



The Lean Farm

How to Minimize Waste, Increase Efficiency,
and Maximize Value and Profits with Less Work

Ben Hartman

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“***The Lean Farm* is one of the most original and innovative books on food and farming to come out in the last decade.**”— **Steve Hallett, author of *The Efficiency Trap***”

Using the words “factory” and “farm” in the same sentence may seem sacrilegious, but today’s young farmers like author Ben Hartman are discovering that the same sound business practices apply whether you produce cars or carrots.

In *The Lean Farm*, Hartman demonstrates how applying lean principles to farming practices can drastically cut waste and increase profit, while at the same time making farms more environmentally and economically sustainable.

“When farmers apply lean with the right intentions—to restore the earth and increase the health of families and local communities—their farms can produce lots of food and fall into alignment with nature,” writes Hartman.

Lean principles were originally developed by the Japanese automotive industry, but they are now being followed on progressive farms around the world. Using examples from his own family’s one-acre community-supported farm in Indiana, Hartman clearly instructs other small farmers in how to incorporate lean practices in each step of their production chain, from starting a farm and harvesting crops to training employees and selling goods.

The Lean Farm demonstrates that small-scale farming can be an attractive career option for young people because it shows them how to work smarter, not harder, by utilizing lean principles to identify and eliminate waste and introduce efficiency in every aspect of the farm’s operation. This approach can help prevent the kind of burnout that start-up farmers often encounter in the face of long hours and hard, backbreaking labor.

Small-scale farmers who are part of the growing local food movement will find tremendous value in *The Lean Farm*, but Hartman’s prescriptions for high-value, low-cost production apply to farms and businesses of almost any size or scale that hope to harness the power of lean in their production processes.



Ben Hartman grew up on a corn and soybean farm in Indiana and graduated college with degrees in English and philosophy. Ben and his wife, Rachel Hersherberger, own and operate Clay Bottom Farm in Goshen, Indiana, where they make their living growing and selling specialty crops on less than one acre. Their food is sold locally to restaurants and cafeterias, at a farmers market, and through a community-supported-agriculture (CSA) program. The farm has twice won *Edible Michiana’s* Reader’s Choice award.

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