

Toolkit of Resources for Farm Landowners and Renters: Soil Health Building and Conservation Leasing



LAND
STEWARDSHIP
PROJECT

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This toolkit is being assembled and updated by Land Stewardship Project (LSP). There are resources from other organizations included here. These are available today and/or can also be downloaded from our website at

<https://landstewardshipproject.org/conservationleaseresourcessignup>

All documents on-line are in PDF format unless otherwise noted. Conversation tips, interview questions, and lease templates are provided in WORD format. On-line you will be asked to sign up so that when we update or add to this information you can be notified by email. If you have questions about the material or suggestions, please contact Robin Moore at moore@landstewardshipproject.org 320 269-2105 or George Boody at gboody@landstewardshipproject.org or 612 722 6377.

1. *Agenda*. The workshop is a facilitated process that includes information sessions, sharing perspectives, and experiential opportunities followed by group sharing.

Conversations with renters

2. *Including Stewardship in Lease Agreements*. LSP Fact Sheet 27 provides examples of practices and other considerations when thinking about leases.
3. *Owner/Renter Discussion Tips*. Developed by LSP with suggestions from the first workshop for engaging in productive conversations with a renter. In WORD format.
4. *Courageous Conversation Tips*. Prepared by Tracy Sides to help imagine conversations between farmland owners and renters.
5. *Farmer (renter) Interview*. Produced by members and staff of LSP, these questions are based on experience interviewing prospective new renters. In WORD format.
6. *Why Do MN Farmers Do What They Do? LSP Fact Sheet #30*. This is meant to help you understand some of the basics of how and why farming practices are what they are today. The intent is to inform the conversation with your renter, make it easier, and to help you figure out, with your renter, how to begin better soil building on your land.

Lease information and templates

7. *Frequently Asked Questions on Sustainable and Long-Term Leases in Minnesota*. Produced by Farmers Legal Action Group, this outlines important considerations and optional approaches to leases.
8. *Cash Rent Farm Lease Template*. Prepared by LSP with legal review, this long-term lease template has been used for rental. It includes sections on the intent of the landowner, crop rotations that integrate continuous living cover (CLC) and related rental rates, a rent to buy provision and sharing of infrastructure costs for adding in a managed rotational grazing system. In WORD format
9. *Organic Vegetable Crops Farm Lease*. Generated by an LSP member/farmer/landowner when renting to vegetable farmers in 2017, this template is designed for a landowner living on the farm, renting part of the acreage and providing for use of landowner's equipment, water, electricity and other infrastructure. In WORD format

10. *Grazing Farm Lease*. Generated by an LSP member/farmer/landowner when renting to graziers in 2017, this lease template this lease is designed for a landowner living on the farm renting part of the acreage and providing for use of landowner's equipment, water, electricity, fencing and other infrastructure. In WORD format.

Setting a rental rate for soil health-building practices

11. *Minnesota Cropland and Pasture Rental Rates*. Prepared by David Bau of the University of Minnesota Extension Service, rental rates are estimated over multiple years using the Minnesota Agriculture Statistics Service Annual Rental Rate Survey for row cropland and pasture. It is followed by a Landowner's Cash Rent Worksheet prepared by David Bau that can be used to estimate cash rent. <https://www.extension.umn.edu/agriculture/business/land-economics/>. For Iowa Farmland Rental Rates, see: <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/wholefarm/html/c2-09.html>
12. The *Cropping Systems Calculator*. LSP Fact Sheet #28 describes a tool that will help you and/or a renter compare costs and returns for a standard row crop mix to longer crop rotations, use of cover crops or different options for grazing by ruminants of cover crops or pastures. It has built in defaults or can be used with Schedule F information. This will require a separate sign-up so updates can be provided: <http://landstewardshipproject.org/stewardshipfood/chippewa10croppingsystemscalculator>
13. *Valuing Sustainable Practices from the Farm Transitions Toolkit*. Developed by LSP, Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, Farmers Legal Action Group and National Center for Appropriate Technology, this provides many other resources. It can also be useful for figuring rental rates for cover crops and other practices. <http://landstewardshipproject.org/morefarmers/seekingfarmersseekinglandclearinghouse>
14. *Minnesota Beginning Farmer Tax Credit*. LSP Fact Sheet #29 outlines a newer option available to Minnesota taxpayers who rent or sell to a beginning farmer.

Additional resources in and beyond LSP

15. *Resource Guide*. Assembled by LSP, this lists specific resources on LSP webpages, as well as other's websites about lease and rental information.
16. *Acronyms* are provided for agencies, organizations and selected conservation incentive programs.
17. *Next steps*. Illustrated by Audrey Arner, you can use this card to write a next step that would move your land toward greater soil health. It might be attending a field day or workshop, contacting your renter, visiting an agency staff member about the resources of concern on your farm, joining LSP's Soil Builder Network or something else. You can use this to write the next step for yourself to remind you of the action you would like to take.
18. **The Toolkit items 1-17 can be downloaded as one PDF.**

Background on Soil Health

19. *Soil Health, Water and Climate Change: A Pocket Guide to What You Need to Know*
Produced by LSP, this is a primer on the science also includes stories of farmers who are making it work in their operations. Available as a separate PDF or as an app at: <https://landstewardshipproject.org/smartsoil>
20. ["Unlocking the Secrets of the Soil"](#) is a presentation on soil health given by Kristin Brennan, assistant state soil scientist, Minnesota NRCS at workshop sessions.
21. • A recent [LSP podcast](#) features a conversation with a landowner and a soil health expert on how to develop a good relationship with renters based on farmland stewardship.