

How to join the incubator or become a partner

- If you are a beginning farmer, fill out the online application at www.prairiecrossingfarms.org
- If you are a landowner, foundation or funder, fill out the online contact form at www.prairiecrossingfarms.org or contact 847-548-4062 or mikesands@prairiecrossing.com
- If you are consumer, wholesaler or retailer interested in buying our food products; visit www.prairiecrossingincubator.org/farms

We want to share with you the vision, mission and values that guide our work at Prairie Crossing and will support the next generation of farmers who will feed our families:

Vision

That local family farms, producing healthy organic foods, are completely integrated into our community food systems.

Mission

To support the development of successful family farm enterprises, which focus on growing & marketing organic food into local & regional systems.

The Farm Business Development Center

at Prairie Crossing Farm

32400 Harris Road, Grayslake, IL 60030, 847-548-4062
www.prairiecrossingfarms.org

Now You Can Live Your Values, Develop Your Skills, And Feed Your Community.



The Farm Business Development Center

at Prairie Crossing Farm

A place where farmers grow their careers

The Farm Business Development Center at Prairie Crossing (FBDC) is a place that supports the development of successful family farm enterprises by focusing on the production and marketing of organic foods for local and regional food systems. Also known as an “incubator,” the FBDC is located on a one hundred acre organic farm in Grayslake, Illinois, and has its foundation in the Prairie Crossing Conservation Community. The incubator program works by providing land, farm infrastructure, and a positive learning environment that helps beginning farmers develop the entrepreneurial skills, farming knowledge and market networks needed to become successful professional farmers. The incubator provides support and resources to its farmers using a market-based fee structure where possible. Farmers are a part of the incubator for no more than five years, at which time they are expected to “graduate” to the next level of independence.

How we fulfill our mission

Recruit farmers.

The FBDC actively recruits new farmers for the incubator program. Typical incubator applicants have 2-3 years farming experience, and do not own land or have the financial capability to lease land for a farm enterprise. These beginning farmers have the practical knowledge, thorough training, apprenticeship and/or a previous farming background, to develop a multi-year business plan with the goal of entering professional farming. The incubator program focuses on increasing the supply of locally grown food and also has the goal of connecting with immigrant and disadvantaged workers who have background in farming and see ownership of a farm enterprise as a potential career.

Creating possibilities with partners.

The FBDC is forming partnerships with private landowners, foundations and other funders to provide necessary resources for the FBDC and for the farmers chosen for the incubator program. Our goal is to help farmers secure financing necessary to launch a farm business within the five-year incubator training program. We work with private landowners to connect our farmers with land available for long-term lease. We also raise awareness with consumers, wholesalers and retailers to the availability of locally-grown, organic foods produced by our farmers.

How we support beginning farmers

The FBDC at Prairie Crossing provides the key business ingredient that is often not available to new businesses; access. Through our incubator system, we provide beginning farmers with access to:

- The use of farmland with stable tenure agreements
- The use of infrastructure such as packing sheds, green houses and coolers
- The use of equipment such as tractors, tillers, and hand-tools.
- Lead farmers & mentors who will provide knowledge and transfer skills
- Advice on start up capital needs
- Consumers, wholesalers and retailers who want to buy locally produced foods
- Advice on employment of skilled farm labor
- Introductions to landowners for future access to farmland
- Review and advice of business and cropping plans with business development staff & management

