

MU Guide

Designing a Farm Résumé

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The competition for rental acreage is ever increasing. As the demand for rentable farmland increases, producers who want to rent land must promote themselves and their management ability to differentiate themselves from the competition. One reason for the increased competition is the distance tenants are willing to travel from their base establishment to rent land. It is not uncommon for a tenant to rent land as far away as 30 miles.

If you want to rent farmland using a crop-share or flexible cash rent agreement (see MU publication G 426, *Farm Lease Agreement*), you may face difficulty if other tenants are willing to rent for cash. Using a crop-share or flexible cash rent agreement places the landowner at risk and increases the need for the landowner to be sure of a tenant's management skills. Rental land does not always go to the highest bidder in a cash-rent, crop-share or flexible-rent arrangement. Communication with the landowner is an important factor in gaining the right to farm the landowner's ground. This publication outlines a way for you to communicate your qualifications as a producer and a prospective tenant farmer by preparing a farm résumé.

A farm résumé is much like a résumé for employment in that it highlights your qualifications to do a job. A farm résumé can help tenants to be creative in selling their services. Young farmers, in particular, can benefit from developing a farm résumé to help them compete for land so that their operation can grow.

Content of the résumé

Just as a job applicant must be careful, concise and creative in developing a résumé for an employer, so a prospective land tenant should follow a similar approach in designing a farm résumé. You may revise your first draft many times before you are satisfied. You should also update your résumé as your farming operation changes. Contact a local extension specialist for help in designing and revising the résumé. The résumé should include at least the following elements:

Management objectives

Describe briefly your farming goals. Taking the time to prepare a clear statement of your goals will benefit you as a manager and can also help set you apart from your competition in the mind of the landowner.

Experience

Provide information about (1) how long you have been farming, (2) how many acres you farm, (3) any special technologies you use or advanced training you have received, and (4) licenses you hold. Include, for example, your use and knowledge of computers, the Internet, precision agriculture, intensive soil sampling and financial record keeping and your training as a certified chemical applicator. As an indicator of your management ability, you may wish to state your average crop yield in relation to the average yield in your county.

Equipment

List the major types of equipment you own or lease. Make note of those pieces of equipment that improve production efficiency or protect the environment, such as tracked tractors for reduced soil compaction. Include grain storage and crop drying equipment if available.

Biographical background

We live in a small world. By providing some background information about yourself, you can establish a common bond with the landowner. Explain when and how you became involved in farming. Be sure to include information about your spouse and other family members and about your community activities.

Environmental statement

Express your views on soil erosion, the size of waterways and the distance that should be maintained between fields and homesteads or water sources. If appropriate, include a statement about incorporating advanced technologies such as biotechnology and precision agriculture into your operation.

Risk-management strategies

For a crop-share lease arrangement, landowners may request help in marketing their share of the crop. Demonstrate your knowledge of crop insurance, forward pricing and futures markets, but you will want to avoid giving the impression that you spend more time mitigating marketing risks than mitigating production and environmental risks.

Insurance coverage and limits

Give the name and address of your insurance agent.

References

You should be able, if asked, to give references. One-liners from landowners who know your work may be included. Additionally, include financial institutions where you handle the majority of the banking for your farm business. You should always obtain permission from all references.

Photograph

If possible, provide a photo of your home operation to show the landowner the care and pride you take in your work. Obviously, a picture of an unkempt operation could hurt your chances.

Putting it in print

The purpose of your farm résumé is to summarize and give a good impression of your qualifications as a prospective tenant. As a rule, (1) limit the résumé to one or two pages; (2) use a font that is easy to read on white or off-white paper; (3) avoid cluttered pages by using appropriate margins (suggested 1-inch margins all around) and extra spacing before subheadings; and (4) proofread your work, more than once. See the sample farm résumé below.

A growing complication in the rental of farmland is the urban absentee landowner. This may be a person who owns land through inheritance or investment and is seldom seen by the prospective tenant. In addition to preparing a farm résumé, you may want to consider developing a regular newsletter during the cropping season or a Web site to better communicate with these landowners. Advances in technology make these tasks relatively simple. See your local University Outreach and Extension center for guidance or further information.

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Management objectives

- Achieve the highest level of revenue on a parcel of land while simultaneously minimizing soil erosion, chemical runoff and loss of production.
- Adopt new technologies that improve the economic viability of agricultural production.

Experience and advanced training

Farming background

20 years of experience in farming cropland in Boone County

- Own 600 acres
- Rent 400 acres

Typical yields:

- Corn: 125 bushels/acre (historical county yield - 100 bushels/acre)
- Soybeans: 45 bushels/acre (historical county yield - 43 bushels/acre)

Advanced training and licenses held

- Certified state of Missouri chemical applicator
- Certified crop adjuster
- Training in optimal waterway construction
- Attend approximately five workshops annually sponsored by the University of Missouri Extension and farm organizations

Record keeping

- Missouri Information Records (MIR)

Special equipment

- John Deere tracked tractor (model #)
- No-till drill (model #)
- John Deere combine (model #, capacity, efficiency)

Education

B.S., agricultural economics, University of Missouri, 1979

Occupation, family, organizations and community service

Farm operator and part-time crop insurance adjuster
Spouse - Elementary school teacher and financial record keeper for our farm
Soil Conservation Committee Member (2 years of service)
Membership in Young Farmers of America and in Farm Bureau

Environmental statement

Practice no-till planting to reduce soil erosion. Adopt new technologies that prove both economically and environmentally beneficial to agricultural production.

Risk management strategies

Participate in a University of Missouri extension marketing club to hone marketing skills.
Subscribe to DTN AgDayta for up-to-date price quotes and marketing recommendations.

Communication

Publish bimonthly newsletter from April through November to report to landowners on crop progress, market news and use of new technologies.

Insurance coverage

Missouri Farm Insurance
Contact Irene Insurer, Columbia, Missouri 65200, 555-000-0000, for further information.

References

Available upon request

On a separate page, have these references with you in case the landowner requests them while talking with you.

References

Larry Landowner 1111 Side Hill Fayette, Missouri 65299 Phone number	←	Landowner from whom you now rent or have rented in the past
Albert Ag Lender Central Agricultural Bank Main Street, Midway, Missouri 6999 Phone number	←	Officer at financial institution where you handle your business