

# APPENDIX 1-6

## ENTERPRISE SELECTION: ANNUAL CROPS

Annual cropping systems include vegetables, grains, legumes, oilseed crops, herbs, and flowers. These are often grown as primary cash crops on a small farm or as part of an integrated farm. Challenges of annual cropping systems include pest, weather, and disease problems as well as labor and marketing. Annual crop production becomes especially labor intensive during spring and summer. Most annual crops are marketed directly through farmers' markets, farm stands, retail stores, restaurants, community-supported agriculture (CSA), and U-pick operations. The benefits of annual cropping systems include steady annual cash flow and high-value return.

Answer the following questions to assess your readiness for annual crop farming and what type of crop mix might best suit your situation.

How will you accommodate the rigorous schedule that is required throughout the growing season for annual crop systems?

---

---

---

---

Many annual crops are sold through direct marketing channels. Will you enjoy interacting with customers?

---

---

---

If you decide to market through wholesalers, which usually brings a lower price, can you grow enough to sustain a business at wholesale prices?

---

---

---

Some farmers concentrate on one or two annual crops; others operate diversified cropping systems. What type and how many varieties of crops do you want to grow?

---

---

---

Diversified vegetable production is complex, fast paced, and intense for much of the growing season. Does this fit with your personality, physical capabilities, and lifestyle?

---

---

---

Annual crops can be grown on rented ground. Is this an option that would help you get started or expand production?

---

---

---

Will your soil and water rights support annual crop production?

---

---

---

Do you have the crop management skills and experience needed to grow the crop? If not, how will you ensure the success of your farm, especially when you are just starting out?

---

---

---