



Participating in the Growing Forward Business Development for Farm Businesses Program can help achieve business goals in such areas as Food Safety and Traceability, Business Development, Environment and Climate Change, and Biosecurity. By taking part in this program, a producer may be eligible to receive up to 50% cost share funding towards travel, tuition and textbooks. In order to participate in this program a producer must attend a Growing Your Farm Profits (GYFP) Workshop. This free two-day workshop will help a producer develop an action plan, review farm management practices, help organize goals for the future, identify resources and build on business strengths.

Once a producer has completed his or her action plan; they could choose to hire a professional Farm Financial Advisor. The Growing Forward Program may cover up to \$2,400 in costs to hire such an advisor and the producer would be required to pay \$100. A Farm Financial Advisor can evaluate past financial performance, review the current farm business situation, perform a ratio analysis and assessment of profitability, liquidity, etc. The advisor can also provide options to meet the farm business profitability goals.

If a specific skill requirement is included in the action plan, then an eligible farm business could receive cost share funding of up to 50 percent or a maximum of \$3000. Farm-related courses include Sheep Shearing School, Succession Planning for the Successor, Nutrient Management Act: Regulation and Protocols and Understanding Sustainable Agriculture: Principles and Practices, to name a few. A complete list of training opportunities and skills are available at <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/busdev/gfwdasdeligiblelist.htm>.

Advanced Business Planning can also be accounted for in the action plan; this involves working with an Advanced Planning Consultant to focus on areas such as expansion, marketing, diversification, succession and feasibility plans. An eligible farm business could receive up to 50 percent in funding or up to a maximum of \$8000 which is required to be stated in the action plan.

To implement components of an Advanced Business Plan, a farm business could receive cost-share funding for one-time capital costs to carry out projects such as business agreements, specialized contracts, licensing agreements, certification, etc.

The first step in participating in this program is to attend a GYFP workshop; details about the program can be found at www.ontario.ca/growingforward or call OMAFRA at 1-888-479-3931. For a list of workshops please refer to the table below. A complete schedule of workshops can be found at www.ontariosoilcrop.org/en/Programs/GYFP091.htm or contact your local Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association for one near you.