**Taking the First Step: Assess Goals and Site**

There are many reasons to plant trees and shrubs on livestock and poultry farms. A properly-designed tree planting can provide a windbreak; control snow so it’s not deposited on driveways, feed bunks, pit fans or roofs; improve relationships with neighbors; provide shade in the summer and protection from winter weather; improve aesthetics and provide visual screening; reduce odor; conserve energy; and more.

Regardless of whether you do a plan for your own site or enlist the expertise of a professional landscaper, it is important to assess your goals and take an inventory of your site to ensure you aren't planting trees in the wrong place(s).

The first step to having a functional windbreak is determining your goals and assessing your site. Below there is worksheet to walk you through the process. Under Goals Assessment, there is a list of different things a properly-designed tree planting can accomplish. Identify your goals by marking the items that apply to your farm.

Then, take a look at your farm site and fill out the Site Inventory section. The very first item you need to consider is your plans for growing the farm. Are you planning to add another livestock barn in the foreseeable future? Or maybe a machine shed? Those are things that need to be taken into consideration at the very beginning. The last thing you want to do is invest time and money into planting trees and have to take them out in 5 or 10 years. Think long-term!

Another crucial item is air flow and ventilation. Identify the type of ventilation system you have for your livestock facilities. Generally speaking, the recommendation is to keep trees a minimum of 70-80 feet back from barns on the north and west sides. On naturally-ventilated barns, avoid planting dense trees on the south and east sides.

Then, make sure to identify all underground utilities, wells, water lines, tile lines, etc., as well as overhead power lines.

Take into account where feed trucks need to unload, semis need to turn around, manure application equipment needs to go, and other operational considerations to make sure any newly planted trees won’t be in the way and/or get run over.

These are a few considerations to help you get started. For additional tips, or a personal consultation, give the Coalition to Support Iowa’s Farmers a call at 800-932-2436, or contact any of the [landscape professionals](http://www.supportfarmers.com/nurseries) participating in the Green Farmstead Partner program.

**Goals Assessment:**

Check those items that apply to your farm’s needs.
 \_\_\_\_\_ Windbreak
 \_\_\_\_\_ Snow control
 \_\_\_\_\_ Odor reduction
 \_\_\_\_\_ Visual screening
 \_\_\_\_\_ Neighbor relations
 \_\_\_\_\_ Energy efficiency
        \_\_\_\_\_ Other reason(s): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Site Inventory:**

List information needed to design the site.

* Future plans for the farm (additional livestock, buildings, etc.):
* Type of ventilating system and requirements for that type of facility:
* Situation of buildings (e.g., N-S; NE-SW, etc.):
* Location of overhead utilities (present or future):
* Location of underground utilities (present or future):
* Location of wells, water lines and tile lines:
* Electronic cables:
* How/where you move livestock:
* How feed is handled:
* How manure is handled and transported:
* Equipment needed to maintain site:
* Determine where the snow drifts and how it is handled:
* Areas that need visual screening (e.g., compost pile, dead animal pick-up, etc.):
* Soil types at site:
* Drainage capabilities/characteristics at site:
* Location of neighbors most affected or who have voiced concern:
* Budget:

For more information or a personal consultation, contact the Coalition to Support Iowa’s Farmers by calling 800-932-2435.