Understanding that farming is a business is the first step on the path to success. A business plan is the next step. What goes into a business plan:

1. **Executive Summary**: a 1-2 paragraph summary of what your business is.

2. **Mission Statement**: brief statement of what your business does, its purpose, values.

3. **Vision Statement**: Where is your business going? Business goals? Where do you want your business to be in 5 years? 10? What your world will look like when you’ve accomplished your mission.

4. **Business Concept**: your product, its uniqueness, your target market, how you fit into the markets in the area.

5. **Operational Characteristics & Plan**
   - Physical Resource Inventory & Plan, including a map.
   - Human Resource Inventory & Plan.
   - Potential crops & Production Plan.
   - Timeline for farm development.
   - Agencies, references, resources consulted or to consult.
   - Transition Plan.
   - Emergency Plan.

6. **Goals and Objectives**: a realistic list of tasks, decisions to be made, actions.

7. **Background Information**: summarize market research and analysis, trends in the larger ag industry.

8. **Management and Organizational Structure**: how you run your business; management, staff, legal structure, insurance.

9. **Sales & Marketing Plan**: how do you plan to market your product?
   - Product or service marketing plan.
   - Plan for marketing “the business”.

10. **Financial Plan**:
    - Current Financial Assessment.
    - Strategic Analysis and Proposed Alternatives.
    - Existing debt & repayment schedules.
    - Financing needs: projections for proposed alternatives.
    - Fixed assets, start-up costs.
    - Risk management plan.
    - Financial monitoring and control plan: cash flow forecast.
    - Financial documents to include: 1) profit and loss statement 2) balance sheet including assets, liabilities and net worth 3) cash flow projections including sales projections and assumptions.

11. **Appendix**: supporting documents.