

15 farms around your town

A guide for the aspiring farmer with a big vision, from Cultivate Farms

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Start with your own farm vision

Every aspiring farmer starts with a vision of their own: the farm you want, the farming you'd run and the life you want around it. Get that down first, and our free planner and You Can Own a Farm will help you do it.

Then think bigger. One of the best ways to get your own farm is to hold the discussion for your region, so the farms around your town stay farming and come to you.

One aspiring farmer asking for one paddock is a favour, but a plan to keep a town's farms going is something a mayor, a landholder and a neighbour can all get behind. Nobody is going to hand you this, so it takes someone who lives there and wants it enough to drive it. This guide is for that person.

Why not hold the discussion for your region?





The farms are already there

Drive out of any town and look at the blocks that are leased out for a few sheep, lightly used or sitting quiet. Most are owned by people who are staying put, a farmer winding down or a family who bought for the life rather than the living.

They won't sell, and the land is too dear for an aspiring farmer to buy anyway. What a lot of them want is to see it farmed properly by someone serious, and that's the person they can't find.

It keeps falling over for one reason, which is that one small block can't pay a full time wage, so the good farmers go somewhere else. Put several of those blocks together and the numbers change.

Around any town there are more of these places than you'd think, and 15 is about the right number of farms for a community to aim for.

The farms aren't for sale. They're waiting for a farmer.

What 15 farms is

15 farms is a program for one community: 15 farms around one town, kept in local hands and farmed well, driven and owned by one aspiring farmer we back. Each farm comes in the way that fits it.

1. The 5 farms program. Small blocks close together, each family keeping its own title and house, farmed as a single operation so there's a full time living in it.
2. A sharefarm on its own. A farm big enough to carry a farmer by itself gets its own sharefarming agreement, made directly between the family and the farmer.
3. The Cultivate Trust. A retiring family places their land in, or locals come together to bring a farm in.
4. Farm Forge. How each farmer gets ready, from the one wanting a first farm to the one handing over.
5. The free guides and the planner. Every family and every farmer does their own plan first.
6. Open for Farming. Your mayor backs it, and a town hall gets the whole town talking.

So your 15 might be two groups of five, a few sharefarms alongside them and a farm a family places in the Trust. What matters is that every farm in it is farmed well, by a farmer with a real living.

Some farms join a group of five. Some stand on their own. All of them stay farming.

It takes one person

What ties it all together is one person. Every town that keeps its farms in local hands has someone who gets it, and for this vision that someone is you.

You don't need land, or the money to buy it. You need to care enough to start the conversation, keep it going when it stalls, and bring the right people to the table: the farmer ready to step back, the family who bought for the life, and the farmers who want to work it.

It has to be driven and owned by one person. A team helps you do the work, but one person carries the vision and keeps it moving, and we'll back that person the whole way.

Every town has someone like that. They just need backing.



Build the business around you

15 farms is a business, so set it up as one from the start. You own it and drive it, with a small team around you who each have a clear job.

1

You, as chair

It's your business. You hold the vision and the relationships, you're the face to the mayor, the landholders and the town, and you keep everyone pointed at the same goal.

2

A chief operating officer

They run the farming day to day across every farm, the stock, the gear, the rosters and the seasons, so each place is worked to its plan.

3

The farmers

Each one works their farms and earns their share, inside the business you build.

Getting the jobs clear early is what makes a landholder take you seriously. A family will sharefarm with one person who owns the business and someone running operations long before they'll hand it to a group of mates with a good idea.

You don't buy a paddock. You build the business that farms them all.

Where the confidence comes from

Families don't put their land into an aspiring farmer's hands on a handshake. They do it because someone they can hold to account is standing behind the deal, and that's Cultivate Farms. We give the confidence to everyone at the table, the families, you and your team, and the town, and we set up the structures it all runs on.

1

We check every farm and the whole deal

Before anyone signs.

2

We write a farm management plan with each family

And oversee the farming against it.

3

We set up and hold the structures

The sharefarming arrangements and the legals across everyone in it, and a report to each family every year.

4

The risk of the farmer is ours

If a farmer isn't up to it, that's ours to fix, and nobody is placed or changed on a family's farm without them.

Every family keeps its own title, and each side takes an agreed share of what the farm produces. We're never in the middle of the money.

Nobody can do this alone. We bring the pieces together and back the local who leads, and that's what lets a family say yes to an aspiring farmer they've only just met.

You bring the vision and the work. We bring the confidence.

Backing your vision

If you want us beside you setting it up, we'll back you in four stages. It is a paid service, one stage at a time, and we'll help you find and raise the funds for it.

1

Map it out

The plan for your town with you: which farms, the mix of groups of five and sharefarms, and the numbers.

2

Raise the funds

We help you find the backers to pay for the rest.

3

Get the conversation going

We run and promote the town hall with you, and find farms alongside you.

4

Set up the structures

Your business, with you as its owner, and each sharefarming arrangement as a farm comes in.

Get in touch and we'll go from there.



Get the conversation going

You won't be finding farms on your own. Once your plan is mapped out with us, we'll go and find farms too, while you find yours.

Run your own ads. Put your vision where landholders will see it, in the local paper, the town's Facebook groups and the noticeboard at the store, and ask anyone with land to get in touch with you. An ad can be as simple as this.

We're aspiring farmers with a vision to keep 15 farms around our town farming. If you've got land you'd love to see farmed well, get in touch.

From the first conversation you can tell a family how the deal works and that Cultivate Farms hold it. The moment they're interested, get in touch and we'll come and sit down with them, and from then on you can tell people we're behind your team.

Knock on the doors

1. Start a little black book. It's the people around the farms you could imagine working: the farmers winding down, the lifestyle owners, and the agents and accountants who know them. Get to know them before you ever talk about a farm.

2. Be useful before you're known. Feed the stock while they're away, fix a fence or put your hand up at shearing, because nobody forgets the person who turned up.

3. Write to them by hand. A letter about their own farm, from someone who wants to work it, doesn't go in the bin.

4. Bring your mayor in. Your council knows its farmland is going out of production and knows who owns every block, so ask them to back your vision and to invite us in.

5. Hold a town hall. We can run it with you and promote it, so the whole town hears the vision at once and anyone wondering about their own farm can put their hand up.

When one farm works, make sure the town hears about it, and the next one comes quicker.

You're not hunting one farm. You're building a list of fifteen.

Start this week

Build your plan

Start your own farm plan and your numbers on our free planner, and work them until they hold up.

Pick your town

The one you'd actually live in, and the farms you can see from it.

Build your team

One or two people around you who want the same thing, and agree early who runs operations.

Map it out with us

Get in touch and we'll map out the plan for your town with you, then we start finding farms too.

Run your first ad

Then be useful to someone before you ever talk to them about their farm.

Book the mayor

Fifteen minutes and your vision for the town, then talk to them about a town hall.

Enthusiasm gets you the first cup of tea. A plan and a team get you the farms.

You can build your plan at cultivatefarms.com/plan, and tell us about your town at cultivatefarms.com/community-champions.