

Farm Resilience Mentorship (FaRM) Program

Farmer Mentor Orientation Manual

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**Welcome to the Farmers for Climate Solutions**

**Farm Resilience Mentorship (FaRM) Program!**

The Farmers for Climate Solutions (FCS) team is excited to have you on board as a ***Farmer Mentor*** for the FaRM program. You will be playing a key role in the success of the program. You are joining a national program that is a community of farmers and supporters working together for change. We look forward to working with you!

The goal of this program is ambitious: 10 000 farmers, across 2 millions acres, trained in Climate-Friendly Farming Practices by the end of 2025. And we know we can only get there by working together. By creating a network and community of farmers, researchers, agronomists, non-profits, and government, we are working towards climate resilience and adaptation, so that we can grow food and community for generations to come.

We are excited to get going for 2022! Since this is the first year of the program, we acknowledge that there are a lot of lessons to be learned. There will be several opportunities for you to provide your wisdom and feedback on how this program can be improved.

This manual will provide the background to the program as well as details on your role as a Farmer Mentor. Please read the manual before starting. This manual can also be used as a reference as questions come up. Important contacts are found at the end of this document if you would like further clarification.

Before we get going, here are a few terms you will see throughout this manual:

* **(CFFP) Climate-Friendly Farming Practice:** practices adopted by producers on-farm to reduce GHG emissions, improve soil health and farm resilience. Includes Advanced Nitrogen Management, Cover cropping, Advanced Grazing Management (Rotational Grazing)
* **(COI) Community of Inquiry:** Meeting spaces that allow a community of like practitioners to troubleshoot, foster learning, knowledge sharing and support among peers. In rural settings especially, COIs can help overcome isolation and build community in a meaningful way.
* **Curriculum Developers:** ( COG, CSS, CFGA)the organizations responsible for the creation of farmer participant and farmer mentor training materials and for training Farmer Mentors
* **(FaRM) Farm resilience Mentorship Program:** The nation-wide peer-to-peer farmer mentorship program to train farmers to adopt climate-friendly farming practices for which you are a Farmer Mentor!
* **(FEWG) Farmer Engagement Working group:** FCS Working Group responsible for oversight of design and implementation of farmer training program
* **Farmer Mentor:** Farmers who will be given training to deliver the FaRM program to farmer participants
* **Farmer participant:** farmers trained by a Farmer Mentor in Climate Friendly Farming Practices
* **(IP) Implementation Partner:** Organizations responsible for providing administrative and logistical support in the delivery of the farmer training program curriculum. These partners may be FCS member or non-member organizations
* **(LMS) Learning Management System:** online learning software platform that houses all curriculum materials and facilitates virtual curriculum delivery

# Checklist

* Read the Farmer Mentor Orientation Manual
* Sign your Contract with Implementation Partner
* Log onto LMS, create password
* Sign all required waivers, codes of conduct, statements etc on LMS
* Complete asynchronous (read on your own time) online training materials
* Complete online “in-person” training session with Curriculum Developers
* Provide online training to your participants
* Provide follow up support to your participants via Community of Inquiry (COI) and one-on-one
* Provide feedback to FCS and curriculum developers to support continuous program improvement
* If continuing as a mentor next year, attend “refresher” training courses to receive curriculum updates

# What is a Farmer Mentor?

As a farmer mentor, YOU are a key player in the FCS FaRM Program. The success of the program is based on you and other farmers sharing your own valuable experience and introducing new ways of thinking. You will create a friendly learning space for farmers to get together and talk about your experiences and solve problems together. You play a crucial supportive role in training FaRM program participants in a particular suite of CFFPs, but also in supporting your participants through the process of implementing this suite of practices on their own farm, thereby increasing the likelihood of successful and sustained CFFP adoption.

This is the first year of this program, so being a mentor is a learning experience for us all! Farmer Mentors will need to be flexible as there may be some challenges at this pilot stage, and you may need to roll with communication and logistical snags as we get up and running. We thank all the Farmer Mentors in advance for their patience!

# Roles and Responsibilities of a Farmer Mentor

*Prepare*

* Complete all Farmer Mentor Training modules on the LMS.
* Read course materials on LMS in advance of training.
* Work with FCS to test usability of curriculum and functions on LMS and provide feedback as required.

*Offer Training Sessions*

* Assist your Implementation Partner to identify and recruit farmers to participate in training workshops.
* Prepare for workshop delivery.
* Deliver 2 workshops (min. 10 farmer participants each) provide attendance record to IP
* Assist farmer participants to complete their Workbook/Farm Plan (online or print)

*Mentorship*

Group:

* + Lead monthly 60-minute Communities of Inquiry (COI) workshops for farmer participants and/or if COIs are not attended or end early, respond to participant questions in LMS discussion boards/”ask an expert” forum

Individual:

* + Provide one-on-one support to farmer participants (up to one hour per participant) which may include:
		- * Phone/video calls
			* Emails
			* Text messages
			* Responding to “Ask the expert” questions on the LMS
			* Reviewing participant work uploaded to LMS

*Evaluation*

* Complete post-training mentor surveys
* Ensure all farmer participants complete a post-training participant survey at the end of their training.
* Provide feedback to FCS as needed

*Continuous Improvement*

* Participate in 2 x 1-hour long “refresher” courses to receive curriculum updates.

## Expectations and Approximate Time Commitment Annually

| **Per Farmer Mentor time commitment breakdown** |
| --- |
| **Description** | **Total hours** | **# of events** | **# of hours/event** |
| Being trained, reviewing curriculum materials (which may include reading, videos, podcasts,  | 8-12 hours | 1 | ~3-7 hours self-paced~5 hours in person |
| Prep for training sessions | 4 hours | 2 sessions | 2 hours/training sessions |
| Face-to-face training sessions | 10 hours | 2 sessions | 5 hour/session |
| Feedback rounds to Curriculum Developers (after each training) | 2 hours | 2 feedback rounds | 1 hour/feedback round |
| Refresher trainings from Curriculum Developers to receive curriculum updates | 2 hours | 2 refresher trainings | 1 hour/refresher training |
| Monthly Communities of Inquiry | 12 hours | 12 | 1/COI |
| One-on-one support sessions*\* If not all participants require the full hour of one-on-one support by the end of the 12 month period following trainings, a Mentor can redistribute remaining hours to offer additional followup support time to other Participants as required (up to a maximum of the total amount of one-on-one support hours offered to each Mentor per training year).* | 20 hours | 20 one-on-one support sessions | 1 hour/support session |

## Working with your Implementation Partner

Your Implementation Partner (IP) is the organization who sent you this material! They are responsible for identifying and recruiting Farmer Mentors (you) and are your main contact for this program. They will also connect you to necessary training and resources and will support you with questions and logistics. You will be paid by your Implementation Partner. Other ways you will be interacting with your Implementation Partner include:

* Assisting your IP in engaging farmers to enrol in training events where appropriate
* Following your IP’s guidelines for invoicing.
* Communicating with your IP as needed for assistance with delivering the program.

## A commitment to Equity

Young farmers, women farmers, farmers with disabilities, Black farmers, Indigenous farmers and food providers, farmers of colour, small-scale farmers, 2SLGBTQ+ farmers, and new Canadian farmers often experience additional and unique barriers to enter and succeed in the agricultural sector. And just like so many others who farm, equity-deserving farmers bring passion, tenacity and independence, and hold the potential to bring vital innovations along with new crops and management practices that can better adapt to our changing climate and growing conditions.

Farmers for Climate Solutions’ (FCS) mission is to advance policies and programming that support farmers to reduce emissions and build resilience in the face of climate change, and we are committed to ensuring that all of our policy and program proposals acknowledge and serve the diversity within our sector.

We go further together, and a commitment to Equity is key to achieving climate resilience and adaptation. All participants of Farmers for Climate Solutions, including Farmer Mentors, are asked to participate with a commitment to Equity. Some Farmer Mentors will be very familiar with this commitment, while others might be hearing about it for the first time. All mentors willing to commit and learn more about equity are welcome to join the FaRM program.

Read more here: [FCS Commitment to Equity](https://farmersforclimatesolutions.ca/commitment-to-equity#:~:text=Farmers%20for%20Climate%20Solutions'%20)

## Working with Your Farmer participants

**Farmer mentors can help the Implementation Partners as needed to recruit farmer participants. Read more about Recruiting Farmer participants** [**here.**](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1P2yPxX2Dvv7F0NmQQOwRnP1GBl93PH5U/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=109162345090251480349&rtpof=true&sd=true)

Farmer Mentors will deliver the Curriculum and support the learning of Farmer participants and support farmer participants to problem-solve specific scenarios on their property that may be barriers to adoption. Mentors will assist farmers to develop a concrete, farm-level plan of action in the Climate-Friendly Farming Practice of their chosen training stream.This will be done through several contact points.

1. Curriculum Delivery/Training
* Conducting training with farmers in a peer to peer setting such as a workshop, online discussion boards, and web-based video conferencing (Microsoft teams, Zoom etc).
1. One-on-one follow up
2. Interaction on the LMS Q/A or chat/club functions

## Providing Feedback

You will be prompted at certain points to give feedback on the program in the form of surveys, questionnaires and interviews. We value your input and feedback, and consider it essential for the success and continuous improvement of this program. Part of your role as Farmer Mentor will be a requirement to give feedback on:

* The course
* The training you receive
* The LMS software
* Your experience with the program (e.g. working with the Implementation Partner, FCS, etc.)

# Background on Farmers for Climate Solutions (FCS)

FCS officially launched in February 2020 as a national coalition of farm organisations dedicated to putting forth farmer-led solutions to the climate crisis. FCS aims to influence climate-friendly agriculture policy and practices in Canada, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the sector, boosting soil carbon sequestration, and improving farm resilience.

Between 2021-2025, FCS is receiving approximately four million dollars in private philanthropic funding to develop and implement a peer-to-peer farmer training program that aims to increase the number of farmers adopting on-farm climate-friendly practices, and to increase political and public support for farmers through policy advocacy, education, and communications.

The Farmer Engagement Working Group (FEWG) is the working strategic advisory body charged with coordinating development, delivery, evaluation and continuous improvement of the FaRM program.

# Background on the FaRM program

**FaRM Purpose**

Help farmers and ranchers across Canada mitigate and adapt to climate change, as well as improve farm resilience. Augment climate-friendly farming-related extension capacity in the sector. Provide on-the-ground data that informs agriculture policy change in Canada.

**FaRM Goal**

Increase knowledge and uptake of climate-friendly farming practices (CFFPs) across Canada.

**FaRM Objective**

Develop and implement Mentorship Program designed to support farmers and ranchers in adopting CFFPs. The FaRM Program will reflect the diversity of farmers and farms across Canada, and will seek to deliver programming that meets the unique needs of equity deserving farmers.

**FaRM Outcomes**

* 10 000 farmers across 2 millions acres are trained in CFFP’s by the end of 2025.
* 7,500 of those farmers adopt one new CFFP on their farm
* At least 30 000 farmers are informed about the FCS CFFPs resources and training opportunities by the end of 2025.

To learn more about FCS, please visit: [www.farmersforclimatesolutions.ca/](http://www.farmersforclimatesolutions.ca/)

If you have questions about FCS, please contact: info@farmersforclimatesolutions.ca

## Farm Resilience Mentorship Program Framework

The ***FaRM Program*** has been developed collaboratively with farmers, farm organizations, and other experts including agronomists and researchers. FCS gave strategic guidance and oversight. While the overall training program is national, it is regionally-driven and implemented. The framework of the program can be broken down into three parts: the course, course delivery, and community.

**The Course**

The program includes three topics or streams:

1. Advanced Nitrogen Management (content developed by [Climate Smart Soils](https://smartsoils.ca/))
2. Cover Cropping (content developed by [Canadian Organic Growers](https://www.cog.ca/))
3. Advanced Grazing Systems (content developed by [Canadian Grasslands and Forage Association](https://www.canadianfga.ca/))

The course materials have been developed through consultation with leading experts in each stream. They aim to strike a balance between making concepts broad enough to be accessible to a wide range of farmers while being detailed enough to make them relevant to farms using various production systems and scales and in different regions/climates across Canada, and to farmers who face unique barriers to enter and succeed in the sector. Courses include both in-person/virtual training materials and written/video materials to be used as reference materials by Farmer Mentors and Farmer participants.

**The Course Delivery**

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**The Community**

Learning from and with your fellow farmers is key to this program. It’s a great way to learn and to build new communities and strengthen existing relationships. We know we can go further together, which means we have a lot to learn from each other, through our success, failures and questions. Bringing Farmer participants together at training will be part of this, as will follow-up hours for questions. An online learning software platform (LMS) will house the course content, allow for group discussion and connect all the participants of the FCS FaRM Program. Options for building community and discussion will include the COIs, chat rooms or “clubs” on the LMS, and other social learning opportunities on the LMS.

# Research/Data Collection

By agreeing to participate in this training program you are also agreeing to participate in research and data collection by academics working in partnership with FCS and independent evaluation consultants hired by FCS. Data collection and research methods may include but may not be limited to surveys, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups and observation of training sessions.

To learn more, please read our Data collection and [Privacy of Information Statement.](https://farmersforclimatesolutions.ca/data-privacy-statement)

The purpose of gathering feedback from Mentors is to learn about your experience in the Farmer Mentor Training Program, the difference that your participation has made for you, and how we can improve the program in the future.

The surveys are voluntary. If there is a question that you don't want to answer, please skip to the next one.

Survey results may be used in reports to funders, communications and promotional materials about the training and to improve the offering. Direct quotes that you share may be shared anonymously in these reports so please keep that in mind when answering.

We thank you for taking the time to share your experiences and honest feedback with us. Your responses will help us with continuous program improvement.

# Complaints

Any issues that arise throughout your participation as a farmer mentor should be brought up with your Implementation Partner first.

# Contacts and Resources

If you have any difficulties communicating with your Implementation Partner, please contact Farmers for Climate Solutions: admin@farmersforclimatesolutions.ca