



AGRICULTURAL NEW JERSEY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY EDUCATION



NJAS FARM BASED LEARNING NETWORK

The proposed new NJ Farm-Based Learning Network (NJ FBLN) initiative is designed to supersede the longstanding NJAS Learning Through Gardening program by significantly expanding upon that program's reach, scope of topics, and content variety. Additionally, the NJ FBLN is designed to shift the focus of learning from school-based garden beds to farm-centered activities both through on-site and virtual learning opportunities.

Network Participation Eligibility

In order for a farm to become part of the NJ FBLN, the farm:

- Membership in the NJAS
- Must currently offer or seek to offer formal farm-centered learning opportunities to children, youth, and/or adults through on-site and/or virtual means
- May also offer agritourism/agritainment opportunities; however, specific learning opportunities* must also be provided.

Learning opportunities are defined as those activities that engage children, youth, and/or adults that include established goals and learning objectives specifically addressing an aspect or aspects of agriculture represented by the NJ FBLN farm.

Learning Delivery Formats

Learning programs may be delivered in-person and on-site at network farms or may be videoed or live-streamed from network farm sites.

- Short, one-time seminars* and/or workshops**
- Series of related seminars and/or workshops
- Full-day workshops/classes
- Week-long classes
- Semester classes (e.g., 4-week or 8-week summer programs)

*Seminars are typically presentation driven, i.e., led by an instructor in a lecture format.

**Workshops are instructor-led, but are not in lecture format; rather, workshops involve direct hands-on learning in some capacity by participants.



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NJAS Coordinating Role

- The NJAS will serve as the NJ FBLN platform with the intention of connecting and coordinating farms, teachers, & students
- All NJ FBLN participation, and requests to participate, will be managed through the NJAS.
- NJAS will be a central repository of best practices for farm-centered learning for children, youth, and adults in the non-farming public, and will make best practices information and resources available through online forums to the NJ FBLN participating farms.
- Future consideration: NJAS as possible lead in creating a mid-Atlantic region FBLN collaborative.

Farm Participation Benefits

- Increased understanding by the public of the critical role that agriculture plays in the health of New Jersey's economy, environment, and population.
- Increased visibility of the nature and importance of the work of individual farms in diverse communities throughout the state.
- Access to information on best practices in farm-centered learning programs
- Access to information on best practices in business model development for farm-centered learning programs
- Contribute to influencing and defining agricultural education in New Jersey for the non-farming public
- Assistance in identifying ag educators for engagement on farms to expand or begin farm-centered learning opportunities

Target Audiences for Learning Opportunities

- NJ schools, grades pre-K to 12, with a focus on K-8
- Community organizations representing youth and adult groups (e.g., youth scouts, senior citizen groups, faith-based groups, etc.)



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Agricultural Areas to be Covered

Participation in the NJ FBLN will be open to all New Jersey farming operations, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Grain crop farming
- Livestock farming
- Fruit and vegetable farming
- Nursery and landscape operations
- Culinary and medicinal herb farming
- Urban farming operations

Research to Support Initial Planning

- Conduct a survey initially limited to current NJAS member farms, NJAS board of directors (farm representatives), and gleaning farm partners to determine which farms:
 - Currently operate formal learning programs meeting one or more of the learning delivery formats above
 - Seek to develop and implement formal learning programs meeting one or more of the learning delivery formats above

Preliminary Workshop Launch

- Schedule and announce an initial half-day or full-day introductory/launch workshop for up to 50 prospective farm network participants
 - First come, first served basis
 - Fee of \$50 to attend
 - Workshop to be hosted on a NJ farm that currently operates an agricultural education program; the workshop will be hosted by the NJAS and delivered by
 - representatives of the FBLN
 - Workshop to be recorded for broader sharing among interested farms (workshop materials to be made available online for access by those who cannot attend)
- Post-workshop survey of participants to determine interest, questions, etc.
- Establish a separate website, Facebook page, and unique email address for NJ FBLN, hosted by the NJAS to target attention to network participants



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Expand Outreach to Determine NJ FBLN Participation Interest

Following collection and assessment of workshop participant survey responses, the following steps will be implement:

- Plan details of NJ FBLN initiative, integrating survey feedback to revise initiative as necessary and appropriate.
- Develop and release the survey to a broader segment of the New Jersey farming sector.
- Develop an application and application process to request participation in the NJ FBLN, and a review/approval process for participation
- Develop preliminary GIS network model for visual impact.