers are the inspectors.

9.2 Risk assessment and performance management strategy

Identified Risks and Actions to Minimize Risks:

- **High Risk (Impact + Likelihood) highlighted in Red**
- **Medium Risk (Impact + Likelihood) highlighted in Yellow**
- **Low Risk (Impact + Likelihood) highlighted in Green**

Production

Identified Production Risks

- bad/unpredictable weather (flooding, drought, storms, hail, overly wet season)
- pest and disease
- bad seeds
- lack of equipment leading to over-burden on farmers time and bodies
- soil health and fertility problems
- crop rotation challenges
- challenges with application of amendments and pest control
- yield variability
- less production experience with some crops we are growing
- untested production methods
- fire or other damage to infrastructure and stored crops
- inability to source or purchase desired inputs (unavailability, price/shipping costs become too high)

Actions to Minimize our Production Risks:

- Talk to experts, ask for advice from neighbours and other farmers
- Don't only focus on one enterprise (market garden plus honey, seedlings, saved seed)
- Diversify within each enterprise (market garden:grow a variety of crops, and different varieties within each crop)
- grow disease resistant crops (tomatoes, cucumbers, etc)
- crop rotation
- irrigate (with well water and a back up pump for drawing water from the lake)
- proper storage for crops (root vegetables, onions, winter squash, garlic, etc)
- hoop houses, row cover, and black plastic mulch (protection and season extension)
- equipment maintenance schedule (van, pump, air conditioner)
- take care of tools (store indoors, keep sharpened, etc)
- look into insurance and see whether it makes sense for us
- plan to reduce reliance on inputs/fossil fuels

Legal

Identified Legal Risks

- problems with landowners
- insufficient insurance contract
- mortgage payments (if we get a mortgage) requires us to change our business plan
- not getting the permits we need
- getting sued for injury on farm or at market
- not paying taxes, lease or mortgage
- not following food safety laws

Actions to Minimize our Legal Risks:

- have solid business structure and partnership agreement
- purchase farm and product liability insurance
- know food regulations for inspection, quality, and handling, keep up to date, know when regulations change or are added

- pay taxes and other expenses on time
- have lease agreement and formal contracts
- estate planning (ex. wills)

Marketing

Identified Marketing Risks

- we're new to the area, all of our markets are new to us (unknown customers, what they want)
- Unsure of price we are able to get at market
- we've limited our marketing channels to 2 nearby farmers markets and on-farm
- direct and indirect competition
- consumer health and safety concerns
- a product or service doesn't sell well
- a competitor sells the same products better than we do
- the farmers market's popularity decreases
- farmers market shuts down
- farmers market location changes and traffic decreases
- farmers market management and advertising is poor and market suffers
- the caterers don't buy from us because they can get cheaper produce
- less on-farm events/retreats than expected

Actions to Minimize Marketing Risks

- have marketing plan
- do market research to find out what our customers want to buy
- know our costs so we set a price that makes us money
- sell a product that other growers are not producing
- Advertise and tell customers about products and benefits of products (in person and through online and other media)
- sell through a variety of outlets/channels
- watch competition
- value add
- store products properly for selling at a later date (cooler, root cellar, warm storage)
- diversity in crops offered for sale
- greenhouse production for wider range and season extension

Human Resources

Identified Human Resources Risks

- sick or injured farm managers/laborers
- unclear job descriptions or responsibilities
- lack of appropriate labor resources
- competing goals among farm partners
- death or divorce of farm partners
- reduced labour time due to pregnancy and family time
- burn-out of one or both partners
- relationship stress between partners

Actions to Minimize Human Resources Risks

- practice communication skills
- leave open option of hiring casual labour for tasks not worth us doing ourselves (valuing our time)
- have clearly laid out roles and responsibilities (specialties), discuss how we feel about these roles and switch if needed
- practice trusting the other person
- integrate with farm community and wider community
- discuss our goals frequently and whether we are on track, whether one or both of our goals have changed
- take time off (weekly-Sundays) and pursue other interests
- make sure we express ourselves clearly and trust that our opinions are heard and valued
- accept that we will need help (ex. funding, business planning)
- devote time and energy for professional development (non-violent communication, holistic management)
- devote time for meetings (plan week's schedule, marketing, admin, vision meetings, discuss/plan special infrastructure projects, weakest link in chain, delve into agronomic aspects, conflict resolutions)
- have a series of meetings at end of season devoted to season review (general overview of season, current year's budget, upcoming year's budget, roles and logistics, marketing plan review, crop planning debriefing, infrastructure review/planning)
- stick to our schedule of hours worked as closely as possible

Financial

Identified Financial Risks

- going into debt
- changing interest rates
- increased taxing
- debts not payed
- no extra money for purchases or emergencies
- unknown revenue and expenses
- lack of financial management experience
- lack of capital to invest
- higher production costs than anticipated
- not charging enough for products to make it worthwhile
- lack of seasonal operating cash (low cash flow during shoulder season)
- insufficient revenue to cover operating expenses
- insufficient revenue to pay adequate wage to owners
- expenses are far greater than we anticipated

Actions to Minimize Financial Risks

- keep records of farm purchases, sales, loan payments, insurance costs, taxes, utilities, vehicle maintenance costs, and family expenses
- take a class to learn about finances
- evaluate assets for liquidity

- have access to line of credit
- pay bills on time, avoid debt, keep good credit rating
- participate in government programs for funding
- make bulk purchases with other farmers to get a better price
- 4 season growing and selling to maintain cash flow

Public Policy

Identified Public Policy Risks

- changes in regulations on the governmental level affecting production or marketing
- GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) Standards becoming mandatory and requiring us to change infrastructure

Actions to Minimize Public Policy Risks

- join and get involved in appropriate groups/NGO's to stay up to date on changes
- find advocates for making sure our voice is heard
- predicting changes that may come into effect and making business decisions based on predictions (ex. designing wash station to adhere to GAP standards)

9.3 Implementing and monitoring our plan

- record-keeping: cash-flow, sales tracking, expenses, crop records, harvest yields, crop plan (incl. greenhouse seeding, plant spacing, dates, maps), hive notes, honey yields
- we have set up our records with estimates and have left columns to input actual numbers. We will fill these in once/wk, once/month, or once/year depending on the record. We will make a record-input schedule and mark it on our calendar.
- we will hire an accountant to do our taxes and ask the accountant about their software so our records will complement their software. we don't want to have to pay our accountant for book-keeping as well.
- we will schedule a day-long “conference” once or twice per year with each other (probably around New Year's) to have a crop debriefing, discuss our field observations, actual and intended planting and harvest dates, disease and pest pressure and what to do about them, market sales, budget, cash flow (actual vs intended) to help us plan for the following season.
- we will use a calendar (or 2) to see at a glance our planting (DS and GH) dates, transplanting dates, harvest goals per week, market dates, special events, dates to contact retreatants (1 wk prior to their arrival) for veg orders, dates to contact caterers (2 wks prior to event), happenings at the farm, record-keeping input dates, lease payment dates, marketing/social media schedule dates.
- we will each keep a small notebook and small digital camera with us at all times to record observations, to-do items, blogging/facebook ideas.
- at the end of each day, we will take our notes and transfer them to: the master to-do list, the calendar, the computer media files, our field observations notebook,...
- during farmer's markets, we will track the weather, attendance, other factors (town events, parades...), what sold well, what sold out and when, what customers asked for, market information, notes about other vendors, amounts we brought with us and amounts we brought back.

- track rainfall for irrigation purposes so we don't allow our plants to get stressed from too little water.
- track labour hours spent on various production activities (individual crop time – planting, weeding, harvesting) and non-production activities (marketing, record-keeping) for cost of production results and the true cost of our labour. So we can find ways to be more efficient and manage our time better.
- do a Holistic Management view of each enterprise (including Are we happy doing what we're doing? is our quality of life what we would like it to be?how can we get there?)
- where is our weakest link? a production component? marketing component? how can we improve this aspect?
- figure out how to better utilize our available resources and increase efficiencies
- which aspects of our farm business are our priorities? can we monopolize those in new ways to make them more economically viable? (garlic, bees, seed-saving)

10. Appendix

10.1 Cashflow

Please see attached Cashflow PDF

10.2 Budget

Please see attached Budget PDF

10.3 Partnership Agreement

1) Financial Contribution

- Shannon: \$8,000
- Bryan: \$8,000

2) Division of Work

- Shannon: 50%
- Bryan: 50%

3) Division of Accumulated Assets if Partnership Terminated

- Shannon: 50%
- Bryan: 50%

This Partnership agreement is made the 5th day of February 2011. Between: Shannon Jones and Bryan Dyck for the purpose of running a farm business together in the province of Nova Scotia.

The partnership business shall be carried on under the name of: Broadfork Farm.

The partners agree the partnership shall continue for the joint lives of the Partners unless earlier terminated in the manner provided below.

The partnership shall be dissolved on the happening of any of the following events:

1. death of a partner
2. physical disability of a partner
3. withdrawal of any partner from the partnership

The partnership may be terminated at any time by a Partner giving written notice to all other Partners of his intention to so terminate the partnership at least 6 months prior to the date of termination.

10.4 List of Advisors and Mentors

Adviser Name	Skills & knowledge (Strengths)	Contact Information	Comments
Joey Puopolo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • business • social media • press releases 	joseph_puopolo@hotmail.com	Bryan's brother-in-law
Mike Mannix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • website • blogging • photography 	mike@tinyfarmblog.com	Farming friend (Tiny Farm Blog)
Jocelyn Leney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • record-keeping • spreadsheets 	jocelynloney@hotmail.com	Farming friend (from Everdale)
Chelsea Jones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public relations 	chelsea@cielcommunications.com	Shannon's sister
Paul and Sandy Arnold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • small-scale organic farming • winter growing in hoopouses • small farm profitability 	arnold.pvf@gmail.com	Farm mentors that Shannon interned with (Pleasant Valley Farm)
Bryan and Justine Denison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organic farming 	den_farm@yahoo.com	Farm mentors (Denison Farm CSA)
Alex Alkhoury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • writing 	alex.alkhoury@gmail.com	Farming friend, Masters thesis on Barriers to Entry for New Farmers in SW Ontario
Brenda Hsueh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • record-keeping • spreadsheets • Heifer/Passing on the gift 	bbhsueh@gmail.com	Farming friend (Black Sheep Farm)

10.5 Lease Agreement

The facilities and areas mentioned hereafter will be made available to Shannon Jones and Bryan Dyck for the purposes of vegetable production by Windhorse Farm, as agreed upon by Jim and Margaret Drescher, for the price of \$300/month (rent for Blue Dragon cabin plus facilities and land access) from March 2011 through end of February 2012. The possibility of extending the contract into the following season can be discussed further on in the season. To ensure the profitability of the season for all parties, if sales exceed \$30000, 10% of sales will go to Windhorse Farm to a maximum payment of \$5000 (including \$300 monthly payment) for the season.

Housing and Facilities

- Blue Dragon - Arriving Late February/Early March through to the end of the following February (2012)
- Propane for stovetop Burners - Purchased and monitored by Shannon and Bryan
- Firewood for heating - Community work (firewood, hay, mulch (hay, straw, leaves), barn chores, chat room/shower room cleaning/internet room cleaning, etc) exchange for firewood use for BD
- Outhouse (BD) - maintained and cleaned by S and B
- Chat Room/Shower room/Harvest Kitchen/Internet room - Use and access throughout season, extensive use not anticipated
- Space would be cleaned after each use as it is a shared area. Also thorough cleaning once each month
- Parking-S&B will need a permanent spot for parking their van and a spot that the trailer can be parked and plugged into an outlet

Phone/Internet Use

- Open access to internet throughout season. Own computer will be brought with wireless capability. Top floor of office used for access.
- Use of phone for local calls. Long distance calls will be made with purchased pre-paid cards or through the use of Skype. There is a phone line in the office that S & B can use and attach our own answering machine to.

Garden and Business Arrangements

- Sweetwater, Great East Gardens, the Taj, and gardens behind (west) Sunshine House, (not including perennial flower gardens and native plant nursery and not the two small beds next to the parking lot at Sunshine)
- S and B will lease land at agreed price for duration of season
- S&B have open access throughout season (Late Feb/March – end of February 2012)
- The Taj and new greenhouse can be planted for extended season use.
- The garden will be left in a state of readiness (weed-free and mulched or cover cropped) for the next season except for late fall crops that could get covered in snow prior to being cleaned out.
 - some crops will be left in the field to harvest late into the season
 - winter kill cover crops - buckwheat, field peas, or oats will be used wherever possible
- S and B can use amendments/treatments that are permitted under certified organic practices (J&M to participate in decisions about long-term soil health).
- The use of gas-powered tillers will not be used in the gardens
- The expansion of garden area for annual vegetable production will be limited to the agreed upon areas

Garlic

S and B will ensure that there is a comparable amount of stock and planted for the following season to replenish what was planted by WHF in fall of 2010

Measures to maintain the quality and purity of WHF stock will be taken (best stock used as seed garlic, maintaining separation from brought in stock)

Water

- S and B will have access to water usage for the purposes of garden irrigation from the Drescher Residence's well.
- Access and use of water from west side well for washing harvests as necessary in the Farm Store wash station
- Hoses provided by WHF will be kept in repair by S and B
- Hoses brought in by S and B will be maintained by S and B, adequately marked
- In the event that the gas water pump is needed, S and B will provide the fuel/oil, and have access as necessary and will care for and maintain pump

Compost

- S and B will ensure that there is a comparable amount of compost for the following season

- Compost materials (animal manures, sawdust, leaves, etc) can be obtained from WHF (S&B responsible for moving materials from dung cellar) for the purposes of building compost windrow in agreed upon area.
- After compost windrows have been made from materials from barn, Bryan will monitor and turn piles as necessary to ensure good compost.
- Compost will be used on vegetable gardens and fruit trees/shrubs/brambles and made available for perennial flower gardens.

Chickens & horses

- The duties of barn chores (chickens & horses) will be a community-shared responsibility (i.e. opening and closing, cleaning nest boxes, feeding, collecting eggs) in exchange for personal use of eggs.
- Feed will be purchased by WHF, garden (weeds), wash station and kitchen scraps will go to feed chickens when available (in outside pen in warm weather, in dung cellar when ground is frozen)
- The possibility of a chicken tractor for use in garden can be discussed as season progresses

Tools

- Tools/equipment purchased and brought to WHF by S and B will be marked and separated
- Assorted WHF garden tools will be available for use during the season (shared with perennial gardeners). Tools will be sharpened and oiled before the season begins and it will be the responsibility of S&B (shared with perennial gardeners) to leave them in the same condition at the end). Two wheelbarrows will be in good serviceable condition and available to S&B at the beginning of the season and must be left that way at the end (broken boxes, frames, etc replaced).
- Cold frames and lights will be in good serviceable condition at the beginning of the season and must be left that way at the end (e.g broken frames and lights replaced).
- Tool Shed(s) will be kept neat, clean and well organized throughout the season.

Mulch

The pile of hay mulch will be available for use in the gardens. It will be a community responsibility to replenish the supply as resources become available.

Farm Store / Flower Shop / Wash Station

- WHF will cover cost of materials/infrastructure to update facilities to adequate level of readiness
- Wash Station: B&S will supply the necessary wash basin for the season that will be taken with them when they leave. If J&M wish to purchase the wash basin from B&S that may be a possibility (to be discussed later in season). J&M are also welcome to purchase a wash basin to be installed this season for use by B&S in the wash station. WHF is responsible for setting up a drainage system from the wash station if they or B&S find there are problems associated with the use of the current drainage system.
- B&S will have use of the upright cooler in the farm store for selling to WHF guests.

Barn

S&B can use space in the barn for curing onions and garlic. Also space for other personal items that need to be under cover from the elements. S & B may construct a small temporary room with straw bales as insulation for the storage of winter squash.

Root Cellar

Access for storing storage vegetables to be sold during winter months.

Heated Greenhouse

- WHF will build a suitable greenhouse foundation (20x48) and raise basic soil level before March.
- WHF will purchase all necessary materials (metal frames, plastic for double-walled skin, wood for framing) in consultation with, and assistance from S&B.
- S&B will put it up in March with help from people hired and paid by J&M and do all necessary soil enrichment.
- WHF will be responsible for all necessary plumbing/heating/ventilation (incl heated bench) in consultation with S&B

- WHF will purchase all necessary materials for heated benches (ideally not wood if want to be long-lasting but up to J&M)
- S&B will supply their own seedling trays and row cover for capturing bench heat during the night.
- Open access and unlimited use throughout the season March through February 2012.
- Heating - Stoking furnace 2-3 times a day, wood will be supplied by WHF exchange for work hours to help with the firewood harvest
- Maintenance – Greenhouse will be left in state of readiness for following season, save for hardy crops planted for winter production

Seed Saving

Arrangements will be made with Owen Bridge, J and M, and S and B as to preferred scenario of seed saving initiatives for the season in March (WHF will want to continue to offer for sale seeds grown at WHF, in conjunction with Sweetwater Native Plant Nursery).

Cold Storage

- A cold storage unit will be brought in by B and S for their use over the course of the season.
- The cost of running the unit (Air Conditioning unit hooked up to CoolBot) is included in the lease price.

Grandmother Clause

Jim and Margaret will have unlimited access to garden food with permission from S & B, to harvest whenever