Land Match England

Guide to Writing a Management Plan

This document is a guide to writing a Management Plan for your land based business. It is the first step in communicating the specific ideas you have in mind for your business and how you will approach it. The Management Plan is a more generalised, slimmed down version of the Business Plan and will be shared with landowners who we consider could be a good match for you. Once a match is confirmed you will develop financial projections and add details to the Management Plan that are specific to the land that you are interested in. This will bring the document in line with a full business plan. Landmatch England has a ‘Guide to Writing a Business Plan’ and a ‘Financial Projections Template’ which details the additional sections you will need to add.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

You will need to go into some detail about your business proposal in your management plan. Some of that information may be sensitive and it may contain personal data. Landmatch England are committed to protecting your data in line with GDPR and will only share your management plan within the Landmatch team and with the land owners you are interested in matching with. Your management plan will never be made public. By sharing your management plan with us you agree to the above conditions.

Content

The purpose of a management plan is to give a general understanding of what kind of business you want to run and how you intend to run it. It can help to promote you as a tenant and allow the land owner to identify areas where there is alignment or cross over in values and approach. There may be areas where they can see opportunities for mutual benefit or where your farming activity can support their broader aims for the site. The reader wants to feel like they are getting a sense of the kind of farmer that you are. They want to feel inspired by your passion, enthusiasm and drive to achieve your goals. You don’t have to have every detail pinned down at this point, in fact some flexibility can help the land owner to see how you might fit within their picture of a landmatch and can help to overcome any sticking points.

Formatting

Use the formatting that communicates most directly. Consider using a table or bullet points instead of writing a list within a paragraph. Images also help to communicate your vision and build excitement for your idea.

The most important sections below are highlighted, these should be included in your management plan. The rest of the sections are recommended but might not be needed for your particular proposal. You can adjust the order of the document to suit your plan. We would expect the management plan to fall somewhere in the region of 5-10 pages long.

Sections

1 Executive Summary
2 Business Description
3 Methodology
4 Experience & Qualifications
5 Market Research
6 Labour Requirements
7 Set Up Infrastructure
8 Site Requirements
9 Financial Summary

Summary of Sections

1 Executive Summary

This is the written form of the 'Elevator Pitch' and is your opportunity to convince the reader of your idea in the first few paragraphs. Some readers won't have time to go through all of the detail you have given, they will only want to see the executive summary and perhaps the financial summary at the end. In your Executive Summary give a summary of; the proposal, the overarching approach, who you are, what your key land/utilities requirements are and what you expect to achieve by yr 3 or 5.

2 Business Description

This is where you can go into more detail about your business plan. Discuss any value added processing you will do. You can describe here how you intend to scale up your activity on the land over the initial few years. Mostly however, this is your opportunity to share your enthusiasm for your proposal and how you will make it work.

3 Methodology

Here you can go into detail about your growing techniques and/or livestock care approach. If there are methods you employ that require deliveries of materials, or the use of machinery or buildings, anything which might affect the wider site that you are on, describe them here.

4 Experience & Qualifications

When describing your past experience, it is helpful to go into specifics about the work or training that is especially relevant to your business idea. Include details about the length of time you were in that role, indicate the scale you were working at e.g. farm scale / field scale and the responsibilities that you held.

5 Market Research

You probably won't know where your eventual landmatch will be so you can't go into specific detail about the outlets you might sell to. You can however describe the type of sales you will be aiming to make. Are you going to have a stall at festivals? Maybe you sell to weddings caterers or restaurants? Do you want to grow exclusively for wholesale or will you focus on veg boxes? Give reasons behind your choice of sales outlet and be clear that you will be flexible and responsive to the local market once you find a landmatch.

6 Labour Requirements

At this stage a landowner might want to know the number of people involved day to day with your business. You might want to indicate roughly how often they might be on site and also if you will be inviting volunteers to help you on the land.

7 Set Up Infrastructure

This is the capital investment you will need to make in order to start your land based business. By providing a costed list of equipment and infrastructure that you will need, you can be transparent with land holders about the investment that you are making in the site while also opening up the conversation about existing infrastructure that might be available to you.

8 Site Requirements

It is a good idea to share the features of a site you'd 'like to have' and especially the 'must haves' in your plan. These might be aspect, type of landscape, livestock shelter, access to machinery or size of plot. Most landholders will have a specific plot in mind that they are offering for a landmatch but there might be wiggle room on a range of things.

9 Financial Summary

Without the specific detail of the land you won't be able to get really accurate figures but thinking about the scale of land you will farm, the crops and outlets you will supply should give you some rough totals to populate the table below.

NB. Direct costs are the costs related to individual product lines, if you stopped producing that particular thing that direct cost wouldn't exist in your plan. Overheads are overall costs, the background running costs such as electricity, transport costs etc.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Income	£42,600	£89,845	£114,420
Direct Costs	£41,837	£59,866	£70,057
Overheads	£23,594	£43,195	£44,396
Total Annual Margin	-£26,653	-£17,039	-£3,856