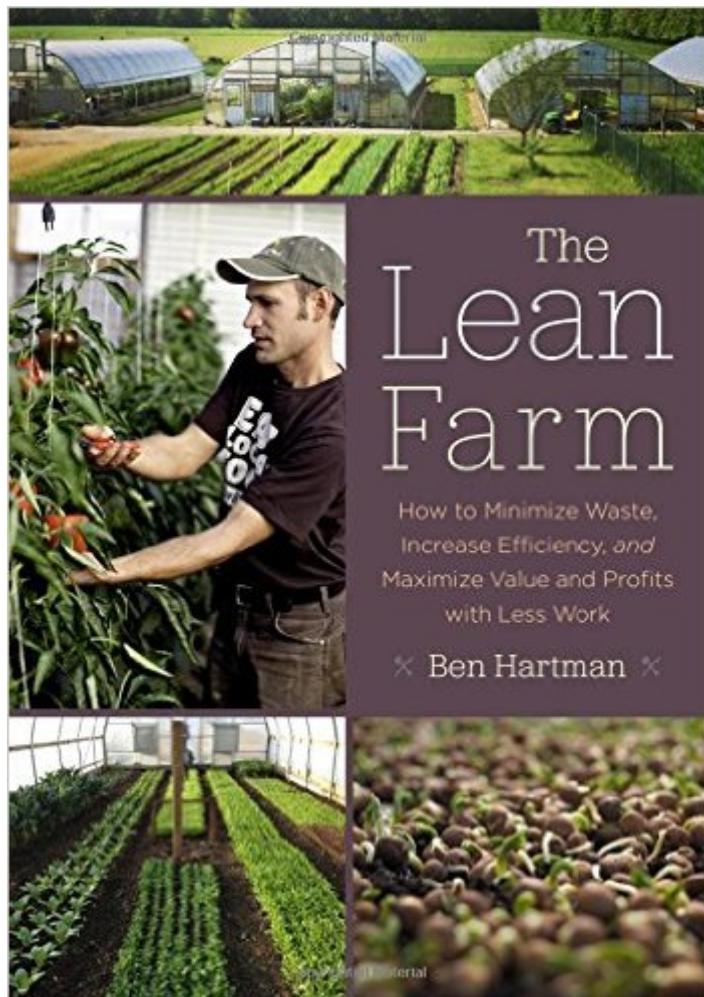


The book was found

The Lean Farm: How To Minimize Waste, Increase Efficiency, And Maximize Value And Profits With Less Work



Synopsis

A practical, systems-based approach for a more sustainable farming operation To many people today, using the words “factory” and “farm” in the same sentence is nothing short of sacrilege. In many cases, though, the same sound business practices apply whether you are producing cars or carrots. Author Ben Hartman and other young farmers are increasingly finding that incorporating the best new ideas from business into their farming can drastically cut their wastes and increase their profits, making their farms more environmentally and economically sustainable. By explaining the lean system for identifying and eliminating waste and introducing efficiency in every aspect of the farm operation, *The Lean Farm* makes the case that small-scale farming can be an attractive career option for young people who are interested in growing food for their community. Working smarter, not harder, also prevents the kind of burnout that start-up farmers often encounter in the face of long, hard, backbreaking labor. Lean principles grew out of 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. While the intended audience for this book is small-scale farmers who are part of the growing local food movement, 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.

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Customer Reviews

As a small organic vegetable farmer I have always found the task of efficiently organizing the business operations of the farm somewhat confounding. Many times I have been frustrated with working long hours into the evening, an employee who did not finish a task the way I asked, or growing a beautiful crop that no one wants to buy. The Lean Farm concisely introduces farmers to a valuable tool for streamlining farming operations and focusing your business on producing what is valuable to your customers. Lean manufacturing is a tool used by gigantic corporations to compete in the global marketplace, so I was wary of its applicability to a small farm context. However, the author makes a strong case for utilizing lean in farming or other small business settings. He even discusses many of the caveats that would naturally occur to a small farmer trying to adopt lean, such as letting your values influence how you implement the concept so that you achieve greater sustainability as well as profitability. The Lean Farm is a great read and well worth adding to your farming library. It will probably be most helpful to farmers or other small business people with at least a few years' experience who are struggling to make it all come together. Although it has many interesting glimpses into the author's farming practices, this book does not attempt to be an introduction to farming. If you are reading it as a beginning farmer, The Lean Farm should be one of many texts you read, though it may end up being the most valuable to the success of your business. I also think this book would also serve as a good introduction to the concept of lean for someone outside of the farming profession. The author provides some of the history and context of lean manufacturing including original Japanese terminology, as well as discussion of other prominent lean texts and guidance for further reading on the subject.

I'm not a farmer, but I was fascinated by Hartman's book because he shows how to do well something as important as small farming. If you're the kind of person who is drawn to pictures of other people's workshops, if you like to daydream about how things work, if you'd like to farm but think something - like not owning a farm - is stopping you, you will gain perspective, pleasure, and maybe even profit from reading this book. Anyone and everyone interested in local food - selling it or buying it - will find The Lean Farm a reading pleasure.

I was fortunate enough to receive this book a few days ago as a Christmas gift. I read it cover to cover and really enjoyed it! I appreciated many aspects of the book: the clear writing style, the clean

lines of thought, the unique application of lean concepts, the colorful photos, and the intriguing references to other seminal lean books. Since lean is very contextual when it comes to implementation, I was delighted to find much detail on precisely how lean was applied at Clay Bottom Farm. Ben effectively describes both the overarching strategies and the specific tactics that were applied over the years. These will help spark lean deployment ideas at other farms for sure. I started to get a bit concerned when the discussion of cost cutting surfaced since lean is NOT another management driven cost cutting program. But Ben effectively addressed my concerns by adding his thoughts on this in "Lean Overreached" and "Lean for More Than Profit." I have seen lean reduced to just cost cutting which resulted in bad, long-term business consequences. As Ben explains, lean is a complete culture change where "respect for people" is paramount and where daily and long-term continuous improvement is knitted into the very fabric of the organization. Excellent book. Way to go Ben and team! (By the way, this is my first book review ever.)

This is such an important book for any farmer. I read it in about one day, because I was so excited by the opportunities it offered to me as a small-scale flower and vegetable farmer, and I couldn't stop writing down all the great ideas it gave me for improving my growing and selling techniques. The goals of lean that Hartman presents are things we already strive for on the farm, but he gives us specific tools to reach them. I don't really care where these strategies came from - if you're a farmer, you'll see instinctively that they will work. From creating uninterrupted work "flow" to solutions to physical problems to training and managing new workers to really understanding your customers, this book helped me see what my farm is capable of. Thank you so much for this great book! I can't recommend it enough.

Overall I thought it was a good book, what I felt stopped it from being a 5 star review, is I didn't feel it was great throughout the entire book. The information on the 5S highly valuable, the case studies were good, though I would have liked to have seen more on farm examples of perhaps other market farms instead of dairy farm from Denmark. Also the last part chapter 12 - on mega farms, is kinda like preaching to the choir. You figure most folks who get this book are typically going to be either market farmers, or small animal producers. I'd say it was worth the money, there were valuable examples that we'll put into use on our farm.

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