OSU Offers On-line Farming Class
—from Oregon State University, https://pace.oregonstate.edu/

Growing Farms: Successful Whole Farm Management provides farmers with the tools and knowledge needed to develop and manage a successful farm business. The course is intended for people who are considering starting a farm business, those within their first five years of farming and others who may be considering major changes to their farm business.

The core of the course is a series of six on-line modules covering topics related to farm management. Modules include over four hours of video created specifically for the course, and feature six Oregon farmers who share their experience and insights. It has an Oregon focus but is relevant to farmers nationwide.

SFTA and B Lab Offer Free Sustainability Assessment Tool for Organic Companies
—by Katherine DiMatteo, Sustainable Food Trade Association, www.sustainablefoodtrade.org

Companies can use a quick, free tool to determine impacts on workers, communities, and the environment, and to measure against other similar companies.

The Sustainable Food Trace Association (SFTA) has partnered with the non-profit standards and certification organization B Lab, to help organic companies quickly measure and assess the quality of their sustainability programs and their impacts on workers, local communities, and the environment.

Measuring is key to successful sustainability programs, which in turn are key to both cost savings and overall business success.

SFTA worked with B Lab to develop the free organic industry-focused Quick Impact Assessment (QIA). Its 30 questions address organic purchase/sales, community involvement, emissions, governance, humane animal management, stakeholder engagement, worker standards, and water quality/use. Instant results even enable companies to compare themselves to other similar companies in the organic industry.

Businesses can also ask their supply chains to complete the QIA to get the information they need to make their entire operations the most sustainable possible.

"An organic industry-focused QIA is an excellent opportunity for organic companies to prove to customers, vendors, and others that they can lead the way by providing organic products and managing their entire operations in a sustainable manner," stated Katherine DiMatteo, SFTA Executive Director, "and to be part of a larger movement to redefine business success as creating value for society."

SFTA will use the aggregate data to track the increase in sustainable practices among organic food companies, in addition to the more extensive data its member companies already submit, and include the results in its Annual Member Sustainability Progress Report. If a business has already completed B Lab’s full impact assessment (a longer, more in-depth survey), or submitted a sustainability report to SFTA, that data can be integrated into this initiative.

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