PROSPERITY FORUM 2026 · DAY 1

Two Ledgers, One Family

Building a financial strategy for your life and your farm

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TPV FOR AG IMPACT

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LIVE POLL

Which sounds closest to where you are now?

A **Building:** I'm getting started, and my farm and household money still overlap

B **Growing:** I have lots of opportunities and am working out which ones to say yes to

C **Land-rich, cash-light:** the land is our biggest asset, and we're working on cash flow

D **Steady:** things are working, and I'm ready to plan further ahead

E **I support farmers** in one or more of these places

IN THE CHAT

Drop your state and what you grow or raise.

WHAT OUR FARMERS' DATA SHOWS

Fewer of our farmers are financially healthy

10%

of the participants were Financially Healthy

31%

of U.S. households are Financially Healthy

38% of our farmers are Financially Vulnerable, compared with 17% nationally.

WHAT OUR FARMERS' DATA SHOWS

The intent is there. The cash and credit aren't yet.

59%

of our farmers say they plan ahead financially

63%

of U.S. households say the same

WHAT OUR FARMERS' DATA SHOWS

For most of our farmers, the household carries the farm

78%

of our farmers earn under $10,000 a year from the farm

So the household ledger drives most of their financial health.

TWO LEDGERS, ONE FAMILY

Separate books, connected on purpose

LEDGER 1

The farm household

MONEY IN	MONEY OUT
Off-farm wages	Housing
Owner's draw	Food
Benefits	Transportation
	Insurance & health
	Debt payments
	Savings

Key number: monthly cost to run

Owner's draw

Documented loan or investment

Not this: farm inputs on personal cards

LEDGER 2

The farm enterprise

MONEY IN	MONEY OUT
Market & CSA sales	Seed & feed
Wholesale sales	Fuel & equipment
Grants & programs	Labor
	Fees & loans
	Reinvestment

Key number: seasonal cost to run

KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

Two numbers everyone needs

HOUSEHOLD LEDGER

What it takes to run your life each month

FARM LEDGER

What it takes to run your farm each season

LIVE POLL

Could you say, within $500, what it costs to run your household for a month? Yes · Roughly · No idea

IN THE CHAT

What's one expense that crosses between your farm and your household?

TODAY'S BIG IDEA

You can't build a strategy for your farm or your household without knowing what it takes to run each one.

Today: what the data tells us, what strategy really means, three farmers' choices, and the two numbers you need.

WHAT WE MEAN BY STRATEGY

Plan versus strategy

A PLAN OR TACTIC

Plant X crops. Sell them for Y dollars. Make Z profit.

Answers: what will I do this season?

A STRATEGY

A clear set of choices about what you'll do and what you won't.

Based on your market, your advantages and your numbers, aimed at a specific outcome.

WHAT WE MEAN BY STRATEGY

Five questions behind every strategy

1

What outcome am I working toward?

2

Where will I sell, and to whom?

3

What advantage do I have there?

4

What will I stop doing?

5

What does it take, in money and time?

Ask them for the farm and for the household.

EXAMPLE

The crop you love vs. the crop that pays

	Heirloom tomatoes	Garlic
Sales	$6,000	$4,000
Costs	$2,000	$800
Labor hours	300	80
Net per labor hour	about $13	$40

Illustrative numbers. The same math works for a market that takes your whole Saturday.

WHAT WE MEAN BY STRATEGY

Your household makes strategic choices too

> “Off-farm income runs the household, not the farm.”

> “No farm inputs on personal cards.”

LIVE POLL

Is there a crop, market or product you keep because you love it, not because it pays? Yes · Maybe · No

IN THE CHAT

Name it, if you're brave.

CASE STUDIES

Two farmers, two sets of choices

POLL OPTION A

Darnell & Tasha

The Stalled Grower

Growing, but saying yes to everything

POLL OPTION B

Ruth

The Legacy Farmer

Valuable land, not much cash

Composites drawn from farmer cohort patterns. **Your numbers will look different where you farm. The question is the same.**

CASE 1 · THE STALLED GROWER

Meet Darnell & Tasha

4 years farming · 20 acres of heirloom tomatoes, garlic and some pastured poultry · three markets, a few restaurants, events

HOUSEHOLD LEDGER

Household

- Tasha's full-time job covers the household and health insurance
- About 2 months of savings
- Thin insurance, no long-term plan

FARM LEDGER

Farm

- $38,000 gross, about $6,000 net
- Saying yes to every opportunity

CASE 1 · THE STALLED GROWER

Every yes costs hours

$13

per labor hour: heirloom tomatoes

$40

per labor hour: garlic

IN THE CHAT

If you were Darnell, what's the one thing you'd say no to?

CASE 1 · THE STALLED GROWER

Darnell & Tasha's choices

HOUSEHOLD · I WILL

Treat Tasha's job as the household anchor on purpose, review insurance and build 3 months of savings

FARM · I WILL

Cut tomatoes to the two varieties chefs pay a premium for, expand garlic, pursue one co-op account and write a 3-year plan

HOUSEHOLD · I WON'T

Use household savings to fund farm expansion

FARM · I WON'T

Expand poultry or vend at events this year

CASE 2 · THE LEGACY FARMER

Meet Ruth

In her early 60s · farms family land she shares with her three siblings · grows hay and raises a few cattle

HOUSEHOLD LEDGER

Household

- Lives on part-time work and a small monthly benefit
- Owes $12,000 on a credit card
- Very little in savings

FARM LEDGER

Farm

- The land is valuable, but it doesn't bring in much cash
- Pays on an equipment loan every month

CASE 2 · THE LEGACY FARMER

What Ruth's farm earns and costs

$1,800
a year earned from hay

$9,600
a year paid on her equipment loan

Her land is valuable, but right now the farm costs her more cash than it brings in.

IN THE CHAT

What's one thing you'd suggest Ruth try first?

CASE 2 · THE LEGACY FARMER

Ruth's choices

HOUSEHOLD · I WILL

Make a plan to pay off her credit card, and ask her lender about lowering her loan payments

FARM · I WILL

Rent some land to a neighbor, sell equipment she no longer needs, and start talking with her siblings about the land's future

HOUSEHOLD · I WON'T

Take on any new debt

FARM · I WON'T

Put off that family conversation another year

YOUR TURN

Your two-ledger strategy card

HOUSEHOLD LEDGER

Household

Monthly cost: _____

I will: _____

I won't: _____

FARM LEDGER

Farm

Seasonal cost: _____

I will: _____

I won't: _____

LIVE POLL

Which number do you need first? Household · Farm · Net per crop · All

IN THE CHAT

Share one “won't” you're committing to.

UP NEXT AT 12:15

Darnell, Tasha and Ruth couldn't make these choices until they knew their numbers.

That's where Farm Financial Records picks up.

QUESTIONS

What's on your mind?

Drop your questions in the chat.

Coming up today: Farm Financial Records at 12:15 · Selling to Buyers at 2:15