

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension will begin its first Farm Beginnings® Program at the Lincoln-Logan-McPherson Extension Office meeting room in North Platte on May 25.

As part of a U.S. Department of Agriculture Farmer and Rancher Grant, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension is facilitating the Farm Beginnings® Program.

The Farm Beginnings® Program is an educational training and support program designed to help people who want to evaluate and plan their farm enterprise.

Farm Beginnings® participants engage in a mentorship experience and network with a variety of successful, innovative farmers and attend practical, high quality seminars, field days and conferences.

The program is unique in that several successful farmers participate in the program as presenters, explaining first-hand the nuts and bolts of their farming operation. While any beginning farmer would benefit from attending these training sessions, most of the farmers that present come from small to medium-sized farming operations that produce and market many different diversified and value-added products. Many of these farmers direct market their products.

The Farm Beginnings® Program consists of a series of 10 sessions from May to October that cover a variety of topics including: building networks, goal setting, whole farm planning, building your business plan, marketing, business and farm management and financial management.

While the class participants will learn first-hand from the farmers, they will also work on developing their own business plan as they progress through the course.

There also is a tour of a greenhouse and hoop house in May and the group tours several farms in the summer to see how the farmers are operating.

If interested, participants also have the opportunity to have a farmer mentor.

Cost of the total program is \$500; scholarships are available. For more information about the program contact Randy Saner, extension educator at rsaner2@unl.edu or 1-800-200-1381.

A brochure and application are available for download at lincolnmcpherson.unl.edu.