



## TRAINING FACT SHEET

### What is SPIN-Farming?

SPIN-Farming is a production system designed for sub-acre land bases. It makes it possible to gross \$50,000+ from a half-acre. It can be practiced anywhere there are markets to support it. It's defining characteristics are:

- Sub-acre in scale
- Low capital intensive
- Environmentally friendly
- Located close to markets
- Entrepreneurially driven

### What are the advantages of SPIN-Farming?

Because it greatly reduces the amount of land needed for commercial crop production, SPIN-Farming removes one of the big barriers to entry – land. A land base can be assembled from backyards, front lawns and neighborhood lots. SPIN-Farming is therefore becoming a popular system for beginning farmers who need to get operational and profitable quickly.

SPIN-Farming is also a tool for governments, ngo's, community groups and farming organizations to relocalize food production, because to rebuild local food systems, at least two things are needed. First, because of increasing urbanization and suburbanization, the practice of food production needs to become compatible with densely populated areas, and SPIN provides an appropriately scaled farming system that integrates crop production into the built environment without conflict.

The second thing that is needed to rebuild local food capacity is more farmers. Lots of them. SPIN not only removes the big barrier to entry, it is also highly replicable. It is as close to a franchise-ready farming system as you can have while still respecting the creative and place-based nature of farming. SPIN's growing techniques are not, in themselves, breakthrough. What is novel is the way a SPIN farm business is run. Contained in the *SPIN-Farming Basics* guide is everything you'd expect from a good franchise: a business concept, marketing advice, financial benchmarks and a detailed day-to-day workflow. In standardizing the system, and creating a reproducible process, it really isn't any different from McDonald's. So while most other farming systems focus primarily if not exclusively on agricultural practices, SPIN emphasizes the business aspects and provides a financial and management framework for having the business drive the agriculture, rather than the other way around.

SPIN-Farming's systematized approach greatly reduces farm development and startup time, eliminates much initial trial and error, and increases the chances of success. By offering a non-technical, non-dogmatic, easy-to-understand and inexpensive-to-implement farming system, SPIN allows many more people to begin their farming careers, right where they live, using backyards and neighborhood lots. And with everyone hoeing the same row in the same way, collaboration is fostered more easily, and progress is accelerated.

### How is SPIN-Farming learned?

The SPIN-Farming learning series is available for purchase and immediate download online at [www.spinfarming.com](http://www.spinfarming.com). Thousands of self-starting new farmers have launched their businesses

by implementing the system and tapping into the the free online SPIN farmers support group for ongoing advice and expertise. Some of these SPIN farmers are now available for one day intensive SPIN training workshops, which provide an overview of the complete system and uses *SPIN-Farming® Basics* as the textbook.

The authors of the learning series, along with SPIN Corps members, are also beginning to collaborate with groups and organizations to develop SPIN-Farming training programs as part of larger economic and community development efforts. Visions, goals and resources vary. From for-profit businesses seeking to expand and diversify; to add-ons to non-profit or community organizations looking to become more self-reliant; to government-sponsored or institutionally-based programs, SPIN-Farming supports many visions. It's one mission is to make the farming profession accessible to many more people who would not otherwise think it was possible for them.

### **What makes SPIN-Farming training different from other training programs?**

Most other farmer training addresses growing, marketing and business, but SPIN-Farming training ties them altogether. Most other farming training pretends that the economic reality of farming is the same as it ever was. SPIN-Farming training is based on products that meet the needs of the growing number of urban and suburban customers and their desire for fresh, healthy food. Most other farming training teaches methods that conflict with urbanization, while SPIN-Farming shows how to leverage its advantages.

### **Who qualifies for SPIN-Farming?**

Success at SPIN-Farming is not determined by education level or prior work experience. What is needed is a deep and passionate interest in farming, which involves working outside long hours in all kinds of weather, a genuine talent for growing, a good business sense, physical fitness, and a willingness to invest years in learning, training and building a business. It should be noted that farming is not a job, and the aim of SPIN-Farming training is to produce independent small business owners.

### **Beyond farmer training...**

Growing the ranks of successful commercial urban and suburban farmers will take more than training in appropriately scaled farming systems. While SPIN-style farming greatly reduces the amount of land needed for crop production, land access remains a challenge. Municipalities need to establish formal procedures for prioritizing disposition of their significant banks of vacant and underutilized land for farming use. Policy commitments to commercial agriculture, technical support, startup financing and market development are also needed. While this may seem like a lot of moving parts, many resources in these areas already exist. It is a matter of re-focusing and redeploying them, and coordinating their delivery. This is the traditional role of incubators.

Urban and suburban farm incubators may require little or no logistical support from local governments beyond rhetorical pronouncements and reforming an ordinance or regulation or two to lift obstacles to commercially farming government land. The primary technical and financial support for setting up a farm incubator program can come from other stakeholders, such as local businesses, property owners, farm material and equipment manufacturers, citizens groups, churches, elementary and high schools, junior college vocational training programs, foundations, banks and other financing institutions, State and Federal agencies, and agriculture extension organizations. What is crucial is a lead agency that can identify, recruit and coordinate partners in the incubator and oversee and manage the delivery of services.

### **To start farmer training...**

To book SPIN-Farming workshops or to incorporate a training program into your initiatives, please contact Roxanne Christensen at [christensen@infocommercegroup.com](mailto:christensen@infocommercegroup.com) or 610-505-9189.

***SPIN-Farming Makes Agriculture Accessible to Anyone, Anywhere!***  
***www.spinfarming.com***