

Property Address	
Landowner Name	
Email / Phone	

Farmland Assessment Checklist

Consider filling this out to assess the suitability of any possible farmland opportunity to your overall farming goals. From site conditions to landowner attributes, this can serve as a fairly comprehensive assessment for you to compare options.

- **BEFORE** visiting any property, review each consideration, identify particular aspects that will be required for your farm operation as well as possible deal breakers.
- **DURING** your site visit, confirm that you’ve covered these topics with the landowner or her representative. Be sure to note your comments and follow up questions.

Consideration	Notes
<p>Land Records</p> <p>County GIS Parcel Number & Map Current & Prior Aerial Photography Zoning Details Easements (conservation / access) Acreage under consideration</p>	
<p>Infrastructure Included / Not</p> <p>Barns / Greenhouses / Sheds Feed Storage Farmer Housing Food Processing Facilities Harvest / Wash Station Walk In Cooler / Freezer All Weather Access to Fields / Barns Fencing</p>	
<p>Land Specifics</p> <p>Soil Series / Soil Drainage General Topography / Aspect Pond or Creek Recent Soil Test Results</p>	

<p>Equipment Included / Not</p> <p>Tractor / Implements Vehicles</p>	
<p>Location</p> <p>Access Road State / Private Drive Travel Time to Highway / Interstate Travel Time to Farm Supply Store Adjacent Land Use / Neighbors All Weather Access Assured</p>	
<p>Land Management History</p> <p>Soil Test Results Soil Amendments / Fertilization Crop Production Records Well / Water Tests Eligibility for Organic Certification Known Concerns Weed Issues / Pesticide Use Wetland / Environmental Concern</p>	
<p>Operations & Maintenance</p> <p>Landowner / Tenant Responsibilities Well / Gallon per Minute Rate Prior Electric Use / Cost Prior Gas / Propane Use / Cost On Site Septic / Off site Sewer Cell Reception / Internet Access Solid Waste / Garbage / Recycling Backup Generator / Power Outages Large Truck Access / Turnaround</p>	
<p>Landowner(s) / Prior Tenant(s)</p> <p>Residence On Site / Off Site Personality / Compatibility Prior Tenant Information Prior / Ongoing Neighbor Issues Landowner Restrictions</p>	
<p>Other Considerations</p>	

Resources For Your Farm Search

Learn More About a Specific Property

Soils on the Farm

- The USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service online [Soil Surveys](#) offer soil maps and related information for every North Carolina county. The maps show the dominant [soil series](#) for the whole county, yet each soil series map unit can include up to 10 to 15% of other soil series. The surveys indicate suitability of soils for a range of land uses, including all types of farming, forestry, recreation, septic systems, or building. Hard copies of soil surveys are often available at public or college libraries and at Conservation District and Natural Resource Conservation Service offices. The [Web Soil Survey](#) is an online version of the soil survey; this interactive service allows you to target a specific location and learn about its soil features.
- Given that the soil map units can have inclusions of up to 15% of very different soil, we strongly advise farm seekers to take soil samples using the guidelines provided at the [NC Agronomic Lab](#).
- Identify problem soils, such as excessively wet or sloped areas. With the landowner or tenant, discuss history and future opportunities with cover cropping, soil testing, and soil amending responsibilities, and associated schedules.

County GIS Maps

- County governments across North Carolina have Town offices maintain GIS maps and most offer [online mapping](#) interface that is available to the public. Each county may have a slightly different system, but most offer options to view 1) parcel information for the farm and neighboring parcels, 2) current and historical aerial photography, 3) soil maps, 4) contour maps, 5) zoning information, 6) current tax value, and 7) easements associated with the property. Zoning and deeded easements / rights or way may place limits and restrictions on the property for farm operations. The contour maps offer important information on the aspect, ie is the slope facing North or South, of the fields on a given property. Contour maps along with tree cover and windbreaks can help you understand how sun and wind may be moderated.

Growing Season and Annual Low Temperature

- [Hardiness zones](#) define where extreme low temperatures occur in a particular region. Perennials are generally classified according to the hardiness zones in which they can grow. For those not familiar with NC geography, the extreme low temperatures generally follow the [physiographic regions](#) of North Carolina - Mountains, Piedmont, and Coastal Plain

Digital Connectivity

- Phone based and internet resources are increasingly important to almost all farmers. Check your phone connection with this [handy guide](#).

For Developing Landowner-Tenant Relationships and Crafting Lease Agreements

Do your best to understand expectations and desires the landowner currently has with regard to the property, specifically farming practices, restrictions on activities / livestock, and infrastructure modifications / improvements.

Discussions with landowner and prior tenants can yield valuable information and save you time later by obtaining information on organic certification records, fencing and water systems, building blueprints, hunter access, wastewater system design plans and permits, Use Value tax program enrollment, as well as forest and field management plans. They can also share knowledge and associated management for any frost pockets without air drainage, wet areas, high spots exposed to excessive winds, erosion, and dry areas.

What, if any, are the approximate costs needed for upfitting the farm for your operation? Know what the landowner is willing to pay for and what the tenant obligations are. If you will be investing in improvements, have clear discussions on whether you will be compensated and once agreement is achieved be sure to include it in clear and specific language in the lease. Typically you are responsible for all routine maintenance that prevents abnormal deterioration, while the landowner is responsible for all major overhauls, replacements, or repairs to structures or other infrastructure. Be sure to consult with builders, irrigation specialists, and other experts to get appraisals, quotes and advice on any infrastructure improvements.

Discuss any farming practices or infrastructure modifications that you suspect might raise concern, such as constructing a tool shed or immovable chicken coop or establishing a composting or odor-prone livestock operation in proximity to residences, and propose sites for their implementation.

Take the time to review [leasing considerations](#) from the perspective of the landowner and the farmer. An online [Farm Lease Builder](#) or [Build a Lease Tool](#) may also be useful.

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