

# **FERNBROOK FARM CSA - APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM – POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS 2019**

**Overview** – Fernbrook Farm CSA is committed to training the next generation of farmers and leaders in sustainable agriculture. We believe that the only way to really learn how to manage a farm is by *helping* to manage a farm. Our Apprenticeship is designed to give candidates a hands-on experience working in all facets of running a farm whether it's weeding a bed of carrots, staffing a farm shop, taking care of livestock, or managing a harvest. Farming requires lots of different skills and know-how that would be impossible to learn from books and workshops alone. Our Apprenticeship provides a full-season opportunity on a working farm to explore the possibilities of a career in farming. Over 30 farmers have graduated from our Apprenticeship since 2008. Our alumni have gone on to pursue their own opportunities in farming, sustainable agriculture, and food policy throughout the United States!

**What We Provide** – We will provide Apprentices with a farming experience designed to introduce them to all facets of managing a farm. The Farm Manager will work directly with the Apprentices to provide training and oversight to ensure that they know how to do all work required of them on the farm. Apprentices will receive a farm orientation so they are familiar with all of the equipment, buildings and grounds, and other people and programs at Fernbrook.

Apprentices will receive copies of the farm's written materials / records including crop plans, budgets, harvest records, planting schedules, and field maps. The Farm Manager will take time (usually during the fall) to go over the farm's systems for making crop plans, keeping records, marketing and outreach, and budgeting.

Apprentices will be given time and resources to attend regional field days, farm tours, workshops and conferences to enhance and broaden their learning experience and give them an opportunity to learn from other farmers and agricultural experts. We are members of NJCRAFT (Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training) - a network of sustainable farms in NJ and PA. The visitation schedule will be determined by the Farm Manager and the Apprentice (generally 2 per month).

In the fall, The Farm Manager will provide contacts, and guidance for any future farming plans the Apprentice is undertaking. The Farmer will also review resumes, farm plans, business plans etc to help the Apprentice pursue future farming goals. In addition, The Apprentice and the Farm Manager will set goals together in the spring and the Farm Manager will provide a mid-year and end-of-the-year performance evaluation and serve as a contact for future job recommendations.

**Compensation** – Apprentices will receive a monthly stipend of \$1,000 / month paid in the middle of the month. A tax withholding is taken out of the stipend. Apprentices will receive worker's compensation. Apprentices will also receive whatever veggies they need from the farm, and pork in the fall. Apprentices can purchase shop items (cookbooks, eggs, honey etc.) at cost.

Housing is provided in the nearby town of Bordentown about 3 miles from the farm. The house is shared by the Apprentice crew. Gas and utilities are provided by the farm. House members can decide to purchase cable / internet service or not on their own. The crew may be asked to house the occasional volunteer or prospective Apprentice. **We also ask that you take very good care of the unit and take responsibility for any damage done to the unit during the course of the year.** The Farm Manager will do a house check with the Apprentices before they move out. Any damages done to the house must be repaired by the responsible parties. Issues with the house should be brought to the attention of the Farm Manger.

**Vacation** – Apprentices will be given a week's vacation in July, August or September, to be scheduled in advance with the Farm Manager. The vacation week starts at Noon on a Saturday and runs until the start of the work day Monday morning. One crew member can take his or her week at a time

**What the Apprentice Provides** – At its core, the program is designed to trade the Apprentice’s work for knowledge from the farm and farmer. And as stated, this is a VERY hands-on educational experience. The Apprentice is expected to provide the farm with very valuable labor in exchange for knowledge that only a working farm can provide. The workload will be very diverse although after weeding onions for 3 hours you may not think so! Days may include a few hours of seeding in the greenhouse, spreading cover crop seeds, stuffing envelopes, changing filters on the tractor, weeding the strawberries and feeding the pigs before you leave for the day. Some days the workload will be very diverse while others might be taken up by 1 or 2 big jobs like planting tomatoes, trellising peas, or harvesting melons. The program is designed to give the Apprentices many more tasks than just “grunt work” but a lot of farming IS field work and candidates (as well as the Farm Manager and all CSA staff) should be prepared for such labor. You are encouraged to show up in the spring in good shape and should be able to lift 50 pounds without much difficulty.

**Work Schedule (*specific times will change throughout the season*):**

Monday – Friday, 7:00 AM – Noon; 1:00 – 5:00PM. Saturdays 6:30AM - Noon. Weekend chores on a rotating basis. Occasionally, Apprentices may be asked to work past 5:00 when situations call for it – i.e. finishing field work before a rainy period begins, and on Tuesdays on a rotating schedule for farm shop. Each Apprentice will get one weekend off per month.

Apprenticeships begin on Monday, April 1st and end Friday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

**Jobs and Responsibilities** – Diversity is the key to the farm work – Apprentices will do many different jobs accomplishing many different things throughout the season. Tasks will include:

**Greenhouse work** – seeding, watering, transplanting, monitoring fertility and disease and pest threats in seedlings

**Field work** – transplanting, seeding, hand weeding, hoeing, spinning cover crop seeds and amendments, trellising, setting up row covers, mulching, etc.

**Livestock** – setting up and maintaining fence, feeding and watering pigs

**Harvesting** – harvesting, washing, sorting and storing produce, maintaining harvest records; cleaning up harvest area. Apprentices will be encouraged to assume the role of Harvest Manager on a rotating basis.

**Farm Shop** – (Tuesdays and Saturdays) setting up, staffing, and cleaning up the farm shop Apprentices will share the responsibility of being the ‘shopkeeper’ with the Farm Manager. The schedule will be determined by the Farm Manager and Apprentices

**Everything else!** You never know what needs to be done to run a farm! Surprises can abound. Jobs may include setting up and taking down irrigation systems, driving the farm truck, pruning blackberries, doing administrative work, helping with carpentry projects, tractor repairs, using a weed whacker, mower and other small machinery, maintaining the hiking trails, using the flame weeder and so on. Flexibility and a willingness to do whatever needs being done are expected and valued qualities!

**Tractors** - We do use tractors on the farm. If Apprentices are interested in getting experience operating a tractor, he or she can work with the Farm Manager to figure out appropriate jobs to do. This isn’t a requirement but remains an option for those interested. (Apprentices do the Lion’s share of tractor work on the farm.) The Farm Manager will teach the maintenance, safety and operation of the tractor and the set-up and safe use of the accompanying tools and implements.

**Working with others** – We are fortunate enough to have lots of people coming through the CSA – as customers, volunteers, kids in the summer camp or visitors; and we value that we have a lot of different kinds of people involved here. Apprentices are expected to be able to work with all kinds of people with patience, respect and as representatives of the Farm. There will be three or four full-time Apprentices and an Assistant Manager on the 2019 crew. We work A LOT with each other and hopefully have a lot of fun doing it!

**Expectations:**

Apprentices are expected to:

- Bring a spirit of dedication and enthusiasm to the job
- Be on time, ready to work with appropriate attire
- Be in good physical condition
- Have a valid drivers license (farm will need a copy)
- Be ready to work outside in all kinds of weather (and be dressed accordingly)
- Be willing to commit to working on the farm for a ***full season***
- Take full advantage of a working and learning experience on the farm! Make observations, ask questions, take notes, enjoy the subtle changes in the seasons, have fun working with the crew, eat a lot of fresh produce, and sleep well knowing you put in an honest days' work!

If there are issues with co-workers, the first (and often best) course of action is to address them openly and honestly with one another. If there are still issues, they should be brought to the attention of the Farm Manager. Our goal is to have a very productive, efficient, enlightening and hopefully fun farming season and achieve our production goals and shareholder retention rate goals by season's end!

**Interested in Applying?**

Send a current resume with references and a letter of interest explaining your motivations for wanting to be a part of the Apprenticeship to the contact info. listed below:

Jeff Tober  
Farm Manager  
Fernbrook Farm CSA  
PO Box 228  
Bordentown, NJ 08505  
609-298-0029  
[info@fernbrookfarmcsa.com](mailto:info@fernbrookfarmcsa.com)  
[www.fernbrookfarmcsa.com](http://www.fernbrookfarmcsa.com)