

APPENDIX 1-8

ENTERPRISE SELECTION: PERENNIAL CROPS

Perennial cropping systems include nut and fruit trees, cane berries, hops, grapes, and grass seed. These are often grown as primary cash crops or as part of an integrated farm. Perennial and annual cropping systems have different nutrient and pest management needs and require different cultural practices.

Answer the following questions to assess your readiness for managing perennial systems and what type of crops might best suit your situation.

Do you have enough land to make the business profitable? For the crop you are interested in, how big of an area is needed and how many plants are necessary?

Do you have the finances for the initial investment required in establishing the orchard, vineyard, et cetera?

How long will it take for the crop to produce yields suitable for commercial production? Can you survive financially while you are waiting for the crop to begin producing? What is your plan for doing so?

How long will the crop be productive?

Some perennial crops require annual pruning, which is often completed during winter. Are you willing to spend considerable time outside in cold weather, possibly climbing up and down a ladder?

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?
