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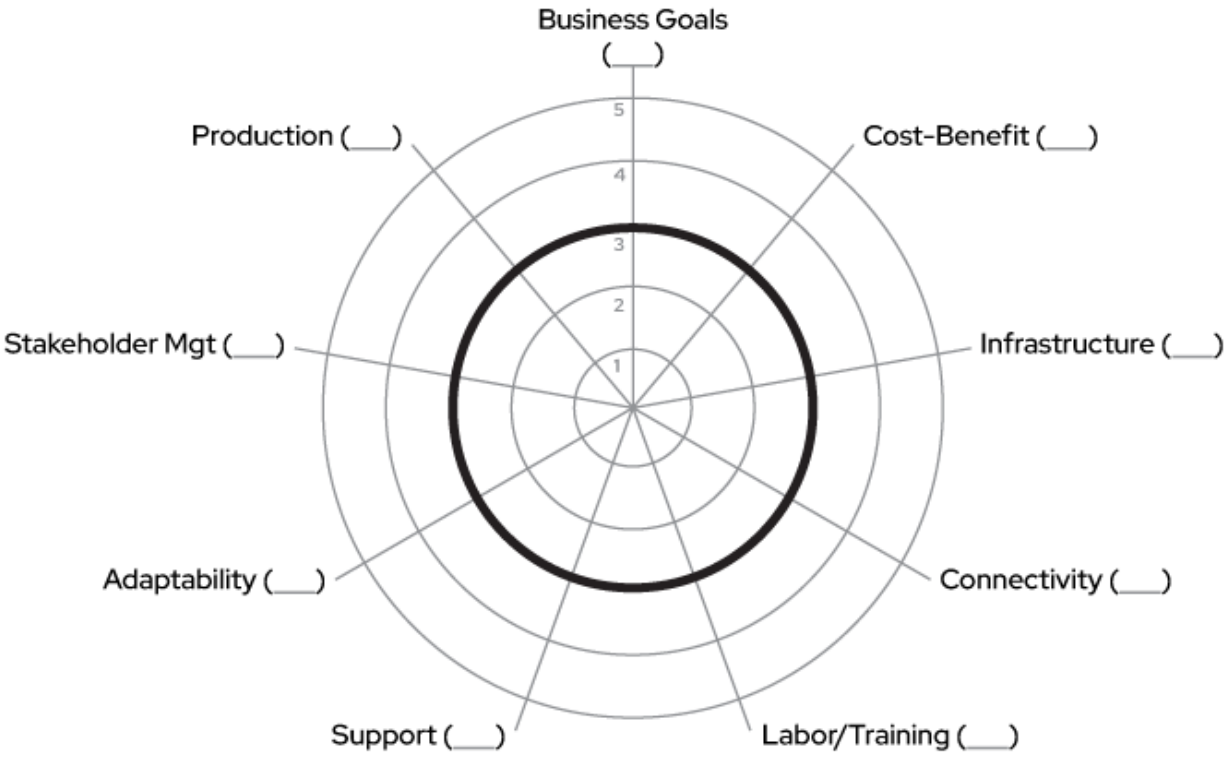
Ag Technology – Are You Ready?

A worksheet to assess your readiness to adopt new technology

Adopting new technology can be a big investment. When done well, it can improve efficiency and profits. When done poorly, it can be costly. Success depends on many factors, and understanding them ahead of time is critical. **This worksheet is designed to help you assess how ready you are to adopt new technology by identifying both strengths and areas that may need additional attention.**

How this worksheet works

1. Review each statement in the nine category boxes on the back of this page. Assess your level of awareness and readiness, record your score for each item, and calculate the average score for each category.
2. Return to the front of the worksheet and plot your category averages on the *Technology Readiness Wheel* to create your readiness map. Connect the dots, any average score of 3 or lower indicates an area that may benefit from further learning, planning, or support.



How to use your results

If any category has an average score of 3 or below, use the guiding questions in that section to help you identify what information or planning you may still need.

For a complete list of questions and additional resources, scan the QR code or visit https://farms.extension.wisc.edu/technology

SCAN ME

How aware and ready am I? Read each statement and rate your readiness. Enter your score in the right-hand column:

1 – Not at all **2 – Minimally** **3 – Moderately** **4 – Sufficiently** **5 – Completely**

1. BUSINESS GOALS	Score
I have written business and family goals that support my long-term strategy	
I identified the main reason for adopting this technology and the key bottlenecks it addresses.	
I considered its lifespan, future updates, and potential obsolescence.	
Average score	

2. COST-BENEFIT	Score
I understand how this technology will affect production and operating costs.	
I calculated total costs, including setup and maintenance with a cushion for unexpected costs.	
I estimated return on investment (ROI) and how it changes with productivity or cost savings.	
Average score	

3. INFRASTRUCTURE & LOGISTICS	Score
I assessed compatibility with current infrastructure and any upgrades needed.	
I understand changes in resource needs like water, energy and supplies.	
I have a backup plan for hardware failures or data security issues.	
Average score	

4. CONNECTIVITY	Score
I confirmed how the technology works with my internet connection and during occasional outages.	
I'm comfortable with frequent notifications, and managing data use and security.	
I know how it fits with my current systems and if new hardware or software is needed.	
Average score	

5. LABOR & TRAINING	Score
I am aware of necessary safety measures and staff training needs.	
I understand the impact on payroll and labor savings.	
I identified the team member(s) who will lead acquisition, adoption, and troubleshooting.	
Average score	

6. SUPPORT	Score
I researched the supplier's reputation and user experiences.	
I understand service needs, downtime impacts, and contract terms.	
I know the reliability and timeliness of available support for technical issues.	
Average score	

7. ADAPTABILITY	Score
I understand short-term transition disruptions and how long they'll last.	
I considered its adaptability to changes in farm size or systems.	
I evaluated how the technology performs in different weather conditions.	
Average score	

8. STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT	Score
I gathered feedback from employees, peers, advisors, and regulators.	
I understand environmental, regulatory, and insurance coverage impacts.	
I know if the supplier's contracts affect my data use and rights.	
Average score	

9. PRODUCTION	Score
I evaluated the changes in management practices needed.	
I have a plan for updating protocols, processes, and operating procedures.	
I undestand the changes in yield, inputs, and outputs across the system.	
Average score	

Developed by Kevin Bernhardt, Farm Management Specialist, and the Automation Working Group (Stephanie Plaster, Carolina Pinzón, Katelyn Goldsmith, John Shutske, Angie Ulness, Jackie McCarville, Leonard Polzin, Kelly Wilfert, Nesli Akdeniz Onuki) with the UW–Madison Division of Extension.

Key Questions to Consider
If you scored a 3 or lower in any of the categories, review and answer the following questions in those categories to help you prepare for a more successful and profitable transition.

1. **Business Goals**
    - What are your business and family goals?
    - How does this technology fit into your long-term strategy?
    - What is the primary purpose for making this change?
    - What tasks or bottlenecks could this technology improve?
    - How could future technology impact your investment?
    - What is the technology's lifespan?
    - What is the plan for updates and obsolescence?

2. **Cost-Benefit Analysis**
    - How will technology affect production?
    - How much does it cost to buy and set up the equipment and infrastructure?
    - How will the change impact operating costs (feed, labor, repair & maintenance, veterinary, utilities, insurance, etc.)?
    - What is the useful life before replacement?
    - How much does it cost to keep the equipment running and maintained?
    - How quickly do you expect to see a return on investment (ROI)?
    - What strategies can you use to manage surprise costs?
    - How does ROI change with productivity improvements, cost reductions, and better resource management?

3. **Infrastructure Compatibility**
    - Is the technology compatible with your current infrastructure and systems, or will you need to make changes to your setup?
    - How will input needs (chemicals, feed, seed, sand, etc.) change?
    - What impact will there be on infrastructure like ventilation, plumbing, electrical, water, and manure systems?
    - How much energy does the technology use and how will your energy needs change (gas, electricity, propane, etc.)?
    - What backups should be in place in case of hardware failures or data breaches?

4. **Connectivity Requirements**
    - Do internet connections meet the technology's network requirements?
    - How does the tech perform with unstable connectivity?
    - How do you feel about being constantly connected to technology through notifications and alarms?
    - How does it handle and secure sensitive farm data?
    - What measures are in place to prevent unauthorized access?
    - Does the technology work well with your existing farm management systems and software?
    - Will you need new software or subscriptions?
    - Do you have a plan for managing and using the data or will you need to hire someone to help?

5. **Labor and Training Needs**
    - How easy for people to learn the new system, no matter their technical skills?
    - How much training will your staff need to use and maintain the equipment?
    - What additional safety training is required?

- How will the changes affect your total payroll costs?
- How much time and labor will the technology save?
- Are there user groups you can join?
- Do you or your staff like and have the capacity to solve problems?

6. **Support and Maintenance**
    - How well-known and trusted is the supplier or manufacturer?
    - What extra agreements or subscriptions are required?
    - Have you checked reviews or sought testimonials from other users?
    - What maintenance and support services does the manufacturer offer?
    - How often will maintenance be needed?
    - How long will maintenance take, and how will it affect daily operations?
    - What is the likelihood of reliable and timely support for technical issues?

7. **Adaptability**
    - What are the short-term effects of switching to the new technology, and how long will they last?
    - Can the technology grow with your farm's operations?
    - How will the technology adapt if your business size or structure changes?
    - How well can the technology adjust to changes in crop patterns or livestock management?
    - How does the technology perform in different weather conditions, and can it handle extreme weather?
    - How does the equipment adapt to unexpected changes in the farming environment?
    - What are the backup plans if bad weather or other factors affects the technology's performance?

8. **Stakeholder Management**
    - What is the strategy for communicating changes to and integrating feedback from employees and stakeholders?
    - What is the environmental impact of the new technology and does it match your sustainability goals?
    - What are other farmers, consultants, agricultural associations, and University research programs saying about the new technology?
    - Does the process for implementing the new technology comply with all state and federal laws and regulations?
    - How will the new technology impact any licenses or certifications?
    - If there is a written contract, are both your and the supplier/service provider's obligations clear? How will the 'fine print' impact your use of the new technology and the supplier's use of your farm data?
    - How will the new technology impact your insurance coverage? Will it impact your coverage types, levels, and premiums?

9. **Production**
    - How will you need to change your management practices?
    - How will you update protocols and operating procedures? Who will do this?
    - What changes are expected in yield, inputs, and outputs?

Reflection questions to help you move forward:

- What's stopping you from having all the information you need?
- What resources or people could help you get more information?
- What are the one or two most important things you should explore first?
- When will you get the information by and who is responsible for getting it?

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