

FarmStart Manchester

The Kindling Trust

June 2014

FarmStart Manchester is the UK's first farm incubator initiative, aiming to make the route into farming easier. Access to land, capital and mentoring are huge barriers to starting out on a farming career and we're hoping FarmStart could be an answer!

With the help of the NatureSave Trust, we have become the proud owners of a Tractor (and attachments). The costs of machinery and equipment are often prohibitively high for new growers, so this will facilitate a crucial element of support for the project.

The Kindling Trust launched FarmStart Manchester in March 2013 in partnership with Abbey Leys Farm. FarmStart is an incubator farm for new growers to trial their farming business ideas in a low-risk setting.

[Abbey Leys Farm](#) is just 15 miles to the south-west of Manchester, with great motorway access to the city. The land is flat and fertile and already certified organic.

New growers join FarmStart as TestCroppers, and benefit from access to certified organic land, training and mentoring, market access and peer support. This is a chance to see if farming suits them, and to put their ideas to the test.

If their business proves itself viable, TestCroppers go on as FarmStarters, and can choose to expand on to further $\frac{1}{4}$ acre sections each year for 4 years, when they should be ready to move onto their own farms.

Growers may work on their own or with friends or family, and depending on what they grow, could expect to spend anything from a few hours to a couple of days each week tending their crops.

We want to see more people growing food around Greater Manchester, and we need more suppliers for our organic fruit and vegetable co-operative, Manchester Veg People. Abbey Leys want home-grown vegetables for their farm shop, and there is plenty of scope for attending local farmers markets. By trying to remove the barriers that stop people getting started in vegetable production, we hope to make it possible for a new generation of growers to emerge.

This year 11 growers will be participating in FarmStart Manchester – follow their progress on our Latest News pages, and buy their produce at Abbey Leys Farm's monthly farmers' market.

This scheme is the first of its kind in the UK, though it has proven a great success in North America. We hope to emulate that success here. To see how it works in Canada [click here](#).

Applications to join FarmStart in 2015 will be available from October 2014. Please e-mail kirstin@kindling.org.uk to register your interest and keep an eye on this page – we will be holding open days in autumn 2014.