



FIRST YEAR FARMING
UProoted Farm | Chatham, MI

In farming, context is everything.



THE FARMER

- Background & Skills
- Financials
- Philosophy & Purpose
- Personality & Temperament
- System choices

THE LAND

- Climatic conditions
- Elevation & terrain
- Soil chemistry & structure
- Existing assets
- Environmentally sensitive?

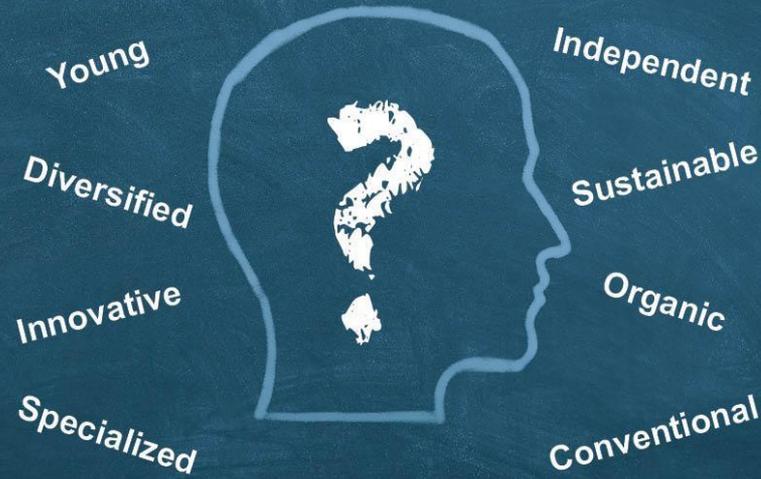
THE INFRASTRUCTURE

- Existing assets
- Season Extension
- Wash/Pack
- Irrigation
- Tools
- Machinery

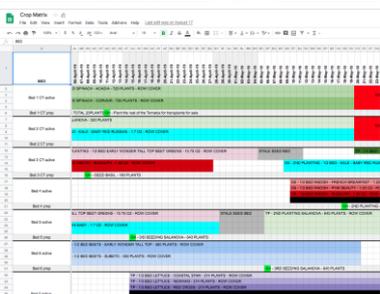
THE BUSINESS

- Sales
- Available Markets
- Marketing Strategy
- Cost

What does the future farmer look like?

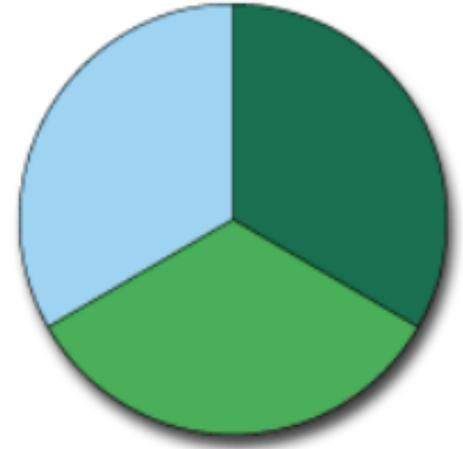


THE FARMER



THE FARMER

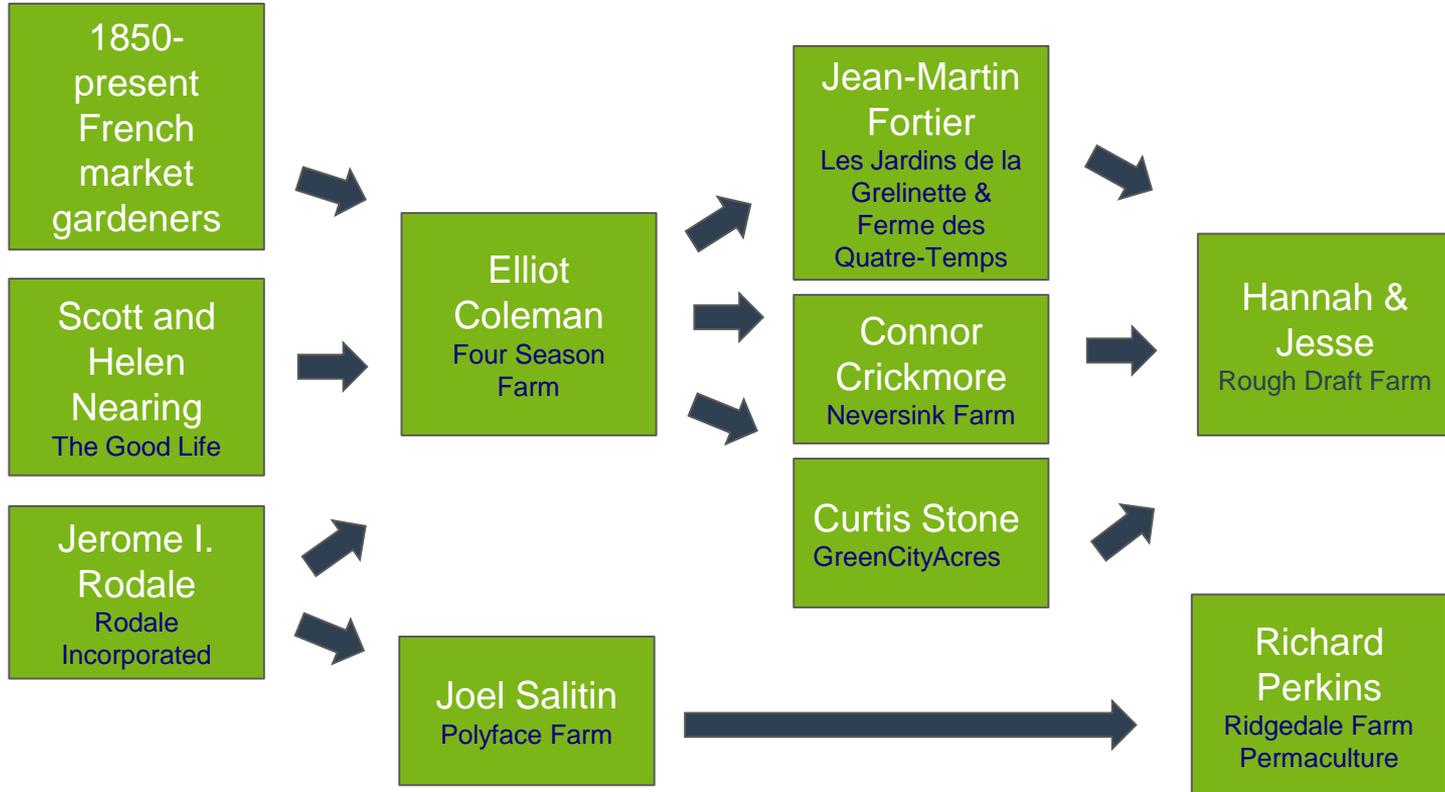
- **1/3 Mechanic**
 - Repair & Upkeep
 - Infrastructure Construction
- **1/3 Grower**
 - Cropping systems
 - Horticultural practices
 - Field work
- **1/3 Business Manager**
 - Business planning
 - Logs & Data collection
 - Marketing
 - Certification & Inspection



What type of farmer do you want to be?

- Conventional vs Organic Agriculture?
- Regenerative Agriculture under Holistic Management
 - “a system of **farming** principles and practices that increases biodiversity, enriches soils, improves watersheds, and enhances ecosystem services. **Regenerative Agriculture** aims to capture carbon in soil and aboveground biomass, reversing current global trends of atmospheric accumulation.”
- Permaculture
- Your personal philosophy, principals, and beliefs should dictate how you farm. *BUT...* Ideological possession and dogmatic thinking aren't good business strategies.

The Transfer of Small-Scale Farming Knowledge



Traits of a Successful Farmer

- Do you like hard manual labor?
- Are you organized and detail oriented?
- Are you conscientious and dependable?
- Can you power through hard, rainy, uncomfortable days?
- Can you be relaxed and adaptable when things get hard and don't go correctly?



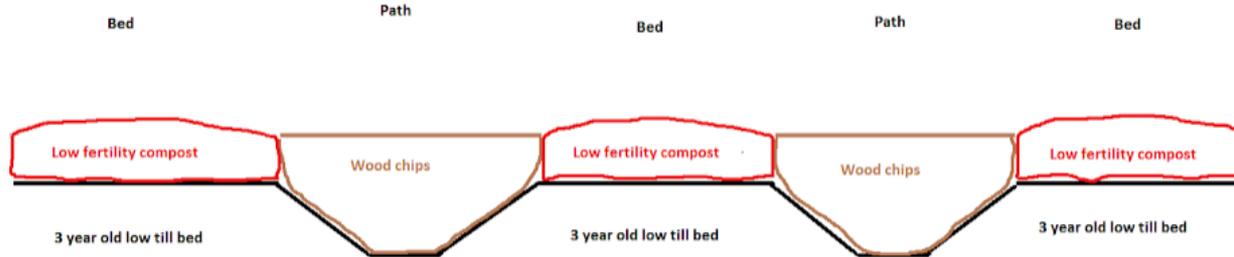
I am definitely not all these things all the time! But...skin in the game will keep you moving forward.

My Tillage System



Moving Towards No Till Farming

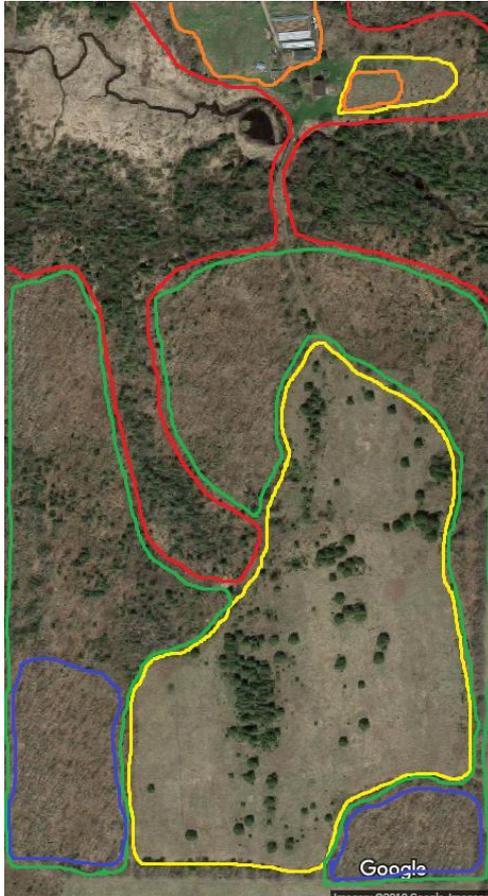
Richard Perkins - Ridgedale Farm and Permaculture - is THE example.





THE LAND

Your Land Base & Intentional Design



Climate

Hindrance or Opportunity?



Anthropogenic Soil

- Intensive cropping systems do not reflect natural plant/soil relationships.
- What does tillage do to the soil?
- Where do the nutrients for our crops come from?
- What tools can facilitate the outcomes we are after?
- Management of soil structure vs soil chemistry is different.

Fertility

Intensive systems have high nutrient demands on the soil. You can make this up out of the fertilizer bag, or you can use compost.



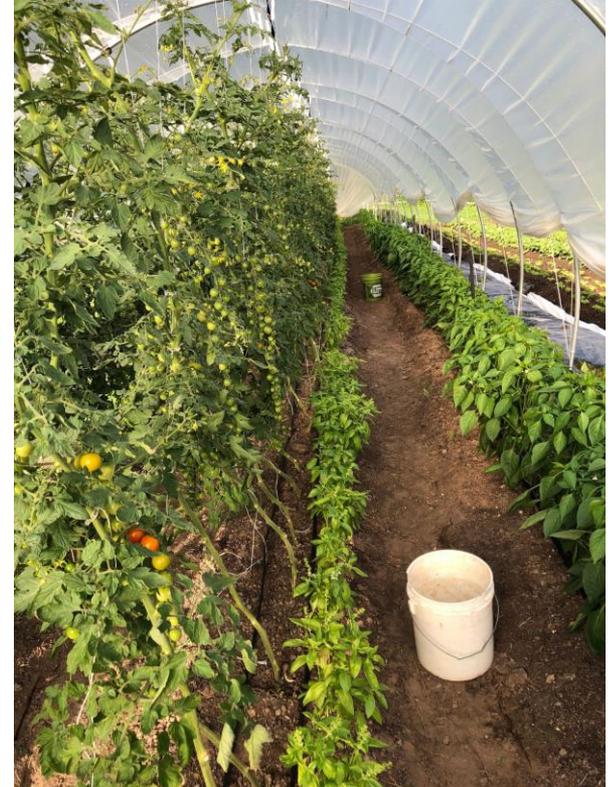


THE INFRASTRUCTURE

What do you need? What do you want?



- **Propagation House**
 - Starting warm weather crops this way is a must in northern climates.
- **Caterpillar Tunnel or Greenhouse**
 - First to market with a valuable crop is great for the bottom line and rewarding personally.
 - Extending an already short season of sales is very important to a farm business in northern climates.



What do you need? What do you want?

- **Wash/Pack Area**
 - Outdoor root washing station
 - Washing/rinsing basins
 - Greens spinning/Drying
 - Walk in coolers or the alternatives

* More important than most people realize. I would consider this an absolute must and consider building it before you plant anything.



What do you need? What do you want?



- **Basic Irrigation**
 - Overhead
 - Drip
 - Water source?
 - Dry farming



What do you need? What do you want?

- **Tools**

- Tillage
- Cultivation
- Irrigation
- Seed Starting
- Seeding
- Transplanting







THE BUSINESS

Starting a farm is expensive! ...what can you do away with?

Considerations

- Buy, rent or borrow land?
- Off farm income?
- Infrastructure
- Tools
- Seed, fertility inputs
- Administrative costs



What does all this cost?

Item	Low Estimate	High Estimate
Walk Behind Tractor	\$8,000	\$10,000
Wash Pack Shed	\$500	\$10,000
Propagation House	\$2,000	\$10,000
Greenhouse or Caterpillar Tunnel	\$2,000	\$20,000
Tools	\$200	\$3,000
Estimated Totals:	\$12,700	\$53,000

These are just the basics. Detailed analysis of your personal finances, one time, and annual costs needs to be done.

Sales

Once you have a product to sell, you still have to sell it! How do you know how to price your products?



Potential Sales Outlets:

- Direct to Consumer
- Wholesale
 - Restaurants
 - Grocery Stores
- CSAs



Marketing

- People choose what to eat with their eyes. Make it beautiful, pile it high, then watch it fly. The true evaluation of quality comes after the purchase in the kitchen and storage.



Marketing

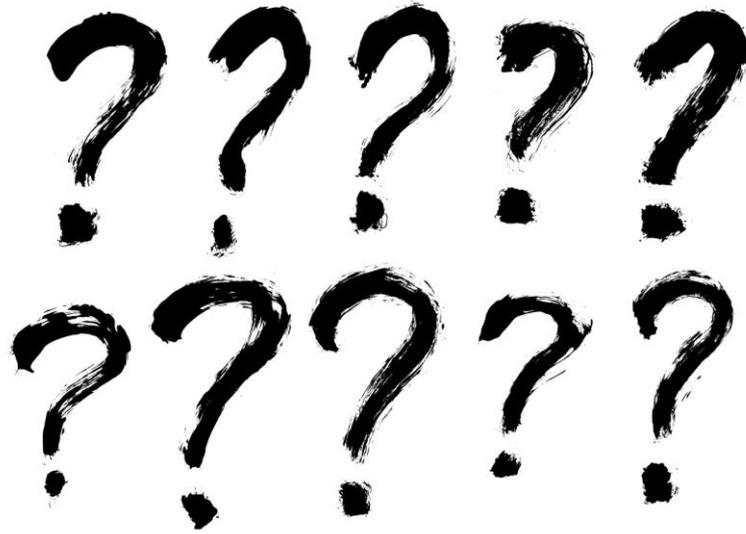
- Logo
- Brand Recognition
- Labelling & Packaging
- Website
- Blog
- Social Media
- Business Cards



Key Takeaways

- Comparing farms and farmers is almost never apples to apples. Context is everything.
- Every prospective farmer has roughly 45 years to get it right.
- Much of what I'm describing is knowledge incorporated from others and applied to my first year experience.
- Define your weakness so your systems CAN mitigate them.
- Make an honest assessment of your context to find a path forward with the highest probability of success!
- A farm must make enough money to support the farmer!





Questions?

Website: www.uprootedfarm-mi.com

Email: uprootedfarm.mi@gmail.com

Phone: 321-794-4130

Instagram: @uprootedfarm

Facebook: @UprootedFarm

Reach out!