



GROUNDSWELL
Center for Local Food & Farming
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NEWS RELEASE

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Groundswell Center, Cooperative Extension and Alternatives Federal Credit Union join forces to support local small farm businesses

Ithaca, NY.

In collaboration with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County and Alternatives Federal Credit Union's Business CENTS Program, the Groundswell Center for Local Food & Farming in Ithaca will be offering an intensive Farm Business Planning course this winter. The class will cover all major aspects of the farm business start-up process including assessing your land, infrastructure and equipment needs; legal and regulatory issues; production planning; marketing; financial feasibility, budgets and recordkeeping; and more.

The course is designed for those who:

- Have at least a year of hands-on experience in farming, OR have completed Groundswell's New Farmer Training Program, and...
- Expect to get their farm enterprise off the ground within three years, OR are in the early stages of a farm business and need help, and...
- Have a clear idea of the kind of farm enterprise they would like to operate, and...
- Can fully commit to an intensive fourteen-week course with substantial outside research and homework.

The class will run for fourteen weeks, meeting every other Thursday evening from 6-9pm from January 5 through April 12. Instructors are Monika Roth, Agriculture Program Leader and Matt LeRoux, Agriculture Marketing Specialist with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County; and Leslie Ackerman, Director of the Business CENTS Program of Alternatives Federal Credit Union, along with area farmers whose stories illustrate the benefits of business planning and financial management skills.

"This is a rigorous course for the serious farming entrepreneur," says Joanna Green, Director of the Groundswell Center for Local Food & Farming. "We are really pleased to be working with Monika, Matt and Leslie. They're skilled teachers with a lot of practical knowledge to offer."

Groundswell is committed to supporting a new generation of farmers that reflects the diversity of culture, color, and class in our community. Tuition for the class is on a sliding scale, from \$80 – \$300 depending on household income. It is NOT a requirement

Groundswell is an initiative of the not-for-profit Center for Transformative Action, Tax ID: 16-0990318



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that you own land or have the financial resources to own land. This course will examine opportunities to lease land for farming in the Tompkins County area, and to secure financing through ag and commercial lenders or local "Slow Money" investors.

Registration is limited, so please apply early! An online application form is available at www.groundswellcenter.org. Click on Programs/Business Planning. For more information send an email to info@groundswellcenter.org or call 607-277-0180. This Business Planning Course is supported in part by the USDA's Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, NIFA Grant #2010-49400-21799.

Class schedule and topics:

- Jan 5: Central NY ag industry overview; Business planning overview; Planning a farm business; Clarifying your vision, goals and timeline.
- Jan 19: Assessing your resources: land, infrastructure, labor, etc; Land tenure options; Legalities and logistics of getting started; Selecting your enterprise; Resources for farming.
- Feb 2: Enterprise Planning Basics: Land evaluation, improvements and preparation; Infrastructure & equipment needs; Production plan and timeline.
- Feb 16: Finance I: Understanding financial statements & accounting concepts; Recordkeeping basics and taxes; Savings, loans and other sources of financing.
- Mar 2: Finance II: Gross profit & cash flow projections; Start up budget; Operating budget.
- Mar 15: Marketing I: Marketing basics; Comparing market channels; Projecting sales.
- Mar 29: Marketing II: Drafting your marketing plan; Understanding your competition.
- Apr 12: Final Presentations and feedback from peers, instructors and advisors.

The Groundswell Center for Local Food & Farming is an initiative of the EcoVillage Center for Sustainability Education/Center for Transformative Action. Support for Groundswell comes from individuals and businesses who believe in the importance of strong local food systems, the Park Foundation and the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program of the National Institute for Food and Agriculture-USDA, Grant #2010-49400-21799. For more information visit www.groundswellcenter.org.

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CALENDAR LISTING

Groundswell Farm Business Planning Course

8 classes, every other Thursday evening, January 5 - April 12, 2012

Dates: January 5 and 19, February 2 and 16, March 1, 15, and 29, and April 12

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Time: 6:00 - 9:00 PM

Location: Ithaca

Cost: Sliding scale, \$80 – \$300

Application required: Visit www.groundswellcenter.org for online application.

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