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Updated Farmers' Recordkeeping Toolkit: Instructions and Templates, Now Available

ST. PAUL, MINN. — Farmers' Legal Action Group (FLAG) is pleased to announce the release of an updated farmers' recordkeeping toolkit, *Recordkeeping Instructions and Templates for Small-Scale Fruit and Vegetable Growers*. The toolkit contains instructions and recording templates that are intended to be useful to small-scale fruit and vegetable farmers to track their farm activities.

Recordkeeping is essential to the successful operation of any farm. However, a good recordkeeping system is one that you, the user, are comfortable with and is suited for your farming business. Since the release of FLAG's first recordkeeping packet in 2012, many farmers have used our templates to record their production and business information. We recently made some changes to the monthly operating expense template to reflect how most small-scale farmers run their business.

We understand that farmers incur many expenses throughout the farming season, and it is more effective to record a final total for each type of expense. Instead of recording expenses on a monthly basis, the expense template is now a general table that lists expenses that are common and are typically deductible for small-scale fruit and vegetable farmers. Farmers can now use the Operational Expense template to record the total cost of each type of expense incurred during the season, at the end of calendar year.

Recordkeeping can help farmers track their farm income and expenses, assist them in preparing their income tax returns, and provide necessary information when farmers apply for farm operating loans and farm programs—such as Non-insured Crop Assistance Payment (NAP) with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

This recordkeeping toolkit was created for small-scale fruit and vegetable farmers, whose recordkeeping can be complicated. There is a separate template for each of the following topics:

- Seed and Plant Source
- Greenhouse Plan
- Production Record: Planting and Harvesting
- Production Record: Planting
- Production Record: Harvesting
- Weekly Market Load List & Sales Record
- Operational Expenses for Farm
- Seasonal List
- Mileage Traveled for Farm Business
- Acreage Conversion Formula Sheet
- Calendar Template

The templates can be used separately based on the farmers' goals or intentions, or together as a comprehensive approach to tracking many stages and aspects of a farm operation. Additionally, the instruction sheets for each template offer practical suggestions farmers can follow for planning and recording their farm activities.

FLAG attorney Hli Xyooj, author of the updated toolkit, notes that, "Recordkeeping continues to be a major challenge for many new farmers and immigrant farmers. Our goal is to provide templates that they can use in ways that best fit their operations and encourage long-term successful business practices."

A free copy of the updated recordkeeping toolkit can be downloaded from FLAG's website at www.flaginc.org. Printed copies can be obtained by calling FLAG's office at 651-223-5400. In Minnesota, the phone call is toll-free at 1-877-860-4349. Printed copies are available to financially distressed farmers in Minnesota at no charge; for all others, the cost for a color copy packet is \$40.00, and a black/white copy packet is \$10.00. The cost for color copies of each individual template (topics are listed above) is \$1.00 per page, and black/white copies are \$.25 per page. Costs do not include postage.

Farmers' Legal Action Group, Inc., is a nonprofit law center dedicated to providing legal services and support to family farmers and their communities in order to help keep family farmers on the land. This updated training is supported by a grant from the Northwest Area Foundation; the original training (2012) was supported by grants from the USDA Office of Advocacy and Outreach - Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers; USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program; and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.