

# Farmland Commons Model

## Farm Management Plan

### Summary

This document frames the management practices and future plans for [FARM NAME], located in [LOCATION] (the “Farm”) managed by [NAME OF FARMER] (the “Farmer”) operating on lands held by [NAME OF COMMONS] (the “Commons”, together with Farmer referred in this document as “we”, “us” and “ours”). The Farm operates on the principles of sustainability, environmental stewardship, and community engagement as more specifically outlined in the *Shared Agreements for Land-Based and Equity Practices*. This plan provides a high-level overview of the farm's layout, commitment to regenerative farming, and overall approach to land management.

### Farm Overview

#### Base Rent

Farmer and the Commons have engaged in constructive dialogue regarding rental practices and agree to the following “Base Rent”: \$XX per year starting on START DATE till END DATE.

- Base Rent takes into consideration (1) the demographics and experience of the Farmer including whether they are a [for-profit/non-profit] entity, (2) business stage and viability, (3) condition of land and farm (as applicable), and (4) Stewardship Contribution (as defined below). Additionally, Base Rent is based on [INSERT ADDITIONAL FACTORS FOR BASE RENT].
- Equipment [is/is not] a part of the formula for the Base Rent.
- Base Rent will not exceed the sum of (1) property taxes, (2) the Common's insurance requirements and (3) any other pre-approved costs agreed on by Farmer and the Commons.
- We agree to review the Base Rent at least every 3/XX years. Important factors for us in determining the Base Rent include but are not limited to:
  - [INSERT TRIGGERS FOR REEVALUATION]
- If any of the following events occur before the 3/XX year time period, we agree to come together to reevaluate the Base Rent within 30 days of the event occurring:
  - Ecological and human-caused disasters;
  - Increases or changes in applicable tax rate or insurance requirements;
  - Farmer and Farm Family health and life-crisis events; and

- [ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT FACTORS].

## **Stewardship Contribution**

A “**Stewardship Contribution**” is a tracked commitment to return more to the Land than is taken. Both the Farmer and the Commons have Stewardship Contributions.

Farmer’s Stewardship Contribution can include such things as:

- Improved soil organic matter through rotational grazing, composting, soil amendments, crop rotations, cover crops, and/or other organic, regenerative, biodynamic methods;
- Increased plant diversity;
- Increased water retention on farm by following wise practices for sustainable water use;
- Improved habitat diversity such as increased food, pollen, shelter and habitat availability, transition zones;
- Reserving 10% or more the Land as a Cultural and/or Conservation easement;
- Farming endangered breeds/varieties;
- Creating public-facing programming through guided tours, cultural events or other programming; and
- Implementing programmatic activities that create land access for Farmer’s local communities.

Farmer will share the Farmer’s Stewardship Contribution with the Commons annually using one or more of the following reporting criteria: (1) in-person or virtual tour, (2) by photos and corresponding narrative, or (3) by soil/biological testing. Farmer and the Commons will coordinate

The Commons’ Stewardship Contribution can include such things as:

- Making investments in farm infrastructure;
- Contribution of capital secured by the Commons;
- Working with Farmer to receive grants related to improving or stewarding the Land; or
- Any other allowable activity under Section [501(c)(2)/(c)(25)] of the Internal Revenue Code.

Unless otherwise agreed upon by the Commons and Farmer, all Stewardship Contributions made with the funds or assets of the Commons will remain part of the Commons.

Both the Base Rent and Stewardship Contribution will align with the Terms of the *Shared Agreements for Equity Practices*.

## Land Use and Layout

The Farm spans [TOTAL ACREAGE] acres, with diverse land use to support our vision of regenerative and integrated farming. The farm is divided into several key areas that may include the following and may overlap and/or have distinct boundaries:

- **Crops with Tillage and Cultivation:** Areas designated for crop cultivation are spread across [SPECIFIC ACREAGE OF TILLAGE CROPS] acres. The Farmer rotates crops and uses cover cropping to maintain soil health and reduce pest pressure and disease, limit soil compaction and mineral depletion focusing on a range of produce and fiber crops to support local food systems.
- **Crops with No Tillage:** Areas designated for crop cultivation are spread across [SPECIFIC ACREAGE OF NO TILLAGE CROPS] acres.
- **Forest:** Approximately SPECIFIC ACREAGE OF FOREST acres of our Land are forested. This area is managed for biodiversity, wildlife habitat and food, and sustainable timber harvesting. The Farmer and Commons will agree on any timber harvest that shall include a forest management plan in consultation with a licensed forester (1) exceeding 10% of the total Forest Acreage or 2 acres of the total Forest Acreage and (2) when any areas involved have slopes over 20%, and/or contain seasonal or perennial wetlands and/or sensitive habitat. However, if Farmer needs to harvest timber due to safety, disease, blight or insects or as incidentally part of the farm operations, Farmer may do so without the consent of the Commons but will provide the Commons with notice of the harvest as soon as reasonably practicable.
- **Grazing:** Livestock grazing occurs on SPECIFIC ACREAGE FOR GRAZING acres, where Farmer practices rotational grazing to ensure animal health and minimize land degradation (factoring in slopes, wetness, ground coverage, etc). Farmer has the authority to determine loafing and sacrifice areas factoring in whole farm environmental health. Farmer shall also have authority to determine transition of land use and practices for such.
- **Riparian Buffers:** Along NAME OF WATER BODIES as well as all seasonal wetlands/waterways, sinkholes, flood zones and areas of high ground water tables, Farmer will establish riparian buffers to protect water quality and enhance habitat connectivity. As applicable, Farmer will protect riparian areas from livestock and tillage activities.

Maps are included in **Appendix A** to provide a visual representation of these areas.

## Sustainable Practices

The Farm is committed to the following sustainable practices, with consideration for balance to manage farm for environmental sustainable production

- **No Harmful Chemical Use:** Farmer will not use synthetic herbicides, pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, or any other life-degrading compounds on the Land, even if they are permitted by the US government under Organic certification standards. This commitment supports soil health, water quality, and biodiversity.
- **Soil and Land Management:** To prevent soil erosion, overgrazing, and compaction, Farmer will implement strategies such as cover cropping, careful tillage, and careful management of livestock density.
- **Additional Specific Practices:** In addition, the Farmer is committed to practices highlighted in the *Shared Agreement for Land-Based Practices*.

## Compliance and Collaboration

The Commons has identified the following existing encumbrances on the Land:

[INSERT EXISTING ENCUMBRANCES AND COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS.]

Should additional management plans be developed, and agreed upon by Farmer, through grants, certifications, or other partnerships (e.g., organic certification, NRCS programs), the Farmer and the Commons will review and integrate these additional management plans into our overarching farm management strategy.

## Future Development Plans

As part of our shared commitment to farm growth and diversification, the following are options that could be explored: food farm-to-fork integration, farmer housing, community outreach, engagement, and education, through the development of:

- **Buildings and Infrastructure:** Plans for new or improved facilities for farm operational needs, affordable housing, education, processing, or storage will meet town, county, city, state, and federal requirements, be insurable and be made according to the form provided in **Appendix B**. This includes potential sites for wells and water system improvements.
- **Community Engagement and Education:** The Commons and Farmer will coordinate outreach programming for purposes such as engagement, education, fundraising, and storytelling.

- **Repair Cap:** The “**Repair Cap**” is [\$XX]. This means that Farmer will make repairs up to the Repair Cap. For repairs or maintenance that exceed the Repair Cap, Farmer and the Commons will work towards a plan to ensure safe and timely management of all repairs.

This Management Plan reflects our dedication to sustainable farming practices, environmental stewardship, and community involvement. We are committed to adapting and evolving our practices to meet the challenges of modern agriculture while maintaining the integrity of the Land. We agree to meet every 3 years to review this Management Plan, but may meet sooner if requested by either of us.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

On behalf of the Commons: \_\_\_\_\_

[NAME OF COMMONS REP, TITLE]

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

On behalf of the Farmer: \_\_\_\_\_

[NAME OF FARMER]

**Appendix A**

Map of the Farm

*This map includes present boundaries, buildings/infrastructure, existing encumbrances, land use areas, ecological habitats and **[INSERT OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION]***

**Appendix B**  
**[NAME OF THE FARM]**  
Farm Improvement Request Form

**Improvement Details**

1. Area of Improvement:

- Dwelling (e.g., home)
- Structural (e.g., barns, greenhouses, storage facilities or processing buildings)
- Water Management Systems (e.g., irrigation systems, water harvesting structures, drainage improvements)
- Energy Efficiency (e.g., solar panels, wind turbines, biogas digesters)
- Livestock Facilities (e.g., livestock shelters, fencing, manure management systems)
- Safety and Accessibility (e.g., farm roads/paths, safety upgrades)
- Environmental Stewardship Projects (e.g., riparian buffers, windbreaks, pollinator habitats)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Description of Suggested Improvement**

2. Please provide a detailed description of the proposed improvement, including what it is, how it should be implemented, any off-site, sub-surface, and associated improvements needed, timeline for implementation and the specific area on the Land or process it relates to:

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3. Briefly explain the goal or objective of this improvement. What problem does it solve, or what benefit does it bring to the Farm?

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4. Please detail all impacts to land and to farm and how they will be mitigated.

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5. If possible, outline any steps you believe are necessary to implement this improvement. Include any resources, tools, or changes needed.

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6. Are you requesting funding or other support from the Commons?

- Yes, as a Stewardship Contribution  
 Yes, but not as a Stewardship Contribution  
 No

If yes, please provide details of desired support:

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7. Estimated Costs (if known): Please provide an estimate of the costs associated with this improvement, including materials, labor, and other resources: \_\_\_\_\_



8. Estimated Funding Source (if known): Examples include debt, grants, farm operations fund, the Commons, etc.: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Discuss the potential impact of this improvement on the farm's operations, stewardship, community engagement, or other relevant areas.

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10. Please share needed, recommended, and optional permits, approvals, codes and standards.

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11. Please add any additional comments or information that could help in evaluating this improvement.

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## Farm Equity

12. A “**Farmer Equity Calculation**” is an agreed-upon method for determining the value of the Improvement for the purposes of calculating and tracking the amount of equity or value Farmer has invested in the Land. This can be done at the end of the Lease or while actively farming. Are you proposing this improvement have a Farmer Equity Calculation determined now?

Yes

No

If Yes, please select preferred method to calculate:

Market appraisal at time of completion with depreciation schedule;

Farm enterprise functional assessment appraisal at time of completion and within 2-years of lease termination or transfer to determine median;

Cost of construction with depreciation schedule; or

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

13. Please explain your rationale for your response to question 12 (whether yes or no) or any questions you have about this process here.

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**Feedback For Commons Use and Response**

Received By: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_

Review Status:  Approved  Pending  To Be Discussed

14. Comments/Feedback:

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**Farmer and Commons Follow-Up Actions:**

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