

Flexible Small Plot Farming Model Appealing

Take a spin with me to learn about a new model for small-scale organic farming. Called SPIN, which stands for Small Plot Intensive farming, the model was developed by two Canadians, Wally Satzewich and Gail Vandersteen. This approach to farming proves that the aspiring farmer doesn't necessarily need large acreage and substantial startup capital.

Using an intensive relay growing technique and using precise formulas for targeting revenue, SPIN farming can push yields and income to much higher levels than expected.

The SPIN website (www.spinfarming.com) claims this approach is "easy-to-learn and inexpensive-to-implement vegetable farming system that makes it possible to earn significant income from land bases under an acre in size."

According to an article in E: The Environmental Magazine ("SPIN in the City," July/August 2009), SPIN and its spin-offs fit the general downsizing trend in American farming. Appealing to first-time farmers, the SPIN method is versatile with all sorts of farming—biodynamic, permaculture and no-till.

The article pointed out that where soil might not be suitable for farming, either because of pollution or rocky or acidic conditions, SPIN farmers have found success using "EarthBoxes"—self-contained units with a built-in irrigation and fertilization system.

Although it does require a lot of physical labor (as opposed to the mechanization of large-scale farming), SPIN farming is adaptable to many environments. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 2007 Census of Agriculture, "new farms tend to have more diverse production, fewer acres, lower sales and younger operations."

Feeling like you're ready for an entrepreneurial adventure? Consider giving SPIN a spin. To learn more, meet SPIN farmers, order a guide or even watch a three-minute video, check out the SPIN website (listed above). To find out more about EarthBoxes, go to www.earthbox.com