

PERSEPHONE FARM  
Job Description for Apprentices

Apprentices are employees who live on the farm and are seeking a practical education in farming. All employees have the option of living off the farm and providing their own food and lodging. Those who live on the farm as apprentices will have a stronger educational experience, as they will have greater access to the farm owners and more opportunity to ask questions and discuss the principles on which the farm operates. Generally, apprentices are responsible for assisting in the planting, cultivation, harvest, processing, delivery, and marketing of all produce grown on the farm.

**Specific Tasks** you can learn to perform during your first full season on the farm:

- Seeding and fertilizing of starts
- Transplanting starts into the field
- Weed Control
- Irrigation (pipe moving and pump operation)
- Harvesting and processing of produce
- Delivery of produce to a Eugene wholesaler
- Occasional produce sales at farmers' markets
- General tractor operation (transporting bins, sometimes mowing or discing)
- Various odd jobs (ditch digging, brush cutting)
- Building and maintaining small compost piles

**Specific Tasks** you can learn during the winter months following your first season, and in second and subsequent seasons:

- General light carpentry and construction
- Cutting firewood
- Mechanical cultivation of field crops
- Additional tractor work
- General routine maintenance of vehicles and tractors
- Calculating crop sales and yields
- Facilities maintenance and supplies inventories

**Work Hours and Schedules:** In the Spring and Fall, the regular workday starts at 8AM and ends at 6PM. From June through September, the regular workday starts at 7AM and ends at 5:30PM. In the Spring, we occasionally start work before 8AM. We sometimes work past the regular quitting time in order to finish a job. Apprentices who work a farmers market (up to one day a week) work a longer day than the regular workday. Lunch breaks are 1 to 1-1/2 hour long. We take a fifteen minute break in the morning and a fifteen minute break in the afternoon. Apprentices work five days a week. Days off are Sunday and either Monday or Tuesday or Wednesday. Once a month, you can work one six day week and take three days off in a row (scheduled in cooperation with other staff to allow for adequate personnel on the farm at all times) the following week. You may be able to trade one day off for another on occasion if you need to make an appointment. Fridays and Saturdays off are not available during harvest season. Most Sundays are a day off. However, every fifth Sunday you will be responsible for a few chores on the farm, such as tending chickens, running irrigation, and unloading perishables from a market truck. These chores can generally be completed in about three hours, and are paid work time. Vacations of more than three days in a row are not available during harvest season.

**Household:** All farm residents cook dinner in rotation, and after dinner cleanup is shared equally among all residents

of the farm. Cooking dinner as well as after dinner cleanup is not a requirement of working here, but it is a requirement of sharing the community kitchen. Therefore, dinner cooking and after dinner cleanup is not paid time.

**Compensation:** Employees who choose to live and eat off the farm are paid \$ 10.75/hour and are responsible for their own food and lodging. Apprentices (employees who choose to live and eat on the farm) are also paid \$10.75/hour, but \$265.00 is deducted from each paycheck to cover the cost of food and lodging. Paychecks are issued every two weeks. Food and lodging includes living quarters, utilities (incl. Water, propane, solar electricity, local phone service, and wireless internet service), TP, soap, laundry detergent and use of the washing machine, first-aid supplies, linens, and most food. It excludes personal body care products, long distance phone calls, purchased beverages, candy, and restaurant meals.

**Evaluation and Communication:** When you first start work, you will be exploring how you feel about working here and whether the work is right for you. We will be checking in with you informally at intervals to see how it's going and if you have any concerns we need to address. At the conclusion of the first month we will schedule an all-way evaluation to talk about the quality of your experience and if there are any issues we need to address. If, at any time, you feel you must leave, we ask that you give two weeks notice (barring extreme circumstances). It is very important that we know if you are considering moving on. Our kind of work does not wait for us to find workers, so we need all the lead time we can get.

**Misc.:** Smoking or chewing of tobacco is not allowed on the farm premises (or off the premises in the middle of a work day by employees returning to work from off the farm). Tobacco carries a virus, which can be transmitted, through the hands or clothes of a tobacco user, to other plants in the solanaceae or "nightshade" family. The virus can cause rapid devastation of a crop. Any employee who uses tobacco off the farm on days off must inform us of this fact and follow appropriate sanitation practices (change clothes, wash hands) before returning to work.

(Please see following page.)

It is important for workers to have the following skills so we can build a productive and happy crew.

1. Interest in and Commitment to Sustainable Organic Agriculture
2. Responsibility and Reliability
  - a. Ability to learn, and to work unsupervised
  - b. Self-motivation to do a quality job in an efficient way
3. Awareness and Participation
  - a. Maintains an awareness of what is currently happening
  - b. Thinks of what needs to be happening next
  - c. Helps initiate what needs to be happening next
  - d. Thinks about safety
4. Time
  - a. On time for work
  - b. Keeps track of work speed and strives for efficiency
5. Positive Attitude
  - a. Cheerful, willing, easy-going
  - b. Makes constructive suggestions for improving jobs; offers to help implement improvements
  - c. Respects all staff and appreciates their work and contributions
6. Communication
  - a. Works well with others through communication
  - b. Questions directions when they seem inadequate or unclear
  - c. Offers alternative ways to achieve an objective
  - d. Responsive to suggestions from supervisors and co-workers
  - e. Proactive and honest
7. Focus
  - a. Able to concentrate on the task at hand
  - b. Listens carefully to instructions without becoming distracted
  - c. Retains information for future reference
  - d. Accomplishes stated objectives completely before moving to a new project
  - e. Cleans up after tasks
8. Household
  - a. Interest in and commitment to home food systems and community living
  - b. Cooperative and creative spirit