

15 farms around your town

A guide for the retiring farmer with a vision for their district, from Cultivate Farms

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Start with your own plan

Every farmer stepping back starts with a plan of their own: how long you want to stay active in the farming, what you want for the farm, and what each person in your family wants. Get that down first, and our free planner and Ageing on Farm will help you do it.

Take it to your partner first, then your children if you have them. Open the wider conversation once your family has agreed.

Then think bigger. One farmer looking for the next farmer is one conversation, but a plan to keep a district's farms farmed is something a mayor, the landholders and the town can all get behind. It takes someone who lives there and wants it enough to drive it. This guide is for the farmer who wants to be that person.

Why not hold the discussion for your region?





The farms are already there

Look out from your own gate at the blocks around you: leased out for a few sheep, lightly used or sitting quiet. You know a lot of the people who own them, the farmers winding down like you and the families 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 our program for one community: 15 farms around one town, kept in local hands and farmed well, driven and owned by one person we back, whether that's an aspiring farmer building their own future or a retiring farmer building a legacy for their district. 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 and a farm a family places in the Trust, and your own farm can be one of them.

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 bring what an aspiring farmer takes years to build: the landholders' trust, the local knowledge, the gear and often the means. People take your call, and you already know the country.

It has to be driven and owned by one person. You step back from the daily work and keep leading, with a team doing the farming, and we'll back you the whole way.

You've farmed this district for years. Now you can keep it farmed.



Build the business around you

15 farms is a business, so set it up as one from the start. You own the business and lead it, with a small team doing the farming, each with a clear job. Every family keeps its own title.

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 aspiring farmers

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

Getting the jobs clear early is what lets you step back from the daily work, and who carries it on is part of the plan from the start.

You build the business that keeps them all farmed.

Where the confidence comes from

Even a farmer everyone knows needs a deal that holds. Families say yes because someone they can hold to account is standing behind it, and that's Cultivate Farms. We give the confidence to everyone at the table, the families, you and your team, the aspiring farmers 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 the aspiring farmer you bring in.

You bring the vision and the relationships. 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

Once your family has agreed, 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.

Once your family has agreed, put the word out. Your vision belongs where landholders and aspiring farmers will see it, in the local paper, the town's Facebook groups and the noticeboard at the store. An ad can be as simple as this.

I've farmed here for years, and I want to keep 15 farms around our town farming. If you've got land you'd love to see farmed well, or you want to farm it, 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.

Knock on the doors

1. Start with the people you know. The neighbours winding down, the families on lifestyle blocks, and the agents, accountants and agronomists who know them all.

2. Look closest for your farmers too. Someone who's helped on the place, a shearer, the aspiring farmer down the road. Meet them, check them and try a season together first.

3. Sit down at the kitchen table. A talk about their own farm, with a farmer they know, goes a long way.

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 keeping 15 farms around your town farming.

Start this week

Build your plan

Start your own plan for stepping back on our free planner, with Ageing on Farm beside you.

Talk to your family

Your partner first, then your children if you have them. If your partner disagrees, the plan waits.

Look out from your gate

Note the farms around yours that sit quiet or lightly used, and who you'd sit down with first.

Choose who runs the farming

Someone you trust to run operations, and agree it early.

Map it out with us

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

Book the mayor

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

You've spent a lifetime on your farm. Now keep your district farmed.

You can build your plan at cultivatefarms.com/plan, and see the whole program at cultivatefarms.com/15-farms.