

DICKINSON COLLEGE FARM – APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

Apprenticeship Program Overview: The College Farm Apprenticeship is designed to offer recent college graduates an in-depth exposure to regenerative Organic vegetable and livestock production agriculture. With enthusiastic participation, this apprenticeship will serve as a valuable base upon which to build a career in agriculture. The experience is also applicable should apprentices choose to return to academic studies or seek other employment related to food, sustainability, and education.

Program Structure: The apprenticeship begins in mid to late May and ends in late November. Our workdays are typically from 7:30 AM to 4:30PM Monday through Friday, with an unpaid, one-hour lunch break. Those times may adjust seasonally or to accommodate weather.

Certain farm responsibilities occur on weekends or require work outside of the normal hours. These include daily livestock care, CSA clean up, irrigation during the dry season, greenhouse management, farmers' market, and food service events. Apprentices are required to participate in a coordinated, rotating schedule with other farm staff for certain tasks outside of normal work hours. Apprentices can trade odd work hours for time off during normal business hours to accommodate personal needs.

During the summer months, apprentices will be part of a team made up of full-time student employees and farm staff. During this time, each apprentice will gain a broad exposure to nearly all facets of the farm. When classes resume in the fall, apprentices take more of a leadership role on the farm, leading part-time students and volunteers on prescribed tasks and work projects.

The goal of this program is to equip apprentices with the knowledge and skills to do their work well, and to help them develop important leadership qualities. At times this will require the farm managers to provide respectful constructive feedback. We value open communication and request that applicants be receptive to the idea of receiving feedback to improve upon their work and overall experience. Communication happens in both directions – managers will work to develop a relationship of trust where apprentices feel comfortable expressing their needs and feelings pertaining to the farm.

One of the most important aspects of our program is that apprentices will be asked to assume individual areas of responsibility under close supervision of a farm manager. In these roles, apprentices will receive careful training and encouragement but will ultimately be asked to take diligent ownership and lead execution of day-to-day duties.

These areas include:

- Pastured Cattle Care and Beef Marketing
- Organic Greenhouse Controlled Environment Management and Seedling Production
- Organic Vegetable Irrigation
- Small Farm Machine Operation and Maintenance
- On-Site Farm Store & U-Pick Management
- Fresh Product Inventory Management and Processing
- Biogas Production and Food Waste Recovery
- Food Service Event Support

Please note that we offer exposure and experience to many more facets of the farm enterprise, but these are the critical areas of production where we offer formalized experience. Please also note that each apprentice will experience some exposure to each of the above areas of responsibility but one will be asked to take the lead.

The Apprenticeship Program is also a chance to live and work on a farm - witnessing the seasonal transitions and other discoveries of place-based living that can only be experienced through an on-site residency. By living on the farm, this program aims to cultivate a sense of community among the farm apprentices. The apprentices are expected to work constructively to resolve conflicts that arise, and to contribute to keeping shared spaces sanitary and tidy.

Our Commitment to Employee Development: We endeavor to provide varied opportunities both on and off the farm for personal and career development for all employees. This includes:

1. Weekly paid farm meetings and educational programs during the summer.
2. Occasional field trips to respected, local food system enterprises during the paid work week.
3. Optional social visits or educational visits to other farms during evening/weekend hours.
4. Exposure to ongoing experimental and investigative projects at the farm.
5. Engaging in farm-based community educational outreach events.
6. Access to optional relevant readings.
7. Personal mentorship.
8. Networking and connections for future employment opportunities.
9. Opportunity to and support for participation in the PASA Diversified Vegetable Pre-Apprenticeship Program.

Program Culture: Success in any business, but especially agriculture, is dependent on hustle, efficient workflow, and diligence from all participants. The farm management team loves the work they do and find beauty and joy on the farm nearly every day, yet they have learned through experience that achieving good harvests and a healthy agroecosystem requires constantly pushing themselves to be faster, smarter, and more organized. Farmers do not sleep well at night if the crops and livestock are not properly cared for. We managers set ambitious goals for vegetable and livestock production and health, as well as for a diversity of education and outreach programming.

Apprentice candidates should be prepared to be pushed to develop their hustle as a core skill set that will benefit them in any future employment. Everyone can learn to work like a successful professional farmer if they approach the role with an open mind and a positive attitude. Since apprentices play a key role in sharing the culture of hustle and efficiency with students and volunteers on the farm, this will be a recurring theme in the apprentice training program throughout the season. We hope apprentices will embrace this mentality as part of the fun of “winning” at the game of farming.

Apprentices will be encouraged to participate in group-text communications and read weekly job lists shared online. These forums help inform the goals of the day and week plus allow opportunities to discuss needs or concerns. Additional study through reading and research in your own time is encouraged but not required. The farm has an extensive library of useful farming books on many topics that will be available upon request.

Compensation Package: In addition to an hourly wage, apprentices are provided with housing in one of the farm's fully furnished yurts. The yurts are equipped with solar powered electricity and wood stoves for heating. Apprentices will share a modern kitchen, common room, and bathroom facility. Food raised on the farm is available to our apprentices, including free produce and discounted access to beef. The farm provides free Wi-Fi, utilities, and certain household necessities. Each apprentice is allowed one week of unpaid vacation to be used from June 15-August 25 or after October 1. Occasional long weekends to accommodate personal needs may be permitted if coordinated in advance. Please note that it is possible that apprentices will be asked to share the largest yurt for part of the season.

