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## Conference Sessions – Call for Proposals

The National Farm Viability Conference is geared towards professionals in the fields of farm and food business planning, financial planning, agricultural financing, farmland conservation, agricultural market development, and food hub management. It will offer attendees the opportunity to network and learn from industry leaders and other professionals in their fields, develop new knowledge and skills and will also include tours of nearby farms and value-added processing facilities. The host committee is collaborating to draw supporters of agriculture and agribusiness from around the country for this third national educational event.

We are inviting proposals for conference sessions from agricultural service providers, capital providers, consultants and program managers who are working to advance the viability of farm and food enterprises. **Proposals are due March 1<sup>st</sup> and all proposers will be notified of the status of their proposal by April 10, 2017. If you need more time to submit a proposal, please notify us by email by March 1<sup>st</sup> of your intent to submit, and you will have until March 10<sup>th</sup> to complete the proposal form.** The conference objectives are to:

- bring together a diverse group of professionals working to build business acumen in the agricultural sector, in order to network and learn from one another;
- highlight the importance of farm viability in the development of more sustainable, resilient and just local and regional food systems; and
- build a long-lasting network of farm viability professionals to broaden and further develop viability services for farmers and food producers. Proposals will only be considered if they support and further the conference objectives and align with one or more conference themes below.

Final decisions regarding which proposals are selected will be made by the host and advisory committees, and where appropriate, speakers may be asked to collaborate with others on the topic they propose.

Please note that we have a minimal budget to pay for speaker honorariums or transportation and lodging costs, and it is our intention that the majority of speakers and presenters are attendees of the conference. All speakers are offered a reduced registration fee for the conference of \$150. If this is prohibitive, please make a note of that in the call for proposals submission or contact the conference organizers.

## Submission Instructions

Please submit all proposals online [HERE](#).

The conference organizers and advisory committee will be making final decisions on proposals by April 10<sup>th</sup>. Depending on the proposals that are submitted, we may ask you to revise parts of your proposal or collaborate with others who submitted similar proposals. The conference will feature several themes and your proposal should fit within these themes.

Conference Themes:

- Finance and Business Development
- Accessing Capital for Growth
- Food and Farm Marketing and Distribution
- New and Beginning Farmers
- Equity and Social Justice in the Food System

- Food Safety and Risk Management
- Succession Planning and Land Transfer
- Program Development, Funding and Design

We are organizing around three types of breakout sessions: panel presentations, workshops, and facilitated discussions. Panel presentations are expected to involve multiple speakers and a moderator, each speaker providing a short presentation, and leaving time for questions and discussion as a part of the session. Workshops are anticipated to be a deeper-dive into a topic, teaching skills, tools or processes, and likely involve one, maybe two speakers rather than a group or panel. Facilitated discussions involve a facilitator and an agenda that involves the attendees as experts in the room.

Breakout sessions are all currently planned to be 75 minutes in length. An in-depth workshop could utilize two back-to-back sessions to cover a topic in 2.5 hours.

The online proposal submission form does not let you save responses or move forward without answering required questions. Be prepared to answer the following questions:

- Your name and contact information
- Your professional biography (approximately 100 words or less)
- Your past experiences leading conference sessions (title of session and conference name)
- Proposed session format:
  - Title
  - Type: facilitated discussion, moderated panel, or workshop
  - Short description (50 words or less)
  - Long description (200 words or less)
  - Learning objectives
  - Description of target audience (experience level and service area) the proposed session is geared towards
  - Audio/visual needs
- Other presenters information:
  - Names, contact information, and whether they are confirmed as speakers
  - Other presenters' professional biographies (approximately 100 words or less)
  - Other presenters' experiences leading conference sessions (title of session and conference name)

If you have any questions, please contact Ela Chapin, Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program, [ela@vhcb.org](mailto:ela@vhcb.org)