

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.

Features of the Farm:

- 90-acre property near two public parks, a trout stream and the Appalachian Trail
- 10 acres of certified organic produce
- 50 acres of pasture for grassfed beef cattle, sheep, and lambs
- Direct marketing through CSA, farmers market, dining hall and wholesale to other farms
- On-campus farm store with lunch counter
- Prepared foods including canned goods, wood fired pizza and grilled meats
- Farm-scale food and yard waste composting operation
- Food and farm waste to electricity biogas system
- Research and demonstration projects
- Farm visits by undergraduate classes and labs

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:

- Pasture Raised Egg Production
- Pastured Sheep and Lamb Care
- Pastured Cattle Care
- Meat Marketing
- Organic Greenhouse Controlled Environment Management and Seedling Production
- Organic Vegetable Irrigation
- BCS Two Wheel Tractor Operation
- Fresh Product Inventory Management
- Farmer's Market Management
- Fresh Product Processing for Freezing
- Compost Production
- Biogas Production and Food Waste Recovery
- Food service-related event support

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 on 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 rustic, 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 retail items such as meat and eggs from the farm. 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. Occasional long weekends to accommodate personal needs may be permitted if coordinated in advance.

2024 Dickinson College Farm Apprentice Application

Please carefully read over the following questions and reply accordingly. Applications and questions should be submitted by email to all three members of the farm management team:

halpinj@dickinson.edu - Jenn Halpin – Program Director

steimanm@dickinson.edu - Matt Steiman – Livestock and Special Energy Program Manager

smithro@dickinson.edu - Alex Smith – Vegetable Production Manager

Applications will be reviewed as they are received. However, please submit your application by no later than February 19th, 2024.

Name _____

Preferred pronouns _____

Phone _____

Email _____

1. Please explain your reasons for applying for this position.
2. Please explain any prior experiences related to farming. Experience is not required but please list anything you believe to be relevant.
3. What type of work environment do you seek to cultivate for yourself?
4. How would you describe your work ethic?
5. How would you describe yourself as an individual? As a team member?
6. Do you agree to each of the following position expectations?
 - a. That this apprenticeship involves participation in a rotating schedule of minor duties outside of the 40-hour work week (Examples include closing greenhouse doors, putting

away CSA veggies, turning off irrigation pump, helping with livestock care or emergencies, cucurbit harvest during peak season). That our job is almost always outdoors, in the elements.

- b. That our workday begins at 0730 and we expect staff to be ready to begin working at that time.
 - c. That farm work can sometimes seem repetitive, tedious, or monotonous.
 - d. That working on a farm includes close proximity to other team members amidst the challenges laid out above. This can bring about a variety of interpersonal challenges – your constructive effort to resolve disagreements will be appreciated.
 - e. That you will be asked to limit cell phone use during work hours to work-related communications only.
7. Please describe the type of leadership you most trust and aspire towards.
 8. On a spectrum from very tidy to cluttered, how would you best describe your preference for maintaining shared living spaces?
 9. Please describe experiences with physically engaging work outdoors. What approaches have you used to remain productive during physically demanding times or extreme weather conditions? How do you plan to keep up the “hustle”?
 10. Do you have any experience operating agricultural, construction, or yard machinery? Do you have any experience with power tools or hand tools? Please elaborate.
 11. We regularly engage in respectful, constructive feedback to improve performance as a farm team member. How do you best receive such feedback?
 12. Please list up to three areas of professional growth that you hope to cultivate during this apprenticeship.
 13. Please explain a recent accomplishment of which you are proud.
 14. On a scale from 1-5, how does this position rank with other jobs/opportunities that you are exploring? (1= very interested, 5 = vaguely interested)
 15. Please provide email and/or phone numbers for two professional references that we can contact to support your application. Please make those people aware we may reach out.

16. Please rank the following areas of focus according to your interest from 1 (most interested) – 12 (least interested). If a listed area does not appeal to you, please leave it blank. The managers will coordinate apprentice assignments based on the interests and the varying time commitments required.

_____ Pasture Raised Egg Production

- Day to day care of the laying hens including chores and inspections.
- Egg washing and inventory management.

_____ Pastured Sheep and Lamb Care

- Day to day care of the sheep flock including chores and inspections.
- Occasional vet care
- Meat sales and inventory management
- Pasture management

_____ Pastured Cattle Care

- Day to day care of the cattle herd including chores and inspections.
- Occasional vet care
- Meat sales and inventory management
- Pasture management

_____ Greenhouse Management

- Seedling Production
 - Weekly seeding operations
 - Germination chamber management
 - Inoculation
 - Irrigation
 - Scouting
 - Transplant readiness report
- Controlled Environment Management
 - Monitoring/troubleshooting GH controllers
 - Monitoring/troubleshooting seedling bench controllers
 - Manual management of GH environments
 - GH crop management (irrigation, scouting, etc.)

_____ Vegetable Irrigation

- Set up and use of drip/fertigation systems.
- Set up and use of overhead reels.
- Odd hour operations

_____ BCS Two Wheel Tractor Operation

- Maintenance
- Various implements
- Pathway cultivation
- GH cultivation

_____ Fresh Product Inventory Management

- Data capture
- Storage
- Confirming weekly inventory
- Daily removal of food waste from packing house

_____ Biogas Production & Food Waste Recovery

- Collect and sort commercial and community food waste.
- Operate machines associated with the biodigester.
- Assist with routine system maintenance and safety checks.

_____ Food Service-Related Event Support

- Participate in campus or community events focused on food prep and food service.

_____ Farmers' Market Management

- Determine weekly harvest needs.
- Coordinating market logistics
- Manage sales at local farmers' market.

_____ Fresh Product Processing for Freezing

- Executing schedule of needs
- Maintaining freezer inventory