

The Beginning Farmer Quiz: Do You Have What it Takes?

Excerpt from an article By Taylor Reid, www.beginningfarmers.org

As part of our *Beginning Farmers* Booth at Farm Aid I constructed a quiz that attempted to challenge people to think about ‘*do you have what it takes to be a farmer*’.

The exercise was meant to be fun and is based solely on my own observations of ‘successful’ farmers I have known. The questions are not a completely accurate judge of a person’s actual ability to succeed in farming. However, the questions are a good place to start to help you start thinking through the process.

Answer each question on a scale of 1-5 where:

1 = No, definitely not, this does not describe me at all

2 = This is not really, or at least not usually true about me

3 = I’m okay with this, but not totally, not all of the time, and/or not with everything.

4 = Yes, this is basically true of me in general

5 = Absolutely, this describes me perfectly

1) I prefer to work outside no matter what the weather is like.

Answer _____

2) I’m not scared of bugs, fungus, slime, or other things that a lot of people think are gross.

Answer _____

3) I am good at identifying what needs to be done and prioritizing tasks in order of importance.

Answer _____

4) I like financial planning, and am good at taking notes, crunching numbers and evaluating expenditures.

Answer _____

5) I am a good observer, and generally see details that a lot of other people miss.

Answer _____

6) I like tinkering, building things, and am mechanically inclined.

Answer _____

7) I am financially savvy, thrifty, and tend to make do with what I have rather than buying new things.

Answer _____

8) When I do buy things, I seldom regret the purchases I've made, and tend to use the things I buy.

Answer _____

9) I'm not easily frustrated, and don't get too upset when stuff doesn't go my way.

Answer _____

10) Making money is less important to me than accomplishment, and I don't mind not being 'rich' as long as I am happy with the work I do.

Answer _____

11) I don't tend to wallow in failure. Instead I simply consider it as a lesson and try to do it better the next time around.

Answer _____

12) I like hard, physical work, and don't mind being tired at the end of the day.

Answer _____

13) I am not easily bored, restless, or frustrated by mundane tasks.

Answer _____

14) I am good at giving direction, and explaining to others how I expect things to be done in a precise and tactful way.

Answer _____

15) I'm better at doing a lot of different things pretty than at doing only one or two things extremely well.

Answer _____

16) I don't mind being alone, and am happy working by myself for long periods of time.

Answer _____

17) When something breaks I usually try to fix it myself before taking it to a shop.

Answer _____

18) I tend to 'roll with the punches' and can accept when things don't go 'according to plan'.

Answer _____

19) I like to get up early, get going with my day, and don't tend to stop until I feel like I've accomplished all the things I wanted to get done.

Answer _____

20) I'm comfortable taking risks, and accepting that not everything is within my control.

Answer _____

21) I am constantly looking for new information, and trying to understand how to do the things I do more effectively and efficiently.

Answer _____

22) I don't need people to tell me I'm doing a good job to be satisfied with the things I accomplish.

Answer _____

23) I am a big picture person, and can see how lots of different small things are related to one another.

Answer _____

24) I'm a good long-term planner, but am comfortable changing my vision when necessary.

Answer _____

25) I love growing plants and/or taking care of animals, and am generally good at keeping them alive and healthy.

Answer _____

TOTAL SCORE _____

EVALUATING YOUR SCORE:

25-50:

Farming probably isn't right for you. But this means you should appreciate the people who do it, and try to support them by buying food from your local farmers at markets, roadside stands, or through community supported agriculture programs. The Farm and Market Directories Page on beginningfarmers.org (under Information Pages on the side bar to the left) can help you locate some near you.

51-70:

Farming might not be the best career choice for you, but maybe you should learn more about it by visiting some local farms and talking to farmers at your local markets. You also might really enjoy growing some of your own food in your backyard, or better yet, your front yard. And Please support your local farmers.

71-100:

Maybe you are ready to try growing food on a modest scale. You could probably handle a big garden, a few chickens, and maybe even a couple of goats or sheep for milk or meat to provide as much of your own food as possible. You might even try selling a little on the side, to see if you like it. [Beginningfarmers.org](http://beginningfarmers.org) has lots of resources to help with that. So start exploring the site to see what you are interested in and what steps you might take to get going.

100-115:

You seem to have what it takes, so maybe you should think about exploring farming as a career option. If you are interested in that, start slow by taking beginning farmer classes, signing up for an internship, or starting to produce crops or livestock on your own land or land owned by a relative or neighbor. You should definitely check out the resources available at beginningfarmers.org to find out more about what you'll need to get started.

116-125:

You are an exceptional candidate, and you definitely have what it takes to farm. If you choose to consider farming as a career, you should begin exploring the steps you will need to get going using the resource links on beginningfarmers.org, by talking with your local extension agent, through a training programs, an internship, or a farm job. Your choices about where and how to start of will depend on your current knowledge and resource level. And the folks at beginningfarmers.org would be happy to assist you with filling in the gaps and figuring out how to take the next (or first) step. Be careful to move slowly and deliberately in order to minimize your risk. Recognize that it won't be easy, and that success is not guaranteed. But if you are interested in going for it, it is likely that you will find farming rewarding and well suited to you.