



CONSIDERING A CAREER IN FARM MANAGEMENT?

Working as a farm manager can be a great, rewarding professional career.

To begin your career as a farm manager or to get more information, please go to:
www.asfmra.org.

The American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers
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The Most Trusted Rural Property Professionals



WHAT IS A PROFESSIONAL FARM MANAGER?

General Responsibilities

The farm manager combines agricultural expertise and business methods in operating one or more farms owned by others. It is common for a manager to be responsible for 50-60 or more farms at one time. The farm manager directs the farming activities utilizing the authority designated by the owner to make the farm productive and profitable. The size and type of farm or farms under a manager's purview and the type of operation are influencing factors that determine the farm manager's duties. The farm manager may be free to run the farm according to their best judgment or be guided by the owner in varying degrees.

Managers spend most of their time organizing and supervising the work on the farm. They determine labor needs, the use of the land, planting, harvesting, and marketing schedules. They may direct and oversee the care and feeding of livestock. Depending on the method of operation, the farm manager may also be involved with the selection of the farm operator or supervising labor.

Determining agricultural methods to be used, purchasing supplies and equipment, directing maintenance and upkeep of equipment and buildings, and utilizing the land to its best advantage are all parts of the job description. Marketing skills, maintaining financial records and budget management are all required of farm managers. The operating arrangements vary from cash rent leases, net share leases, and participating crop shares (50/50 for example) to custom farming or direct farming.

RESOURCES & SPECIALTY EDUCATION

Professional farm managers have a nationwide professional organization, the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers (ASFMRA). The association offers its members strong support in the political and professional arenas. ASFMRA provides education, continuing education and professional designations for members who wish to improve their skills, gain credentials as a professional farm manager and increase their professionalism.



DESIGNATIONS

The American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers offer the Accredited Farm Manager (AFM) designation. This designation is well known and highly respected in the agricultural industry.





EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK

The number of opportunities in professional farm management is excellent right now for several reasons:

- Investment in land by individuals and entities who do not operate the land is growing
- Demand for food is increasing due to an ever-growing world population
- Many farm managers are retiring creating openings in the field
- Percentage of land owned by non-operating owners is growing due to land transfer by inheritance

POTENTIAL EARNINGS & HOURS

The farm manager's hours vary considerably depending on the responsibilities and the size, type and number of farms they manage. Days can often be longer than eight hours, particularly during busy times of the year. The annual salary averages from \$45,000 to \$70,000 with 1-5 years of experience to \$60,000 - \$100,000 with 5 to 15 years of experience.



Work Environment

Part of the work is done outdoors, visiting and traveling to the farms as well time spent in the office.

Professional Goals

The landowner, the farm manager, and the farm operator are all dedicated to preserving the value of the property in terms of fertility, soil conservation, condition of improvements, and general productivity or income earning potential.

WHO USES A PROFESSIONAL FARM MANAGER?

Anyone who owns agricultural property and doesn't have the time or expertise to operate it may utilize a farm manager including:

- Non-operating land owners
- Institutional land owners (e.g., banks, investors or funds)
- Resident land owners who are unable or don't want to manage their property

For example, imagine you inherited a farm in another state. You know very little about being a farmer and have no desire to move to that area. Your best bet would be to hire a professional farm manager to run the property for you. You own the property, you share in any profits from the land, and the farm manager takes care of the details.



FARM MANAGERS & THEIR COMPANIES

Professional farm management companies range in size from a small one person firm, to large firms with over 100 employees. They may be privately-held, employee-owned, or operated by a financial institution or bank. These types of firms can be very effective in their chosen territories or crop specialties.

Most states require farm managers to obtain a real estate license in order to manage property.

Many firms also provide agricultural real estate brokerage services and agricultural consulting. Ag consulting includes agronomic, financial, operational, or resource-based consulting services.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS TO BE A FARM MANAGER?

The typical farm manager has:

- An agricultural background
- A four-year college degree, typically in some field of agriculture or business; and many also have Master's Degree(s) in specialty fields such as Agronomy, Animal Science, Ag Business/Economics, Business, or Finance

The farm manager needs strong skills in:

- Business management
- Interpersonal, verbal, and written communications
- Negotiating
- Organization/planning
- Budgeting/financial work
- Business law

Agricultural expertise in several areas including:

- Agronomics/crop production
- Soil fertility
- Drainage/irrigation
- Commodity marketing
- Crop insurance
- Government regulations

Farm managers must be highly-motivated self starters who can manage their assigned accounts with a minimum of direct supervision. Owner/client communication is critical to the farm manager's success.

