Developing a Mission Statement

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A Mission Statement

• Sets goals and standards.
• Looks at the future and asks what kind of business do I want?
• Is a source of inspiration.
• Provides clear decision-making criteria.
Questions to ask to help develop a clear company *vision*:

- What values do I hold that I will not compromise?
- What characteristics do I want to portray to people?
- What principles do I stand for?
- How do I want to be seen or thought of when I interact with people?
- What do I want in life?
The **Mission**: 

- Focuses on the firm’s present.
- Lists broad goals.
- Why does the firm exist?
- What is its purpose?
- What does the firm do?
- Why does it do it?
- For whom does it do it?
- It identifies the company’s products, services, and customers.
A Mission Statement:

• Focuses less on what activities happen on the farm and more on what the business will accomplish for its customers, employees, and owners.
• Describes what consumer need will be filled.
• How will the firm’s products and services do this better than the competition -- Customer Value Proposition.
Market-driven vs. Production-driven

• In less competitive times, managers produced high-quality products and then found a market for them.
• Now, firms must first identify a market need and then grow products that satisfy that need, at a price customers are willing to pay and will still return a profit to the business.
A mission statement

• Should be short enough so people can easily remember it.
• Answers:
  – Why am I here?
  – Where am I going?
  – How can we beat or avoid competition?
A mission statement

- Can unify the people involved in the farm around a common direction and purpose.
- Is the foundation or measuring stick for making decisions.
- Highlights the unique philosophy and set of circumstances of the farm whether it is:
  - A production method, such as organic farming
  - A specific commodity such as livestock or vegetable farming.
  - A target market such as local or high-end consumers.
- Uses the unique circumstances of the farm to craft the “who, what, why and how’s” that ultimately help develop a farm business plan.
- Is a short concise statement that describes the core purpose of a business.
Uncle Steve’s Farm

**Description:** Uncle Steve’s farm is located in beautiful Hunterdon County. The farming operation consists of beef cattle raised for sale to various customers in New Jersey. Steve is dedicated to the ethical treatment of his animals and is a strong believer in organic production.

**Uncle Steve’s Farm Mission Statement:** Uncle Steve’s Farm is dedicated to raising animals in an environmentally sustainable fashion with the strictest attention to animal health and comfort. These practices ensure a superior quality organically raised beef product for our customers and a picturesque healthy environment for our neighbors.
Mrs. Greenjeans Greenhouse

**Description:** Mrs. Greenjeans Greenhouse is a small greenhouse business located in a fairly rural area in Anywhere, USA. Mary Wilson, the manager and owner of the greenhouse, went back to college after her children were in school to earn a B.S. degree in horticulture. Mary recently bought the business from Bill Smith who had reduced production to only bedding plants in the spring. Mary plans to produce bedding plants, but to also expand production to include poinsettias, hanging baskets, perennials, and garden mums to have crops almost year-round. This will improve cash flow, keep customers coming back for products all year, and help keep the same employees most of the year. She will produce her own plugs and rooted cuttings in the winter so that she can ensure the top quality demanded by the retail garden center market.

**Mrs. Greenjeans Greenhouse’s Mission Statement:** Mrs. Greenjeans Greenhouse will produce and distribute unique high-quality greenhouse products to serious gardeners within a 200-mile radius around Anywhere, USA. We will pursue continued market penetration through a commitment to quality and value.
**Mission Statement Worksheet**

What type of farm business do you have?

- Livestock farm
  - Species ____________________
- Grain farm
  - Type ____________________
- Forage or hay farm
  - Type ____________________
- Vegetable farm
  - Type ____________________
- Nursery
  - Type ____________________
- Greenhouse
  - Type ____________________
- Tree fruit
  - Type ____________________
- Diversified Operation
  - Describe ____________________
- Other
  - ____________________________________________
Mission Statement Worksheet

Select the words or phrases that describe your farming practices.

– Organic
– Natural
– Sustainable
– Conventional
– Hormone free
– Grass fed
– Biodynamic
– Other
Mission Statement Worksheet

What words or phrases best describe the principles or values that guide your choice of farming practices?

- Sustainable
- Green
- Local
- Environmental stewardship
- Profitable
- Fresh
- Healthy
- Natural
- Rural heritage
- Efficient
- Community involvement
- Quality
- Other
Mission Statement Worksheet

What words or phrases best describes how you sell your products/services?

- Community Supported Agriculture (C.S.A)
- Direct retail sales
- Wholesale
- Farmers market or tailgate market
- Pick-your-own
- Experiential (agritourism or entertainment)
- Other _____________________________
Mission Statement Worksheet

What words or phrases best describes your customer base?

– Local consumers
– Retail outlets
– Restaurants
– Specialty crop consumer Describe

– Ethnic markets Describe
Mission Statement Worksheet

What words or phrases best describe what you want your farm to be known for?

- Family atmosphere
- Freshness
- Humane
- Friendly service
- High quality
- Superior quality
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Progressive
- Welcoming
- Picturesque
- Other ________
Mission Statement Worksheet

Briefly describe what makes your farm unique?

___________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Develop a mission statement using the words or phrases that you selected above.

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AgPlan – Free Business Plan

- Center for Farm Financial Management, University of Minnesota AgPlan: [https://www.agplan.umn.edu/](https://www.agplan.umn.edu/)
- New users need to "Register" (under the Login button).
- Also see: Rutgers Farm Management Website To Market, To Market [http://aesop.rutgers.edu/~farrmgmt](http://aesop.rutgers.edu/~farrmgmt)