The University of Minnesota Extension Small Farms Team developed this survey in order to better understand the needs and interests of our audience. The goal of this effort is to utilize the feedback to strategically plan educational events and team activities on a local and statewide level.

About the survey
- Online survey consisted of 28 core questions with 314 survey responses. Survey was sent out to online distribution lists, local educator contacts, and social media.

Demographics
- Largest population is comprised of those 51 years of age or older, predominantly female (58%), and nearly all Caucasian (95%).
- Responses were from all parts of Minnesota, but primarily from the metro, Southeast, and South Central Minnesota.
Farm acreage

- There is a wide distribution of acreage; most farm less than 5 acres, however, the second highest proportion of respondents farm more than 100 acres.

Production system interest

- The majority are interested in organic and/or integrated crop and livestock production.
- Other systems include sustainable, natural, aeroponics, aquaponics, aquaculture, hydroponics, season extension, and perennial/restoration agriculture.

Farm income and business

- For nearly 50%, income from the farm contributes 10% or less to their household income. However, nearly 20% report farm income contributes to over half of their total income.
- The proportion of those who have and have not performed business planning is nearly equal, 41% vs 46%. Only 10% have no plans to increase their income.

Challenges to farm business

- Lack of capital is by far the biggest challenge followed by general production issues, marketing, and labor.

Increasing income

- Respondents plan to increase income through production improvements. Other plans include increasing scale of their business and to reduce costs and input expenditures.
Crop production

- Vegetables, small fruits, and pasture rank the highest among current production.
- Honey, tree fruit, and small fruit rank highest among products respondents would like to produce.

Livestock production

- Layer and broiler poultry production, followed by beef production rank highest in current production.
- Bees, followed by laying hens, broilers, and beef cattle rank highest among livestock respondents would like to produce.
Most sell their products directly off the farm or at farmers’ markets. Just over 20% do not market anything at this time.

**Topics of interest**

- In the area of business; grant and loan opportunities, general marketing, bookkeeping/financial planning, and starting a farm enterprise were the topics of most interest.
- In the area of crop production; soil fertility, season extension, weed control, and perennial crop care were the topics of most interest.
- In the area of livestock production; pasture management is by far the topic of most interest, followed by animal health, nutrition, and fencing.
Reaching audience

- In-person meetings are preferred, followed by farm tours, online courses/lessons, and webinars.
- Winter months are preferred for workshops and meetings.

Preferred communication

- E-mail, websites, and direct mail are preferred methods for communicating news and announcements.

Our team’s plan

- The responses help us focus our efforts on what small farmers in Minnesota are doing and where help is needed.
- Programming will not be strictly limited to areas of the state with majority responses.
- The University of Minnesota Extension Small Farms Team can’t cover everything in all locations, but improving our development and distribution of online resources and newsletter should assist many small farms.
- To connect with a Small Farms Team member in your area, visit our members’ page here: [http://www.extension.umn.edu/food/small-farms/program-team/](http://www.extension.umn.edu/food/small-farms/program-team/)
- Sign up for the newsletter to receive small farm updates: [http://www.extension.umn.edu/food/small-farms/](http://www.extension.umn.edu/food/small-farms/)