



TAXES

Best Practices for Working With a Service Provider

It is difficult to know what to look for in a service provider for your farm or ranch business. These tips will help you make a decision with confidence and be prepared for your first meeting.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

- ☐ Choose someone with whom you are comfortable sharing private and personal information.
- ☐ You are in a position of power to choose who will receive your business.
- ☐ Ask for references and/or examine online reviews.
- ☐ Decide on a price range comfortable to you.
- ☐ Paid services may be able to respond more quickly than free or non-profit service providers.

PREPARING FOR A MEETING:

- ☐ You may need to bring a completed contract or service provider requested information, which may include financial documents and projections, tax returns, contracts/agreements, parcel information, farm or management plans, etc.
- ☐ Become familiar with average rates of similar services.
- ☐ Consider using our Tax Organizer to give your tax preparer the relevant information they need to file your return accurately.
- ☐ Organize your records as thoroughly as possible. By categorizing receipts by month and labeling each with the appropriate category, you may reduce costs and streamline the process.

As a Community Development Financial Institution, we invest in the prosperity and well-being of farmers, ranchers, and fishers who have limited access to financial resources. Our programs center communities of color, and promote just and resilient economies and natural resource conservation. We offer fair financing, business education, and support for owning or managing agricultural land. For more about California FarmLink, see: cafarmlink.org

Questions to ask:

AGRICULTURAL EXPERIENCE

- ☐ What is your experience working in agriculture?
- ☐ How many of your clients are farmers/ranchers?
- ☐ Do you have experience with Schedule F?

RATES AND PAYMENT

- ☐ What is the typical rate you charge for your services?
 - ☐ Do you charge a lower rate for administrative work or travel time?
- ☐ How do you charge for your services?
 - ☐ Do you charge hourly or a fixed fee per completed form?
 - ☐ Do your services/prices differ depending on the scale of an operation?
- ☐ When is payment due?
 - ☐ Can you offer a payment plan?

GENERAL INQUIRIES

- ☐ Where are your offices located?
- ☐ Do you work with clients outside of your office locale?
- ☐ What do I need to prepare for our first meeting?
- ☐ What is their availability and what is the estimated timeline for your scope of work?

What to expect from a Service Provider:

- ☒ Respect and patience
- ☒ Confidentiality
- ☒ Reasonable response rates of 3-5 business days
- ☒ Clear communications of timeline, scope of work, and projected cost/ payment schedule

What is expected from you:

- ☒ Respect, patience and honesty
- ☒ Expect to share personal and financial/business information so that the service provider can best serve you
- ☒ Timely delivery of documentation and other requests from service provider
- ☒ Show up to meetings on time and provide at least 24 hours notice of cancellation.
- ☒ Understand limits of what a serviceprovider can provide and the work required on your part to make the project successful
- ☒ Understand the difference between what your tax preparer is responsible for vs the role of a bookkeeper and a CPA