



Robins Creek Farm

Business Plan

05-29-2024

Contact

Ross Robins

(289-969-9425)

rossrobins@live.com

Address

Mailing address: 5756 Sixteen Rd

Ontario, Canada

LOR 1Y0

Table of contents

1. Executive summary	1
2. Goals and objectives	2
3. Farm background and history	8
4. Ownership, management and human resources (HR)	10
5. Products, services and target market	12
6. Sales and marketing	15
7. SWOT analysis	17
8. Financial position and projections	18

1. Executive Summary

Project/business description

Who we are

- A fourth generation family of farmers with key players having 12 years plus in various financially successful entrepreneurial endeavours and hands on experience in animal husbandry and crop growing. We are already a member of OFA and qualify for the farm tax exemption.
- The farm property at 7395 Twenty Rd has been in Evelyn Ducks family since early 1900's and has since passed from grandparents to parents to Mrs. Evelyn Duck and will be passed down to Melissa Duck and Ross Robins. To keep the existing farm in the family name there is a long-term lease that has been arranged on the 18 acres with a rent to own opportunity currently being negotiated between Jeff and Evelyn Duck (parents) and Ross Robins and Melissa Duck (children) with the additional approx. 30 acres to be left to Ross Robins and Melissa Duck upon the parents retirement. This is important to keep the entire parcel of land together, running a sustainable farming operation, under the family name to avoid land being left open to future development.
- The farming activities will include 10 acres of hay crops and 3 acre garlic crops, small scale egg production and to begin a 6 stall horse barn for horse boarding.

Business Description

- **Horse Boarding** – The horse boarding facility will be targeted at track horses that need a rehabilitation facility in the off season. We are already working with this industry and know we can fill our barns with horses due to contacts we have acquired. The projected revenues generated by the horse boarding facility are estimated at \$33,000.
- **Hay Crops** – Through family contacts we have a list of farmers that are waiting for us to supply quality hay for their farms. Some of the hay will be kept for the horse boarding facility but most will be sold to third parties. The projected revenue from this endeavour is \$8800 per annum
- **Garlic Crops** – The farm will allocate 3 acres of the property for garlic crops to be built up over time which should yield approx. \$60,000 by year 3

2.Goals and objectives

Our fourth generation proposed family-owned farm is located in Southern Ontario and is naturally severed through the Navigable Waterways Act. The severed lot includes 18 acres of Good General Agriculture lands with some Natural Heritage overlay. The severed land is currently being used for hay production but it is our goal to add value to this agricultural land by running a sustainable, environmentally sound micro farm by planting crops of garlic, raising poultry and using the existing hay fields to compliment these activities. It is also our plan to add a horse boarding facility. As farm land becomes diminished by urban spread we want to be a glowing example of how a successful micro farm can efficiently run on a smaller acreage showcasing the diversity and adaptability of modern agriculture and animal care.

Vision, Mission and Values

OUR VISION - Our micro farm is to become a community leader and an example of how next generation farmers can redefine what it is to be a farmer, to develop interest for growth in the area of micro farming within the community and for next generation of farmers by running a successful, sustainable smaller scale farm.

OUR MISSION - is to provide high quality naturally grown garlic, garlic products and eggs to niche markets within the Niagara region by promoting locally grown and farm to plate food products as well as fostering community education on the health benefits of consuming natural garlic. We will also provide our community with top notch animal care and promote a supportive working relationship with our equine partners.

OUR VALUES - Service to others has always been a primary goal for us personally and will continue to be in this fourth generation farm. Presently servicing the publics needs and providing excellent service to our communities in the field of electrical contracting and horse training, we will continue to provide a high level of excellence on our farm. We plan to be stewards of this land and its resources and take a conservation approach to our farm. We want a return to basics of family, community, hard work and faith by employing ethical decision making throughout the entire farming process.

Business goals for the next 3 years

The critical activities and goals for the next 3 years are as follows:

- Year 1 – Main goal for year 1 is to replenish existing hay field, for which all equipment is owned and or made available for our use, by adjusting soil ph and fertility, possibly reintroducing appropriate forage species and managing the weeds early in the year so as to increase the quality and quantity of hay to sell to the community.
- We are in the process of applying for zoning changes and building permits on the land so that we may begin the planning process of building the Amish portable horse stables and corral. Upon obtaining required permits and zoning the house build and shed build will begin in order to take care of the livestock. The shed build will be required to accommodate storage of hay, machinery and supplies.
- Other minor goals include:
- Self education on sustainable and organic garlic growing and networking with other garlic growers through joining the Garlic Growers Association of Ontario, thereby compiling a wealth of information on the current industry.
- Sign up for workshops with the OMAFRA (Ontario Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Rural Affairs) specifically as they relate to Integrated Pest Management for crops.
- Enrolment in Good Agricultural Practices Course and Ontario Safe Food Handlers Course
- Assessing the various options for financing future farm business activities.
- Analyze various “packages” of horse boarding that would be provided to the public, which provide the highest level of care of the animals in line with profit expectations.

- Year 2 – Access to planting and harvesting equipment has already been secured, so the main goals for the subsequent year include having the pre fabricated horse stalls/barn installed on the 18 acres that is most appropriate given the environmentally sensitive protected land sections of this lot in order to uphold our environmental stewardship and public trust responsibilities. Provide for a waste management system for the horses being boarded and a way to safely store and spread the manure for use on newly bedded garlic crop. The principal home and the other building required for storage of hay and equipment would be completed in Year 2 as some of the hay would now be kept for boarded horses. The other secondary goal of Year 2 and just as equally prioritized would be the land preparation for the garlic crop along with seeding the first crop using

only clean seed that is free of any disease or virus ensuring future success in Years 3 and 4 and beyond.

- Year 3 – Main goal for Year 3 is to build the garlic harvesting building to hang and process garlic. A small secondary portable greenhouse will be installed to establish an early start to the growth of garlic for planting. The farm will continue supplying hay and providing horse boarding services. By Year 3, depending on the garlic seed used we will see our first year of profits from our crops. Our overall goal is that the resources of the farm and lands and all the services and products provided will collectively provide sustainable profits that coincide with our expectation of excellent service.
- Year 4 – Maintain and grow the already established horse boarding and garlic crops by renting our in laws 20-30 acres from them until the farm is transferred to us upon their upcoming retirement. Potential to build further horse stalls to accommodate growing boarding business.
- Year 5 – Continue to maintain the farm and ensure steady and sustainable growth by creating a budget and reviewing results of farming activities on a regular and continuous basis with our accountant.

Strategic objectives

Personal goals provide the foundation for business goals in any proper plan. Our personal goal of showcasing our successful micro farm to the community in which we both have lived our entire lives drives at the heart of what we want to accomplish. We want to prove to ourselves as well as our community that land value is not what the financial market dictates but how the land can sustain life for both human and animal alike.

With this in mind our business goal of running a profitable and sustainable micro farm that adheres to biodiversity and promoting sustainable use of the ecosystems will be accomplished with our following individual strengths:

- The Chief operator (Melissa Duck) has 18 years of equine experience in care, training and welfare of a variety of breeds of horses and has obtained a high level of respect in the industry. Ms. Duck has also worked at a local horse facility in training and rehabilitation. Robins Creek Farm will be an extension facility for thoroughbred and race

horses needing rest and rehabilitation. Ms. Duck's high level organizational skills will lead her well in the day to day operations of the horse boarding businesses. Melissa has lived with the day to day farm operations growing up along side her grandparents dairy farm and has a thorough understanding of the commitment it takes to run an animal care operation.

- The youthfulness of management is a benefit as both have a rich knowledge of social media skills which is inline with the direct marketing strategy of the business.
- The Chief executive (Ross Robins) has 12 years experience as an electrical contractor working closely with other local businesses and has obtained a strong reputation for high level, customer centered service with long term customers and repeat work. Mr. Robins has built his company from the ground up with no initial capital investment with revenues now exceeding 3 million. This life experience has provided him with a wealth of contacts and ability to network with customers from his community that could greatly aid in the planned business activities of the Robins Duck Farm. Mr. Robins' entrepreneurship skills set such as leadership, time management, problem solving skills, creative thinking and business management have proven vital for promoting innovation, business growth and competitiveness in his current businesses and will carry through to any future endeavour.

The life skills and contacts that have been compiled with Ross and Melissa's careers can be used strategically in the businesses and are a definite advantage over other competitors.

Financial objectives

We want our financial objectives to be concrete and specific so that we can measure our success throughout the planning, implementation and operational processes. Specific objectives aid in long term planning in the businesses, act as benchmarks throughout the process and help the management team make informed decisions to meet its targets.

The main financial objective is to diversify the business activity receiving revenue streams from multiple sources. The farm business will then be protected by way of diversification and reduce risks associated with one revenue stream.

The farm business has specific financial goals, the most critical being:

- Repayment of all initial invested capital by recycling profits from all business activities of the farm each year making repayment of start up loans first priority. This will be accomplished by the following:
 1. The Chief Operations Officer (Melissa Duck) will not be taking a salary until the initial investments are paid in full. This is reasonable and feasible because the personal expenditures will be covered by the Chief Executive Officer (Ross Robins) salary he pulls from his current corporations.
 2. The farm business will make use of the credit facility already developed and in place with Ross Robins companies, so that the farm business can realize a lower cost of borrowing. This will lend in the repayment of the principal loans in a more timely fashion by paying off more of the principal portions of the loans.
 3. Up to date record keeping will be performed so that the management can make well informed business decisions and grow the micro farm in steps. This will provide the time necessary for management to run each division more effectively and seek outside contractors on an as needed basis.
- The main plan is to set up the facilities in a manner to save time in the daily chores of running the animal care services to keep labour costs down. This will also allow the staff to capitalize and make the most of their time supplying their customers with superb animal care services and allow time for the value added services they plan to offer (grooming care, training and extra attention for special needs animals).

The second most important financial objective, like any farm, is to capitalize on all the natural resources provide by the land, as well as offering services that synchronize together thereby reducing costs and maximizing profits.

Critical activities of this objective are:

- Using waste created by horse barn as fertilizer for the garlic crops.
- Developing the quality and cutting the hay from existing fields to feed the horses and provide insulation to the garlic crops.
- Robins Electric inc. is a related corporation to the Robins Creek Farm Inc and will provide the farm an opportunity to cultivate its own wood products. Robins Electric Inc. owns property of which is included a northern property that is considered by the government to be part of the Managed Forest Program (Plan #17164). On this parcel of land there is a 107 acre wood lot. As part of the Managed Forest Program this wood lot must be maintained and selected trees/wood cleared from the wood lot over time. This wood

can then be chipped and used by the horse stables as bedding for the horses. This will greatly reduce the up keep costs of the horses being boarded and reduce daily operations costs.

- The natural beauty of the lands on the severed lot provide the perfect idyllic back drop for trail rides for the horse boarders, this will provide a major incentive for horse owners to board on this property at a potentially higher rent.
- Robins Water Haulage Inc a related corporation has committed to supply the farm all its water needs at cost thereby reducing the costs of water required to run the businesses..
- Robins Electric Inc. will further supply all electrical services installations for the initial cost of the buildings and home free of cost thereby reducing the cost of borrowing

3. Farm background and History

Location and History

The start up farm will be located at 7395 Twenty Road West Lincoln Township, on lands north of the navigable water way. It includes 18 acres of what is deemed by Township “Good General Agriculture with Natural Heritage Overlay. Its sits adjacent to Ms. Ducks parents farm.

The Duck family has been in farming for over 80 years in the West Lincoln area. Ms. Duck was raised on her grandparents dairy farm in which she was an integral part of daily operations growing up. Ms Ducks parents purchased the property from Evelyn Ducks grandparents who now own the adjoining 50 acres on 7895 Twenty Road and have both, along with their daughters, participated in haying the fields and planting and caring for soy beans and corn that supplied their parents’ farm. Farming and working with the land and animals has been apart of Melissa’s Ducks life from early childhood to adulthood. Farm kids realize the value of life, from watching in amazement while new calves are born to participating in the excitement of feeding a new calf. Farm kids learn the basics of animal husbandry from watching their family care for the cows. This upbringing has inspired Melissa and Ross to provide this same life for their young family.

Major initiatives

The three major business activities of the proposed start up farm are as follows:

- Natural Garlic Crops – The farm will offer garlic in its natural form as well as in future provide other alternative garlic products.

Cultivated for over 5000 years garlic has been revered as an essential culinary ingredient. Intense and uniquely flavoured, garlic is found in virtually all cuisines of world. As Ontario becomes more multicultural, garlic becomes a very sustainable market offering as everyone uses it. Our farm business will fiercely promote and educate the public on the benefits of garlic locally grown (versus Asian Garlic) both culinary and for the health and well being of humans as garlic contains many health benefits. This is important as more and more people seek out natural remedies over prescription drugs for the ailments.

The Niagara region's natural beauty from the fruit farms and orchards of The Bench extending to the south that holds vast fields that offer an array of agricultural uses and breathtaking views of natural features such as wetlands, forests and streams provides the perfect back drop for the culinary market. This is the reason for the social movement which promotes serving local foods at restaurants and local schools and also one will notice the trend that local grocers now try to promote the "grown local" foods in their stores. These foods are healthier and the cultivation of these foods produce less harmful effects to the environment in transportation.

- Horse Boarding Business – Per the Socio Economic Impact Assessment report created by Wilton Consulting Group of Canada it has been proven that the following is fact:

Equines are good for people – There has been an emergence of horse therapy programs as more people realize the mental health benefits associated with being in these animals presence and working with these magnificent creatures. There is a market in this industry as people seek alternative ways to reduce stress.

Equines are good for the economy – Canada spends more then 8.3 billion dollars on keeping horses and large equine venues serve as economic drivers in rural communities across Canada

Equine industries provide a buffer between agriculture and urban lands. These farms can help to increase awareness in urban areas of normal farming activities

On a more local basis Ms. Duck's insights into this industry over her extensive years of experience working at many different facilities and working with a variety of breeds of horses has uncovered a need for over flow care from the existing horse stables within and around the Township of West Lincoln. Therefore, this area of care for horses is under supplied in the area and with Ms. Ducks vast and extensive contacts in this industry, she has realized further boarding facilities are much needed.

4. Ownership, management and human resources (HR)

The Robins Creek Farm and its associated businesses will be set up as a Canadian Controlled Private Corporation. The land will be held by Robins Electric Inc, the principal residence will be held personally and be financed personally by Ross Robins and Melissa Duck. The storage shed will be owned by Robins Electric Inc with a small portion of it rented to the Robins Duck Farm Inc. for storage of hay, garlic and farm equipment storage. The horse barn buildings and business will be held by the Farm Incorporation with Ross Robins as sole shareholder.

The Organizational Structure of the Farm Incorporation will be as follows:

Chief Operations Officer –

Mellisa Duck, mother/wife with 18 years of combined equine experience including caring day to day for many breeds of horses including racing horses, lessons horses, rehab horses, mares, foals, brood mares and stallions. Experience assisting with veterinary care labouring mares and has learned about the over all health and welfare of horses at varying stables around West Lincoln.

Experience breeding and caring for exotic poultry breeds. Ms. Duck had a small scale business selling rare chicken eggs to the public in 2021/2022.

20 years experience during family farm hay seasons, hauling wagons with a tractor, raking hay and setting it for storage.

Chief Executive Officer –

Ross Robins, father/husband with 27 years experience as an Electrician from apprentice to Master Electrician status. 12 years into owning an electrical contracting business and starting from no capital and working up to 3 plus million dollars in revenues annually. Entrepreneurially minded and highly respected in the construction industry for providing top tier electrical services, servicing a variety of industries including local home builders within the Niagara Area.

Ross has expanded his repertoire of business skills in a newly water haulage company that services the West Lincoln and Haldimand area. Using his skills and experience as small to

medium sized business owner the business went from operational losses to now earning a respectable profit within a 3 year span. The company has expanded the customer base from the initial 340 customers that existed when the company was purchased to the current level of 785 customers.

Operations Support Staff –

Aiden Robins – part time – summers - 16 years old son of Ross Robins. Has grown up as a member of 4H in West Lincoln and has had hands on experience helping at his grandparents' dairy farm in Wellandport, caring for the cows and operating farm equipment with his grandfather. Post secondary plans include running his own farm in West Lincoln.

Operations Support Staff – continued

Jaiden Duck – part time – summers – 14 years old, daughter of Melissa Duck. Jaiden has spent summers helping her mother with the horses she works with in her employment and has also taken riding lessons and training on personal care of horses.

Amanda Duck – full time staff – sister of Melissa Duck. Amanda has agreed to work full time on the Robins Duck Farm alongside her sister and she brings a strong work ethic, family loyalty and has general knowledge of farm life Amanda has developed a good knowledge of social media skills and will be an integral part in providing this type of advertising and public relations work to the Farm Business.

Jeffery and Evelyn Duck – parents of Melissa Duck. Advisors to Melissa and Ross regarding hay field and crop care. Father Jeffery Duck has many years experience as a farm hand in a variety of agricultural settings. Mother Evelyn Duck has experience in the daily business administration as they have had a variety of their own small business ventures.

Key Advisors:

- Andrea Bland, CPA – Ross Robins corporate and personal accountant since 2017, participating in the start up of the Water Haulage company as well as the Utilities division of Robins Electric Inc. Andrea has 20 years experience as a freelance accountant in a variety of industries mainly lawyers offices, custom home builders, construction

contractors and accounting firms. Andrea's services extend to include HR services (Members Plan Administrator for employee benefits plan) and general consulting on business matters/ acquisitions, capital assets investments, cash flow projections and business planning.

- Rick Betts RBC – Commercial Account Manager and banking advisor at Royal Bank of Canada for the last 4 years. Over the past 4 years Robins Electric admin staff have developed a good rapport with Rick and his associates meeting annually to review financials. Mr Betts has been very supportive over the last 4 years with Ross Robins banking needs.
- Terry Romaniuk – lawyer Halinda Romaniuk Professional Law Corporation, St Catharines – 10 plus years
Specializing in business and corporate law, Terry has provided legal advice to Ross Robins on various matters associated with running his corporations and has provided high standard service and care on all aspects.

5. Products, services and Target Market

Natural Grown Garlic Crops

Primary farm product or service

- Naturally grown garlic will be supplied to the community for household use as well as marketed and sold to higher end restaurants.
- Once established BBQ Rubs, Marinades and Sauces will be introduced using our naturally locally grown garlic as the main ingredient in the food product
- Preserved garlic (oil preserved) will be offered to market following all government food safety guidelines

Target market

- We will use social media as well as selling our garlic at local fruit and vegetable stands in its natural form, the main market being households.

- We will promote our garlic to local restaurants as an alternative to store bought garlic to promote the social movement farm to plate
- As the business progresses we will begin to enter the gourmet food stores found locally throughout the Niagara areas.

Competitive advantage

Using social media outlets and signage aimed at educating the public about the health benefits of using locally grown garlic (over Asian produced garlic) along with the superior taste, the garlic business will begin to sway the public opinions about cost over quality

Pricing strategy

The rise in consumers prioritizing quality of food ingredients and seeking locally grown food products will allow the Ontario garlic growers more freedom in asking higher prices for their products. As well, a bulb of garlic at for example \$3.00 a bulb goes along way when used in several dishes and consumers tend not to be sensitive to the price of food items that boost the overall taste of their culinary creations.

Horse Boarding Services – 6 Stall Horse Barn

Primary farm product or service

- Horse shelter provided in temperature regulated metal barn, each horse has its own stall and there will be a section for tacking the horse – 6 stall horse barn
- Staff provide owner supplied food and water to the horse daily and stalls will be cleaned out daily
- Staff will put horse out to pasture daily monitoring the safety and welfare of the animal under their care
- Staff will facilitate farrier and vet calls
- Extra fees will be charged for blanketing, supplements, treatments and grooming
- Horse owners who board may use lands for trail rides and to exercise their horses as a complimentary service

Target Market

- Private horse owners
- Overflow boarding services will be offered to local stables in the West Lincoln and surrounding area, transportation to be agreed upon between the party and may be offered at an additionally charged fee

Competitive Advantage

The Robins Creek Farm's competitive advantage over other locally run stables will be the custom services it offers with the flexibility for the horse owners to choose a la carte services for their horses care. The small population of horses that the barn will shelter helps ensure the horses stress levels are kept to a minimum such is the way with larger facilities. The smaller scale horse barn and services allows for a more customized personal care plan to be developed for each horse which any horse owner would appreciate.

Pricing Strategy

The pricing strategy for the horse boarding services business will be structured as a basic fee of \$500 a month with the flexibility for the horse owner to add additional services as needed a la carte style pricing for:

- Blanketing horse - \$40 month
- Providing medications, supplements and providing special care as directed by a veterinarian (when owner not able to attend) - \$20 per treatment
- Grooming and tacking horse (ie preparing horse for owners arrival) per scheduled time slot – groom \$40 per groom \$60 with bath and groom – tack up \$15
- General weekly grooming when owner not able to attend - \$160 per month
- Fans/ Fly system – required in summer months \$25/month
- Horse trailer and transportation costs - \$1.86 per km

Hay Products

Primary farm product or service

- Naturally enhanced food quality hay cut and raked by the Robins Duck Farm staff
- Hay will be bailed by third party (no charge to farm) and offered for sale as a bale

Target Market

- Local farmers – some of the hay to be used on the farm as feed and insulation on crops

Competitive Advantage

- The Operators of the Robins Duck Farm already have farm contacts that will take the hay bales offered
- The farm plans to fertilize and enhance the hay field so as to get a thicker more nutrient dense bale

Pricing Strategy

- Large square bales of hay to be sold at \$110 per bale and approx. 80 bales per year in 2 cuttings yields approx. \$8,800 in revenue per annum.

6. Sales and marketing

Marketing and Sales Plan - Natural Garlic Crops Business

The farm will develop a professional web site promoting the health benefits of local garlic. Social media platforms will be used to brand the product and educate the public and market to the target markets showing the advantages over Asian supplied garlic (Asian garlic bleached, grown in human feces, lower grade mutated seed, can contain higher levels of heavy metals and chemicals).

The farm will work collaboratively to offer their products at local fruit and vegetable stands using basic signage to promote the “Buy Local” movement.

Marketing and Sales Plan – Horse Boarding Business

Initially, there is limited capacity as the barn is 6 stalls and the fact that local stables have already voiced a need for overflow boarding needs not much is required in this business division. On a as needed basis ads will be placed digitally and in local newsletters and papers for stalls to rent. As well as public forums/Facebook Marketplace/ Kijji and blogs on the internet. The outcome will be full capacity for the stable 12 months of the year

Once a horse boarder contracts to board their horse the other additional a la carte services will be offered.

7.SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
What strengths will keep you competitive over time?	What areas could be improved? Avoided?
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge and experience in the animal care and farm industry 2. Cohesion of the various existing business owned by Ross Robins and the knowledge and expertise in start ups will set the Farm Business up for success 3. The Farm is located in perfect location where culinary and pet/horse owners exist and most household incomes are more than the provincial average 4. The youthfulness of the Farm Business owners lends well to the new social media trends and applications that allow for target marketing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Too many services being offered may put strain on labour needs 2. Misguided consumer awareness and difficulty branding services as there are many services offered 3. Entirely family staffed allows for no leverage, everything is weighed by the fact that you could cause interpersonal family relationship problems when having to discipline staff or follow up on duties.
Opportunities	Threats
What other trends present an opportunity for your farm to take advantage of?	What other obstacles exist and how will you overcome them?
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Entirely family staffed – may also be a benefit as they are young adults who are looking for learning experience and aren't expecting high pay for work as they tend to be compensated through the estate 2. Both Ross Robins and Melissa Duck have vast contacts list and have developed relationships in the community that will support their business endeavors 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Strain on household budgets due to economic pressure – Strategies to overcome this obstacle – target higher income earning households who are not as sensitive to economic fluctuations 5. Incident causing any kind of loss in trust for the animal care business may have detrimental effects on business – Strategies to overcome this obstacle – identifying any customer dissatisfaction immediately and making whatever the situation is right

<p>3. There are many grants and financial options for farm start ups that the Farm Business may qualify for.</p>	<p>with on going communication with customer</p>
--	--

8. Financial position and projections

To follow upon request.