

Developing a Business Plan for Farms and Rural Businesses: Training for New and Beginning Farmers and Entrepreneurs

MODULE 2.1: WHAT RESOURCES DO YOU HAVE? Farm History and Current Situation

**Online Training Program for
New & Beginning Farmers and Agricultural Entrepreneurs**

**Cooperative Extension Programs
Florida A&M University**

*New & Beginning Farmers Training Program
Funded by Beginning Farmers & Ranchers Development Grant Program (USDA NIFA)
*Adapted from Building a Sustainable Business: A Planning Guide for Farmers and Rural Business Owners (MN Institute for
Sustainable Agriculture & The Sustainable Agriculture Network)*



MODULE 2.1: Farm History and Current Situation

What Resources Do You Have?

- ✓ Prepare a brief history of your family, farm and business.
- ✓ Conduct a **SWOT** analysis for each management areas.
- Assess your current situation in:
 - **Marketing** – product, customers, unique features, distribution, pricing, promotion, anticipated changes
 - **Operations** – physical resources, production systems, management systems
 - **Human Resources** – work force, unique skills, anticipated changes
 - **Finances** – needs, performance, risk, financial environment and anticipated changes
- Conduct a whole farm **SWOT** analysis.
- Prepare the History and Current Situation section of your Business Plan.



Brief History of Your Business

Look back to important events and decisions from the past one, five or ten years – whatever time frame that best describes why and how you arrived at your current business situation.

For an Experience Farmer or Business Owner

- Consider the different phases you have gone through in terms of marketing, operations, human resources and finances.
- Identify the most important successes and failures , as well as opportunities and challenges encountered.
- Reflect on what was learned from these experiences.
- Consider how values have shaped the choices made.



Brief History of Your Business

For a Beginning Farmer or Business Entrepreneur

- Focus on personal, economic, environmental and community experiences that led to your current desire to begin a farm business.
- Take time to learn about the land you will farm, the markets you will serve and the industry you plan to enter.

To complete farm history, open Worksheet 3 below.



Assessing the Current Situation: **SWOT Analysis**

- Evaluate your Current Situation for:

S = Strengths

W = Weaknesses

O = Opportunities

T = Threats

- The **SWOT analysis** is a planning tool used by all sizes and types of businesses and organizations.
- **Strengths and Weaknesses** refer to factors that are **internal** to your business.
- **Opportunities and Threats** refer to the business' **external** environment.



Assessing the Current Situation : **SWOT Analysis**

- Keeping a list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for each of the management areas as you proceed forward.
- You will summarize the information and make an overall SWOT analysis for the farm business that can be included in the final business plan.

See Worksheet 4: SWOT below.

