

SMART Goals Information Sheet

Goals are targets to help you get where you want to go. They are important both to personal fulfillment and farm or ranch business success.

The best goals are based on your values and advance your vision. They should be simple, yet specific enough to explain what you want and need. They should cover the 5 Ws: Who, What, Where, When, Why, and also the How of what you want to achieve. Example: “To inherit my grandfather’s vegetable farm in Ohio and make it financially viable by diversifying markets and increasing crop yields so that in 5 years I can farm full time and still support my family.”

SMART goals are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-focused, and Time bound.

S = Specific. Example: To take over my grandfather’s vegetable farm in Ohio and produce a seasonally diverse mix of fruits and vegetables and sell both to wholesale markets and direct-retail through farmers markets and local schools.

M = Measurable. Example: To earn an annual gross income of \$250,000 by Year 5 by increasing crop yields 10 percent and sales by \$75,000.

A = Attainable. Example: To earn an annual gross income of \$250,000 by increasing annual revenues by \$15,000/year over the next 5 years by improving soil health and boosting sales by adding new farmers’ markets and a local school or university to the marketing portfolio.

R = Results-Focused.* Example: Increase crop yields by 2%/year increase by improving soil health through organic practices and boost sales by \$15,000/year by adding 3 farmers’ markets and securing a contract with a to local school or university.

T = Timely (or Time-bound). Example: To increase sales by \$75,000 by adding 1 farmers’ market in years 1, 2, and 3, and having a contract with a to local school or university by year 4.

Setting SMART goals may seem challenging at first. You have to think about what you really want to achieve and what it will take to get there. But with practice, it will become second nature and help you stay focused on the things that will help you get where you want to go.

* Some people use Realistic or Relevant for the “R” in SMART goals.



This resource is part of American Farmland Trust’s [Farm Transfer Toolkit](#) which is available on AFT’s [Farmland Information Center website](#). The toolkit walks agricultural landowners through key steps in a farm transfer process. It contains information, worksheets and other tools to help users set goals, assess their finances, communicate with stakeholders, and work with professionals to finalize decisions and implement a transfer plan.