

## Supplementary Materials

**Table S1.** First and second level codes.

| Name                                  | Description   | Participants (#) | Freq. (#) |
|---------------------------------------|---|------------------|-----------|
| Environmental goals                   | Participant's goals and values toward the environment and agricultural land                                 | 39               | 145       |
| carbon footprint                      | reduce personal contribution to fossil fuel use   | 7                | 9         |
| don't cause harm                      | not trying to achieve any grand goals, just don't leave the land worse than when you started                | 4                | 4         |
| health                                | preventing diet-related disease or -cide sickness   | 22               | 29        |
| minimal inputs                        | put as few external resources into the system as possible; conserve resources                               | 8                | 9         |
| mitigate degradation                  | be part of the group of farmers that's not degrading soil but mitigating env impacts of farming as a whole  | 10               | 11        |
| no chemicals                          | chemicals are destructive to the environment and people; don't cause pollution                              | 13               | 16        |
| preserve-promote natural biodiversity | preserve natural systems or promote them  | 11               | 14        |
| price premium                         | practice organic to get a higher price for products   | 1                | 1         |
| regenerative                          | create healthy soils, not deplete them  | 12               | 18        |
| responsible                           | personal responsibility to sustainability   | 3                | 4         |
| show it can be done                   | set an example that minimum inputs works, you can grow food without being destructive                       | 6                | 6         |
| spread the movement                   | inspire other people to be small farmers  | 1                | 1         |
| support life on earth                 | reverse the current path of environmental degradation to support future generations                         | 9                | 9         |
| waste reduction                       | reduce contribution to landfill   | 1                | 1         |
| work with nature                      | work with nature's natural cycles and ecosystems instead of against it and trying to control and manipulate | 12               | 13        |

Table S1. Continued.

| Name                    | Description  | Participants (#) | Freq. (#) |
|-------------------------|--|------------------|-----------|
| Finances                | The financial components that had to come together to make the farm happen | 38               | 76        |
| bank loans              | received a loan from a bank  | 2                | 2         |
| cosign loan             | had someone else cosign to get a loan                                      | 3                | 3         |
| credit card debt        | spends for farm on credit cards  | 3                | 4         |
| second job              | has second job   | 6                | 6         |
| family land             | inherited family land  | 4                | 4         |
| family loans            | family provided loan   | 7                | 7         |
| growing slow            | growing slowly so no large up-front capital necessary                      | 7                | 7         |
| inheritance             | inherited money  | 1                | 1         |
| investments             | used capital gained from investments                                       | 1                | 1         |
| lease                   | got a lease instead of buying  | 2                | 2         |
| loans                   | got a loan, but source unclear   | 1                | 1         |
| no debt                 | debt averse  | 1                | 1         |
| not about profit        | costs aren't as important as mission                                       | 1                | 1         |
| raise start-up capital  | did a go fund me or some fundraising to get funds                          | 3                | 3         |
| second income           | another person in the household has income                                 | 8                | 8         |
| small start-up costs    | low start-up costs from the beginning                                      | 2                | 2         |
| sold house for profit   | sold a house that had appreciated over time and used profit                | 5                | 5         |
| USDA loan               | Received a loan from USDA  | 2                | 2         |
| Inspiration             | What inspired the farmer to start their farm                               | 38               | 62        |
| Book, program or course | The farmer read a book, enrolled in a program or course that inspired them | 16               | 27        |
| Other farms             | The farmer saw other farms succeeding                                      | 29               | 35        |
| Personal satisfactions  | The benefits that a farmer received from farming                           | 34               | 76        |
| beautiful               | enjoy looking at a beautiful farm  | 3                | 3         |
| being grounded          | farming keeps them in the moment   | 2                | 2         |
| being happy             | farming makes them happy   | 2                | 2         |
| being outside           | enjoy being outside  | 6                | 6         |

Table S1. Continued

| Name                         | Description  | Participants (#) | Freq. (#) |
|------------------------------|--|------------------|-----------|
| beneficial lifestyle         | love health benefits of farming                                | 4                | 4         |
| brave                        | get to be an image of bravery                                  | 1                | 1         |
| offering at-risk ppl a job   | hiring at-risk populations                                     | 1                | 1         |
| eat fresh food               | enjoy eating fresh food  | 4                | 4         |
| emotional attachment         | feel an emotional attachment to land                           | 1                | 1         |
| feeding people               | enjoy feeding others   | 5                | 5         |
| feeling accomplished         | feel good after a hard day's work                              | 3                | 3         |
| finding balance              | escaping the stress of traditional "work"                      | 1                | 1         |
| food movement                | knowing you are doing positive work                            | 1                | 1         |
| happy customers              | seeing customers enjoy their food or company or the experience | 12               | 12        |
| having good time             | having a good time working on a farm                           | 1                | 1         |
| helping environment          | contributing to a healthier physical environment               | 2                | 2         |
| learning                     | love to learn something new every day                          | 3                | 3         |
| less stress                  | less stress than a traditional desk job                        | 2                | 2         |
| making money                 | enjoy making money doing something they love                   | 1                | 1         |
| no office job                | don't have to be indoors, sitting at a desk                    | 4                | 4         |
| pleasing others              | seeing others enjoy their farm/food/etc                        | 1                | 1         |
| seeing family enjoy learning | seeing their family enjoy the farm and food benefits           | 2                | 2         |
| learning                     | love to learn something new every day                          | 3                | 3         |
| less stress                  | less stress than a traditional desk job                        | 2                | 2         |
| making money                 | enjoy making money doing something they love                   | 1                | 1         |
| no office job                | don't have to be indoors, sitting at a desk                    | 4                | 4         |
| pleasing others              | seeing others enjoy their farm/food/etc                        | 1                | 1         |

Table S1. Continued.

| Name                                 | Description  | Participants (#) | Freq. (#) |
|--------------------------------------|--|------------------|-----------|
| seeing family enjoy                  | seeing their family enjoy the farm and food benefits   | 2                | 2         |
| seeing food grow                     | watching the growing process from seed to harvest  | 12               | 13        |
| teach others                         | enjoy being a teacher and educator   | 1                | 1         |
| Fairness                             | Balancing fairness to customers and farm finances  | 37               | 61        |
| accessible                           | want food to be accessible to all income levels  | 4                | 4         |
| calculate out                        | use spreadsheets to calculate food prices  | 1                | 1         |
| customers will pay                   | a fair price is one customers are willing to pay for   | 13               | 13        |
| difficult to sell at premium         | would like to set a higher price but can't sell it   | 4                | 4         |
| donate                               | donate extra food to food banks or other charities   | 5                | 5         |
| don't charge enough                  | feel like prices are a little low and they could get more                                    | 2                | 2         |
| don't want to undercut other farmers | don't want to de-value another farmer's prices by charging less                              | 6                | 6         |
| efficiency helps                     | being more efficient behind the scenes help lower prices and increase profit margins         | 1                | 1         |
| feel bad selling high                | sell high to make a living but feel bad doing it and doesn't want to do it                   | 2                | 2         |
| food shouldn't be cheap              | people are used to cheap food at the grocery store because of subsidies, but it shouldn't be | 2                | 2         |
| hard to set price                    | still navigating how to be fair  | 2                | 2         |
| have to make a living                | maybe would lower prices but can't afford it to survive                                      | 6                | 7         |
| modest income                        | can keep prices low because income is low  | 1                | 1         |
| profitable                           | a fair price is one that customers are willing to pay  | 4                | 5         |
| specialty items                      | have to charge more for items difficult to produce   | 1                | 1         |
| want to sell cheap                   | want to sell at lower price but have to make a living  | 1                | 1         |

Table S1. Continued.

| Name                             | Description  | Participants (#) | Freq. (#) |
|----------------------------------|--|------------------|-----------|
| worth hard work                  | higher prices are worth the hard work that went into producing it                        | 4                | 4         |
| Risk                             |  | 36               | 142       |
| aging                            |  | 1                | 1         |
| community                        |  | 3                | 3         |
| connectedness                    |  |                  |           |
| community                        |  |                  |           |
| relationships buffer             | already know people in community   | 2                | 2         |
| confidence buffer                | confident in production practices to take the leap                                       | 4                | 6         |
| crop fails                       | risk of crop failing for any of a multitude of reasons                                   | 6                | 6         |
| debt                             | risk of getting deep into debt   | 5                | 5         |
| business fails and can't repay   |  |                  |           |
| disappointing others             | don't want to let people down who believed in them                                       | 1                | 1         |
| experience buffer                | have experience so know what they're getting into  | 3                | 3         |
| failure                          | fear of failure and risking embarrassment to everyone who knew they were starting a farm | 5                | 6         |
| finding employees                | worried they won't have anyone to hire   | 1                | 1         |
| hard work                        | worried it will be too much physical work  | 1                | 1         |
| income diversification as buffer | planned for multiple revenue streams to buffer financial risk                            | 9                | 9         |
| inexperience                     | risk of having little to no practical farming experience                                 | 5                | 9         |
| lack of knowledge                | there's some information they just don't know  | 2                | 2         |
| location                         | might pick a location that's not good for growing on                                     | 1                | 1         |
| losing land                      | could lose gifted or leased land   | 1                | 1         |
| losing pride                     | feel ashamed if they fail  | 3                | 3         |
| money                            | losing money   | 12               | 14        |
| naive                            | too idealistic   | 3                | 3         |
| nature                           | natural catastrophe, pest or disease outbreak  | 2                | 2         |
| new community                    | not knowing anyone   | 3                | 3         |

|               |  |   |   |
|---------------|--|---|---|
| no going back | not being able to go back to previous career once they leave | 1 | 1 |
|---------------|--|---|---|

Table S1.

| Name                     | Description   | Participants (#) | Freq. (#) |
|--------------------------|---|------------------|-----------|
| no market                | risk of having no one to sell to  | 10               | 10        |
| not producing enough     | risk of having a large market but not enough to sell                          | 3                | 3         |
| nothing grows            | risk of nothing growing on land   | 1                | 1         |
| nothing to lose          | no risk, nothing to lose  | 2                | 2         |
| outside income buffer    | buffered by another source of income  | 6                | 7         |
| overconfident            | was confident but probably shouldn't have been                                | 2                | 2         |
| physical injury          | risk of getting injured and no one to take over the work                      | 4                | 7         |
| regret                   | risk of failing and thinking they didn't try hard enough                      | 2                | 2         |
| risk averse              | wouldn't have done it if they thought there was a lot of risk                 | 3                | 4         |
| slow as buffer           | grow slowly to avoid large financial risks                                    | 3                | 3         |
| specialty crops          | risk of growing all specialty crops because if it fails that's your only crop | 1                | 1         |
| stubborn                 | unwilling to give up or quit  | 1                | 1         |
| unreliable market        | risk of inconsistent customer base  | 3                | 3         |
| wasted time              | nothing to lose except the time "wasted" on the endeavor                      | 3                | 3         |
| weather                  | weather events like hurricanes, tornadoes, rain, dry spells, etc              | 7                | 8         |
| weeds                    | risk of having weeds take over farm   | 2                | 2         |
| Why farming              | Why the person decided to start a farm  | 40               | 234       |
| Challenge                | Enjoy a challenge   | 4                | 4         |
| College job              | Got a job in college and ended up liking it                                   | 5                | 6         |
| Connect to land          | wanted to be closer to nature   | 5                | 5         |
| Didn't like previous job | Wanted to leave job because they were unhappy                                 | 13               | 16        |
| Educate                  | Wanted to be able to teach others about benefits of farming                   | 3                | 3         |
| enjoyable                | They enjoy it   | 16               | 17        |

|               |  |   |   |
|---------------|--|---|---|
| enlightenment | They felt like they had an "aha" moment and realized they needed to be involved in the "food movement" | 5 | 7 |
|---------------|--|---|---|

Table S1. Continued.

| Name                   | Description  | Participants (#) | Freq. (#) |
|------------------------|--|------------------|-----------|
| Family history         | Old family history of farming and wanted to connect back to that (skipped 1 or more generations) | 3                | 3         |
| Family values          | Wanted to promote healthy family dynamics like spending time together at home and outside        | 8                | 8         |
| Fate                   | Found it at exactly the right time in life like an intervention                                  | 3                | 3         |
| good at it             | Found out they were good at it   | 2                | 2         |
| Grow good food         | Want to grow healthy, nutritious food  | 8                | 8         |
| Happiness              | Want to be happy   | 1                | 1         |
| help environment       | Want to be a positive influence on physical environment  | 12               | 16        |
| Idealistic             | Committed to ideals of sustainability and sustainable agriculture                                | 1                | 1         |
| Improve health         | Improve personal health like physical ailments   | 9                | 9         |
| Improve public health  | Promote healthy communities, not just themselves and their family                                | 5                | 5         |
| in control             | have control over their day and life   | 1                | 1         |
| independence           | wanted to be their own boss, work on their own schedule and run a business on their terms        | 16               | 21        |
| love to learn          | love to learn something new every day  | 1                | 1         |
| make a difference      | want to make a positive impact on the world of sustainable agriculture                           | 5                | 5         |
| meaningful             | find they are doing something that makes a difference  | 3                | 3         |
| Necessity              | Had to make an income to start farming   | 2                | 2         |
| Other farms succeeding | Saw others doing it and doing it well  | 5                | 5         |
| Part of identity       | Felt like it was always part of them   | 1                | 1         |
| Passion                | Love it and couldn't imagine doing anything else   | 3                | 3         |
| rewarding              | see the fruits of your labor in the field after hard work  | 4                | 4         |

Table S1. Continued.

| Name                           | Description  | Participants (#) | Freq. (#) |
|--------------------------------|--|------------------|-----------|
| satisfying spiritual           | feeling like a day's work well done  | 2                | 3         |
| Studied in college             | connect to land through spirituality   | 1                | 1         |
| Transition from gardening      | Found farming in college courses   | 1                | 1         |
|                                | Had a garden or parents had a garden so it was something they "knew"                       | 9                | 9         |
| transition from restaurant biz | found farming through working in restaurant kitchens                                       | 2                | 2         |
| variety                        | love being able to do a variety of activities as part of one job, always new, never boring | 7                | 7         |
| Want to be an inspiration      | want to show others that they can do it too  | 2                | 2         |
| Want to be outdoors            | love being outside   | 21               | 29        |
| Want to change system          | want to contribute to a sustainable ag system  | 7                | 8         |
| want to feed people            | want to offer good food to people  | 6                | 6         |
| Wanted to start a biz          | Was going to start a business anyway   | 5                | 5         |
| WOOF                           | Had no direction, wanted to travel so enrolled in WOOF and fell in love with farming       | 1                | 1         |

**Table S2.** Educational-related sources of inspiration.

| Education Descriptor    | Participants (#) | Freq. (#) |
|-------------------------|------------------|-----------|
| aquaponics              | 2                | 2         |
| beyond sustainable      | 1                | 1         |
| biodynamic              | 1                | 1         |
| climate                 | 1                | 1         |
| composting              | 1                | 1         |
| cover crops             | 1                | 1         |
| crop spacing            | 1                | 1         |
| ecosystem               | 1                | 1         |
| energy conservation     | 1                | 1         |
| expanding opportunities | 1                | 1         |
| good food               | 1                | 1         |
| hoop houses             | 1                | 1         |
| organic                 | 3                | 3         |
| permaculture            | 1                | 1         |
| practices               | 1                | 1         |
| profitable              | 8                | 9         |
| raised beds             | 1                | 1         |
| soil management         | 2                | 2         |
| urban ag                | 1                | 1         |
| variety selection       | 1                | 1         |
| water conservation      | 1                | 1         |
| worms                   | 1                | 1         |

**Table S3.** Farmer-related sources of inspiration.

| Education Descriptor       | Participants (#) | Freq. (#) |
|----------------------------|------------------|-----------|
| aesthetically pleasing     | 1                | 1         |
| authentic                  | 2                | 2         |
| committed                  | 1                | 1         |
| confident                  | 1                | 1         |
| disciplined                | 2                | 3         |
| eclectic                   | 1                | 1         |
| efficient                  | 2                | 2         |
| encouraging                | 2                | 2         |
| experienced                | 1                | 1         |
| generous                   | 5                | 5         |
| good at budgeting          | 1                | 1         |
| good at compartmentalizing | 1                | 1         |
| good communicator          | 1                | 1         |
| hard worker                | 1                | 1         |
| innovative                 | 1                | 1         |
| inspiring                  | 2                | 2         |
| knowledgeable              | 3                | 4         |
| organized                  | 1                | 1         |
| persistent                 | 1                | 1         |
| risk taker                 | 1                | 1         |
| successful                 | 2                | 2         |
| the bomb                   | 1                | 1         |
| willing to help            | 2                | 2         |
| work ethic                 | 1                | 1         |