



# HOW TO FIND FARMLAND TO LEASE

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*Tillable is making it simpler to find farmland to rent, but here are some more helpful tips for farmers looking to expand their operations.*

Whether you're looking to find your first acres to farm or seeking new soil to till, it can be intimidating to begin the search for farmland for rent. While Tillable's platform aims to make this process simpler for farmers and landowners, we recognize that more goes into looking for farmland than just checking a search engine for agricultural land for lease.

In fact, there's a lot more you can do to position yourself as a farmer who landowners will want to rent to and to find land that's the right fit for you. Here's what new and experienced farmers need to know about their search for farmland for rent.

## **Advice for new farmers looking for farmland to lease**

If you want to find great farmland to lease, be a farmer worth leasing to. Your value to your landlord goes beyond the dollar you're willing to pay—who you are and what you value matters.

It's critical to build strong relationships and market yourself as a great tenant from day one, and there are a couple of ways you should think about how you approach these tasks:

## **1. Build your brand as a great farmland tenant**

Just because you're a farmer doesn't mean you shouldn't think about your brand—how you're perceived in the community.

The reputation you build impacts your ability to get a great farmland lease almost as much as the rent you're able to pay. It's important for farmers to know their brand and communicate it well.

If you're invested in treating the soil as a living organism and practice biological farm management, you'll find landlords who are also interested in improving their soil quality in the long term, rather than those looking to make a quick buck. Show that you're skilled, hardworking and ready to help improve the farmland you rent (and everyone's finances along the way).

## **2. Great farmland tenants cultivate strong relationships**

As a farmer, you can't just approach a landowner and try to outbid your neighbors on the ground they're already farming. This may work in the short term, but it won't help you build strong relationships in the local community—not to mention, that it's not a morally or ethically sound approach.

Even if you're a "new farmer," it's likely you already have some family ties to the industry and your local agricultural community. For the rare new farmer looking for farmland without established connections, cold calling farms you'd want to rent is an option, but it's not likely to get you far.

Co-ops and extension agencies may be able to help connect farmers to people who are looking to rent their land, but the best way to get started is to get your foot in the door and establish a network of positive references. Whether you opt to take your search for land to Tillable's online platform or elsewhere, you'll need real people in your life who can attest to your work ethic, values, and that you're worth your salt.

If you don't have much experience farming yet, your best bet is likely to advertise yourself as a custom operator for landowners and farm owners who don't have time to get to everything. Find work planting, harvesting or spreading to get your foot in the door, and you may just be ready to lease your own farmland next season.

### **If you're an experienced farmer looking for new farmland to lease, seek the right fit**

Whether you're looking to farm different land, expand the number of acres you farm or change landlords, it can be a challenge to find the right land (and the right landlord) for your goals.

And this may take some time. In our experience, because farmland tenants don't change farms that often, it typically takes 5-10 years to locate the right land to rent. The USDA reports that 70 percent of acres rented from operator landlords have been rented to the same tenant for over three years. Nearly a third of these acres have been rented to the same farmer for over a decade.

This just means you'll need to play the long game. When you're looking for new farmland, there are a few things you can do to stand out:

- Be progressive and demonstrate your investment in sustainable farming practices so you can gain a competitive advantage over other farmers in your area.
- Your yields should fall in the top ten percent in your county.
- Keep marketing in mind. Make sure you're offering your grains at a competitive price in your county and be sure to state their quality.

Ultimately, finding the right farmland to lease make take time, but once you have a strong relationship with your landlord, you'll be well-positioned for years to come.

### **How Tillable can help you find farmland for rent**

If you're looking to simplify your search, Tillable is a great place to start looking for agricultural land for lease. By providing tools to help landlords find and vet prospective farmland tenants, our platform offers younger farmers credibility and a better view of what a competitive offer in your county looks like today.

By legitimizing your offer and providing the required references, Tillable also offers farmers and farmland owners a better chance of finding the right land at the right price. However experienced you are, you'll be able to see what's available this year, verify the soil's health before signing a cash rent lease for the year and get a fair price. And that visibility is what it's all about.

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