



Farming Alternatives: A Guide to Evaluating the Feasibility of New Farm-Based Enterprises

Nancy Grudens Schuck, Wayne Knoblauch, Judy Green, Mary Saylor

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This book assists rural and farm residents who are considering alternative enterprises. The case study and workbook format helps in evaluating personal and family considerations, resources, market potential, production feasibility, profitability, cash flow, and all factors combined. The guidebook also offers research sources for enterprise ideas. Each chapter includes exercises, self-tests, checklists, and worksheets that allow the reader to analyze an enterprise idea. Starting a new venture requires resources, careful management, hard work, and risk. Before committing time and resources to an enterprise, it is important to look at the feasibility of the idea on paper. Each chapter of *Farming Alternatives* includes exercises-self-tests, checklists, and work sheets-that allow the reader to analyze an enterprise idea and build business management skills. The reader will take an inventory to identify underutilized resources that can be used in a new enterprise, perform market research to determine who will buy a product or service, and plan the production aspects of the enterprise. An income statement and cash flow analysis will be prepared to determine profitability and the financial feasibility of starting and operating the enterprise. The guidebook even explains how to combine the documents to present a proposal to a lender. Many extension agents and other educators have expressed an interest in organizing workshops for farm and rural families interested in-but not necessarily experienced in-alternative enterprises. *Farming Alternatives* works well as a textbook for an in-depth workshop series, as a framework for one-on-one counseling, and as a resource for the reader to use on his or her own. The guidebook is being successfully used as a teaching tool by Cooperative Extension agents.

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