

AGRARIAN APPRENTICESHIP

Growing the Next Generation of Ranchers and Farmers



Virginie Pointeau, Julie Sullivan, Sarah Wentzel-Fisher

NAP's very first apprentice Amber Reed learning about horse care from Michael Bain, expert horseman, ranch manager, and Quivira Coalition board member.
San Juan Ranch, 2009. Photo by Avery C. Anderson Sponholtz.

The New Agrarian Program

AGRARIAN APPRENTICESHIP

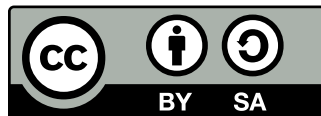
Growing the Next Generation of Ranchers and Farmers

Virginie Pointeau, Julie Sullivan, Sarah Wentzel-Fisher

Quivira Coalition • Santa Fe, New Mexico

Designed by Sarah Wentzel-Fisher
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TEXT

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Dr. Jennifer Thatcher, associate professor in economics at the University of New Mexico, designed the online survey that got this project off and running, and conducted the statistical analysis of responses.

Regina Fitzsimmons, Patricia Jenkins, and Jeremy Smith worked together with Avery and Julie to write the text (Regina) and to create the artwork (Patricia and Jeremy) that culminated in the first New Agrarian Program publication in 2012, *New Agrarian Education: A Handbook for Mentor and Apprentice*, which served as an excellent resource in the creation of this guidebook.

Julie Sullivan and George Whitten of the San Juan Ranch, along with Dan and Becca James of James Ranch Artisan Cheese, have partnered with us as New Agrarian Program mentors from the beginning. Thanks for learning and growing with us. We would never have made it this far without you.

Courtney White, co-founder of the Quivira Coalition, and Avery C. Anderson Sponholtz, the original New Agrarian Program director, together first conceived of the New Agrarian Program and took that great big leap to get it off the ground. Julie Sullivan, rancher and educator, teamed up with Avery to design the New Agrarian Program and to initiate the first apprenticeship on the San Juan Ranch in 2009.

Last but not least, we are grateful for the growing number of ranchers and farmers across the US and beyond who are dedicated to mentoring the next generation. It's a critically important job, and no one is more qualified than you.

Thank you!

CONTRIBUTORS



Avery C. Anderson Sponholtz

runs Impairative LLC, a consulting company dedicated to strategically pairing philanthropy with regenerative opportunities. Previous to this work, she dedicated nine years to the Quivira Coalition, serving initially as an intern (2007), then as co-founder and original director of the New Agrarian Program (2008-2011), and then ultimately as the executive director (2012-2015). Avery was a founding board member of the National Young Farmers' Coalition, and currently serves on the advisory councils for Holistic Management International, and the Western Landowners Alliance.



Becca James

with her husband Dan, runs James Ranch Artisan Cheese, a 100% grass fed, Jersey dairy and cheesemaking operation north of Durango, Colorado. Becca has degrees in Spanish, history, and interior design but has spent the last fifteen years raising three kids, dozens of cows, many pigs, and countless chickens in the beautiful Animas Valley. Becca and Dan teamed up with NAP in 2010 to mentor apprentices in both sustainable dairy practices and artisan cheesemaking.



Virginie Pointeau

has been the New Agrarian Program Director at the Quivira Coalition since 2012. As such, she enjoys engaging in collaborative projects with other nonprofits committed to the next generation of agrarians. Virginie serves on the boards of the National Young Farmers Coalition and the Southwest Grassfed Livestock Alliance. In her free time, she's off exploring the trails on her bicycle or doing her best to disappear into the wilderness via canoe.



Julie Sullivan

runs the San Juan Ranch, a certified organic, 100% grass fed and finished operation located in southern Colorado, together with her husband George Whitten. Previous to becoming a rancher in 2001, Julie applied her Masters in Environmental Education as faculty for the Audubon Expedition Institute. She teamed up with Quivira in 2008 to design and launch the New Agrarian Program, and has served as a mentor to NAP apprentices ever since.



Sarah Wentzel-Fisher

is the New Agrarian Program Coordinator at the Quivira Coalition. In addition to her work at Quivira, she works at the intersection of regional food system development and regenerative agriculture as the board chair for both the Rio Grande Farmers Coalition and the Rio Grande Agricultural Land Trust. In her free time she visits ranches and farms (she highly recommends this activity), experiments in her kitchen, and keeps chickens in her backyard.

SPECIAL THANKS TO

The research project leading up to the production of this book, and its publication and dissemination was made possible by generous financial support from the Thornburg Foundation.

The Thornburg Foundation, based in Santa Fe, New Mexico, invests in enduring solutions to help solve problems affecting people and our planet. They believe New Mexico's residents should benefit from robust food and agricultural systems that are: locally embedded; that offer healthy, affordable food; that grow a resilient and diverse farm and ranch economy; and federal, state, and community policies and institutions support.



FORWARD! (A FOREWORD)

Quivira's New Agrarian Program sprang into existence over a cup of coffee during the summer of 2007. In retrospect, it seems fitting that the program was conceived of by an eager summer intern and a seasoned thought leader in his field. I was the intern—fresh from grad school, with big ideas, boundless enthusiasm, and a deep desire for mentorship. Courtney White was the sage guru—founder and executive director of the Quivira Coalition, acclaimed thought leader in the conservation and regenerative agriculture communities, and consummate idea generator. I wanted to know everything that he knew, and fortunately for me, he wanted to share it all, preferably over coffee.

Sitting across the café table from Courtney, I listened to him describe a troubling situation: for all of the time, effort, and resources that Quivira was investing in our community of remarkable land stewards, we didn't yet have an adequate repository for the wealth of knowledge and innovation that it was generating. Like grass banking and seed saving, Courtney described the need within the land conservation and regenerative agriculture communities for a human ingenuity bank, where wisdom could be deposited by elders, invested wisely, and then withdrawn by future generations.

I enjoyed working with Courtney on puzzles like this, but on this occasion I failed to see the beauty and complexity of what was starting to take shape in his mind. I impulsively offered up that perhaps he, himself, should capture all of the knowledge and practices swirling around the Quivira community, utilizing his gifts as a writer. But Courtney wasn't interested in this solution; he was instead cooking up something much fresher and more truly regenerative. Rather than capturing ideas in words, he wanted to capture ideas in people. He imagined that the right people would let those ideas settle in, take root, become their own, and bear fruit, and then they would toss them back out into the world for further propagation.

I liked this idea. I let it settle in, take root, become my own, and bear fruit. . .

In 2008, Courtney took me up to the San Juan Ranch to meet Julie Sullivan and George Whitten. We sat down together around their kitchen table, and for three days (with more coffee) we hammered out what would eventually become the New Agrarian Program. Julie's gifts as an educator, comingled with George's skill in converting sunlight into healthy land and food, brought forth the tiny gem of an apprenticeship program. We decided to hire one apprentice at a time and nurture that individual with all of our love and care. Over time, our investment would add up.

And off we went, hiring Amber Reed as our first apprentice on the San Juan Ranch, then slowly adding other extraordinary mentors like Dan and Becca James of the James Ranch, Deb and Dennis Moroney of the 47 Ranch, and Duke and Janet Phillips of the Chico Basin Ranch. For every new mentor willing to make a deposit in the human ingenuity bank we were able to bring on another new apprentice who could benefit from the investment and grow it. During these first years, Quivira's New Agrarian Program remained intentionally small and intently focused on providing a deep educational experience to a select few individuals—but perhaps unintentionally isolated from the rest of the larger new agrarian movement that was growing up around it.

In February 2011, Courtney approached Quivira's board of directors and asked them to promote me from New Agrarian Program director to acting executive director for the term of his sabbatical. I was honored and humbled by Courtney's trust in my capacity and somewhat daunted by the opportunity that lay ahead. Perhaps, as all good mentors know intuitively, passing leadership is a critical element of mentorship. And in that funny twist of fate, I too was presented with an opportunity to step aside and welcome in new leadership for the New Agrarian Program.

In November 2011, I met Virginie Pointeau when I was interviewing candidates to fill my position as New Agrarian Program director. Sitting across the café table (more coffee), she listened to me describe a troubling situation: for all the time, effort, and resources that Quivira was investing in our community of remarkable mentors and apprentices, we didn't yet have a plan to take the program to scale. We didn't have a way to keep pace with the growing national need for food producers and land stewards.

Virginie clearly enjoyed working on puzzles like this, and she instantly sprang into creative action. Unlike my first misguided attempt to solve Courtney's dilemma, she went directly to the heart of the question and saw what was at stake if we didn't dig deep enough to find the right solution.

She liked this idea of scale. She let it settle in and take root. She let it become her own, and four years later, she is letting it bear fruit. . .

As Julie Sullivan so aptly captured in 2010, for our prototype first edition of the *New Agrarian Handbook*:

Given the cultural, social, and environmental challenges of the twenty-first century, we need new agrarians who are as adaptable as their predecessors. We need whole-system thinkers who are able to take the best practices of the past and merge them with new knowledge generated today. In short, an agrarian apprenticeship is a whole person education. . . and as such, it must foster the development of the technical, practical skills that are necessary for a life on the land, as well as cultivate the heart and interpersonal skills that are equally necessary for success.

Together, the twenty-nine exceptional apprenticeship models described in this handbook represent a massive deposit into the bank of human ingenuity. That investment is growing as we speak, and will be the foundation from which future generations provide our society with food, fuel, and fiber.

My deepest gratitude for all of the wisdom that preceded me on this journey and for all the wisdom that will come after—propelled forward by more cups of coffee.

Avery C. Anderson Sponholtz

WHY THIS PROJECT? WHY NOW?

Once upon a time, apprenticeship was the primary form of education available to a person, whatever the field—medicine, music, cobbler or scholar. Not necessarily a beginner, but not yet a master, an apprentice agreed to work for a specific length of time for a master craftsman in a craft or trade, in return for instruction. An agrarian apprenticeship is a form of this age-old process by which a learner becomes a practitioner.

– Julie Sullivan, Rancher and NAP mentor

For aspiring ranchers and farmers, one of the most daunting barriers to creating a successful and resilient agricultural enterprise is lack of on-the-ground, hands-on experience alongside a dedicated mentor. This is especially true now, when the next generation of ranchers and farmers is increasingly made up of individuals who have grown up in cities, with no family connection to agricultural land. By increasing the number of professional training opportunities with highly skilled, established practitioners, land-based agricultural apprenticeships provide critical experiential education and mentorship that cannot be acquired through classroom study alone.



Samantha Bradford learns to weld corral panels.

In 2012, the average age of US ranchers and farmers was fifty-eight (USDA 2012). Throughout the country, only 6% of family operations are owned by people thirty-five years old or younger, while more than 30% are owned by people sixty-five and older. Some three thousand acres of productive agricultural lands are lost to development every day (EPA). These trends serve as a powerful call to action and simultaneously present a huge opportunity. Established ranchers and farmers—those who have given their lives to ensuring healthy soils, healthy food, and healthy communities—embody knowledge that is most effectively passed on to the next generation through mentorship, direct example, and experiential learning on the land. An entire generation of highly knowledgeable practitioners is beginning to retire. Agricultural apprenticeship programs across the nation seek to take advantage of this invaluable resource before it disappears.

The Quivira Coalition launched the New Agrarian Program (NAP) in 2009 as a response to these and other staggering statistics in US agriculture. NAP helps train the next generation of ecologically minded ranchers and farmers by partnering with established practitioners to offer agricultural apprenticeships for young people committed to lives in regenerative agriculture. Now eight years old, the New Agrarian Program has demonstrated that apprenticeships are among the most effective educational methodologies for land-based careers, and yet our modern-day lack of familiarity with the apprenticeship model has kept them somewhat rare. Existing apprenticeship programs in the US often operate in isolation, with few resources to help them be as effective, efficient, and resilient as possible in order to successfully—and quickly—train the next generation of ranchers and farmers.

Through a year-long research and outreach project that has culminated in this apprenticeship guidebook, the Quivira Coalition and NAP have helped to initiate a nationwide dialogue among US agricultural apprenticeship programs. Our hope is that momentum gained through this dialogue will propel existing programs forward in this work by fostering the development of new apprenticeships, and by encouraging all of us to help one another grow highly effective, comprehensive programs at a scale large enough to bring about systemic improvements in agricultural education and practice. By creating repeated opportunities to compare program components and structural frameworks, financial models, challenges, and successes, we can serve as resources for one another and ensure that our programs operate as efficiently and effectively as possible, while also bringing attention and recognition to the apprenticeship methodology and our individual initiatives.

To these ends, rather than copyright the text of this book, we have chosen to license it with a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International License, meaning, that we encourage others to share and adapt it. The license does specify that you must acknowledge this Quivira Coalition publication as the source if you use it in your own document or publication, and license it in the same fashion. This helps ensure that others will be able to take advantage of—and contribute to—our collective knowledge about effective agrarian education. We believe in minimizing barriers to knowledge and, inasmuch as possible, working collaboratively with others to help perpetuate high quality ranch and farm apprenticeship programs.

Effecting change at a systemic level requires widespread participation and dedicated effort, and yet none of us need singlehandedly change the world. By growing a strongly collaborative network of small, regional programs at work within their own communities and by learning from one another, we can make a significant difference for ranchers and farmers throughout the country. Our hope is that this guidebook will serve as a catalyst to develop this national network of people committed to agricultural apprenticeships and to growing the next generation of ranchers and farmers.

THE BIG PICTURE

In this chapter we describe why the Quivira Coalition started the New Agrarian Program, and why we continue to be so committed to growing not only our own program, but a network of similar ranching and farming apprenticeship programs all over the country.

Agrarianism, broadly conceived, reaches beyond food production and rural living to include a wide constellation of ideas, loyalties, sentiments, and hopes. It is a temperament and a moral orientation as well as a suite of economic practices, all arising out of the insistent truth that people everywhere are part of the land community, just as dependent as other life on the land's fertility and just as shaped by its mysteries and possibilities.

-Eric Freyfogle

THE QUIVIRA COALITION

THE NEW AGRARIAN PROGRAM

COMING TOGETHER: AGRICULTURAL APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS ACROSS THE US

DEFINING APPRENTICESHIP

ON BEING A MENTOR

- ☐ Julie Sullivan, San Juan Ranch
- ☐ Becca James, James Ranch Artisan Cheese

THE QUIVIRA COALITION

The Quivira Coalition builds resilience on western working landscapes by fostering ecological, economic, and social health through education, innovation, collaboration, and progressive public and private land stewardship. Two conservationists and a rancher founded Quivira in 1997 to work at the radical center, where people come together to explore common interests rather than argue their differences. We believe that real change happens here, on the actual landscape of Aldo Leopold's back forty, and we work to cultivate this exploration in all of our programming.

Our overarching goals are to:

- Foster the work of the radical center by creating a meeting place for the diversity of ranchers, environmentalists, scientists, and land managers who steward working landscapes in the western US and throughout the world;
- Disseminate innovative ideas and techniques for progressive, regenerative management of grasslands and riparian areas, with a focus on food production, economic diversification, and collaboration across urban/rural and environmental/agricultural/management boundaries;
- Train the next generation of food producers and land stewards;
- Inspire and support hope in an era of increasing environmental and economic instability by disseminating regenerative solutions already at work on the land.

Quivira's programs serve ranchers and farmers, conservationists, scientists, teachers and students, government and tribal agency personnel, business people, and many donors and other individuals committed to the cause of progressive land stewardship and regenerative agricultural practices. Over the past two decades, our collaborative efforts have directly benefited more than one million acres of rangeland, thirty-two linear miles of riparian drainages, and more than sixteen thousand people. A recent informal survey of Quivira members and conference attendees found that we are currently influencing the stewardship of at least another twelve million eight hundred thousand acres.

Since 1997 we have witnessed a response to natural resource depletion and diminishing land health, in the American West and throughout the world, in the form of growing emphasis on soil health as the critical determinant of overall societal resilience. In the words of Courtney White, co-founder of the Quivira Coalition, the next wave of conservation is the sustainable production and local distribution of food from ranches and farms that are managed for land health, biodiversity, and human wellbeing. This is the work of a growing number of agrarians who are sequestering carbon in soils, improving water quality and quantity, restoring native plant and animal populations, fixing creeks, developing local energy sources, and approaching agricultural production holistically as the only practical way to replenish the land for people and nature alike. The New Agrarian Program seeks to help realize this vision of coexistence, resilience, and stewardship by helping to create the next generation of food producers and land stewards.

NEW AGRARIAN PROGRAM

Quivira initiated the New Agrarian Program (NAP) in 2009 as a way to help beginning agrarians learn the advanced skills necessary to pursue successful careers in regenerative agriculture. The program partners with skilled ranchers and farmers to create opportunities for comprehensive, full-immersion, experiential learning in authentic professional settings. NAP apprentices and interns are first-career professionals with sincere commitments to life at the intersection of conservation and agriculture. Mentors are dedicated land stewards who prioritize healthy soil, healthy food, and healthy communities. Their ranching and farming practices provide a high quality of life for people and animals, while actively regenerating soil, vegetation, and riparian areas, and protecting air and water quality.

NAP's work merges the worlds of regenerative agriculture, environmental restoration, and climate change mitigation as a way to build economic resilience in rural communities. We are educating a generation of climate-savvy young people committed to growing nutritious food on carbon-rich land.

Ours is a unique era, ripe for ecologically sound, soil-based solutions to the challenges of climate change and agriculture facing the next generation of food producers, land managers, and problem solvers. Agricultural soils, and grasslands in particular—which make up more than 20% of the world's landmass—have lost upwards of 70% of their original carbon stocks (United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization). Because of their immense capacity to return carbon to the soil, grasslands alone offer a solution to feed a growing human population and mitigate climate change. According to a 2010 United Nations report, grasslands offer a “win-win scenario for sequestering carbon, reversing environmental degradation and improving the health, wellbeing, and long-term sustainability of livestock based livelihoods.” And from the Rodale Institute website, “recent data from farming systems and pasture trials around the globe show that we could sequester more than 100% of current annual carbon dioxide emissions with a switch to widely available and inexpensive organic management practices, which we term ‘regenerative organic agriculture.’ These practices work to maximize carbon fixation while minimizing the loss of that carbon once returned to the soil, reversing the greenhouse effect.”

Agriculture has the potential to create an abundance of food while simultaneously sequestering and storing carbon in soils and perennial vegetation, thereby playing a significant role in climate change mitigation. With almost half of the world's landmass currently utilized to produce food on cropland and pastures, increasing the number, quality, and scope of training opportunities for the next generation and ensuring that these lands remain in agriculture in perpetuity are among the most effective ways to restore a healthier planet.

Since our beginning in 2009, the New Agrarian Program has enjoyed tremendous success as a small program, with more than 95% of our graduates developing careers in regenerative agriculture. The time has come for us to scale our efforts to better meet increasing economic and environmental needs and foster change at the systemic level.

But we can't do it alone. Building a new generation of soil-building ranchers and farmers requires the combined effort of every apprenticeship program in the US. For positive change to manifest, we must foster

solution-oriented communication within and between the wide spectrum of agricultural industries and practitioners. Thus, in this research, we bring nonprofit apprenticeship programs together with for-profit private ranches and farms across the US for an initial conversation about improving and increasing learning opportunities.

COMING TOGETHER: AGRICULTURAL APPRENTICESHIP IN THE US

In 2015, the New Agrarian Program launched a national dialogue among agricultural apprenticeship programs in order to foster systemic improvements in agricultural education and practice and to encourage the development of new programs of a consistently high quality. Initial research included in-depth analysis of participating programs, follow-up interviews, and site visits to programs representing a diversity of regions and regenerative agricultural operations. Thirty-four programs—including private ranches and farms, nonprofit organizations, and academic institutions—engaged in our research, which has culminated in the publication of this book. Participating programs were given the opportunity to contribute ideas and help shape the project to ensure a valuable and useful process for all.

This project has already served to connect several programs, which have started conversations about curriculum, program components and structures, financial models, challenges and successes, and ways to serve as resources for one another. It has brought attention and recognition to the apprenticeship methodology and to individual program initiatives, and has fostered collaboration and resource sharing across the country.

DEFINING APPRENTICESHIP

For the purposes of the research, an agricultural apprenticeship is defined as comprehensive education and professional training, typically eight months in length or longer. The training includes hands-on experience in an authentic, professional work setting alongside a dedicated mentor who is an experienced practitioner in his or her chosen areas of agricultural production.

While many apprenticeship programs refer to themselves as such, some programs may provide the equivalent in training and education without using the term apprenticeship. Examples might include:

- An academic institution with a degree program in agriculture that provides a significant hands-on component to enrolled students;
- An in-depth training program that describes itself as an internship, simply because that term is more common;
- Entry-level employment on a farm or ranch that includes significant training.

While programs will differ in how they balance experiential education, self-initiated study, and formal class time, the nature of apprenticeship requires that practical application of knowledge is central to the experience.

Historically, apprenticeship was intentional training in a specific trade, formally undertaken between the mentor and apprentice for a number of years. The training was primarily practical and experiential in a real-life setting, as opposed to classroom study in an academic setting. Within a specific field, the knowledge and practical skills that an apprentice learned could be far reaching in scope and breadth, resulting in a multidisciplinary education. Such is certainly the case with agricultural apprenticeships, as the professional skills needed by a rancher or farmer span economics, biology, hydrology, soil science, animal science, business management, and personal life skills.

According to John Dewey, considered by many in the US to be the father of experiential education, an experience is educational if:

- The individual grows intellectually and morally;
- The larger community benefits from the learning over time; and
- For both, the experience results in further growth, arouses curiosity and strengthens initiative, desire, and purpose.

As the term suggests, direct experience is at the core of experiential education, but experience alone does not result in learning or mastery of a trade. The framework of experiential education can serve us as we consider how historic models and current trade-based apprenticeships (plumber, electrician, doctor, lawyer) can be adapted for a twenty-first-century agricultural apprenticeship program.

Given the crises in food production systems, soil carbon loss, and the aging population of ranchers and farmers, agricultural apprenticeships offer opportunities to foster new agrarians who are as resilient, creative, and adaptable as their forebears and to develop whole-system land managers with the technical and interpersonal skills essential to direct their own futures and serve as role models and leaders to others.

The second chapter of this book, *Agricultural Apprenticeship in the US*, provides an overview of our findings and features descriptions of a number of the apprenticeship programs that participated in our research.

ON BEING A MENTOR

The following two pieces were contributed by NAP mentors who have been with us from the beginning. We affectionately refer to them as our legacy mentors. George Whitten and Julie Sullivan of the San Juan Ranch and Dan and Becca James of James Ranch Artisan Cheese have hosted NAP apprentices since 2009 and 2010, respectively. Our success as a program is due in large part to their extraordinary skills as ranchers and farmers; their commitment to teaching others what they know and love; their tenacity, patience, and compassion as mentors to the eager yet decidedly green apprentices who show up at their doorsteps every spring; and their willingness to stick with us through all these years. Our journey with these mentors has been one of mutual growth and enrichment. We couldn't ask for better partnerships as we continually strive to improve our program, to better serve mentors and apprentices alike.

These narratives present the experience and perspectives of these legacy mentors in their own words. Each is preceded by a short introduction of the mentor ranch or farm, and a brief description of the apprenticeship. We hope they will provide you with helpful and encouraging insight as you prepare to design your own apprenticeship.

MENTORING AT THE SAN JUAN RANCH



Julie Sullivan and George Whitten.

San Juan Ranch—a certified organic, grassfed beef ranch located in the San Luis Valley near Saguache, Colorado—is operated by George Whitten and Julie Sullivan. The apprenticeship curriculum includes Holistic Management, animal husbandry, range health monitoring, planned grazing, herding, ranch infrastructure maintenance, improving soil by grazing cover crops on irrigated cropland, finishing process for grassfed cattle, low-stress livestock handling, and organic certification. In addition, the curriculum may include a series of professional development opportunities. Apprentices emerge from the program with tangible skills, both technical and interpersonal, that are essential for successful employment in regenerative agriculture, as well as for eventual ownership and management of their own operation.

George's grandfather homesteaded in the San Luis Valley in the 1890s, and the family has been ranching sheep or cattle in the valley since. As an active member of the ranching community since the 1970s, George has worked towards collaborative, forward-thinking management of resources in the valley. A practitioner of Holistic Management for over thirty years, he uses this as a lens and adapts management practices to fit the land and operation under his management. The symbiotic relationship between cattle and grasslands, along with the capacity of intact grasslands to store carbon, are central to George's vision and practice as a rancher.

Julie was born and raised in California. After working as an actor, and arts administrator, and starting a private progressive preschool in Seattle, she earned her Master's in environmental education and subsequently taught interdisciplinary environmental education at both the undergraduate and graduate levels for the Audubon Expedition Institute. She spent those years challenging students to look beyond surface conflicts between environmentalism and agriculture, and to see the common values and goals shared by both points of view. After more than a decade living outdoors and teaching for the Expedition, Julie joined George at the ranch in 2001.

By Julie Sullivan, with added "Whitten Wisdom" from George

There are many reasons for wanting to mentor someone. Cheap labor is not even on the list.

"One has to commit to the idea of practical education both for the apprentice and yourself. Remember, you are learning at least as much as the person you are teaching, just at different levels."

These people will:

- Pester you with endless questions
- Break your shovel handles
- Burn up your clutch
- Spoil your dog

They will also:

- Give you their heart and soul
- Make you a much better manager
- Teach you how to turn anger into teachable moments
- Add to your life in ways that will astonish you."

- George Whitten, San Juan Ranch and NAP mentor

Apprentice Paul, Foreman Martha, and I are in the corral with a pregnant cow in the squeeze chute. Paul's long arm is searching inside the cow's uterus for the back feet of a calf who is coming into the world butt first. Sleet patters on our faces and Paul's bare arms. Martha and I are bundled against the twilight freeze, but Paul is jacketless for the task at hand.

I'm monitoring the cow, the darkening sky and Paul. Is his strength flagging, is the cow weakening, how long before we won't be able to see? How much longer before it's time to call off our effort, load the cow into a trailer, and make it to the vet?

While this isn't an unusual scenario on a ranch in the spring, with apprentices an additional challenge is at hand. What is the best balance between their learning and the cow's welfare? Or between the ranch's ability to absorb risk and our commitment to teach the next generation of ranchers?

Welcome to mentoring.

If you're considering hiring an apprentice, I'm sure you want to hear encouraging stories describing how a young, strong, enthusiastic person helping on the ranch has made us happy, rich, and well rested. But let's begin with this question: Do you want to be a mentor?

It isn't for everyone. You might be an inspiring, skilled teacher or a



George Whitten with 2009 apprentice Sam Ryerson.

seasoned and conscientious employer with decades of experience in agriculture, but neither of these guarantees that you have what it takes to mentor. For mentoring is an odd duck of a calling, neither boss nor teacher but a mix of the two that springs as much from who you are as from what you choose to teach. Nor is mentorship a role you slip on at eight in the morning and take off with your jacket when you come in at night.

Are you eager to bring your apprentice into your heart, mind, and operation, not only when everything goes smoothly, but even when there's a wreck and the limits to your own skill and knowledge crash in on you? Are you ready for the press of questions about your management decisions? How about the humility needed when the Millennial apprentice bails you out again when your iPad crashes?

Why would any rancher or farmer add this to an already over-full life? It isn't a surplus of spare time, so it must be something else.

Perhaps it's a wish to:

- Pass on what was given to you when you started—specific skills, hope, and the ability to suss out a problem and find an effective, affordable solution ideally made from junk bouncing around in the back of the pickup;
- Offer someone what you didn't get—insightful encouragement and tough feedback from admired elders and peers;
- Revive your enthusiasm and curiosity about agriculture and the world;
- Discover that someone younger, with different life experiences and education, who is committed and passionate about restorative agriculture, can teach you.

Neither George nor I set out to be mentors, but we both liked to teach. I'd earned a Masters in Environmental Education and taught undergraduate and graduate students for more than a decade as faculty for a university's traveling field program. George had hosted college classes, environmental groups, and Holistic Management courses, offering day-long views into his ranch management, philosophy, and practices.

In 2003, our workload tripled when we decided to keep and grass-finish our own calves. A young man asked if he might intern with us and stayed three months. After that, a series of short-term interns came and went, energetic people eager to see if agriculture was the right life for them. Some were great, some weren't. Either way, as George said back then, "just when they get useful, they leave." By 2006, we were ready for continuity, people committed to an agrarian life, thirsty to learn, and able to manifest ongoing dedication to the most mundane, yet critical, of daily chores.

Our first apprentice started that fall and saw us through winter, calving season, moving onto the range in summer, and the death of George's mom. That stretch of months taught us plenty. A longer time frame worked well. To effectively teach an apprentice we would need some systems and schedules. And mentoring—at least on a small family ranch like ours—meant that our relationships with apprentices would be deeply personal as well as professional.

Our first full-year apprentice arrived in 2008, and during that year, in partnership with the Quivira Coalition, we designed the New Agrarian Program. After thirteen years, seven interns, and twelve apprentices, what do we know now that we didn't know when we began? And why are we still mentoring?

Love—we love sharing, we love learning, and we love these determined young people. We love helping them discover their gifts and develop the tools of the body, mind, and heart that support their dreams of a life—not just a job—with the land. They learn tractor maintenance, forage assessment, when to pull a calf and when not to, financial and pasture planning, everything we can offer that might help them take care of the land, animals, and people with whom they work each day. They come for direct experience in a real situation where the bottom line has to be met so that there is a next year and a year after that. In the process, they test themselves and their vision against the reality of this work and develop attributes that will help them live a life full enough to feed their souls.

Sometimes, on a hard day in the corral or building fence in a snowstorm, that love frays. Sharp words and short tempers explode from one or all of us. Once an apprentice filled the Chevy's gas tank with diesel. A quarter mile from the house the engine began to sputter and she realized what she'd done. We drained the fuel and replaced the tank. A week later, as three apprentices headed off to build fence for an upcoming cattle move, a tire went flat. While two of them set to work on the fence, the third jacked up the truck to change the tire. The parking brake wasn't set, the truck rolled off the jack, and the jack punctured the new gas tank.



Whitten and 2014 apprentices Shalini Karra, Drew Cole, and Samantha Bradford fix a well.

Then there was a slick snowy morning when that year's apprentice arrived at headquarters, hornet-stung mad and scared after driving an old jeep on bad roads. This time the lesson was for us. Ranches get by with old vehicles all the time, but it isn't right to ask an apprentice to drive something she finds unsafe.

There are transcendent moments too, such as the time one apprentice asked the vet if he would teach her how to feel for the calf fetus while he preg-checked our herd. He gave her a glove and softly offered instruction. Her eyes lost focus and her face became taut as she explored. After a minute, like a pink and gold sunrise, a smile lit up her face. "I feel it! I feel the calf!"

We've learned as much as we've taught. One apprentice showed us

the business proforma he had used as an architect, budgeting for infrastructure, set-up, labor, and other often overlooked costs. Another used her significant horsemanship skills to train better manners into our high-headed mare. Yet another brought her passion for soil science to us, just as we had realized how much we still needed to learn to bring this fully into our land practices. We learn alongside them, and many times they are in the lead. It's humbling, and it's made us better ranchers.

While there's always more fence to fix or a pasture plan to review, we've learned how essential it is to share a meal, ask about their folks, debrief after a tough day, and meet regularly with the apprentice to talk about what's going well, where they feel stuck in their learning, and whether a problem or conflict has arisen. George used to call these, "The Dreaded Check-ins." Now he says:

These are usually the most productive moments in the relationship, and the most uncomfortable. Each of us is going to come up against our shortcomings—sometimes it's the mentors, sometimes the apprentice. Sometimes we need to talk about something in the apprentice's behavior that seems to be holding them back. If we've built mutual trust, that conversation makes more difference than any amount of learning about running the ranch. The ranch is the framework where we build the trust for bigger transformations.

Apprentices tell us that one of the most significant lessons they learn is whether or not they "have it"—the capacity to live with the high level of risk inherent in small-scale, resilient agriculture. They experience the sometimes harsh consequence of a bad choice or hasty action, but they bear this with elders who have seen and survived it before. All but one of our twelve apprentices are still in agriculture, most in ranching, six in manager positions, five working their way toward that. They call us for advice or just to talk, and one invited us to officiate at her wedding. Another is our own foreman.

It's been said that mentors impart lessons in the art of living. If so, it's the art each of us creates every day from who we are and what our ranch or farm offers as inspiration, frustration, and opportunity. What George and I do may not be right for you. But we'd like to offer you the most valuable insights we've gleaned from our years with these amazing young people.

Reciprocity. Invest in your apprentice as a person, not just as an employee, and he or she will give back to you beyond measure. Believe in them and prioritize their learning.

Balance. On any given day, the needs of the ranch and the education of the apprentice will appear to be in conflict. Mentors must create equilibrium between these two equally vital obligations and be fully committed to both.

Humility. Be as willing to learn as your apprentice about yourself and your work in the world.

Expect to be challenged. Expect to be delighted. And expect to grow in ways you couldn't imagine.

"Great mentors extend the human activity of care beyond the bonds of the family. They see us in ways that we have not been seen before. And at their best they inspire us to reach beyond ourselves: they show us how to make a positive difference in a wider world."

- Laurent A. Daloz, from *Effective Teaching and Mentoring*



2009 apprentice Amber Reed doing a herd check.



2011 apprentice Amy Wright checking calves.



2012 apprentice Martha Skelley and Julie Sullivan.

MENTORING AT THE JAMES RANCH



Dan and Becca James.

By Becca James

We have run a grass-only, seasonal dairy and farmstead cheesemaking operation near Durango Colorado for fourteen years. Dan grew up on this land but not with a dairy or cheesemaking background. We are so grateful to the many people who showed us around their farms and answered our questions when we were starting out. For the past nine years we have loved being able to give back knowledge and support by being mentors through the New Agrarian Program at the Quivira Coalition.

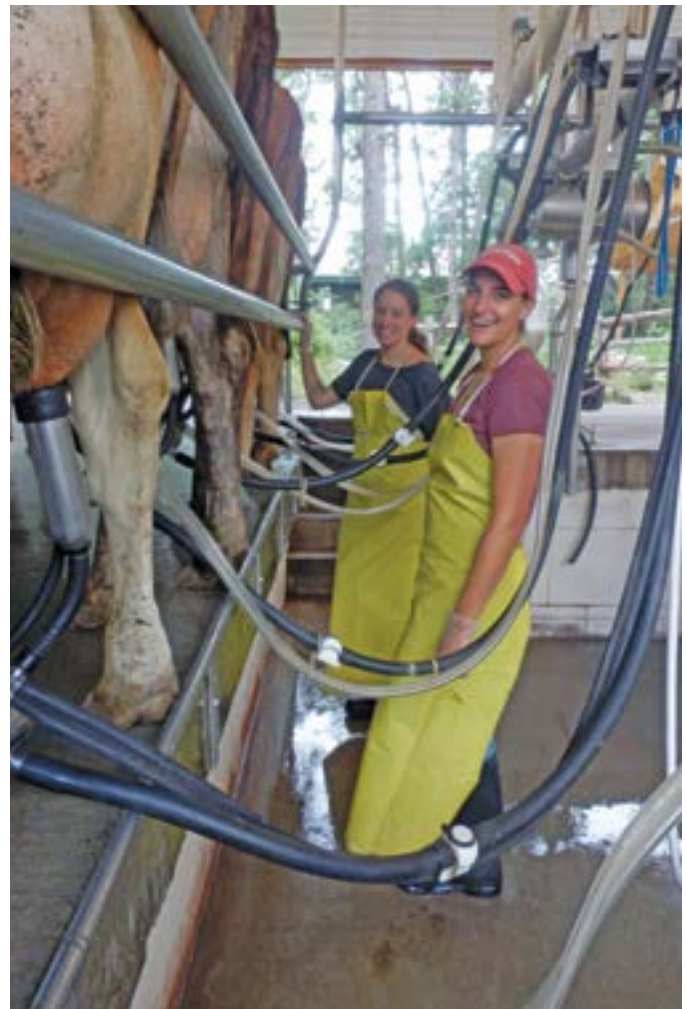
Mentorship is a unique role. It goes a little beyond just teaching, especially when the apprentice you mentor is deeply committed and intimately involved in your operation. We have found mentorship especially important in sustainable land management and food production, due to their hands-on nature. There is much that can be learned in a classroom setting or from books but even more that needs to be learned elbow deep in the dirt, grease, manure, compost, and curds.

Because sustainable and regenerative agriculture leads to conscious stewardship of land, humane treatment of animals, biodiversity in both plants and animals, and healthy food for humans, it is a crucial link in the care and repair of our precious lands. We believe so deeply in the importance of our environment and agriculture's healing and nurturing role that we feel we must mentor. We must pass on the knowhow and the experience to others who can expand the vision and make a difference.

Mentorship is not always easy. Every year we invite a newbie into our lives and business and onto our land. He or she is a liability for a time before that person becomes an asset. Milk has gone down the drain due to valves left open. Whole batches of cheese have been ruined when the stirring mechanism was left on during renneting. Cows get out. Instructions are explained, executed incorrectly, and then explained again. Tears happen. More often laughter happens. Then competence begins to blossom and confidence follows on its heels. That is a beautiful thing to watch.

James Ranch Artisan Cheese manages a small herd of Jersey cows for the production of raw milk and small-batch cheeses in the beautiful Animas Valley near Durango, Colorado. Operated by Dan and Becca James, James Ranch Artisan Cheese is one of several family-run enterprises on the larger James Ranch. This dairy and cheesemaking apprenticeship offers professional training for aspiring agrarians committed to a life and career at the intersection of conservation, sustainable agriculture, and artisan foods. The apprenticeship includes hands-on experience with all aspects of dairy operation and cheese production, including low-stress animal handling, milking, cheesemaking, affinage, biological monitoring, marketing, financial planning, Holistic Management, and land stewardship.

Dan and Becca run the cheese company together. Becca manages accounts and sales while Dan focuses on cheese production and dairy management. The Jameses met at the University of Washington and lived in Seattle for several years before deciding to return to Dan's childhood home on the James Ranch in Durango and to a life in agriculture. After visiting cheesemakers and dairies in Europe and New Zealand, they moved back to Durango, where they started a 100% grass-based dairy and cheesemaking operation to utilize the best resource available on the James Ranch—grass. They sold their first cheese in 2003, and later added whey-fed, pastured pork to the product mix.



2014 apprentices Justine Sanfilippo and Claire Persichetti in the milking parlor.

Some apprentices come and learn that farming is not for them. More often they come and are forever changed, no matter where their lives take them. We have former apprentices in graduate school, on dairies, working for cheesemakers, and setting up their own farms. All of these are valid manifestations of the experience they have gained from us. All of our apprentices leave a lasting impression on us and we on them. We are all changed. While they generally learn a lot from us, we also gather knowledge and experience from them. We come away knowing ourselves better, having learned to be better teachers.

We mentor for all of these reasons. In the end, if an apprentice is chosen carefully, it is a sound business decision. His or her mistakes cost money but the apprenticeship's low-cost help is invaluable in the thin-margin business of agriculture. If we can get it all done at a lower cost and pass on valuable knowledge at the same time, it is a win-win situation for all.

On a windy spring morning, when the clouds were deciding whether to spit rain or snow or to just keep their moisture to themselves, a panicked apprentice came running to our door. "Ginger's calf has really runny poop. I've been reading about scours, and I'm afraid that's what she has." We invited her into the house for a muffin and cup of tea. We discussed a number of things relating to the situation, among them the need for calm even in an emergency (which this was not). Her reading had come from veterinary books that were not focused on pasture-based dairy, nor were they taking into account calves that were with the mother cows.

When we went to check, we found the little calf with bright eyes and head up. With some reflection, the apprentice remembered that this calf had spent much of the day before on the wrong side of the fence. When she was reunited with her mother, she must have done a bit of overeating. We put her on watch just in case, but she was right as rain two days later.

As mentors, we accept the extra time out of our already busy schedules to tend to wonderfully endless questions and countless learning opportunities. These teaching moments also provide a space for human connection that brings a welcome dimension to our farming day. In the end, mentoring is sometimes hard, sometimes easy, but always worthwhile. The relationships built and the skills passed on endure. Our apprentices leave a lasting mark on us, and we are grateful.



2013 apprentice Sandra Gavillot.



2012 apprentice Josh Lang moves the herd to pasture.



Dan James cutting cheese at the Telluride Farmers Market.

AGRICULTURAL APPRENTICESHIP IN THE US

In 2015, with funding from the Thornburg Foundation of Santa Fe, the Quivira Coalition's New Agrarian Program launched a nationwide dialogue among established agricultural apprenticeships to foster programs large and effective enough to bring about systemic improvements in agricultural education and practice. More than forty programs administered by private ranches and farms, nonprofit organizations, and academic institutions have engaged in this project over the last year and are now beginning to serve as resources to one another. We hope to reach many more programs, both existing and emerging, and ultimately to help build a strong and inclusive network of programs representing every region and area of agriculture, from ranching, dairy farming, and cheesemaking to fruit, vegetable, and grain production—and everything in between.

We deeply appreciate the participation of the ranchers, farmers, apprentices, and program directors who completed the online survey and follow-up questionnaires, answered the phone calls, and hosted the site visits that have culminated in this guidebook. Everyone without exception gave generously of time and information, sharing their success stories and challenges, and revealing a rich store of insight and experience.

This chapter summarizes the most important findings of our research, followed by short descriptions of many of the programs that participated in the project. The first section summarizes responses to the survey that initiated the project. Our contact list included seventy representatives of farms, ranches, and nonprofit organizations currently administering stand-alone apprenticeships, either independently or in partnership, and of academic institutions that have developed experiential, hands-on learning opportunities for students enrolled in agricultural programs.

The second section provides two-page descriptions of thirty apprenticeship programs that participated in the project. It also includes a map of the US as a visual guide to the diversity of programs included in the project and a table for comparing programs. This section is further divided into the following program categories:

- **Ranch- and Farm-Based Apprenticeships**, typically administered directly by a single, private ranch and/or farm working independently to offer entry-level learning and working positions for beginning ranchers or farmers and defining these positions as apprenticeships.
- **Nonprofit Hubs**, typically partnerships between nonprofit organizations and mentor ranches and farms in which the nonprofit serves as the program hub, providing a variety of support services for multiple host ranches and farms.
- **Academic Programs**, hands-on training provided on campus farms for enrolled students, which meets the definition of apprenticeship but is not necessarily referred to as such.

For the purposes of this project, an agricultural apprenticeship was defined as comprehensive education and professional training, typically eight months in length or longer, including hands-on experience in a real-life work setting alongside a dedicated mentor who is an experienced practitioner in his or her chosen areas of agricultural production.

In our initial survey, we acknowledged that many programs offer educational opportunities that meet the definition of apprenticeship but are called something else. Two examples are academic institutions that provide hands-on learning in a ranch or farm setting to degree candidates in agricultural departments, and programs whose internships provide the same depth and breadth of training as an apprenticeship.

SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESPONSES

APPRENTICESHIP CASE STUDIES

- ☐ Map and Summary Table
- ☐ Case Studies: Nonprofits
- ☐ Case Studies: Individual Ranches and Farms
- ☐ Case Studies: Academic Programs

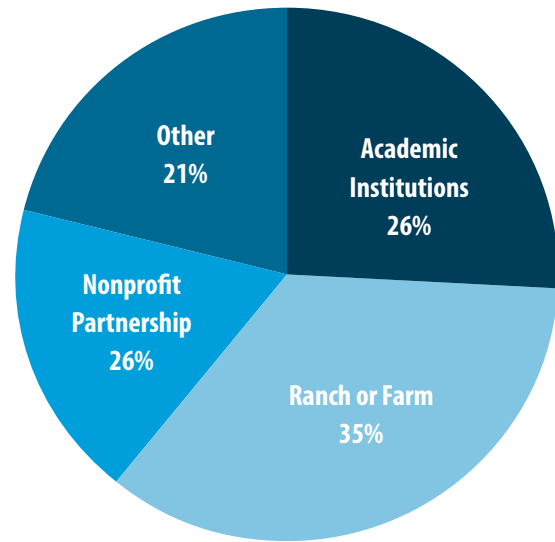
SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESPONSES

The following analysis is based on survey responses from thirty-eight individual apprenticeship programs. While the combined analysis of these programs offers interesting general insight into apprenticeship trends and practices, they represent only a fraction of existing opportunities for beginning ranchers and farmers in the US.

RESPONDENTS

Participating programs represent a variety of organizational structures:

- The largest share (35%) are ranches or farms offering apprenticeships exclusively on home operations; of these, half are registered as nonprofits.
- A quarter (26%) are academic institutions. Of these, almost two-thirds (60%) are community colleges or universities with a campus farm or ranch, and the rest are land grant universities with a university-based farm or ranch. None were academic institutions in partnership with private host ranches and farms.
- A smaller but significant number (18%) are nonprofits partnering with private ranches and farms.



Programs included in this project have been in operation for a minimum of two years; a small majority (53%) have been in operation for over ten years. Almost half (47%) employ two to four staff working half-time or more, while slightly more than a third (37%) employ five or more staff working at least part-time.

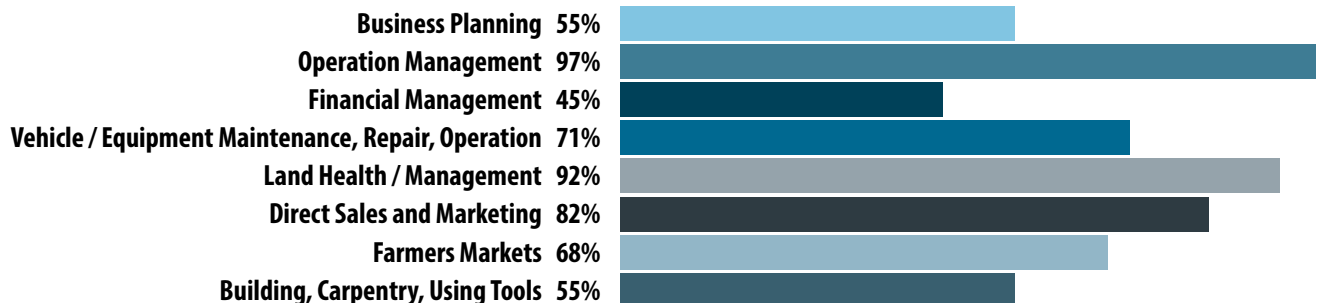
VARIATIONS IN APPRENTICESHIP

The length of a typical apprenticeship varies widely among respondents. While almost half (47%) last eight to twelve months, 16% are over two years long.

The number of apprenticeships offered per program also varies annually: 42% report zero to four offered, but a large share (26%) report fifteen or more.

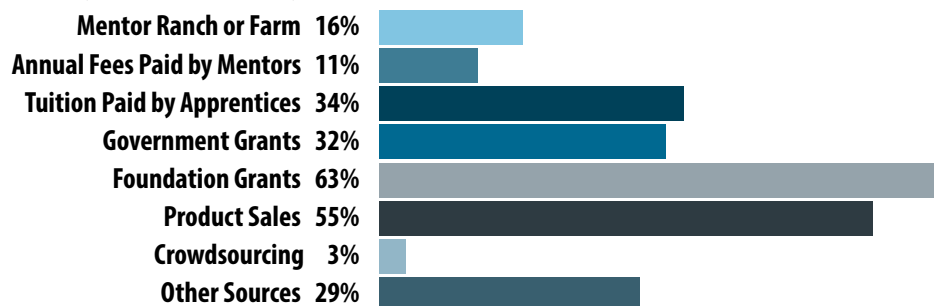
Programs serving many apprentices each year are typically nonprofit organizations in partnership with a number of host ranches and farms.

Respondents offer a wide variety of subjects. Not surprisingly, almost all respondents (97%) offer training in ranch or farm management. The second most frequent training category (92%) addresses land health and management issues (water, soil, air, wild fire), followed by direct sales and marketing (82%). Far fewer organizations offer financial management (45%) and business planning (55%).



COSTS AND FUNDING SOURCES

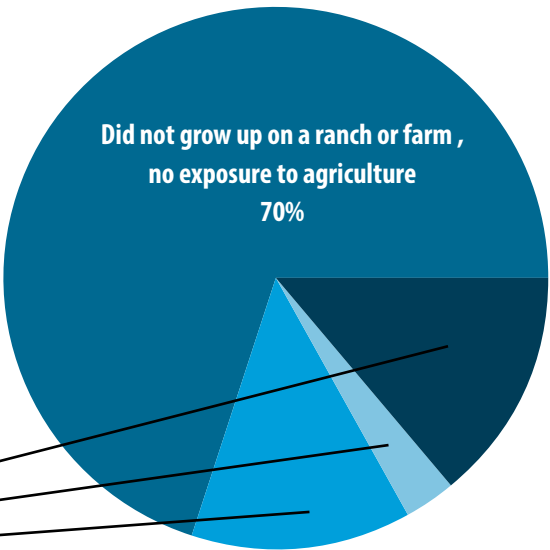
There is wide variation among programs in the reported total annual cost of training one apprentice. Costs were defined to include apprentice stipend and other compensation, room and board, program administration, staff time and travel, marketing and outreach, and application review and selection. The most common response (35%) is a range of \$5,000-\$9,999 per year. But almost as many programs (30%) report a per apprentice cost greater than \$15,000 per year. The most frequently reported sources of important funding for apprenticeship programs are donations from foundations or individuals (63%) and product sales (55%). Only a small share rely on annual fees paid by mentors (11%) and mentor ranches and farms (16%).



APPRENTICE BACKGROUND AND DEMOGRAPHICS

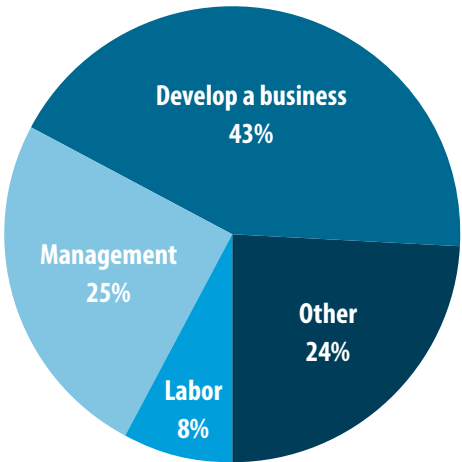
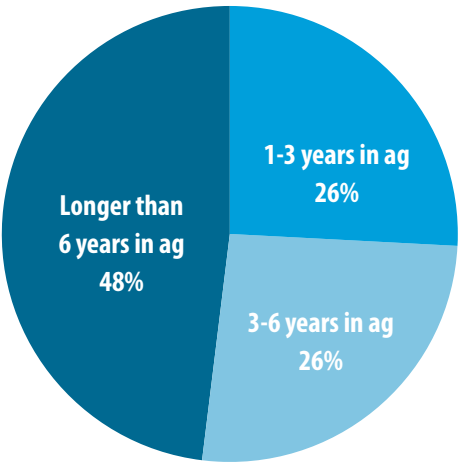
The majority of apprentices from participating programs (70%) are Twenty-three to twenty-nine years old and have a bachelor’s degree (81%). Very few of the programs are either predominantly male (5%) or female (3%).

More than two thirds of programs (70%) reported that their typical apprentice did not grow up on a farm or ranch and did not have regular exposure to farms or ranches. However, most also reported that apprentices had moderate prior farming or ranching experience, either some positive amount less than a year (38%) or between one and five years (43%). These numbers suggest that apprenticeship programs are filling a specific educational niche, serving individuals who have started farming or ranching and then decided that they need more training and who do not have familial relationships to provide mentoring.



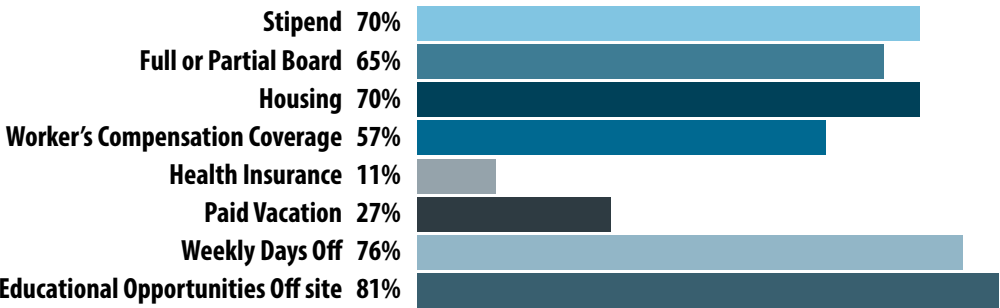
APPRENTICE OUTCOMES

A majority of programs (65%) track the employment of former apprentices, and of these most report a fairly high number of graduates who find and retain employment in agricultural professions. Almost half (48%) report that the average graduate remains in agriculture longer than six years, and about the same number (43%) report that most apprentices seek to develop their own businesses.



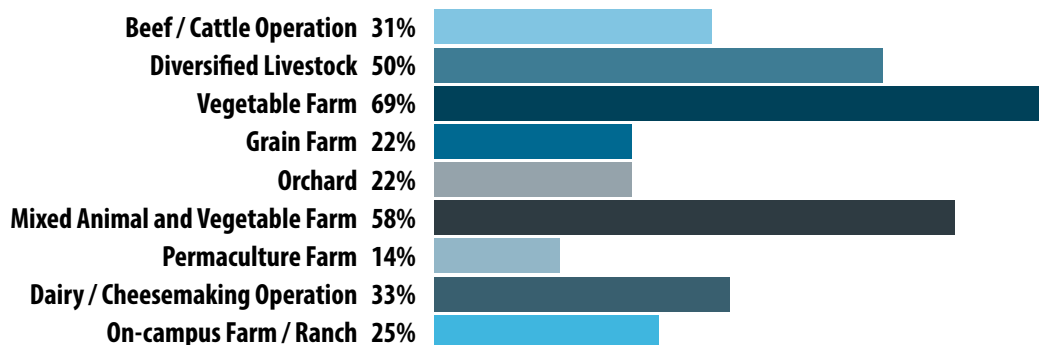
APPRENTICE COMPENSATION

Types of compensation are somewhat standard. Only a very small share (11%) of programs provide health insurance or paid vacation (27%). Slightly over two-thirds report providing a stipend (70%), board (65%), and housing (70%). A quarter of all responding programs (25%) pay stipends in the range of \$500-\$899 per month, and another quarter (28%) pay stipends of \$900 or more per month.



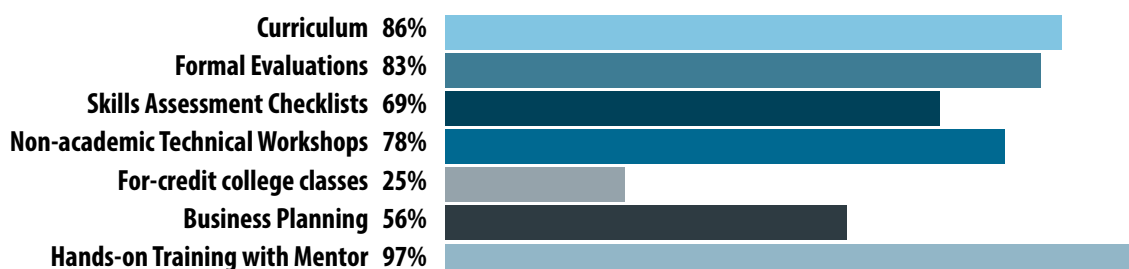
MENTOR OPERATIONS

Surveyed mentor operations are most commonly vegetable farms (69%) and mixed animal/vegetable operations (58%). These ratios should not be interpreted to be representative of all agricultural apprenticeships throughout the US. Based on our experience, for example, very few total apprenticeship opportunities exist on ranching operations.



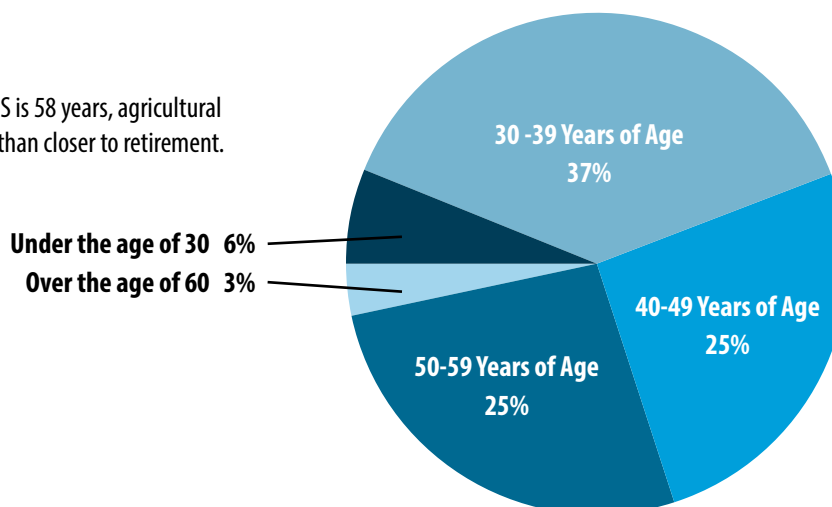
MENTORSHIP TOOLS

Most mentors provide hands-on training (97%), curriculum (86%), and formal evaluations (83%). In our experience, most mentors use a number of these tools without necessarily recognizing them as such. For example, a mentor may not realize that a detailed list of skills to be taught throughout the season serves as a simple curriculum.



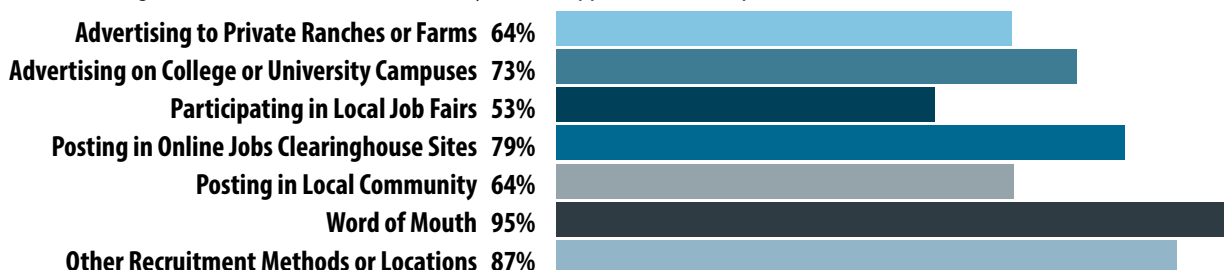
MENTOR DEMOGRAPHICS

While the national average age for a farmer in the US is 58 years, agricultural mentors in this study tend to be mid-career, rather than closer to retirement.



RECRUITMENT

On average, word of mouth is identified as the most successful method for recruiting high-quality applicants (82% of respondents rated it as very successful). Participating in local job fairs was on average the least successful and least often tried method. The graph below affirms our understanding that advertising online and through social media is a more effective way to reach applicants than via print ads.



NONPROFIT HUBS

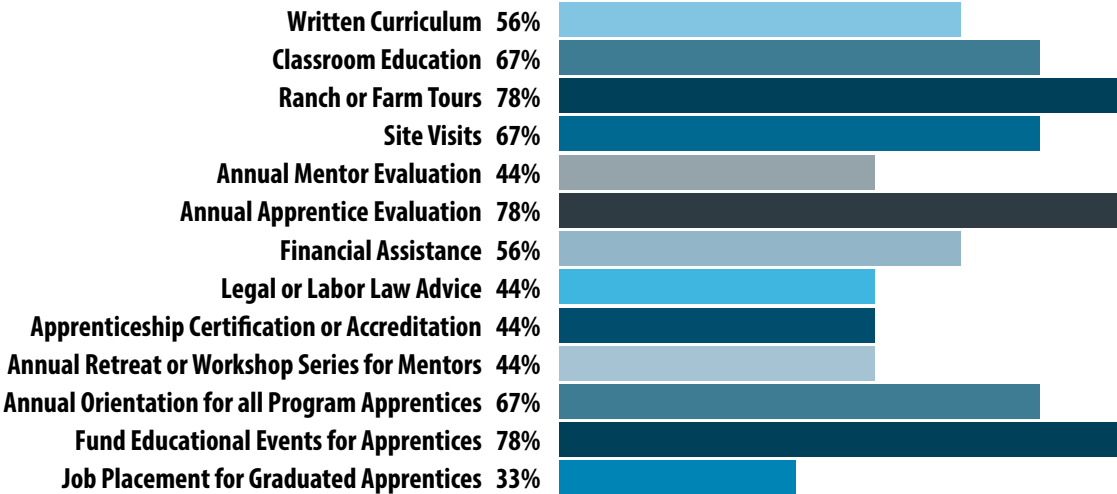
Our experience as a nonprofit organization operating an apprenticeship program hub gives us a deeper understanding of what is involved in running this particular kind of program. The following information is relevant to this category of program and does not apply to individual apprenticeships on single ranches and farms, or to hands-on programs hosted by academic institutions. We will do our best to focus more deeply on these programs in future editions of this book.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Nine organizations responded to these questions. The vast majority (78%) have a standard application for all applicants, designed by program headquarters and utilized by host ranches and farms. For most (78%), apprentices apply to the central organization, and for just slightly fewer (71%), program headquarters distributes completed applications to mentor ranches and farms, based on potential fit. In all cases, mentors conduct interviews and make the final selection. Most of these programs (67%) work with fifteen or more independent host ranches and farms.

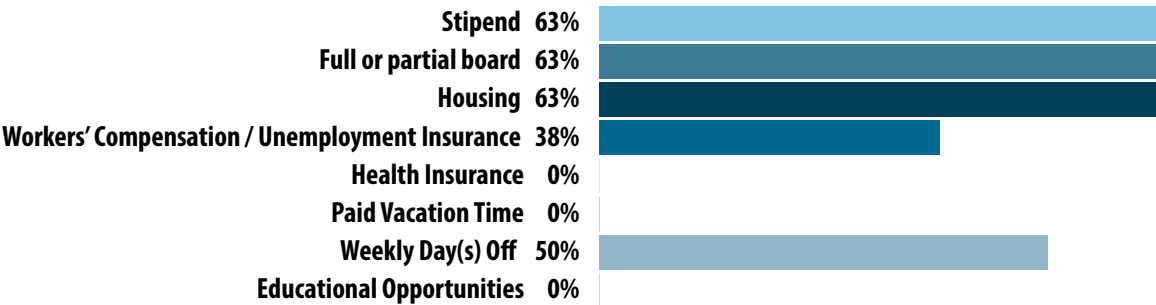
WHAT PROGRAMS PROVIDE

Respondents listed the following services as ones they provide to partner ranches and farms: 1) facilitating farm and ranch tours to other operations for apprentices (78%); 2) conducting an annual evaluation of apprentices and exit interviews (78%); 3) covering expenses to send apprentices to conferences, workshops, or other educational events (78%). Programs least frequently provided job placement for graduated apprentices (33%).



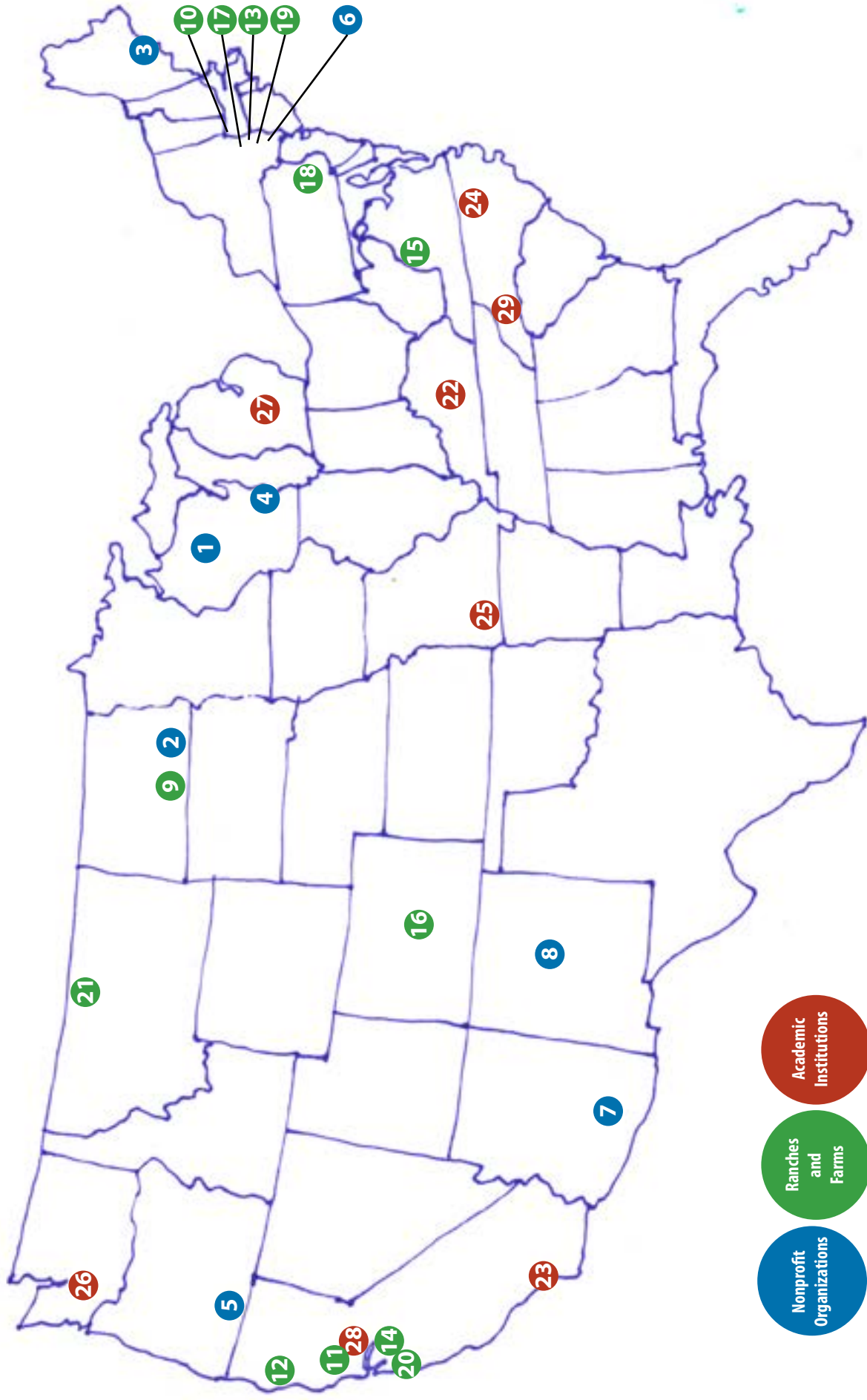
WHAT MENTORS PROVIDE

These same respondents ranked willingness to share the business model and financial management details of the host operation with apprentices and previous experience mentoring or supervising as the most important mentor selection criteria. They also reported that most mentors (63%) are required to pay the apprentice stipend and provide full or at least partial board and housing out of the ranch or farm budget. None of the hub organizations represented required mentor operations to provide health insurance, paid vacation, or additional educational opportunities.



Almost all respondents (97%) are interested in becoming part of a national network of agricultural apprenticeship programs

APPRENTICESHIP CASE STUDIES



Program	Contact	Email	Phone Number	Website	Pg
1. Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship, Medford, WI 54451	Joe Tomandl	joe@dga-national.org	715-560-0389	dga-national.org	28
2. FARRMS Internship Program, Medina, ND 58467	Sue Balcom	info@farms.org	701-486-3569	farms.org	30
3. Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association Journeyperson Program, Palermo, ME 04354	Daniel MacPhee	dmacphee@mofga.org	207-568-4142	mofga.org	32
4. North American Biodynamic Apprenticeship Program, Milwaukee, WI 53202	Thea Maria Carlson	nabdap@biodynamics.com	262-649-9212	biodynamics.com/nabdap	34
5. Rogue Farm Corps, Ashland, OR 97520	Stuart O'Neill	stu@roquefarmcorps.org	541-951-5105	roquefarmcorps.org	36
6. Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture Growing Farmers Initiative, Tarrytown, NY 10591	Sam Anderson	apprenticeships@stonebarnscenter.org	914-366-6200	stonebarnscenter.org	38
7. The Farm Education Resource Network (FERN) FarmReach, Tucson, AZ 85716	Debbie Weingarten	debbie@fernschool.org	520-260-2685	fernschool.org	40
8. Quivira Coalition New Agrarian Program, Santa Fe, NM 87505	Virginie Pointeau	virginie@quiviracoalition.org	505-820-2544	quiviracoalition.org	42
9. Brown's Ranch, Bismarck, ND 58503	Gabe Brown	brownranch@bektel.com	701-527-5570	brownranch.us	44
10. Caretaker Farm, Williamstown, MA 01267	Don Zasada	don@caretakerfarm.org	413-458-9691	caretakerfarm.org	46
11. Full Belly Farm, Guinda, CA 95637	Dru Rivers	dru@fullbellyfarm.com	530-796-2214	fullbellyfarm.com	48
12. Grange Farm School, Willits, CA 95490	Ruthie King	manager@grangefarmschool.org	707-841-1588	grangefarmschool.org	50
13. Hawthorne Valley Farm, Ghent, NY 12075	Lucy Marston	apprenticeships@hawthornevalleyfarm.org	518-672-7500	bit.ly/29yGGQ	52
14. Pie Ranch, Pescadero, CA 94060	Debbie Harris	debbie@pieranch.org	650-879-0995	pieranch.org	54
15. Polyface Inc., Swoope, VA 24479	Joel Salatin	polyfacefarms@gmail.com	540-885-3590	polyfacefarms.com	56
16. Round River Resource Management, LLC, Rush, CO 80833	Louis Martin	louis@roundriver.biz	970-768-1970	roundriverresource.wordpress.com	58
17. Roxbury Farm, Kinderhook, NY 12106	Jody Bolluyt	info@roxburyfarm.com	518-758-8558	roxburyfarm.com	60
18. The Seed Farm, Emmaus, PA 18049	Lindsey Parks	info@theseedfarm.org	610-391-9583x16	theseedfarm.org	62
19. Sisters Hill Farm, Stanfordsville, NY 12581	David Hambleton	shfarm@optonline.net	845-868-7048	sistershillfarm.org	64
20. TomKat Ranch Educational Foundation, Pescadero, CA 94060	Kevin Watt	kevin@tomkatranch.org	650-683-0268	tomkatranch.org	66
21. Vilicus Farms, Havre, MT 59501	Anna Jones-Crabbtree	anna@vilicusfarms.com	406-394-2469	vilicusfarms.com	68
22. Berea College Farm, Berea, KY 40404	Sean Clark	sean_clark@berea.edu	859-539-5308	berea.edu/anr	70
23. Cal Poly Farm, San Luis Obispo, CA 93407	Scott Steinmaus	ssteinma@calpoly.edu	805-756-5142	aeps.calpoly.edu	72
24. Center for Environmental Farming Systems Apprenticeship Program, Raleigh, NC 27695	Lisa Forehand	lisa_forehand@ncsu.edu	919-513-0954	cefs.ncsu.edu	74
25. College of the Ozarks Agriculture Department, Point Lookout, MO 65726	Dan Swearingen	swearingen@cofo.edu	417-690-3360	cofo.edu	76
26. The Evergreen State College Organic Farm, Olympia, WA 98505	Sophie Fluhrer	organicfarm@evergreen.edu	360-867-6160	evergreen.edu/organicfarm	78
27. Michigan State University Organic Farmer Training Program, Holt, MI 48842	Ellen Moje	msufarm@msu.edu	517-230-7987	msuorganicfarm.org	80
28. UC Davis Student Farm, Davis, CA 95616	Raoul Adamchak	rwadamchak@ucdavis.edu	530-304-1898	asi.ucdavis.edu/programs/sf	82
29. Warren Wilson College Farm Crew, Swannanoa, NC 28778	Ian Robertson	farm@warren-wilson.edu	828-771-3014	warren-wilson.edu	84

DAIRY GRAZING APPRENTICESHIP

MEDFORD, WI 54451

IN A NUTSHELL

Started two to five years ago

Apprenticeship commitment greater than two years

Up to four graduates per year

**Nonprofit organization partnering with
more than fifteen independent host ranches and farms**

AGRICULTURAL FOCUS

Dairy and cheesemaking operation

SPECIALIZED TRAINING TOPICS/PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS

Business planning; ranch or farm operations management; financial management; vehicle and equipment maintenance, repair, and operation; land health and management issues (water, soil, air, wild fire)

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS PROVIDED BY MENTORS

Curriculum (formal or informal); formal evaluations; skills assessment checklist; non-academic technical workshops; for-credit college or university classes; business planning and financial management; hands-on training alongside a mentor

APPRENTICE COMPENSATION

Stipend; full or partial board; housing; workers' compensation; unemployment insurance; health insurance; paid vacation time; weekly day(s) off; educational opportunities off the mentor ranch or farm (e.g., workshops, visits to other operations)

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Government (federal or state) grants; donations from foundations or individuals

COSTS COVERED BY MENTORS

Stipend: required to pay a minimum of eight dollars per hour, but generally pay more to retain good apprentices

PROVIDED BY PROGRAM

Written curriculum; suggested reading materials; classroom education; facilitated tours to other ranches and farms; site visits to ensure a successful experiences for mentors and apprentices; financial assistance with stipend or costs associated with apprenticeship; apprenticeship certification or accreditation; paid conferences, workshops, or other educational events for apprentices

APPLICATION AND SELECTION

Standard application for all applicants, designed by DGA; candidates apply directly to DGA; DGA distributes applications to mentor farms based on potential fit; mentors conduct interviews and make final selection

The Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship (DGA) is dedicated to providing a guided pathway to independent dairy farm ownership, developing grazing careers, and strengthening the economic and environmental wellbeing of rural communities and the dairy industry. We accomplish this mission by:

- Linking current and aspiring graziers in the transfer of farms and graziers skills and knowledge;
- Developing alliances with agricultural, environmental, and consumer groups;
- Providing opportunities for farmers and their customers to invest in the next generation of grazing farmers.

DGA professionalizes dairy grazing as a career by providing an accredited pathway to farm ownership and helping transition the industry to the next generation. The program is composed of four thousand hours of training over two years. Of those hours, three thousand seven hundred twelve are on-the-farm employment under the guidance of an approved Master Dairy Grazier. The remaining two hundred eighty-eight hours are paid related instruction. Related instruction includes formal coursework offered by partnering universities and technical colleges, farming conferences, and other educational events organized by support organizations. Apprentices also receive credit hours for peer-discussion groups, which bring in local business leaders, agency representatives, and agricultural professionals, to provide access to more in-depth information as well as networking opportunities. In addition, DGA includes a Holistic Management seminar and professional development training through the Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards. To assist both masters and apprentices in reaching their farming goals, the program offers financial analysis and business-planning support through Cadwallader Consulting, LLC. DGA is an approved vendor for the Farm Services Agency's Financial Management Training Program.



APPRENTICES

TYPICAL AGE: Twenty-three to twenty-nine years old

BACKGROUND: From farming and non-farming backgrounds

PRIOR EXPERIENCE: One to five years

MOST COMMON OUTCOME: Seek to develop own business

HOW DO APPRENTICES FIT INTO YOUR PROGRAM?

DGA gives aspiring dairy farmers an opportunity to earn while they learn. They:

- GAIN knowledge and experience within a structured program of support under the guidance of an experienced dairy grazer;
- DEVELOP skills that will prepare you for positions in management, partnerships, and farm ownership;
- RECEIVE professional financial analysis and business planning support;
- EXPLORE new models of investment, equity building, and farm transfer;
- ACHIEVE your dream of becoming an independent dairy farmer and help shape the future of the dairy industry.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO CREATE THIS PROGRAM?

Dairy farming is an important part of rural economies. Each cow generates approximately twenty-thousand dollars of economic activity in the local community each year. But new farmers face significant barriers and are not entering the profession at a rate that offsets the loss of retiring producers. The US loses 5-10% of its dairy farms every year. Because the average age of farmers is fifty-nine years and many do not have an identified successor, farm loss is expected to continue.

DGA—the first accredited Apprenticeship for farming in the nation—was created by and for farmers to address this challenge.

Using the model of education that has prepared skilled workers in the trades for more than a century, DGA combines work-based training with related instruction for the federally recognized occupation of dairy grazer. A dairy grazer is a farmer who uses managed grazing. In managed grazing systems, the majority of farm acres are planted to perennial forages and cows are rotated through paddocks of high quality grasses that are allowed to rest and regrow. Using this cost effective method, dairy graziers are able to restore natural resources, produce high quality milk, and remain profitable in both conventional and value-added markets.

DGA is dedicated to providing a guided pathway to independent dairy farm ownership, developing grazing careers, and strengthening the economic and environmental wellbeing of rural communities and the dairy industry.



INSIDER'S VIEW

TOP SUCCESSES

- Formal Apprenticeship registered with US Department of Labor
- Potential to be shared nationally
- New farm startups

TOP CHALLENGES

- Funding for administration and services
- Successful recruitment of Master Graziers and apprentices
- Securing industry support

WHAT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WOULD BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL?

- Financial resources!

WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU HAD KNOWN BEFORE YOU STARTED?

The structure of formal apprenticeship within the US Department of Labor.

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING...?

I would have created related instruction classes that could be delivered in virtual format right away... we are working on that now.



FARRMS INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

MEDINA, ND 58467

IN A NUTSHELL

Started two to five years ago

Apprenticeship commitment less than eight months

Ten to fourteen graduates per year

**Nonprofit organization partnering with
ten to fourteen independent host ranches and farms**

AGRICULTURAL FOCUS

Ranch or beef cattle operation; diversified ranch or farm; vegetable farm; grain farm; mixed animal and vegetable farm; permaculture farm; dairy and cheesemaking operation

SPECIALIZED TRAINING TOPICS/PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS

Business planning; vehicle and equipment maintenance, repair, and operation; land health and management issues (water, soil, air, wild fire); direct sales and marketing; farmers markets; building, carpentry, and using tools

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS PROVIDED BY MENTORS

Curriculum (formal or informal); formal evaluations; skills assessment checklist; non-academic technical workshops; hands-on training alongside a mentor

APPRENTICE COMPENSATION

Stipend; full or partial board; housing; workers' compensation; unemployment insurance; weekly day(s) off; educational opportunities off the mentor ranch or farm (e.g., workshops, visits to other operations)

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Donations from foundations or individuals

COSTS COVERED BY MENTORS

Full or partial board; housing; weekly day(s) off; some farms provide food for their interns

PROVIDED BY PROGRAM

Written curriculum; conducts classroom education to complement on-farm learning; facilitates farm/ranch tours to other operations for apprentices; annual evaluation of mentors; annual evaluation of apprentices and exit interviews; financial assistance with stipend or other expenses associated with apprenticeship; legal/labor law advice; annual orientation for all program apprentices; paid conferences, workshops, or other educational events for apprentices

APPLICATION AND SELECTION

Standard application for all applicants, designed by FARRMS; candidates apply directly to FARRMS; FARRMS distributes applications to mentor farms based on potential fit; mentors conduct interviews and make final selection

The FARRMS Internship Program provides beginning farmers and ranchers with real world training in sustainable agriculture.

Participants in the FARRMS internship program live and work full time on a host farm for an entire growing season, receiving ongoing instruction and learning in-depth skills unique to the host farmer's operation.

FARRMS internship program aims to prepare beginning farmers and ranchers with the fundamental skills and concepts of operating a successful farm.

Our organization empowers people to dream and realize those dreams in the creation of thriving, exciting, diverse, and sustainable rural communities. We establish links between people, good food, living farms and the environment through hands-on educational experiences. We model sustainability by acting with appreciation and respect for the environment, society, and just economics. FARRMS builds a better world through powerful, creative actions.

Sustainability is central to our organization. FARRMS has determined "sustainability" to contain the following components:

- Approaches to community and agriculture that foster self-renewal, are in harmony with natural cycles and conserve natural resources;
- Activities that benefit and nurture the land and rural community;
- Activities and approaches that are socially as well as economically just and contribute to the common prosperity of the community;
- Cultural and agricultural practices that ensure the health and diversity of the land and the life it supports.



APPRENTICES

TYPICAL AGE: Twenty-three to twenty-nine years old

BACKGROUND: Did not grow up on farm/ranch and did not have regular exposure to ranches or farms

PRIOR EXPERIENCE: Less than one year

MOST COMMON OUTCOME: Seek to develop own business

HOW DO APPRENTICES FIT INTO YOUR PROGRAM?

The FARRMS Program consists of the following.

Field-based education and on-farm work experience: The majority of this program is focused on learning by doing, while under the supervision and mentorship of your host farmer. Participants will work both cooperatively and individually to accomplish the daily farm work. These tasks will vary according to each farm and its production methods.

Orientation: An orientation session is held at the beginning of the season to introduce the program and meet the other farmers and interns. Questions are answered, expectations are outlined, and a potluck for networking is held.

Farm Tours: FARRMS has funds for interns to travel to two to four farm tours or field days at other farms across the state. Our partner organizations, such as NPSAS and the ND Grazing Lands Coalition, host six to twelve field days every summer.

Potlucks: Summer is a busy time for farmers. We have a potluck at the mandatory orientation in the spring, as well as three potlucks over the summer to discuss books, socialize, and compare notes.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO CREATE THIS PROGRAM?

Farms and farming continue to change. Our rural communities are shrinking and growing farther apart as farms and young families disappear. While rural communities struggle to survive and the average age of farmers continues to increase, there are opportunities to develop new markets and do things in new ways. FARRMS recognizes the need for education to create sustainable farms and alternatives for economic development in small communities.

FARRMS was founded in 2000 to address specific educational needs of organic producers and processors and to promote sustainable rural development in the Medina community and beyond.

The original concept behind the development of FARRMS came from International Certification Services, Inc. (ICS) and its organic certification program, Farm Verified Organic. ICS saw the need for a separate organization to provide education about organic agriculture and other sustainable concepts.

FARRMS's first major accomplishment was the construction of a new office building in Medina, North Dakota, in 2003. This new facility includes a state-of-the-art classroom, a conference room, space for an interpretive center, as well as office space for FARRMS and ICS. It is our hope that this facility can become a meeting place for the community of Medina as well as other groups from around the state and the region. Various organizations from around the state have already met in this facility, generating income for FARRMS as well as for Medina businesses, such as restaurants and lodging providers.

With growing consumer awareness of and demand for organic and sustainable products, there are many opportunities for producers and entrepreneurs in North Dakota. FARRMS employs a multifaceted approach to developing sustainability on farms and in communities.

Education is the first step toward creating the next generation of organic farmers; thus, it is a primary focus of FARRMS.



INSIDER'S VIEW

TOP SUCCESSES

- Amazing educational resources
- Networking opportunities
- Diverse experience

TOP CHALLENGES

- Government bureaucracy (institutions overseeing the program)
- Poor pool of applicants
- Unappealing location

WHAT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WOULD BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL?

A national website to link potential apprentices with apprenticeship programs with filters for interests and experience.

WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU HAD KNOWN BEFORE YOU STARTED?

How to attract good applicants.

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING...?

Housing and office space.

JOURNEYPERSON PROGRAM

MAINE ORGANIC FARMERS AND GARDENERS ASSOCIATION – PALERMO, ME 4354

IN A NUTSHELL

Started over ten years ago

Apprenticeship commitment one and a half to two years

Fifteen or more graduates per year

Nonprofit organization partnering with

fifteen or more independent host ranches and farms

AGRICULTURAL FOCUS

Ranch or beef cattle operation; diversified ranch or farm; vegetable farm; orchard; mixed animal and vegetable farm; permaculture farm; dairy and cheesemaking operation; other specialty crops and value-added products

SPECIALIZED TRAINING TOPICS/PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS

Business planning; ranch or farm operations management; financial management; vehicle and equipment maintenance, repair, and operation; land health and management issues (water, soil, air, wild fire); direct sales and marketing; farmers markets; building, carpentry, and using tools; organic certification; whole-farm planning; accessing resources, services and financing; land access/tenure; legal issues for farm businesses

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS PROVIDED BY MENTORS

Curriculum (formal or informal); formal evaluations; non-academic, technical workshops; business planning and financial management; hands-on training alongside a mentor

APPRENTICE COMPENSATION

Stipend for educational materials; access to educational programming and other special services and benefits.

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Government grants; donations from foundations or individuals; capital campaign to build an endowment

PROVIDED BY PROGRAM

Classroom education; facilitated tours to other ranches and farms; site visits to ensure a successful experiences for mentors and apprentices; annual evaluation of mentors; annual apprentice evaluation and exit interviews; financial assistance with stipend or costs associated with apprenticeship; legal/labor law advice; annual retreat or workshops for mentors; annual orientation for apprentices; paid conferences, workshops, or other educational events for apprentices; apprentice job placement

APPLICATION AND SELECTION

Standard application for all applicants, designed by MOFGA; candidates apply directly to MOFGA; MOFGA interviews and selects apprentices; apprentices choose mentors with MOFGA staff assistance

The Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA), formed in 1971, is the oldest and largest state organic organization in the country. The purpose of the association is to help farmers and gardeners grow organic food, fiber and other crops; protect the environment; recycle natural resources; increase local food production; support rural communities; and illuminate for consumers the connection between healthful food and environmentally sound farming practices.

MOFGA now has more than eleven thousand members, a staff of eighteen employees, an organic certification subsidiary that certifies 4% of Maine's farms and 15% of the state's dairies, a year-round education program offering dozens of conferences, presentations, and workshops throughout Maine, countless opportunities for more than two thousand active volunteers, and a Journeyperson Program providing advanced training for people wanting to become organic farmers.

With the help of its members and friends, MOFGA built a facility to support organic growers and demonstrate the viability of organic agriculture. Located on more than two hundred fifty acres of mixed farmland and forest in Unity, Maine, MOFGA's Common Ground Education Center provides ample space for dozens of gardening, farming, and forestry management meetings, demonstrations, workshops, and courses hosted by the organization each year. MOFGA's staff offices are located in the main building on the grounds as well.



APPRENTICES

TYPICAL AGE: Twenty-three to twenty-nine years old

BACKGROUND: Not from a farming background, but has worked on farms for at least two years prior to participating

PRIOR EXPERIENCE: One to five years

MOST COMMON OUTCOME: Seek to develop own business

HOW DO APPRENTICES FIT INTO YOUR PROGRAM?

MOFGA's Journeyperson Program provides hands-on support, training, and mentorship for people who are serious about pursuing careers in organic farming in Maine. The program is designed to fill the continuing education gap between apprentice and independent farmer, and to provide the resources and opportunities for prospective new farmers who have completed an apprenticeship or have farmed for at least two years to further develop the skills they need to farm independently and successfully. The program is largely shaped by the farming interests and goals of individual participants, and is intended to enable aspiring new farmers to gain advanced farming experience, skill, and perspective in a relatively safe and supportive environment, buffered somewhat from the high risk of establishing a farm enterprise. Journeypeople also benefit from participating in a supportive network of like-minded, motivated people.

MOFGA seeks applicants who are serious about operating farm businesses in Maine that will make significant contributions to the agricultural community and economy. While open to farms at any stage of development, the program is best utilized by those who have an established farm business with secure land tenure and will use this program as a tangible step toward achieving farm goals. MOFGA seeks applicants to the Journeyperson program who meet the following criteria: minimum two years farming experience; one calendar year of farm experience in Maine; a demonstrated commitment to farming in Maine; measurable contributions to Maine's agricultural economy; production goals of feeding their community and region; and a demonstrated commitment to sustainable practices, including but not limited to organic production. The MOFGA Journeyperson program is ideally suited to farmers whose focus is on livestock and crop production for direct-to-consumer and wholesale markets and who need support to refine their vision, apply whole-farm planning practices, and have the time to fully utilize the resources of the program.

MOFGA offers participants a two-year package of support, including:

- Mentorship—MOFGA Journeypersons choose a mentor, who will be paid by MOFGA for their mentorship role. A mentor from MOFGA's Agricultural Services staff will also be assigned to each Journeyperson;
- Free access to MOFGA resources, including technical advice from our Agricultural Services staff, business planning help, admission to MOFGA-sponsored events, workshops, and conferences, access to MOFGA's farmer network, and farm visits from MOFGA staff and advisors;
- An educational stipend of five hundred dollars per year, which can be spent on classes, workshops, or conferences related to farming, or books, videos, computer programs, etc., that are educational in nature;
- Six-hundred-dollar stipend towards the Farm Beginnings whole-farm and business-planning course;
- Discount with FEDCO and Organic Growers Supply;
- Discount with Johnny's Selected Seeds;
- Access to the Shared Use Farm Equipment pool;
- Assistance and support for land access and tenure issues through partnerships with Maine Farmland Trust and Land For Good;
- Access to the MOFGA Organic Farmers' Loan Fund.



INSIDER'S VIEW

TOP SUCCESSES

- 93% of participants in our journeyperson program since it started fifteen years ago are still farming today—and 85% are still in Maine.
- The number of farms and farmers are quickly increasing in Maine (organic acreage doubled in last census survey, number of producers up by 36%).
- Graduates are actively engaged in the ag community, training other new farmers and making positive change in expanding markets and reviving vibrant local ag culture.
- Over 75% of product grown by our graduates are sold within 100 miles of their farms.

TOP CHALLENGES

- Capacity—we know what to do, but we are understaffed.
- Mentor training and support—mentors are hard to gather in one place due to geography and culture.
- Lack of aggregation and distribution capacity.
- Institutional buyers and large wholesalers are reluctant to adjust any of their industrial scale model to meet smaller scale producers halfway.

WHAT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WOULD BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL?

- Develop a legal framework for apprenticeship.
- Develop evaluation and assessment tools.
- Effective outreach methods for different groups (farm kids, veterans, immigrants, minorities, etc.).
- Clearinghouse for different types of farm training programs, intermediate management gigs, etc..

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING...?

We would hire additional program staff so that we had more time to be checking in more closely and frequently with apprentices AND mentors. We have lots of educational programming, but would like the capacity to develop more advanced offerings and a framework to provide the space for farmers to determine and deliver dynamic programming that they need at any particular moment (with our support).

NORTH AMERICAN BIODYNAMIC

MILWAUKEE, WI 53202

IN A NUTSHELL

Started six to ten years ago

Apprenticeship commitment one and a half to two years

Ten to fourteen graduates per year

**Nonprofit organization partnering with
over fifty independent host ranches and farms**

AGRICULTURAL FOCUS

Ranch or beef cattle operation; diversified ranch or farm; vegetable farm; grain farm; orchard; mixed animal and vegetable farm; permaculture farm; dairy and cheesemaking operation

SPECIALIZED TRAINING TOPICS/PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS

Land health and management issues (water, soil, air, wild fire); biodynamic principles and practices

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS PROVIDED BY MENTORS

Formal evaluations; skills assessment checklist; hands-on training alongside a mentor

APPRENTICE COMPENSATION

Stipend; full or partial board; housing; weekly day(s) off; educational opportunities off the mentor ranch or farm (e.g., workshops, visits to other operations)

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Program tuition paid by apprentices; donations from foundations or individuals

APPLICATION AND SELECTION

Standard application for all applicants, designed by NABDAP.; candidates apply directly to host ranch or farm; mentors conduct interviews and make final selection

COSTS COVERED BY MENTORS

Stipend; full or partial board; housing; workers' compensation; unemployment insurance

PROVIDED BY PROGRAM

Classroom education; site visits to ensure a successful experiences for mentors and apprentices; annual evaluation of mentors; annual apprentice evaluation and exit interviews; annual retreat or workshops for mentors; apprenticeship certification or accreditation; paid conferences, workshops, or other educational events for apprentices

The Biodynamic Association awakens and enlivens co-creative relationships between humans and Earth, transforming the practice and culture of agriculture to renew the vitality of the earth, the integrity of our food, and the health and wholeness of our communities.

Founded in 1938, the BDA is considered to be the oldest sustainable agriculture nonprofit organization in North America. Biodynamics was developed in the early 1920s by the Austrian philosopher and social reformer Rudolf Steiner. Steiner is considered one of the pioneers of the organic farming movement, and biodynamics is considered by many to be the most advanced and holistic form of organic farming and gardening on the planet. Over the past seventy-seven years, biodynamic practitioners have played a key role in the renewal of agriculture—helping pioneer the early organic farming movement; inspiring the work of Silent Spring author Rachel Carson; piloting the first community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs; and demonstrating how to bring health and flavor back into our food.

The North American Biodynamic Apprenticeship Program (NABDAP) helps aspiring farmers develop the skills and knowledge they need to build successful organic and biodynamic farms. Apprentices complete two years of structured, on-farm training and mentoring at one or several of over forty participating farms across the US and Canada. On-farm training is guided and documented through comprehensive skills checklists, which help apprentices identify and focus on the skills they wish to master while tracking their progress. Apprentices keep a daily farm journal and complete an independent project on the farm.

On-farm training and mentoring is complemented by a classroom course that addresses essential elements of biodynamic farming through a series of weekend workshops. Courses are located at several education centers in the US and Canada, and are taught by experts in the theory and practice of biodynamic agriculture. Upon successful completion of the program, apprentices are awarded a certificate, which is presented at a ceremony during the biennial North American Biodynamic Conference. Graduates of NABDAP have gone on to start their own farms, manage existing farms, and share their knowledge and skills as educators with children, youth and other aspiring farmers.



HOW DO APPRENTICES FIT INTO YOUR PROGRAM?

Apprentices are integrated into daily work and life on each farm. With the help of skills checklists, apprentices observe and subsequently demonstrate ability and confidence working with soil, plant cultivation and management, animal husbandry, biodynamic preparations, business management and marketing, and more.

We work with a wide variety of farms, including fully diversified farms integrating dairy herds, market gardens, value added products, and educational programming; farms featuring seed production, draft horse power, cow, sheep, and goat herds, orchards, and honeybees; and some set within an educational institution, or within a community that integrates people with developmental disabilities into daily life. Partner farms span a variety of sizes and organizational structures, though all are focused on working with biodynamics and have a strong interest in guiding farmers, gardeners, and educators in their journey to strengthen relationships with food, farming, and community to bring healing to the earth.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO START THIS PROGRAM?

NABDAP began as an initiative toward a structured course of learning to meet the needs of aspiring biodynamic farmers. This work is both broad and deep, and can be bewildering when first encountered. Many biodynamics ideas and methods need careful guidance and cultivation, and will not reveal themselves if approached with our modern, materialistic way of thinking and being in the world. Approaching the work from a variety of viewpoints and experiences, including daily work and life on a farm alongside a dedicated mentor, guided observation, journaling and self reflection activities, classroom study, community building opportunities, visits to other farms, and an independent project help to foster each individual's learning journey and personal encounter with biodynamic farming. This work grows through a collaboration of mentors, apprentices, educators, workshops and other learning opportunities, various supporting organizations and initiatives, and many others.

We love working with people who ask difficult questions, who challenge our understanding of agriculture, education, and social and organizational relationships, and who are committed to doing the work it will take to grow and develop new capacities to meet the needs of the future, especially as they relate to life on Earth. As apprentices work through the program and eventually graduate (we currently have twenty-five graduates), it is inspiring to see each grow as human a being through meaningful experiences in agriculture, and then carry this work further.

APPRENTICES

TYPICAL AGE: Twenty-three to twenty-nine years old

BACKGROUND: Did not grow up on ranch or farm and did not have regular exposure to ranches or farms

PRIOR EXPERIENCE: Less than one year

MOST COMMON OUTCOME: Seek to develop own business

INSIDER'S VIEW

TOP SUCCESSES

- We have established a low-cost, comprehensive two-year training program for beginning biodynamic and organic farmers, with a strong network of over fifty mentor farms across the US and Canada.
- The majority of our graduates have continued in farming and stayed connected to the Biodynamic Association.
- Through our program, we have launched or strengthened six different classroom courses that complement on-farm training.

TOP CHALLENGES

- Raising sufficient funds to meet the demand for staff support to apprentices and mentor farmers
- Developing rigorous and meaningful evaluation of the impact of the program
- Providing access to classroom courses to apprentices in more remote areas of the continent

WHAT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WOULD BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL?

- Funding to support paid regional coordinators
- More comprehensive evaluation

WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU HAD KNOWN BEFORE YOU STARTED?

Many apprentices begin the program and do not complete it, simply because they are trying out farming as a vocation and realize through the training that it is not for them.

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING...?

Establish a minimum number of years' experience for mentor farmers to participate in the program.



ROGUE FARM CORPS

ASHLAND, OR 97520

IN A NUTSHELL

Started over ten years ago

Apprenticeship commitment less than eight months

Fifteen or more graduates per year

**Nonprofit organization partnered with
more than fifteen independent host ranches and farms**

AGRICULTURAL FOCUS

Diversified ranch or farm; vegetable farm; orchard; mixed animal and vegetable farm; permaculture farm; dairy and cheesemaking operation

SPECIALIZED TRAINING TOPICS/PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS

Ranch or farm operations management; land health and management issues (water, soil, air, wild fire); direct sales and marketing; farmers markets; basic agricultural skills

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS PROVIDED BY MENTORS

Curriculum (formal or informal); formal evaluations; skills assessment checklist; hands-on training alongside a mentor

APPRENTICE COMPENSATION

Stipend; full or partial board; housing; workers' compensation; unemployment insurance; weekly day(s) off; educational opportunities off the mentor ranch or farm (e.g., workshops, visits to other operations)

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Annual fees paid by mentors; program tuition paid by apprentices; government (federal or state) grants; donations from foundations or individuals

APPLICATION AND SELECTION

Standard application for all applicants, designed by RFC; candidates apply directly to RFC; RFC distributes applications to mentor farms based on potential fit; mentors conduct interviews and make final selection

COSTS COVERED BY MENTORS

Stipend; full or partial board; housing; workers' compensation; unemployment insurance; weekly day(s) off; host farmer fees

PROVIDED BY PROGRAM

Curriculum and suggested reading materials; classroom education; tours to other operations; host site visits for success of mentors and apprentices; annual apprentice evaluation and exit interview; legal/labor law advice; apprenticeship certification or accreditation; annual retreat or workshops for mentors; annual orientation for apprentices; paid conferences, workshops, or other educational events for apprentices; apprentice job placement; promotion of program, applicant screening, secondary mentorship, and mediation

Rogue Farm Corps (RFC) was founded in 2003 by a community of Southern Oregon farmers who recognized the need for beginning farmer training and shared a commitment to mentoring the next generation. RFC is the only organization in Oregon with a structured, entry-level education and training program for beginning farmers that is based on commercial farms.

In 2010, RFC took a leadership role in establishing a legal framework for on-farm internships, in response to discussions in Salem with state agencies and concerned farmers about the current quasi-legal status of informal internships. As a result, RFC launched negotiations with Rogue Community College (RCC) in late 2010 to establish a pilot program for legal, on-farm internships. With guidance from the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) and the Bureau of Labor and Industry (BOLI), RFC has created a model that will ensure the continuity of on-farm internships in Oregon.

In 2012, RFC began collaborating with a group of farmers and farm advocates in the South Willamette Valley who were interested in creating a farm internship program in their community. Together, we launched the South Willamette Chapter of RFC, which hosted its first on-farm internships in the 2014 growing season. Collaborations with farmers and organizers in other parts of the state led to the creation of the Portland and Central Oregon chapters in 2013, and ongoing expansion efforts are being planned across the state.



APPRENTICES

TYPICAL AGE: Twenty-three to twenty-nine years old

BACKGROUND: Did not grow up on ranch or farm and did not have regular exposure to ranches or farms

PRIOR EXPERIENCE: Less than one year

MOST COMMON OUTCOME: Seek work as ranch or farm labor

HOW DO APPRENTICES FIT INTO YOUR PROGRAM?

Our host farms are located in the Rogue Valley, the Portland Metro Area, the South Willamette Valley, and Central Oregon. They offer experiences with vegetable production, animal husbandry, dairy, and more.

Rogue Farm Corps offers two levels of training for aspiring farmers. FarmsNext is an introductory farm internship program designed for the student with little or no farming experience, while FarmsNOW is an advanced apprenticeship program designed for the student who has a solid foundation of farm experience and the goal of managing a farm operation.

FarmsNext is a full season farm immersion program combining hands-on training and skill-based education in sustainable agriculture for aspiring ranchers and farmers. Through an innovative and cooperative model, FarmsNext combines up to one thousand five hundred hours of field training with a mentor farmer, classes with agricultural professionals and expert farmers, fifteen tours of local farms, and opportunities for independent study on a diverse network of commercial family farms across Oregon's agricultural communities. FarmsNext is an immersive experience that will leave students with a deeper understanding of sustainable agriculture, a foundation of entrepreneurial skills, and practical knowledge to plan for and start their own farming operation. Students live and work full-time on a host farm and receive ongoing training from their farmer mentor. The companion classes, farm tours, discussion circles, and independent project deepen the experience and expose students to the vast array of knowledge and expertise in our farming community.

Beginning in 2015, RFC's advanced-level apprenticeship program, FarmsNOW, began its pilot year to bridge the gap between farm intern and farm manager/owner. Apprentices in our FarmsNOW program live and work full-time on a host farm for up to two farming seasons, receiving more than three thousand hours of on-farm training, with a focus on deepening their agricultural skills and learning the managerial and business aspects of farming. This program will propel beginning and intermediate farmers to the next level of planning, designing, and running integrated farming systems.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO START THIS PROGRAM?

The face of agriculture is changing dramatically in Oregon. The average age of Oregon farmers is now almost sixty years old. In the last fifty years, Oregon has lost twenty thousand farms and three hundred thousand acres of farmland. The USDA estimates that over 60% of US farmers lack a succession plan for their land. These trends are alarming.

At the same time, market opportunities for farmers are signaling a comeback. Responding to a boom in consumer interest in locally produced food, the number of farmers markets has grown 17% since 2010. The average market value of products sold in Oregon has increased by nearly 53% in the past ten years.

To meet the demands of this shifting landscape, RFC is committed to developing a comprehensive plan to provide quality on-farm training. Education and business start-up support is essential to prepare the next generation of farmers and to engage young people from diverse backgrounds who are interested in pursuing a career in sustainable agriculture.



INSIDER'S VIEW

TOP SUCCESSES

- Real-world experience that helps apprentices know whether or not farming is the right choice for them
- Immersion into farm life and an agricultural community
- More aware food citizens, whether or not they continue to farm
- Legal model for on-farm training
- Development of "next step" advanced level training

TOP CHALLENGES

- Not enough applicants
- Stable, continuous funding
- Outreach and promotion
- Managing the sometimes complex relationships between student and mentor

WHAT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WOULD BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL?

More stable funding. Peer-to-peer trainings, networking and resource sharing. Better outreach and promotion to reach more applicants. As we develop and launch our advanced-level program, connections to other entry-level programs for access to a larger pool of applicants.

WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU HAD KNOWN BEFORE YOU STARTED?

How to develop farmers to be mentors. Legal concerns surrounding on-farm training on commercial farms.

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING...?

A higher-level commitment from more mentors, especially those with advanced skills to offer. A way to evaluate mentorship.

GROWING FARMERS INITIATIVE

STONE BARNs CENTER FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE – TARRYTOWN, NY 10591

IN A NUTSHELL

Started 2008

Apprenticeship commitment nine months

Ten to fourteen graduates per year

Nonprofit organization with apprenticeships at Stone Barns Farm

AGRICULTURAL FOCUS

Diversified ranch or farm; vegetable farm; mixed animal and vegetable farm; cut flowers; year-round greenhouse production

SPECIALIZED TRAINING TOPICS/PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS

Business planning; ranch or farm operations management; financial management; land health and management issues (water, soil, air, wild fire); direct sales and marketing; year-round crop and livestock production

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS PROVIDED BY MENTORS

Curriculum (formal or informal); skills assessment checklist; non-academic, technical workshops; business planning and financial management; hands-on training alongside a mentor

APPRENTICE COMPENSATION

Stipend; full or partial board; paid vacation time; weekly day(s) off; educational opportunities off the mentor ranch or farm (e.g., workshops, visits to other operations); weekly workshops, continued mentorship and assistance after the apprenticeship

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Government (federal or state) grants; donations from foundations or individuals; product sales

APPLICATION AND SELECTION

Standard application for all applicants, designed by SB; candidates apply directly to SB; SB distributes applications to mentor farms based on potential fit; mentors conduct interviews and make final selection

Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture is on a mission to create a healthy and sustainable food system that benefits us all. On eighty acres just twenty-five miles north of New York City, we operate a highly diversified, four-season farm and an education center that hosts over a hundred thousand visitors each year. Farm operations include field vegetables, livestock, cut flowers, herbs, perennial fruits, bees, and year-round greenhouse production. As a nonprofit, we work to: 1) experiment with and improve sustainable farming practices; 2) train beginning farmers in resilient, regenerative farming techniques; 3) help children discover the sources of their food while preparing them to steward the land that provides it; 4) increase public awareness of healthy, seasonal and sustainable food.

On the farm, our work and scope have grown beyond an initial focus on public awareness and children to include the Growing Farmers Initiative, our program to educate and train beginning farmers and help them get the resources they need to succeed. We held the first Young Farmers Conference in 2008. We've branched out to embrace and encourage on-farm innovation and experimentation—projects geared toward resiliency, and new tools and resources to help beginning farmers succeed, and which draw from the principles of nature to inform our relationship to the land.



APPRENTICES

TYPICAL AGE: Twenty-three to twenty-nine years old

BACKGROUND: Did not grow up on ranch or farm and did not have regular exposure to ranches or farms

PRIOR EXPERIENCE: One to five years

MOST COMMON OUTCOME: Seek to develop own business



HOW DO APPRENTICES FIT INTO YOUR PROGRAM?

Stone Barns offers paid, full-time, nine-month apprenticeships to young people (and sometimes not-so-young people) who are committed to working the land. Each apprenticeship focuses on a particular area of the farm. In 2016, apprenticeships include: Field (outdoor vegetables), Livestock, Greenhouse, Cut Flower, Herbal, and Perennial Crops. Farm apprentices are given real responsibilities in their specialty and gain a comprehensive view of the larger operation. Additionally, apprentices attend a weekly, three-hour workshop on a production topic, farm business planning, or hands-on skills, very often taught by outside speakers from around the Northeast. Apprentices also take an active role in the center's public programming and school visits, learning to become not just farmers but farmer-educators and ambassadors of resilient agriculture. Farm apprentices are given real responsibilities and gain the practical knowledge needed to run an ecologically and economically resilient farm business. Apprentices hone their teaching and speaking skills through regular interactions with visiting children and the general public.

The program runs five days per week, with weekends as needed. This is a nine-month apprenticeship, running from March to December. Specific focus areas vary each year depending on need. Housing is not provided. As students in the program, apprentices are not employees of Stone Barns. However, apprentices receive a bi-weekly stipend of seven hundred twenty dollars (gross before taxes), paid every other Friday; to help defray living costs, an additional monthly housing allowance of four hundred dollars is provided to apprentices who do not have access to housing within thirty miles of Stone Barns Center. In addition, Stone Barns voluntarily provides workers' compensation and short-term disability insurance to apprentices.

Applicants should be committed to learning and passionate about developing their career as a farmer. Preference is given to applicants with at least one season of farming experience. Strong commitment and effort is required, and solid time management skills are essential. Apprentices will need to feel comfortable interacting regularly with visitors, including children; teaching or public speaking skills are a plus. Additional prerequisites include the ability to lift at least fifty pounds, be outside in adverse weather conditions, and function positively in a team and as part of a collaborative work environment.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO START THIS PROGRAM?

Stone Barns wants to stop the loss of farmers, farmland and rural economies. Our way of contributing is through the Growing Farmers Initiative (GFI), an ongoing effort by Stone Barns to increase the number of sustainable small and mid-size farms, especially in the Northeast. Through the GFI, we seek to remove the barriers that stand in the way of beginning farmers' success, whether access to land, prohibitive capital costs, or marketing and distribution challenges.

The Apprenticeship Program at Stone Barns Center is a focal point of our mission; it is a unique educational experience designed to equip the next generation of farmers with the knowledge and hands-on experience to create economically viable and ecologically resilient farm-business enterprises.



INSIDER'S VIEW

TOP SUCCESSES

- High rate of alums still in food/farming (~75%)
- High rate of alums farming independently or managing a farm (~50%)
- Good reputation = lots of excellent applicants

TOP CHALLENGES

- Housing and transportation
- Balancing educational/training opportunities with work requirements
- Getting everyone through the crazy part of the season (May-July) without burning out

WHAT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WOULD BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL?

Ways to connect outgoing apprentices with capital.

WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU HAD KNOWN BEFORE YOU STARTED?

Lessons learned included having a written job description, scheduling a full curriculum, paying at least a minimum wage-equivalent stipend.

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING...?

We would like to find more ways to get apprentices off our farm and onto other farms, more interaction with other farmers in settings more similar to the ones they are likely to experience after they leave this farm.

IN A NUTSHELL

Started 2010

Apprenticeship commitment less than eight months

Up to four graduates per year

**Nonprofit organization partnering with
one to four independent host farms in the Tucson area**

AGRICULTURAL FOCUS

Diversified ranch or farm; vegetable farm; mixed animal and vegetable farm

SPECIALIZED TRAINING TOPICS/PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS

Business planning; ranch or farm operations management; financial management; vehicle and equipment maintenance, repair, and operation; land health and management issues (water, soil, air, wild fire); direct sales and marketing; farmers markets; building, carpentry, and using tools; animal husbandry, growing produce, processing animals

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS PROVIDED BY MENTORS

Curriculum (formal or informal); formal evaluations; skills assessment checklist; non-academic, technical workshops; business planning and financial management; hands-on training alongside a mentor

APPRENTICE COMPENSATION

Stipend; full or partial board; housing; weekly day(s) off; educational opportunities off the mentor ranch or farm (e.g., workshops, visits to other operations)

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Mentor Ranch or farm; annual fees paid by mentors; program tuition paid by apprentices; donations from foundations or individuals

COSTS COVERED BY MENTORS

Half of the apprentice stipend; full or partial board; housing; weekly day(s) off

PROVIDED BY PROGRAM

Curriculum and suggested reading materials; tours to other farms for apprentices site visits to ensure a successful experiences for mentors and apprentices; annual evaluation of mentors; annual evaluation of apprentices and exit interviews; financial assistance with stipend or other expenses associated with apprenticeship; paid conferences, workshops, or other educational events for apprentices

APPLICATION AND SELECTION

Standard application for all applicants, designed by SB; candidates apply directly to SB; SB distributes applications to mentor farms based on potential fit; mentors conduct interviews and make final selection

The Farm Education and Resource Network (FERN) was created in 2010 by Southern Arizona farmers who came together to support the advancement of sustainable agriculture, local food systems, and healthy food choices through education. Our mission is to secure local food sources in the desert Southwest through educational exchanges between current producers engaged in diverse, ecologically conscious agriculture, and a new generation of food producers. We envision a network of food producers in the desert Southwest who are active in connecting students of all ages to dynamic agricultural experiences. In turn, our region's food opportunities are enriched by supporting our current growers and a new generation of food producers through farm-based educational exchanges.



APPRENTICES

TYPICAL AGE: Eighteen to twenty-two years old

BACKGROUND: Did not grow up on ranch or farm and did not have regular exposure to ranches or farms

PRIOR EXPERIENCE: No experience

MOST COMMON OUTCOME: Seek work in ranch or farm management

HOW DO APPRENTICES FIT INTO YOUR PROGRAM?

FERN's FarmReach program is a year-long beginning farmer/rancher training program that provides new and existing beginning farmers in southern Arizona with a triad of educational components. These components include: 1) on farming training, 2) business training and one-on-one business mentorship; and 3) immersion into the regional food system through a network of food system organizations.

Interns are placed at one of our host farms for a twelve-month internship. Interns live in shared housing in Tucson and commute to the farm four days per week (thirty-two hours). Interns participate in all aspects of the farm operation on one of the participating farms listed below. Additionally, interns are placed in a part-time internship (one day/week) with one of our food systems collaborators. These internships are designed to round out the experience and connect future farmers with food systems resources.

Rattlebox Farm is a four-and-one-half-acre family farm located in Tucson that raises vegetables, melons, and flowers. Dana Helfer and Paul Busek sell through a CSA, at farmers market, wholesale, and through a local farmers cooperative.

Forever Young Farm is one of the oldest direct market vegetable farms in Southern Arizona. They are Certified Naturally Grown and produce high quality vegetables and garlic for local markets.

SouthWinds Farm is a year-round, off-grid eight-acre organic vegetable farm located near Benson, Arizona. Joe Marlow sells through Tucson farmers markets, a CSA, restaurants, and a food co-op.

ReZoNation Farm is a small diversified family farm in Marana built around the concepts of water harvesting and the use of heat tolerant animals and plant materials. Jaime M. de Zubeldia raises honeybees, eggs, and pork.

San Xavier Cooperative Association is an eight-hundred-sixty-acre farm located nineteen miles south of Tucson on the Tohono O'odham Native American Reservation. The farm produces alfalfa, produce, and traditional crops.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO START THIS PROGRAM?

We are committed to training new and existing beginning farmers to be knowledgeable, ecologically and economically resilient, and connected to the network of Southern Arizona food system resources. FERN's founding farmers identified unique challenges for Southern Arizona ranchers and farmers, including: lack of available labor; lack of on-farm housing for Interns; lack of farmer focused business training/mentorship resources; a changing climate; seasons that differ greatly from other parts of the country; and fluctuating markets due to seasonal tourism and the close proximity to the largest produce port in the US.

Over the last decade, Southern Arizona has experienced a decline in ranchers and farmers selling direct to consumers. Currently, the demand for locally grown foods far surpasses what existing farmers are able to produce. Southern Arizona needs beginning farmer training that prepares new farmers to launch farm businesses and helps existing farmers to sustain and grow their businesses.



INSIDER'S VIEW

TOP SUCCESSES

We have great mentor farms supporting us. We perceive a great need for the program, and for support of local farming and leading community organizations.

TOP CHALLENGES

- Money
- Lack of staff
- Slow organizational process through unstable board

WHAT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WOULD BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL?

Access to capital, accreditation with an educational institution or another governing body, access to land for future farmers, owning our own farm as an organization.

WHAT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WOULD BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL?

Money, networked connections with community leaders and educational institutions, more experienced consultants/advisors in this area.

WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU HAD KNOWN BEFORE YOU STARTED?

Many apprentices begin the program and do not complete it simply because they are trying out farming as a vocation and realize through the training that it is not for them.

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING...

Hire a program director and get stuff done!

NEW AGRARIAN PROGRAM

QUIVIRA COALITION – SANTA FE, NM 87505

IN A NUTSHELL

Started in 2009

Apprenticeship commitment eight months

Three to ten graduates per year

**Nonprofit organization partnering with
five to ten independent host ranches and farms**

AGRICULTURAL FOCUS

Ranch or beef cattle operation; dairy or cheese-making; diversified animal farm/ranch; grain farm; orchard; beekeeping and queen breeding

SPECIALIZED TRAINING TOPICS/PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS

Business planning; farm/ranch operations management; financial management; vehicle and equipment maintenance, repair, and operation; land health and management issues (water, soil, air, wild fire); direct sales and marketing; farmers' markets; building, carpentry, and using tools

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS PROVIDED BY MENTORS

Curriculum (formal or informal); formal evaluations; non-academic technical workshops; business planning and financial management; hands-on training alongside a mentor

APPRENTICE COMPENSATION

Monthly stipend; full or partial board; housing; weekly day(s) off; educational opportunities off the mentor ranch or farm (e.g., workshops and conferences, visits to other operations); Holistic Management International webinar series

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Government (federal or state) grants; donations from foundations or individuals; mentor contribution to stipend, housing, and food

APPLICATION AND SELECTION

Standard application for all applicants, designed by NAP; candidates apply directly to NAP; NAP distributes applications to mentor farms based on potential fit; mentors conduct interviews and make final selection

The Quivira Coalition initiated the New Agrarian Program (NAP) in 2009 to help beginning agrarians gain the skills necessary to pursue successful careers in regenerative agriculture. NAP partners with skilled ranchers and farmers to create opportunities for full-immersion, experiential learning in professional settings. Apprentices are first-career professionals with sincere commitments to life at the intersection of conservation and agriculture. Mentors are dedicated land stewards who prioritize healthy soil, healthy food, and healthy communities. Their agricultural practices provide a high quality of life for people and animals, while actively regenerating soil, vegetation, and riparian areas, and protecting air and water quality. NAP merges the worlds of regenerative agriculture, environmental restoration, and climate change mitigation as a way to build economic resilience in rural communities. We are educating a generation of climate-savvy young people committed to growing nutritious food on carbon-rich land.

In 2008, the Quivira Coalition approached a ranching couple on a small cow-calf, grassfed operation in the San Luis Valley of Colorado to gauge their interest in partnering with us to create a ranching apprenticeship. At the time, apprenticeships in regenerative ranching were virtually nonexistent, and young people with no family background in ranching who wanted to pursue this particular path had very few options. George Whitten and Julie Sullivan of the San Juan Ranch agreed to become our first program mentors, and worked very closely with Avery Anderson Sponholtz, then NAP director, to design and launch this program. Soon after, Dan and Becca James of James Ranch Artisan Cheese joined as the second mentor operation. What started as a vague idea over a cup of coffee at the San Juan Ranch has since blossomed into a comprehensive leadership-training program for young agrarians—still one of very few programs with a focus on regenerative ranching in the west. Since the summer of 2008, we have created a curriculum; perfected an application process; developed the capacity of mentors on a number of agricultural operations; recruited, trained, and graduated twenty-five apprentices; and, most recently, restructured our program from the inside out to make it possible for us to work with up to ten ranching and farming operations. NAP alumni are individuals who represent both the essence of new agrarianism and the hope for the future of regenerative agriculture.

APPRENTICES

TYPICAL AGE: Twenty-three to twenty-nine years old

BACKGROUND: Did not grow up on ranch or farm and did not have regular exposure to ranches or farms

PRIOR EXPERIENCE: Less than one year

MOST COMMON OUTCOME: Seek management or foreman position on another operation; seek to develop own business





INSIDER'S VIEW

TOP SUCCESSES

- Because we work with small-scale, family ranches and farms, apprentices become a core part of the mentor operation and benefit from a truly comprehensive, authentic learning experience.
- As a small program, we have been able to nurture excellent rapport and working relationships with each of our mentors and apprentices. This contributes to an overall high-quality experience for both mentors and apprentices.
- Excellent retention! More than 95 percent of our graduates since our inception in 2009 have pursued careers in regenerative agriculture.

TOP CHALLENGES

- Finding that perfect balance between quantity and quality. We feel driven to make as many apprenticeship opportunities available as we can handle, but not at the cost of the high-quality relationships with mentors and apprentices that help ensure successful experiences for all.
- Recruitment. We are constantly on the lookout for new and better places to post our ads and conduct outreach.
- Fundraising. This is a consistent challenge.

WHAT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WOULD BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL?

An established network of organizations that together offer full cradle-to-cradle support for ranchers and farmers. For example, an apprenticeship graduate would then access the incubator network, followed by more advanced opportunities and land access support.

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING...?

In an ideal world, we would host all program mentors for a two-day retreat every year. This would give mentors an opportunity to swap stories, compare notes, and use each other as peer mentors and resources. It would also give us the opportunity to build consistency across our program through workshops on such topics as effective feedback, building curriculum, conducting selective interviews, etc.

HOW DO APPRENTICES FIT INTO YOUR PROGRAM?

The New Agrarian Program partners with small, family-scale agricultural enterprises, so that apprentices rapidly become a core part of the ranch or farm team. NAP apprenticeships are full-immersion, hands-on educational experiences; apprentices work alongside their mentors on a daily basis. As they gain skills and confidence, they are given increased responsibilities and occasional opportunities to work independently. They have opportunities to engage in almost everything their mentor needs to do on a daily basis to keep their lands healthy and their business thriving.

While each NAP apprenticeship is customized to the host ranch or farm, and the mentor's particular business model and teaching style, several program components remain consistent across host operations. Apprentices can expect the following from a NAP experience:

- Approximately twelve to sixteen hundred contact hours with their mentors, spread over an eight to twelve month apprenticeship.
- The opportunity to attend a New Apprentice Orientation in Santa Fe, New Mexico with fellow apprentices.
- A copy of the New Agrarian Program Apprentice Workbook, which includes a daily work log for recording weather, daily activities, hours worked, questions and observations that come up during the work day. Work logs are shared with mentors during check-ins, serving to guide the review of tasks completed and assess progress.
- A bimonthly evaluation with their mentor. Apprentices will undertake an initial skills assessment evaluations at the beginning of their apprenticeship, using the NAP skills checklist as a guide, followed by subsequent evaluations every other month.
- Ranch or farm visits. During their eight month experience, apprentices will seek out and schedule site visits to a minimum of two other operations. The purpose of these visits is to expose apprentices to different perspectives and practices.
- Holistic Management International webinar series for beginning ranchers and farmers: apprentices receive approximately thirty five hours of online instruction covering a range of topics relevant to land health, business development, and financial management.
- Attendance to the annual Quivira Coalition conference.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO START THIS PROGRAM?

Ranching has always been central to the Quivira Coalition's work and mission. In 2008, Quivira's founder and then-executive director, Courtney White, asked the question, "Who's training the next generation of progressive land stewards and ranchers?" At the time, very few offered formal apprenticeship opportunities in ranching. Even eight years ago, most aspiring ranchers did not come from agricultural families, and struggled to find high-quality, authentic learning opportunities to enter the field. White decided Quivira should start a program geared specifically to serve first-career professionals pursuing lives and careers in ranching. Since then, a number of other excellent ranching apprenticeships have surfaced, some of which are featured in this guidebook. Also, the New Agrarian Program has expanded beyond ranching to include apprenticeships in dairy and cheesemaking, orcharding, and even beekeeping.

BROWN'S RANCH

BISMARCK, ND 58503

IN A NUTSHELL

Started two to five years ago
Apprenticeship commitment of six months
Up to four graduates per year
Not registered as a nonprofit organization

AGRICULTURAL FOCUS

Diversified ranch or farm; grain farm; mixed animal and vegetable farm

SPECIALIZED TRAINING TOPICS/PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS

Ranch or farm operations management; financial management, vehicle and equipment maintenance, repair, and operation; land health and management issues (water, soil, air, wild fire); direct sales and marketing; farmers markets; building, carpentry, and using tools

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS PROVIDED BY MENTORS

Non-academic technical workshops; hands-on training alongside a mentor

APPRENTICE COMPENSATION

Stipend; full or partial board; housing; workers' compensation; weekly day(s) off; educational opportunities off mentor ranch or farm (e.g., workshops, visits to other operations)

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Agreement with a nonprofit

Brown's Ranch is a holistically managed, five-thousand-acre operation located east of Bismarck, North Dakota. The operation runs two hundred fifty cow-calf pairs, two hundred yearlings, a herd of grass-finished beefs, hair sheep, pastured laying hens, pastured poultry, and pastured hogs. All livestock are routinely rotated on pasture. A large produce garden is raised each year, and the ranch is developing multiple orchards and a vineyard. Ranch products are marketed directly to consumers throughout North Dakota and through local wholesale outlets. No-till annual crops and perennial hay are also a big part of the operation.

We practice Holistic Management, a part of which is farming and ranching in nature's image. We strive to solve problems in a natural and sustainable way. Improving soil health is a priority; no-till farming has been practiced since 1993. We use a diverse cropping strategy that includes cover and companion crops. We have eliminated the use of synthetic fertilizers, fungicides, and pesticides. We use minimal herbicide and are striving to eliminate it. We do not use GMOs or glyphosate. Our grazing strategy allows most pastures a recovery period of over three hundred sixty days. These strategies have allowed the health of the soil, and the mineral and water cycles to greatly improve. The natural resources have benefited. This results in increased production and profit, and a higher quality of life. We are moving towards sustainability for not only our own but future generations as well.



APPRENTICES

TYPICAL AGE: Twenty-three to twenty-nine years old

BACKGROUND: Did not grow up on ranch or farm and did not have regular exposure to ranches or farms

PRIOR EXPERIENCE: One to five years

MOST COMMON OUTCOME: Seek work in ranch or farm management





INSIDER'S VIEW

TOP SUCCESSES

Getting the next generation involved in production agriculture; teaching Holistic Management; developing future leaders

TOP CHALLENGES

Workers' compensation; health Insurance; liability

WHAT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WOULD BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL?

Nation-wide exposure to potential participants.

WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU HAD KNOWN BEFORE YOU STARTED?

Just how patient one needs to be with apprentices; some apprentices lack drive and ambition

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING...?

We need a more thorough interview process.

HOW DO APPRENTICES FIT INTO YOUR PROGRAM?

The internship typically lasts six months, starting in April and ending in November. Interns are expected to work long hours from time to time and will generally have one day off each week. Ranching is not a nine-to-five career, and it takes hard work to be successful. We want that experience to be given to our interns so that they realize the work and responsibility that come with managing a ranch. We will never ask our interns to do a task that we wouldn't do ourselves.

Interns live together in a separate farmhouse with all necessary amenities included. This house is located on another farmstead, allowing for privacy. Most meals are left up to the intern; however, interns also have access to meats and vegetables produced on Brown's Ranch.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO CREATE THIS PROGRAM?

As we continued to go around the world and speak about our operation, it was apparent to us that there were a lot of people wanting to visit our place and even work with us. This group of people was typically from a younger generation that wanted to spend more than a few days with us. So that is why we decided to start hosting interns. We felt that we had enough demand and that we could offer some great learning experiences through the way that we manage our ranch. We also felt there was a lack of farms and programs in our area that offered internships, and so we chose to be one of the first.

Sharing the knowledge that we currently have and continue to gain with others who can take it and apply it in their own situation for the good of future generations is what is most meaningful to us. We have years of learning experiences that can help save others' precious time and money. Providing that information to them so that they can be that much further ahead is important for the future of our resources. Teaching people who want to learn how to regenerate the landscapes for a sustainable future is very important. By showing others the management techniques that build health into our soils, we are showing them that if they take care of their soil, it will take care of them.



CARETAKER FARM

WILLIAMSTOWN, MA 01267

IN A NUTSHELL

Started over thirty years ago by previous farm owners

Apprenticeship commitment less than eight months

Three to four graduates per year

AGRICULTURAL FOCUS

Vegetable farm

SPECIALIZED TRAINING TOPICS/PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS

Business planning, ranch or farm operations management; financial management; land health and management issues (water, soil, air, wild fire); cover crop management; managing volunteers

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS PROVIDED BY MENTORS

Curriculum (formal or informal); formal evaluations; skills assessment checklist; non-academic technical workshops; business planning and financial management; hands-on training alongside a mentor; weekly farm tour; weekly task list and study materials

APPRENTICE COMPENSATION

Stipend, full or partial board; housing (including Internet and laundry); workers' compensation; unemployment insurance; paid vacation time; weekly day(s) off; educational opportunities off the mentor ranch or farm (e.g., workshops, visits to other operations)

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Product sales

Caretaker Farm was established in 1969 as a community supported farm that provides vegetables and fruits for two hundred seventy-five families. It covers thirty-five acres of forest land, meadow, pasture, vegetable fields, and two ponds, and is bisected by a meandering stream. Caretaker Farm's mission is to provide nourishment to all who come into contact with the farm. Through connection with the land that grows our food, our community learns to care for each other and the earth.

We use sustainable methods to ensure that the land will continue to be restored and improved for future generations. We grow over two hundred varieties of forty different crops each season. Instead of chemical fertilizers, on-farm compost created from our animals and vegetable matter is used to build up the fertility, structure, and tilth of the soil. A portion of cropland is taken out of production each year to let it rest. Various cover crops and mulches are used to reduce weed and pest pressure, increase the ability of the soil to retain moisture, reduce erosion, and build the soil. The farm also has mixed livestock (pigs, chickens, and bees), one greenhouse, four hoop houses, an orchard, and a bakery. It provides food to a community hot-meals program and a food pantry on a weekly basis.



APPRENTICES

TYPICAL AGE: Twenty-three to twenty-nine years old

BACKGROUND: Did not grow up on ranch or farm and did not have regular exposure to ranches or farms

PRIOR EXPERIENCE: One to five years

MOST COMMON OUTCOME: Seek work in ranch or farm management



HOW DO APPRENTICES FIT INTO YOUR PROGRAM?

Caretaker Farm is both a working farm and a training ground for future farmers. Each season we train three or four farm apprentices. Over the last thirty years more than one hundred twenty-five apprentices have learned how to farm at Caretaker Farm, and past apprentices currently manage farms all across the country.

Apprentice education includes full immersion into the inner workings of a small scale family farm, from soil preparation and greenhouse propagation to weed control and harvesting. A vast amount of education is derived from active participation in all of the farming systems throughout the season. We also participate in the Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training (CRAFT), a seminar and farm visitation program for the apprentices from Caretaker and eleven other farms in the region. CRAFT enables apprentices to study the diversity of farm design and agricultural technique found within the twelve collaborating farms and to form long-term friendships and a supportive community with their peers. We share all of our farm planning materials developed over the winter, provide weekly farm tours, share written resources that support our work, distribute weekly farm management information, teach fall workshops specific to the interests of the apprentices, facilitate monthly feedback sessions on both field work and community life, and provide support as apprentices develop the dreams of their farming future.

We seek apprentices who take initiative; are reliable and responsible; work well with others and individually; have a good sense of humor and a desire to have fun; appreciate high quality work and products; are excited about living in community with others; possess a deep respect for others; work hard; and are able to lift fifty-five pounds.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO CREATE THIS PROGRAM?

We learned how to farm through an apprenticeship program ourselves and believe that the apprenticeship model provides the optimal environment to work on a farm, live an agricultural lifestyle, learn in a structured setting, and develop the skills to someday manage a farm.

We believe in the importance of training the next generation of farmers. After an apprenticeship at Caretaker Farm, people have moved onto managing farms all over the world in many types of settings. Apprentices are our most important crop each year!



INSIDER'S VIEW

TOP SUCCESSES

Apprentices receive a solid foundation on the systems of a small sustainable farm. They leave with a strong understand of how to organize the various tasks and prioritize needs.

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING...?

If would be nice if all of our apprentice related infrastructure was located in one building. It is currently spread out in a few places (sleeping area, kitchen, bathroom, etc.).

FULL BELLY FARM

GUINDA, CA 95637

IN A NUTSHELL

Started over ten years ago
Apprenticeship commitment of one year
Five graduates per year
Nonprofit organization

AGRICULTURAL FOCUS

Mixed animal and vegetable farm

SPECIALIZED TRAINING TOPICS/PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS

Farm operations management; farmers markets

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS PROVIDED BY MENTORS

Hands-on training alongside a mentor

APPRENTICE COMPENSATION

Stipend; full or partial board; housing; workers' compensation; unemployment insurance; off-site educational opportunities; workshops; visits to other operations

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Product sales

Full Belly Farm is a certified organic farm located in the beautiful Capay Valley of northern California. We are committed to fostering sustainability on all levels, from fertility in our soil and care for the environment to stable employment for our farm workers. We strive to be good stewards of this farm, so that this generation and future generations may continue to be nourished by the healthy and vibrant food that we produce. Our farm has been certified organic since 1985 and has grown since then to almost four hundred acres. We strive to continue to support local food systems and create a strong local food economy.

Full Belly Farm grows vegetables, flowers, fruits, and nuts. We sell these through three farmers markets every week, a CSA program, and sales to stores and restaurants. We also raise sheep and other animals, and integrate them into our production cycles. The farm is in a beautiful, narrow valley on the banks of Cache Creek, less than two hours from the San Francisco Bay Area and one hour from the Sacramento metro region. Full Belly also sells value-added products and hosts on-farm events and children's camps.



APPRENTICES

TYPICAL AGE: Twenty-three to twenty-nine years old

BACKGROUND: Did not grow up on ranch or farm and did not have regular exposure to ranches or farms

PRIOR EXPERIENCE: Less than one year

MOST COMMON OUTCOME: Seek to develop own business



HOW DO APPRENTICES FIT INTO YOUR PROGRAM?

Full Belly Farm apprentices live and work on the farm, experiencing many facets of life and work on a diverse organic operation. For example, apprentices usually go to one farmers market or delivery per week; this may involve getting up before the sun, as early as three in the morning! They spend at least a day each week in the packing shed, washing, packing, and organizing produce. Other tasks include weeding, taking care of animals, writing the weekly note for the CSA boxes, planting seeds in the greenhouse, weeding and caring for crops, and planting crops in the field. If additional education is of interest, they may get opportunities to assist with on-farm educational programs, including overnight visits from local school groups.

The rhythm of the farm varies with the seasons. From June through October, the days are very long, often with trucks to load and more tasks to complete than there is time to get them done. This is not a job for someone who is uncomfortable around hard work! It gets hot here in the summer, but it is dry heat, and we can always cool down in the creek that runs along one border of the farm. We strive to hire people who have a long-term interest in food and farming, and ask that apprentices make at least a one year commitment to our farm. Only by seeing the changes of the seasons and the different rhythms and smells and experiences that each new season brings, will they get a sense for what farming is about. We are looking for people who are serious about agriculture, food, or farming as a career path. This year-long commitment is education-filled, equivalent to a year at a trade school or college.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO CREATE THIS PROGRAM?

We are inspired by the stream of people who are interested in learning the agricultural arts. Our apprentices bring new energy and bright ideas to the farm, and leave with additional skills that then hone their motivation and creativity. Full Belly has had a long-term commitment to training and education—this program is a reflection of that.

Additionally, our rural area does not always provide sufficient people interested in working on our organic farm. The apprenticeship program brings willing workers from far and wide, something that we deeply appreciate. We are proud to know about farms in many different states, operated by farmers who trained here on Full Belly Farm.



INSIDER'S VIEW

TOP SUCCESSES

It adds a lot to our farm community to have enthusiastic young people working at the farm. We enjoy watching our graduates go on to food and farming careers.

TOP CHALLENGES

Our program is a learn-by-doing program without a formal curriculum. We do add a business-training component for those apprentices who are interested.

WHAT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WOULD BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL?

A written check off list that would tell me everything that I want them to learn in the year that they are here. This would need to be farm specific but a general list for all intern programs could also be useful, each farm could add their own details. We wish we had a measuring stick for each intern so that we are sure they have gotten everything possible from being here. In addition, a number of other components would be great: a peer mentorship, a regional network so that interns locally could interact, etc.

WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU HAD KNOWN BEFORE YOU STARTED?

I wish I had known that I would become very close with all of my apprentices and that my heart would break when they left!

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING...?

We would have one person dedicated to teaching and interacting with our interns on a full time basis. I am mostly that person who works with them, giving them tasks, helping with issues, etc., but I am way too busy on the farm to be super good at it!



GRANGE FARM SCHOOL

WILLITS, CA 95490

IN A NUTSHELL

Started two to five years ago

Apprenticeship commitment less than eight months

Up to four graduates per year

Nonprofit organization offering apprenticeships exclusively on home operation

AGRICULTURAL FOCUS

Ranch or beef cattle operation; diversified ranch or farm; vegetable farm; grain farm; orchard; mixed animal and vegetable farm

SPECIALIZED TRAINING TOPICS/PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS

Business planning; ranch or farm operations management; financial management; vehicle and equipment maintenance, repair, and operation; land health and management issues (water, soil, air, wild fire); direct sales and marketing; farmers markets; building, carpentry, and using tools

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS PROVIDED BY MENTORS:

Curriculum (formal or informal); formal evaluations; non-academic technical workshops; for-credit college or university classes; business planning and financial management; hands-on training alongside a mentor

APPRENTICE COMPENSATION

Full or partial board; housing; weekly day(s) off; educational opportunities off the mentor ranch or farm (e.g., workshops, visits to other operations)

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Program tuition paid by apprentices; government (federal or state) grants; donations from foundations or individuals; product sales; crowdsourcing

The Grange Farm School's Practicum Student Program aims to prepare the whole farmer, with a curriculum covering agricultural production skills, industrial arts, marketing, and business skills essential to a profitable farm. Practicum Students may earn college credits for internships through Mendocino College and are encouraged to live on site. Workshops, guest lectures, field trips, and coursework on sustainable agricultural development are offered to adults who demonstrate interest and potential. After completion of their first term, students are encouraged to apply for additional terms as Capstone Students with a more focused individual project. Students accepted to the first few years of our program have the unique opportunity to participate in the start-up phases of a working farm and nonprofit educational project. The work completed by students provides in depth and experiential knowledge of the challenges that go into creating a new farm or program from scratch.



APPRENTICES

TYPICAL AGE: Twenty-three to twenty-nine years old

BACKGROUND: Did not grow up on ranch or farm and did not have regular exposure to ranches or farms

PRIOR EXPERIENCE: Less than one year

MOST COMMON OUTCOME: Seek to develop own business



HOW DO APPRENTICES FIT INTO YOUR PROGRAM?

Our residential Practicum Student Program is a fourteen week intensive focused on the foundations of food production. Apprentices are fully immersed in the daily life of a beautiful five-thousand-acre working ranch in Mendocino County, California. We believe there is no silver bullet to solving the food crisis facing our world, so we teach a broad spectrum of sustainable agricultural theory. We also teach engine repair, carpentry, animal husbandry, soil and ecology, crop production, entrepreneurial skills, and more. Our curriculum is comprehensive as well as adaptive to individual interests.

The practicum student program runs five days per week for fourteen weeks, with sessions from April to July and July to October. Practicum students work an average of twenty-five hours per week on experiential learning projects on the farm.

Lessons with staff and guest instructors take place on a daily basis, and students are expected to be present and engaged during the week. Field trips to outstanding farms are an important component of the curriculum, as they facilitate connections to mentors and experts in the area. Students work together with staff to create a weekly schedule which includes supervised field work, lessons, meals, and chores. Conflict resolution and communication are essential to this kind of collaborative work, and so students and staff work together each session to craft agreements on communication protocol.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO CREATE THIS PROGRAM?

Grange Farm School programs recognize that food production will never be the same again. We are looking for people who are determined and creative. Students should have a desire to enter into a career equipped with essential skills in the science, art, and business of food production.

The Grange Farm School concept was first developed by the ten thousand members of the California State Grange in 2011. Start up funding came from this group for the first year of infrastructure development in 2013, and in July of 2014 the Grange Farm School became a project of the Little Lake Grange, fiscally sponsored by North Coast Opportunities. The school operates on twelve acres of the Ridgewood Ranch in Mendocino County, and is now supported by a wide network across the region, state, nation, and world.



INSIDER'S VIEW

TOP SUCCESSES

- Comprehensive overview of essential skills—including business, industrial arts, crops, livestock
- Critical thinking, systems thinking, high quality questions embedded in the culture
- Communication and leadership skills built in to the living environment

TOP CHALLENGES

- Funding for adequate staffing
- Recruitment
- Balance of field work and course work
- Time management for students

WHAT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WOULD BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL?

- Post graduation resources for jobs and land access
- Scholarship resources

WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU HAD KNOWN BEFORE YOU STARTED?

I wish I had known how essential the administration and office management would be in freeing up the staff to do the work they are best at.

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING...?

We would create separate housing for students.

HAWTHORNE VALLEY FARM

HAWTHORNE VALLEY ASSOCIATION — GHENT, NY 12075

IN A NUTSHELL

Started over thirty years ago (1980s)

Apprenticeship commitment eight to twelve months

Three to four graduates per year

Nonprofit organization offering apprenticeships exclusively on home operation

AGRICULTURAL FOCUS

Diversified ranch or farm; grain farm; mixed animal and vegetable farm, dairy and cheesemaking operation; highly diverse biodynamic farm with education programs

SPECIALIZED TRAINING TOPICS/PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS

Business planning; ranch or farm operations management; financial management; land health and management issues (water, soil, air, wild fire); direct sales and marketing; farmers markets; building, carpentry, and using tools; goal setting; whole farm planning; relationship between self reflection, social relationships and a healthy farm

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS PROVIDED BY MENTORS

Formal evaluations; skills assessment checklist, non-academic technical workshops; business planning and financial management; hands-on training alongside a mentor

APPRENTICE COMPENSATION

Stipend; full or partial board; housing, workers' compensation; unemployment insurance; paid vacation time; weekly day(s) off; educational opportunities off the mentor ranch or farm (e.g., workshops, visits to other operations)

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Product sales; additional programming (whole farm planning course, biodynamic intensive, bi-monthly enrichment opportunities, etc.) covered by government grants and private foundations

Hawthorne Valley Farm has been producing high-quality, Biodynamic and organic foods since 1972. Our biodynamic farming practices reflect our commitment to protecting the health of the earth and all who live on it, and our education and outreach programs strive to raise awareness of the social, ecological, and economic importance of agriculture in our daily lives.

Hawthorne Valley Farm, like all farms, is part of the global food system and part of our regional foodshed. Through conscious collaboration, we're working to build a new food paradigm predicated on providing nutritious food to all people in our foodshed, preserving farmland and farmland wildlife habitats, making land accessible for sustainable agriculture, enhancing regional economic vitality, and fostering connections between people and the living land.

Our five-hundred-acre biodynamic farm is home to a sixty-cow dairy herd, beef and pork operation, forage and grain production, and two vegetable operations (a two-acre garden growing for our on-site farm store and a twelve-acre operation growing for CSA and farmers markets). Our farm store is a full-line, natural foods store open seven days a week.



APPRENTICES

TYPICAL AGE: Twenty-three to twenty-nine years old

BACKGROUND: Did not grow up on ranch or farm and did not have regular exposure to ranches or farms

PRIOR EXPERIENCE: One to five years

MOST COMMON OUTCOME: Seek work in ranch or farm management



HOW DO APPRENTICES FIT INTO HAWTHORNE VALLEY FARM?

Hawthorne Valley Place-Based Learning Center, located on Hawthorne Valley Farm, is part of Hawthorne Valley Association, an educational not-for-profit organization. Since 1972, on-farm education has been an integral part of our work. Over the years, our educational offerings have grown from serving school groups to offering farm tours, providing farmer training, and crafting special family and group activities. Through our on-farm learning programs, we strive to foster connections to the land, which sustains us all. The farm is a place for both children and adults to rediscover the earth as the ground of all life. Through experiences on the farm, visitors and leaders alike stretch boundaries and realize new inner capacities.

All Hawthorne Valley Farm apprentices experience farming through hands-on learning on our diversified Biodynamic farm. Whole Farm Apprentices rotate through all areas of the farm, working with the field vegetables, Corner Garden, milking herd, and livestock operation. We also hire apprentices who focus just on vegetables, either working in the market garden or field vegetable full-time.

The farm focuses on both production and education. Because of the nature of the work, an apprentice should have some familiarity with the physical demands of farming, have spent some time working or volunteering on a farm (at least part of a season), be able to lift fifty pounds, work for several hours outdoors in a variety of weather conditions, and enjoy repetitive, even tedious, tasks. Apprentices with previous dairy or livestock experience may apply for an advanced livestock apprenticeship.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO CREATE THIS PROGRAM?

We have been working with apprentices since the 1980s because a big part of our mission is education. We believe it is a vital task to train the farmers of the future to be responsible stewards of the land, and we work to revitalize the culture within agriculture.

The apprenticeship program at Hawthorne Valley is a huge part of our farm and something that we dedicate a lot of time and energy to. Beyond spending time teaching our apprentices all the practical skills needed to run their own farm, we also provide supplemental education in the form of farm visits and classroom sessions to complement what they are learning in the field. Our apprenticeship program helps bring new life to the farm each season.



INSIDER'S VIEW

TOP SUCCESSES

We grow a lot of farmers! They have a chance to experience a unique blend of commercial farming, value-added production, retailing, and educational activities, so that if they don't become farmers they can still contribute to the movement in some way.

TOP CHALLENGES

Completely funding most of the apprenticeship through our own production costs us in potential profit and productivity.

WHAT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WOULD BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL?

Funding!



PIE RANCH

PESCADERO, CA 94060

IN A NUTSHELL

Started over ten years ago (2005)

Apprenticeship commitment one year

Up to four graduates per year

Nonprofit organization

AGRICULTURAL FOCUS

Mixed animal/vegetable farm

SPECIALIZED TRAINING TOPICS/PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS

Ranch or farm operations management; land health and management issues (water, soil, air, wild fire); direct sales and marketing

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS PROVIDED BY MENTORS

Curriculum (formal or informal); formal evaluations; skills assessment checklist; non-academic technical workshops; hands-on training alongside a mentor

APPRENTICE COMPENSATION

Stipend, full or partial board, housing, workers' compensation; unemployment insurance; paid vacation; weekly day(s) off, educational opportunities off the mentor ranch or farm (e.g., workshops, visits to other operations)

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Program tuition paid by apprentices; donations from foundations or individuals; product sales

Pie Ranch is a twenty-seven-acre educational farm. We grow over forty vegetables and fruits and raise pigs, goats, dairy cows, and pastured poultry for meat and eggs.

In 2002, three founding partners—Nancy Vail, Jered Lawson, and Karen Heisler—purchased a triangular-shaped property on California's San Mateo coast to establish Pie Ranch. The shape of the land—and their shared vision to create a model center of sustainable farming and food system education—inspired the farm's distinctly fitting name. Since 2005, Pie Ranch has operated as a working farm, hosting youth from regional high schools to participate in farm-based programs and activities. Pie Ranch also works with educators and community collaborators in diverse urban, suburban, and rural settings to help students apply what they've learned at Pie Ranch in their daily lives. In addition, Pie Ranch mentors aspiring farmers as resident apprentices who spend a full year immersed in all aspects of farm operations and marketing.

Pie Ranch is a place for "pie in the sky" idealistic thinking to guide social change. We believe enjoyable and thoughtful engagement with good food can bring individuals, families, and institutions—from children to school boards—together to create a more healthful and just society.



APPRENTICES

TYPICAL AGE: Twenty-three to twenty-nine years old

BACKGROUND: Did not grow up on ranch or farm and did not have regular exposure to ranches or farms

PRIOR EXPERIENCE: One to five years

MOST COMMON OUTCOME: Seek work in ranch or farm management



HOW DO APPRENTICES FIT INTO YOUR PROGRAM?

Our Emerging Farmers Program comprises year-long apprenticeships and shorter-term internships. We seek enthusiastic, hard-working, self-motivated individuals who are interested in becoming organic farmers committed to social justice.

The year-long apprenticeship program is available for people who have worked for at least one season on a farm. Apprentices help out with all aspects of the ranch. Work includes sowing, planting, weeding, irrigating, and harvesting a variety of crops; animal husbandry; experiential education with youth and other groups; and direct marketing through our farm stand, CSA, and sales to local restaurants and bakeries. While the apprenticeship model is mainly focused on learning by doing, our weekly farm meeting/walk and monthly classes are opportunities to expand apprentices' knowledge of sustainable food production.

We also offer a summer internship from June to August, intended for folks who are curious about farming but haven't yet had many opportunities to work on farms. Interns work alongside our apprentices in all aspects of the work week. In addition to a monthly stipend, interns are provided with a tent space, access to an outdoor kitchen and bathroom, food grown on the farm and staples, educational instruction, and the chance to live and work in a beautiful, productive environment.



INSIDER'S VIEW

TOP SUCCESSES

- Leadership, mentorship, management
- Multi-faceted education (animals, farm, marketing, sales, planning)
- Happy farmers

TOP CHALLENGES

- Funding/revenue (too many commitments)
- Housing and infrastructure limitations
- Communication/relationships

WHAT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WOULD BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL?

- More funding for additional workshops and infrastructure improvements

POLYFACE INC.

SWOPE, VA 24479

IN A NUTSHELL

Started over twenty years ago
Apprenticeship commitment one year
Up to four graduates per year
Nonprofit organization

AGRICULTURAL FOCUS

Diversified ranch or farm

SPECIALIZED TRAINING TOPICS/PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS

Business planning; ranch or farm operations management; financial management; vehicle and equipment maintenance, repair, and operation; land health and management issues (water, soil, air; wild fire); direct sales and marketing; farmers markets; building, carpentry, and using tools

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS PROVIDED BY MENTORS

Curriculum (formal or informal); formal evaluations; skills assessment checklist; non-academic technical workshops; business planning and financial management; hands-on training alongside a mentor

APPRENTICE COMPENSATION

Stipend; full or partial board; housing; workers' compensation; unemployment insurance; weekly day(s) off; educational opportunities off the mentor ranch or farm (e.g. workshops, visits to other operations); formal mentor lectures and seminars

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Product sales

Polyface Farm is a pasture-based, carbon-centric, multi-speciated, symbiotic-environmented, synergistic relational, stacked-enterprise, direct-marketing, people-centric farm in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. We produce salad bar beef, pigator pork, pastured eggs, broilers and turkeys, forage-based rabbit, lamb, ducks, lumber, and educational seminars—marketing to six thousand families and fifty restaurants within four hours of the farm.

We don't do anything conventionally. We haven't bought a bag of chemical fertilizer in half a century, never planted a seed, own no plow or disk or silo (we call those bankruptcy tubes.) We practice mob-stocking, herbivorous-solar-conversion, lignified-carbon-sequestration fertilization with the cattle. The Egmobiles follow them, mimicking egrets on the rhinos' nose. The laying hens scratch through the dung, eat out the fly larvae, scatter the nutrients into the soil, and give thousands of dollars worth of eggs as a byproduct of pasture sanitation. Pastured broilers in floorless pasture schooners move every day to a fresh paddock salad bar. Pigs aerate compost and finish on acorns in forest glens. It's all a symbiotic, multi-speciated, synergistic, relationship-dense production model that yields far more per acre than industrial models. And it's all aromatically and aesthetically romantic.



APPRENTICES

TYPICAL AGE: Twenty-three to twenty-nine years old

BACKGROUND: Did not grow up on ranch or farm and did not have regular exposure to ranches or farms

PRIOR EXPERIENCE: Less than one year

MOST COMMON OUTCOME: Seek to develop own business



HOW DO APPRENTICES FIT INTO YOUR PROGRAM?

Twenty years ago we began the program with two apprentices for twelve-month stints, overlapping so both didn't come at the same time. Ten years ago we started the intern program, which is four months long. Five years ago we redesigned the apprenticeship so that apprentices were chosen exclusively from the intern pool; at the midpoint of the internship, interns can apply for the twelve-month apprenticeship. That is one of the best changes we ever made. Apprentices then become the first-level managers/mentors/teachers for the new interns. We consider internship to be boot kindergarten and apprenticeship to be a doctorate.

The selection process is our programs most critical component. Candidates have to fit with the mentor, and fit is quite broad. Apprentices question everything: religion, politics, tractor brand, child rearing techniques—you get the picture. In such an intimate setting, fit—which is far more than reluctant toleration—is critical. Intimacy and immersion are the foundations. An on-farm chef prepares communal evening meals Monday-Friday to facilitate fellowship between mentors, staff, and interns (about twenty-five of us). Formal teaching complements hands-on tasks. The internship runs May 1-September 30. At the halfway point, interns may apply for the year-long apprenticeship (October 15 to October 15). Apprentices are first-level managers for the interns. Skill and attitude create more responsibility.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO CREATE THIS PROGRAM?

Back in the early 1990s, young people kept asking us to let them come and learn, and so we developed the program to serve and meet that need. We did not start it to get labor; we started it to mentor young people to go out and duplicate our principles. Our entire focus has been to inculcate the experience and thinking necessary to re-create farm success anywhere in the world.

First, seeing the number of successfully germinated farms is gratifying beyond words. Our graduates keep in touch with both their successes and failures, but many are persevering and thriving. Second, sharing what can become drudgery over time with enthusiastic young people for whom our routine is a brand new experience energizes us emotionally, physically, and spiritually. "Wow! I get to gather eggs!" That's cool to hear as a mentor and helps us realize how blessed the farm life is. Third, it's a way for us to vet future team members. That reduces the oopses often encountered in new hires.

ONE MORE THING...!

Housing, pay, workplace safety compliance, etc. . . These are huge fears that all mentors have. Most of us are illegal on at least some of it because our culture does not recognize anything beyond student-pays-teacher or worker-gets-paycheck. These apprenticeships do not fit into government regulatory boxes, and therefore I would say the single biggest impediment to this kind of experience is mentor fear and frustration regarding regulatory tyranny. Lots more to say, but not enough time; I've said far more in my book *Fields of Farmers* by Joel Salatin.



INSIDER'S VIEW

TOP SUCCESSES

- Seeing apprentices develop skills
- Enjoying youthful energy and enthusiasm
- Vetting for future staff and business partners

TOP CHALLENGES

- Picking good ones
- Dealing with relationship drama
- Being patient with broken machinery, misplaced tools, and improper methods

WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU HAD KNOWN BEFORE YOU STARTED?

- To get rid of bad apprentices immediately; do not wait for them to get better

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING...?

A more perfect vetting process: we feel as if we turn away some good apprentices and sometimes pick not so good ones. We do an application and then require a two-day, check-out visit over a ten-day period (we invite about four candidates per final pick), but we still get duds from time to time.

ROUND RIVER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, LLC

RUSH, CO 80833

IN A NUTSHELL

Started in 2008

Apprenticeship commitment eighteen months to two years

Two to three graduates per year

Nonprofit organization

AGRICULTURAL FOCUS

Ranch or beef cattle operation; diversified ranch or farm

SPECIALIZED TRAINING TOPICS/PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS

Business planning, ranch or farm operations management; financial management; vehicle and equipment maintenance, repair, and operation; land health and management issues (water, soil, air, wild fire); direct sales and marketing; farmers markets; building, carpentry, and using tools

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS PROVIDED BY MENTORS

Curriculum (formal or informal); formal evaluations; skills assessment checklist; business planning and financial management; hands-on training alongside a mentor

APPRENTICE COMPENSATION

Stipend, full or partial board, housing, workers' compensation; unemployment insurance; weekly day(s) off; educational opportunities off the mentor ranch or farm (e.g., workshops, visits to other operations)

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Product sales

Round River Resource Management, LLC provides management and consulting services to land and livestock owners. Its partners are dedicated to managing ranches and their natural resources for long-term economic and ecological sustainability and are currently responsible for managing more than one hundred twenty thousand acres on the eastern plains of Colorado.

The Brett Gray Ranch is a fifty-thousand-acre ranch, currently leased and managed by Round River from the Colorado State Land Board. In partnership with the State Land Board and The Nature Conservancy, Round River has a three-part goal to maintain a productive and sustainable ranching operation, encourage science and stewardship that maintains biodiversity and a sustainable prairie ecosystem, and support education and community outreach to foster appreciation and support effective conservation of prairie ecosystems through responsible ranching.

Round River currently manages a fifteen-hundred-to-two-thousand-head yearling grazing operation, along with a five-hundred-head cow-calf herd. By utilizing the principles of Holistic Management and working upon the four fundamental ecosystem processes—mineral cycle, energy flow, water cycle, and community dynamics—Round River strives to improve the resource base and bring ecological and economic sustainability to the ranching industry.



APPRENTICES

TYPICAL AGE: Eighteen to twenty-two years old

BACKGROUND: Did not grow up on ranch or farm and did not have regular exposure to ranches or farms

PRIOR EXPERIENCE: Less than one year

MOST COMMON OUTCOME: Seek to develop own business



For all that we embrace progressive concepts and forward-thinking, the beating heart of what we do is as old as the American West. Cattle have long been as much a part of the Front Range landscape as the pronghorn and sagebrush. These animals in particular, though, are hardly just hanging out. We utilize temporary, minimal fencing, paired with a management-intensive, rotational grazing schedule, to push a couple thousand steers and heifers through the varying landscapes that make up our ranches at a relatively high frequency. The real work gets done by the cattle themselves. Their natural behaviors, when carefully managed, provide fertilization, soil activation, overall vitalization, and even restoration of the grasslands and riparian areas they occupy across thousands of acres. After a lot of time and consistent effort, we start to see something that much more closely resembles this land before it was overgrazed.

Essential to our grazing methodology is an understanding of how timing, intensity, and rest are crucial to the restorative process. Overgrazing is typically caused by too few or too many cattle in a given area for too continuous a period of time. When plant species aren't given any time away from grazing to rest, mature, and go to seed, a crucial link in the natural cycle is disrupted. That being said, simply allowing a piece of land to go completely ungrazed has almost the same negative consequences over a period of years. Simply put, herbivores and grasslands evolved in a symbiotic way. Some of the keys to finding the most harmonious balance—one that imitates the natural world—are planning, observation, and management. Those are the things Round River strives to bring to the table on a daily basis.

HOW DO APPRENTICES FIT INTO ROUND RIVER?

Round River generally offers two to three internships during the summer and fall, as well as opportunities for apprenticeships lasting one to two years. Interns and apprentices help manage a fifteen-hundred-to-two-thousand-head yearling grazing operation along with a five-hundred-head cow-calf herd managed holistically in an intensive rotational grazing system. Hands-on learning opportunities include, but are not limited to: grazing planning and management; plant identification and rangeland monitoring; fence construction; general maintenance of equipment and facilities; livestock handling and health management; and enterprise budgeting, planning and development. Interns and apprentices are also given access to additional off-ranch learning opportunities.

Successful candidates have the opportunity to learn and participate in all aspects of the ranch operations and enterprise development and will develop an appreciation for conservation and sustainable ranch management.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO CREATE THIS PROGRAM?

Round River recognizes the critical need and value of training dedicated young professionals with the necessary skills to successfully operate an economically and ecologically sustainable agricultural enterprise. With the rising age of our current ranchers and farmers, the steady increase in world population, global warming, and the continuous degradation of our natural resources, it is critically important that we provide a new generation of young, innovative professionals with the skills and knowledge to lead an economically and ecologically sustainable agricultural industry.



INSIDER'S VIEW

TOP SUCCESSES

- An apprentice join our ranching business and is developing his own livestock herd,
- two who have gone on to Vet School
- one has gone into ranch management in his home state

TOP CHALLENGES

- Finding highly motivated apprentices who are truly interested in pursuing a career in economically and ecologically sustainable ranch or farm management

WHAT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WOULD BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL?

We would like to refine our program and develop an apprenticeship handbook that will detail expectations, learning and instruction opportunities, and educational experiences.

WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU HAD KNOWN BEFORE YOU STARTED?

I wish I had known that I would become very close with all of them and my heart would break when they left!

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING...?

- Better manage and train apprentices with varying personalities and experience levels
- Improve the learning experience, promote teamwork, good communication skills
- Provide business and employment opportunities upon completion

ROXBURY FARM

KINDERHOOK, NY 12106

IN A NUTSHELL

Started over ten years ago
Apprenticeship commitment less than eight months
Up to four graduates per year
Nonprofit organization

AGRICULTURAL FOCUS

Mixed animal/vegetable farm

SPECIALIZED TRAINING TOPICS/PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS

Ranch or farm operations management, vehicle and equipment maintenance, repair, and operation, land health and management issues (water, soil, air, wild fire), direct sales and marketing, farmers markets

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS PROVIDED BY MENTORS

Curriculum (formal or informal), formal evaluations, skills assessment checklist, non-academic technical workshops, hands-on training alongside a mentor

APPRENTICE COMPENSATION

Stipend, housing, workers' compensation; unemployment insurance, paid vacation time, weekly day(s) off, educational opportunities off the mentor ranch or farm (e.g., workshops, visits to other operations)

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Product sales

Roxbury Farm is a three-hundred-seventy-five-acre farm with thirty acres of land in vegetable cultivation, twenty acres in green manures, one hundred acres in hay production, and eighty acres of pasture. We produce a wide variety of vegetables for eleven hundred shareholders representing over thirteen hundred families in four communities: Columbia County, the Capital Region, Westchester County, and Manhattan. We also have a herd of Black Angus beef cows and a flock of Katahdin/Dorper sheep that are completely grassfed. We have three sows and in the summer raise both the sows and the feeder pigs on pasture. They are fed organic grain.

In 2016, Roxbury Farm will celebrate our twenty-sixth year as a CSA. Since 1991, when we started with thirty members in Manhattan, we have striven to produce high quality food at an affordable price. During this time, Roxbury Farm became recognized across the US as a farm with innovative practices. Through partnership with other organizations, we have trained many new farmers, protected land for agriculture in perpetuity, built soil fertility for future generations (since 2000 we have doubled the soil fertility on our farm), and provided many educational materials for beginning and experienced farmers through our website, mentorships, and presentations.



APPRENTICES

TYPICAL AGE: Twenty-three to twenty-nine years old

BACKGROUND: Did not grow up on ranch or farm and did not have regular exposure to ranches or farms

PRIOR EXPERIENCE: One to five years

MOST COMMON OUTCOME: Seek to develop own business



Our produce is grown without the input of any synthetic or artificial fertilizers or pesticides. Almost all of the vegetables are started from seed on the farm, either in the field or in one of our greenhouses. The land is fertilized with aged compost and green manure crops. A very carefully planned rotation allows fields to be taken out of production to build soil fertility. This means we cultivate twice as many acres as needed for vegetable crop production. The result is that we have very low incidences of pests and diseases. We believe that soil health is the basis for sound farming.

We have chosen not to pursue organic certification by the USDA. We comply with all the standards but feel that third-party verification is not necessary on our farm. CSA members can come to the farm and certify for themselves that we use organic and sustainable practices. We chose to sign the Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York's Farmer's Pledge in place of becoming certified organic. We feel that the Farmer's Pledge is a reflection of why many farmers choose to become organic in the first place: to treat the people who grow the food, the customers who eat the food, and the land and animals that produce the food with dignity and respect.

Livestock are an important part of our farm. We raise sheep, pigs, and beef cattle. We strive to provide our animals with environments that best suite the instinctual needs of the animal. Our beef and lamb are 100% grassfed and our pigs are pastured and fed organic grain.

HOW DO APPRENTICES FIT INTO ROXBURY FARM?

Training new farmers is an important aspect of Roxbury Farm. Roxbury Farm Apprentices are part of the CRAFT program (Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training) of the Hudson Valley/Pioneer Valley. Our farm is best suited to people with at least two years of experience on a production farm. Apprentices take part in most aspects of the farm operation and can develop their own training and learning objectives. Apprentices are part of the farm crew. Through our participation in CRAFT, apprentices can also take advantage of opportunities to visit twelve other farms with a group of like-minded apprentices.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO CREATE THIS PROGRAM?

In the US there is not a vocational training program for people who want to do organic vegetable production in order to become farm managers or farm owners. We started our program in order to give people an opportunity to learn the needed skills to operate a farm. It is an informal training with no certificate or college credit.

We enjoy working with people who are excited to learn about organic agriculture. They bring new enthusiasm to the work. We also enjoy teaching people how to farm efficiently and collaboratively. Since 1990, Roxbury Farm has trained many new farmers who have gone on to have successful businesses and we enjoy keeping in touch and maintaining relationships with these farmers and their families.



INSIDER'S VIEW

TOP SUCCESSES

- Apprentices who are now successful farmers on their own
- Apprentices who decide to stay on our farm and become skilled farm staff members
- The energy and excitement that apprentices bring to learning about the farm and our farming methods

TOP CHALLENGES

- Finding time to do in-depth training on soil health, business management, marketing, etc.
- Creating a program that prevents apprentices from becoming overwhelmed by the scale of our operation
- Making sure that apprentices feel there is a skill-building-and-learning to work ratio that keeps them happy with their experience

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING...?

We would like to have outside funds available to pay for the time we spend training apprentices. It would be easier to then take the time to do a better job at training. Under the financial pressure of a production farm it can be difficult to find the time on a regular basis.

THE SEED FARM

EMMAUS, PA 18049

IN A NUTSHELL

Started 2010

Apprenticeship commitment eight months

Three to five graduates per year

Nonprofit operating training program in partnership with county extension and county government

AGRICULTURAL FOCUS

Vegetable farm

SPECIALIZED TRAINING TOPICS/PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS

Business planning; ranch or farm operations management; financial management; vehicle and equipment maintenance, repair, and operation; land health and management issues (water, soil, air, wild fire); direct sales and marketing; farmers markets; building, carpentry, and using tools

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS PROVIDED BY MENTORS

Curriculum (formal or informal); formal evaluations; skills assessment checklist; non-academic, technical workshops; business planning and financial management; hands-on training alongside a mentor

APPRENTICE COMPENSATION

Educational opportunities off the mentor ranch or farm (e.g., workshops, visits to other operations)

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Program tuition paid by apprentices; government (federal or state) grants; donations from foundations or individuals; product sales; fundraising events; county operating and capital support; corporate sponsorship

The Seed Farm was founded in 2010 as a collaboration between Lehigh County and Penn State Extension, made possible by a USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) grant. We provide new farmers with valuable, practical experience and skills on our training farm, as well as the opportunity to launch sustainable farm businesses on our site in Emmaus, PA. Our training program was designed to address challenges facing new farmers (especially those who didn't grow up on farms), specifically lack of access to land, training, and capital. Our long-term goals are to increase the success of beginning farmers by providing the skills necessary for successful farm start-ups and to increase the number of sustainable farms in our region by providing access to land, mentoring, and networks.

The Seed Farm is located on a forty-two acre site in Pennsylvania's Lehigh Valley. Participants in our training program help to manage a four-acre training and demonstration farm, where they grow vegetables, herbs, and flowers. In addition to our greenhouse, high tunnel, ponds, and wash-and-pack facility, we have an extensive array of equipment available for demonstration and rental purposes. Our products are sold via CSA, farmers market, and wholesale channels as a critical component of marketing training.



APPRENTICES

TYPICAL AGE: Twenty-three to twenty-nine years old

BACKGROUND: Did not grow up on ranch or farm and may or may not have farming experience

PRIOR EXPERIENCE: Less than one year

MOST COMMON OUTCOME: Seek to develop own business



HOW DO APPRENTICES FIT INTO YOUR PROGRAM?

Everything we do is tied to our mission to cultivate the next generation of farmers. The purpose of operating our farm is to teach skills that are critical to new farmer success: production, marketing, business planning, record keeping, equipment use and maintenance, season extension, etc. Trainees are involved in every aspect of running the farm, from seed ordering and crop planning to budgeting and managing the farmers market stand.

The Seed Farm's new farmer training program requires apprentices to make an eight-month commitment and provides six hundred hours of intensive training in production planning, equipment use, business planning, and marketing through a unique combination of on-farm and classroom learning. Apprentices are given decision-making responsibility for our two-acre market garden at the Seed Farm site in Emmaus, PA, from seed to harvest to market.

Additionally, we work closely with partners such as Penn State Extension, Lehigh County, and Tri-State CRAFT to enable beginning farmers to develop the knowledge, hands-on experience, and business plans that are necessary for successful farm start-up. Formal courses are taught by Penn State Extension over the course of the season. These courses are hosted at the Lehigh County Agricultural Center in Allentown, as well as at several local farm sites.

After completing training, some of our graduates choose to stay at The Seed Farm and launch their own farm businesses in our agricultural incubator. Our incubator program is available to new farmers who can demonstrate adequate farming and equipment experience, and solid marketing and business plans. Successful applicants farm as either Stewards or Enterprise farmers at The Seed Farm. Stewards have completed farm apprenticeships or internships, and they benefit from frequent mentoring from The Seed Farm staff and other area farmers. Enterprise farmers have a few more years of experience under their belts and can assume a mentoring role on the farm. Resources available to incubator farmers include: one to three acres of land; cooler, greenhouse, and dry storage space; tractors and implements; wash/pack facilities; and a water and irrigation system. We help incubator farmers connect with service providers, new markets, and even promotional opportunities, while they build a solid foundation for a new farm business.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO START THIS PROGRAM?

Now that we have completed six full training seasons, we can look back with satisfaction, knowing that we have played an integral role in the creation of more than fifteen new farms. These new businesses are exciting and dynamic, and they are strengthening the Lehigh Valley's local food system. We have helped to build the local farming community and have provided valuable training to hundreds of farmers and gardeners.



INSIDER'S VIEW

TOP SUCCESSES

- Four graduates have gone on to launch businesses in our incubator
- Fourteen participants (out of twenty-five) have gone on to own/manage agricultural operations
- Over the course of the training season, apprentices increase their knowledge in over 70% of seventy-five skills that are critical to new farmer success

TOP CHALLENGES

- Attracting enough high-quality applicants
- Retention of apprentices
- Managing expectations so that apprentices understand the hard work and stress that comes with farming
- Ensuring reliable funding streams for an intensive program despite seemingly small impact

WHAT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WOULD BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL?

- Identifying a target demographic and effective places to advertise our program and recruit apprentices

WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU HAD KNOWN BEFORE YOU STARTED?

- How helpful it would be to partner with an accredited educational institution

SISTERS HILL FARM

STANFORDVILLE, NY 12581

IN A NUTSHELL

Started over ten years ago
Apprenticeship commitment eight to twelve months
Two to four graduates per year
Nonprofit organization

AGRICULTURAL FOCUS

Vegetable farm

SPECIALIZED TRAINING TOPICS/PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS

Business planning; ranch or farm operations management; financial management; vehicle and equipment maintenance, repair, and operation; land health and management issues (water, soil, air, wild fire); direct sales and marketing; building, carpentry, and using tools

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS PROVIDED BY MENTORS

Curriculum (formal or informal); formal evaluations; skills assessment checklist; non-academic technical workshops; business planning and financial management; hands-on training alongside a mentor

COMPENSATION

Stipend; full or partial board; housing; workers' compensation; unemployment insurance; weekly day(s) off; educational opportunities off the mentor ranch or farm (e.g., workshops, visits to other operations); participation in CRAFT program

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Product sales

Sisters Hill Farm, organized in 1996, rejuvenated land that flourished as Hill Crest Farm in the early days of the twentieth century. After the property was willed to the Sisters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul of New York in 1917, the sisters continued to oversee the active farm and made improvements on buildings and property until the 1940s, when the land was left fallow.

Once again vibrant and thriving, Sisters Hill Farm seeks to create a just relationship between people and the earth through healthy food, outreach to the poor, and community building. An active CSA since 1999, we have grown from one acre feeding forty members to five acres feeding more than three hundred families. Each year we harvest around ninety thousand pounds of the highest quality produce, and we hit the one million pound mark in the 2014 season!

The Sisters of Charity have been advocates for people who are poor for over one hundred eighty years. This project is a natural extension of that work. One of our goals is to share 10% of the harvest with our neighbors in need, whether it be directly to families or to soup kitchens and pantries.



APPRENTICES

TYPICAL AGE: Twenty-three to twenty-nine years old

BACKGROUND: Did not grow up on ranch or farm and did not have regular exposure to ranches or farms

PRIOR EXPERIENCE: Less than one year

MOST COMMON OUTCOME: Seek to develop own business



HOW DO APPRENTICES FIT INTO SISTERS HILL FARMS?

We are committed to creating the best learning environment possible. This is a true hands-on program. We work hard but we also work intelligently. Every morning we get together and prioritize tasks. Custom computer spreadsheets and databases are utilized for crop planning and to determine our planting schedule. Interns are exposed to and expected to competently perform all farm operations. Greenhouse management, transplant production, primary tillage, secondary tillage, cultivation, a systems approach to farm management, weed control through many methods, and careful efficient harvesting for maximum crop quality are just some of the many things interns and apprentices learn here. They also learn: how to drive tractors; how to operate a front-end loader; and how to enhance soil fertility through the use of composts, manure, and cover crops. Farm rotations and insect and disease control are regularly discussed and implemented. Ultimately, however, what trainees learn is up to them. To make the most of this experience takes openness, a curious nature, and a desire and initiative to learn and grow. A growing farm library is also available to all, and certain key texts are recommended reading. Visits to other farms are a regular part of our program.

We are currently participating in the Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training (CRAFT) program, an alliance of more than a dozen farmers who utilize apprentices as their primary source of farm labor. Throughout the season different farmers host apprentices from participating farms. The host gives a tour and a presentation on some unique aspect of his/her farm operation.

More and more we are looking for applicants who know that they want to farm. A wealth of farm experience is not a necessity, but a love of physical labor is essential, as is a love of being outdoors in all kinds of weather. Applicants should be the kind of people who are always looking for a better way to get a job done. They must be kind, respectful, and empathetic; have a beginner's mind; and be open to learning no matter how much they think they know about a subject. Finally, they should love to laugh and have fun!

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO CREATE THIS PROGRAM?

We consider it a vital part of our mission to be training the next generation of farmers. Sustainable farming as we practice it is a very rewarding and challenging career path. There is so much to teach and a great deal to learn.



INSIDER'S VIEW

TOP SUCCESSES

- Most apprentices go on to manage or own their own farms
- Those farms are successful

TOP CHALLENGES

- Balancing teaching and practice time with the demands of production

WHAT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WOULD BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL?

- A farm-specific written list of everything that an apprentice should learn in a year
- A general checklist for intern programs
- A peer mentorship, a regional network for intern and apprentice interaction

WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU HAD KNOWN BEFORE YOU STARTED?

- More about how to interview and hire the best people

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING...?

- We'd like to make paid internship opportunities available to more people, on a shorter-term basis and in a condensed format

TOMKAT RANCH

PESCADERO, CA 94060

IN A NUTSHELL

Started two to five years ago
Apprenticeship commitment one year
One to four graduates per year
Nonprofit organization

AGRICULTURAL FOCUS

Ranch or beef cattle operation

SPECIALIZED TRAINING TOPICS/PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS

Business planning; farm or ranch management; vehicle and equipment maintenance, repair, and operation; land health and management issues (water, soil, air, wild fire); direct sales and marketing; farmers markets; building, carpentry, and using tools; agricultural innovation and applied sciences

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS PROVIDED BY MENTORS

Curriculum; formal evaluations; non-academic technical workshops; business planning and financial management; hands-on training alongside a mentor

COMPENSATION

Stipend; housing; workers' compensation; unemployment insurance; health insurance; paid vacation time; weekly day(s) off; educational opportunities off the mentor ranch or farm (e.g., workshops, visits to other operations)

SOURCES OF FUNDING

TomKat Ranch Educational Foundation

TomKat Ranch Educational Foundation (TKREF) is located on TomKat Ranch, an eighteen hundred acre cattle ranch in Pescadero, California on the San Mateo Coast three miles inland from the Pacific ocean. A working cattle ranch, TomKat is also home to LeftCoast GrassFed, producers of grassfed, grass-finished, pasture-raised beef.

TomKat Ranch provides healthy food on working lands in a way that sustains the planet and inspires others to action. We sustainably produce grassfed beef, pasture-raised pork and poultry, and both aquaponic and traditionally-grown fruits and vegetables. TomKat Ranch strives to research, teach, sponsor, connect, and empower. To that end, we work closely with community, academic, research, and private institutions, as well as with thought leaders in many fields, to innovate and further the cause of sustainable food at large.

At TomKat Ranch Educational Foundation (TKREF), we recognize the need to forge sustainable solutions to the crises facing the world today. To do so, we embrace the interconnectedness of agriculture, the environment, and human health in order to address high levels of atmospheric carbon, severe drought in California, deadly antibiotic resistant bacterial infections, and declining plant and animal species.



APPRENTICES

TYPICAL AGE: Twenty-three to twenty-nine years old

BACKGROUND: Did not grow up on ranch or farm and did not have regular exposure to ranches or farms

PRIOR EXPERIENCE: Less than one year

MOST COMMON OUTCOME: Seek work in ranch or farm management



At TomKat Ranch Educational Foundation (TKREF), we work to provide healthy food on working lands in a way that sustains the planet and inspires others to action. We believe that conservation and production are complementary when done well, and so our work focuses on de-risking and sharing strategies that blend the best ideas we can find from both fields. We partner with ranchers, scientists, advocates, policy makers, students, and neighbors on a wide range of projects to further the cause of sustainable food.

TKREF values science and believes that the scientific method, employed in an adaptive management framework, is one of the most fundamental tools for taking action today to achieve our desired outcomes for the future. We are committed to sharing our knowledge and lessons learned, in order to facilitate the empowerment of others in creating sustainable landscapes. Finally, we recognize that we are in a unique position to take risks, experiment, measure outcomes, and share our successes and failures with our dedicated partners.

HOW DO APPRENTICES FIT INTO TOMKAT RANCH?

Interns work with the wide variety of teams at TKREF (conservation science, for-profit sales, land and livestock management, applied agricultural sciences/innovation, and education and outreach) in order to identify their own particular passions and professional goals in sustainable food. Often interns work fifty percent of their day with our Land and Livestock Team and then rotate in the afternoon to work with other teams on the ranch, but we have designed a flexible experience to meet the unique interests of each intern.

Interns who have completed their term and would like to stay for an additional one to two years to focus on further developing skills and achieving professional goals can apply for our Apprenticeship Program. Whether interested in becoming ranchers, researchers, managers, or food advocates, apprentices are a respected part of the ranch team and work closely with staff and on-site partners on a wide range of projects that help develop them professionally and prepare them for success in the field. Apprentices gain experience in many focus areas including land and soil stewardship, wildlife conservation and protection, compost science, sustainable multi-species animal grazing, small business development, aquaponics, ranch management, and ecological data collection and research design.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO START THIS PROGRAM?

This program was created to help train the next generation of land stewards and sustainable food professionals. TKREF believes that managing diverse and complex landscapes requires equally diverse and complex human resources. As such, it is important to offer individuals from all professional, educational, and cultural backgrounds the opportunity to find their unique calling in this field and the training to help them achieve their goals.

We believe the internship and apprenticeship programs are the heart and soul of our foundation. Interns and apprentices bring an amazing intellectual openness and flexibility to the ranch that helps spur our permanent staff to be better innovators. Additionally, as a sustainable food professional who got my start and subsequent training through internships, I personally love providing the same opportunity for the next generation.



INSIDER'S VIEW

TOP SUCCESSES

Apprentices are given an education that can take individuals with no experience to a point where they can be a productive and reliable part of a working sustainable ranch. They receive a very well-rounded education by working with a wide range of teams and partner organizations that give them experience with business administration/sales, conservation science, ranch facilities management, nonprofit management, agricultural research and development, events planning, and advocacy. Our organization has a stated goal to help apprentices develop professionally and find jobs or opportunities after they leave that suit their interests.

TOP CHALLENGES

- Housing
- Limited number of mentors on site
- Giving interns and apprentices the ability to earn certifications or other easily transferable job credentials

WHAT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WOULD BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL?

We would be interested in using pre-made educational classes or modules on general topics like farm finance, business planning, animal health, soil health, marketing, etc. as a primer for interns/apprentices.

WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU HAD KNOWN BEFORE YOU STARTED?

Apprentices need to learn by doing, which can be very costly. Create a generous budget for equipment repairs and replacement.

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING...?

I feel very pleased with our apprenticeship program as it is.

VILICUS FARMS

VILICUS TRAINING INSTITUTE – HAVRE, MT 59501

IN A NUTSHELL

Started two to five years ago

Apprenticeship commitment two years

One to two graduates per year

In the process of becoming a nonprofit organization to expand partnerships and formalize the program

AGRICULTURAL FOCUS

Grain farm, more than six-year rotation growing other organic food crops

SPECIALIZED TRAINING TOPICS/PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS

Business planning; ranch or farm operations management; financial management; vehicle and equipment maintenance, repair, and operation; land health and management issues (water, soil, air, wild fire); direct sales and marketing, building, carpentry, and using tools

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS PROVIDED BY MENTORS

Curriculum (formal or informal); formal evaluations; skills assessment checklist; non-academic technical workshops; hands-on training alongside a mentor

COMPENSATION

Stipend; full or partial board; housing; workers' compensation; unemployment insurance; weekly day(s) off; educational opportunities off the mentor ranch or farm (e.g., workshops, visits to other operations); exposure to and interactions with product buyers

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Mentor ranch or farm; sponsorships from companies interested in growing new organic grain farmers

Vilicus Farms is a nationally recognized first generation, organic, dry land crop farm located in northern Hill County, Montana. Established in 2009, we grow a diverse array of heirloom and specialty grains, pulse, oilseed, and broadleaf crops within a five or six-year rotation on approximately forty-seven hundred acres. Vilicus Farms practices advanced land stewardship at a scale that matters, serving as a model from which to advocate for positive changes for a more regenerative agriculture.

Doug and Anna envision a world where farming is a respected and indispensable vocation, organic practices are considered conventional, and agriculture is defined by a supportive network of like-minded farmer stewards. Vilicus Farms exists to model this vision not as something that we wish for or talk about with fondness, but rather as an authentic and realistic agricultural reality. Vilicus Farms works to embody advanced land stewardship practices at scale in partnership with nature, promote the standing of professional farmers in society, and cultivate a new generation of farmer stewards on the Northern Great Plains.

Positive changes in our agricultural system are absolutely necessary to spur positive changes in our society and our relationships with our planet.



APPRENTICES

TYPICAL AGE: Eighteen to twenty-two years old

BACKGROUND: Did not grow up on ranch or farm and did not have regular exposure to ranches or farms

PRIOR EXPERIENCE: Less than one year

MOST COMMON OUTCOME: Return to undergraduate education; work for a sustainable ag nonprofit; return for a second season



The Vilicus Farms Apprenticeship is intended to be a multi-season training and mentoring program that immerses highly motivated young professionals in organic farm operation and management—a journey that ultimately ends in farm ownership. The Apprenticeship has three phases:

Immersion: Learn the Nuts and Bolts of Organic Farming

Apprentices are immersed in organic farming methods; Vilicus Farms' growing system; conservation practices; and ecosystem.

Growth and Development: Mature Farm Management Skills and Land Stewardship Ethic

They begin to build business plan for farm ownership. This phase could include online university coursework, and expansion of initial capstone project.

Launch: Manage an Independent Farming Operation

Apprentices will hone their business plan and graduate into managing an independent operation. They will implement their business plan with mentorship support from the Vilicus Farms network.

HOW DO APPRENTICES FIT INTO VILICUS FARM?

The first-year position is a six to eight-month immersion experience in all facets of a dryland organic crop farm enterprise. Apprentices work under direct supervision of the farm managers and are an integral part of the Vilicus Farms team. Apprentices participate in the physical labor of the operation as well as the mental challenge of the farm business management. After immersion apprentices ideally will commit to shaping a longer-term arrangement that develops their farm management skills, and prepares them to launch their own farm enterprise. Our vision is a three-to-five year program tailored to the individual apprentice's skills and learning needs that culminate in an opportunity for the apprentice to launch into ownership and operation of their own farm enterprise in the northern plains ecosystem. Vilicus Farms graduate apprentices will be leaders, and their farms will serve as examples, furthering the understanding that land stewardship must be integral to food production.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO START THIS PROGRAM?

Determined to participate in an organic agriculture revolution, Doug and Anna became beginning farmers at the age of forty. Before they even made an offer on land, they purchased their first tractor, "Maddie," with part of Anna's retirement fund. They broke ground with Maddie in the spring of 2009 using the USDA's Beginning Farmer loan resources for land, equipment purchase, and operating capital. Although farming should be hard work the pathway for new entrants into large-scale organic production shouldn't be unobtainable. Given consumer demand and markets, the age of farmers, and the incredible need for a more diverse and regenerative agriculture, becoming an organic farmer is one of the most entrepreneurial pursuits that could be pursued. We wanted to design a pathway that made organic farming at scale a possibility for those who are ready to commit to the vocation of farming.

INSIDER'S VIEW

TOP SUCCESSES

- We've started a dialogue in the organic grain world about what it actually takes to grow new farmers. And a fiscal agency relationship with NCAT.
- We've gotten to meet some awesome people running apprenticeships and internships and realize that we are not completely crazy.
- We've had fun moments when an apprentice actually voices an opinion about liking the work.

TOP CHALLENGES

- Inadequate funding for staff to enable the program becoming more formal and structured.
- Inadequate candidate pool of young people who are fully committed to becoming farmers. Many envision themselves farming but do not have the focus, the work ethic or the creativity to become independent farm operators in the future. We may move towards a system where larger entities hire apprentices to manage parts of operations as employees.
- Lack of apprentice acknowledgement of the gift that a farmer mentor has provided by including the apprentice on their operation.
- Need for facilities to allow separate living and eating spaces between farm managers/hosts and apprentices.
- Need to have the staffing capacity to maintain facilities and handle the impact of hosting.

WHAT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WOULD BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL?

Funding to support a full time executive director who can sink some time and effort into developing a formally structured, state sanctioned apprenticeship program who could also spend more time cultivating relationships across the organic food industry, leading to additional funding and resources and enabling VTI to become more than an apprenticeship on one farm but a formalized, legitimized program.

WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU HAD KNOWN BEFORE YOU STARTED?

We had absolutely no idea that growing new professional organic grain farmers would be so difficult. When we first started we heard from many places the funding would be available. That hasn't been the case, and the industry hasn't been ready to engage in a long-term relationship. Building farmers is like building soil—it doesn't happen overnight or in one annual fiscal cycle.

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING...

We would create a set of must-have prerequisites for candidates who apply to our program. Or find another entity to take over the immersion phase as an internship, allowing us to focus on serious candidates committed farming. As far as I'm aware, no other programs offer hands-on, at-scale, diverse, organic grain farm education.

BEREA COLLEGE FARM

BEREA COLLEGE — BEREA, KY 40404

IN A NUTSHELL

Started over ten years ago

Apprenticeship commitment greater than two years

Fifteen or more graduates per year

Accredited academic institution with on-campus farm

Faculty and farm staff mentors

Enrolled students participate; no separate application required

AGRICULTURAL FOCUS

Ranch or beef cattle operation; diversified ranch or farm; vegetable farm; grain farm; mixed animal and vegetable farm

SPECIALIZED TRAINING TOPICS/PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS

Business planning; ranch or farm operations management; financial management; vehicle and equipment maintenance, repair, and operation; land health and management issues (water, soil, air, wild fire); direct sales and marketing; farmers markets; building, carpentry, and using tools; livestock health and management; horticultural production; grain production; value-added processing

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS PROVIDED BY MENTORS

Curriculum (formal or informal); formal evaluations; skills assessment checklist; non-academic technical workshops ; for-credit college or university classes; business planning and financial management; hands-on training alongside a mentor

COMPENSATION

Hourly wages for 10-15 hours of work per week; full or partial board; housing; workers' compensation; unemployment insurance

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Government (federal or state) grants; donations from foundations or individuals; product sales; institutional support to pay staff salaries

Founded in 1855 as the first interracial and coeducational college in the South, Berea College charges no tuition and admits only academically promising students, primarily from Appalachia, who have limited economic resources. Berea's cost of educating a student exceeds twenty-three thousand dollars per year. Berea offers undergraduate degree programs in twenty-eight fields.

All students work at least ten hours per week in campus and service jobs in more than one hundred thirty departments. The college has an inclusive Christian character expressed in its motto: "God has made of one blood all peoples of the Earth." Berea's primary service region is Southern Appalachia, but students come from all states in the US and, in a typical year, from more than sixty other countries, representing a rich diversity of colors, cultures, and faiths. About one in three students represents an ethnic minority.

Berea College is one of a small number of liberal arts colleges in the US offering an academic program in agriculture and natural resources (ANR). The program curriculum provides all students with a sound foundation in ANR, with options to pursue training in particular areas of interest.



APPRENTICES

TYPICAL AGE: Eighteen to twenty-two years old

BACKGROUND: Did not grow up on ranch or farm but had regular experiences on ranch or farm belonging to family or friends

PRIOR EXPERIENCE: One to five years

MOST COMMON OUTCOME: Return to family farms or start up farms; seek work in related areas like cooperative extension, 4-H, research, etc.



Berea College offers a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR), with a broad foundation in the fundamentals as well as opportunities to focus in specialty areas. The program emphasizes critical inquiry, practical experience and innovative problem solving.

The Berea College Farm is one of the oldest continuously operating and most highly diversified student educational farms in the US. Located in the Knobs along the edge of the Bluegrass Region, the farm borders the campus of Berea College and the City of Berea and consists of pastures, cropland, gardens, woodlots, and ponds on about five hundred acres. The farm is an educational laboratory for students in the ANR program and a working model of sustainable agriculture in the region. Students who work on the farm as part of the college's labor program produce beef cattle, hogs, chickens, eggs, goats, fish, honey bees, grains, pulses, vegetables, fruits, and herbs, all of which are sold locally, mostly to the college's dining hall and to the public via the campus store and area farmers market.

The farm is an essential educational resource that complements and reinforces in-class academic learning by serving as the main laboratory for most of the courses taught in the ANR program and providing students with practical work and management experience. The daily farming operations throughout the year are carried out by students with supervision and support from staff and faculty.

The college farm and ANR program have a tight working partnership. Our goal is that the college farm serve as a model of sustainable agriculture, broadly defined as ecologically sound (resourceful and holistic), socially acceptable (safe, fair, and just), economically viable (financially solvent and potentially profitable), and humane (ethical and caring).

HOW DO APPRENTICES FIT INTO YOUR PROGRAM?

Students play a fundamentally important role in all aspects of the farm's operation, including enterprise development and management, production, equipment maintenance, marketing, and financial planning. Much of the food produced is also prepared by and served to students in the dining hall. The income generated supports practical, hands-on education for students in sustainable agriculture and foods systems. The work experience gained from the college farm complements classroom learning and provides a real advantage to students through skill development and management training.

Our students are essential to the operations of the farm. Without them there would be no farm. They are involved in everything from the day-to-day tasks that get necessary work done to the longer-range planning that shapes the farm for future students.

The farm serves to educate students, provides employment for students as they work their way through college, and functions as a laboratory for courses, internships, and independent studies in the ANR program.

This is a diverse working farm where students can get practical work experience, see concepts from the classroom applied in a real-world context, test assumptions, explore new ideas, and wrestle with the ambiguities and complexities of creating a more sustainable food system.



INSIDER'S VIEW

TOP SUCCESSES

Graduates are broadly trained in all areas of agriculture, including horticulture, field crops, livestock and value-added production and marketing. Students graduate with very little or no debt. We maintain a high degree of transparency in the operations for both students and the greater community.

TOP CHALLENGES

Balancing costs and revenue. Managing government regulations and fees for small-scale processing. Handling institutional pressures concerning safety and liability.

WHAT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WOULD BE HELPFUL?

- Networking with other programs in the region and beyond to share information
- Connections to job opportunities for graduates

WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU HAD KNOWN BEFORE YOU STARTED?

- The challenge of working with relatively inexperienced students for short periods of time
- Making work and study efficient due to student's course schedules

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING...?

We would seek ways to restructure the academic calendar to allow for greater periods of time devoted only to the educational farming experience, during which academic courses wouldn't interfere.

CAL POLY FARM

CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY SAN LUIS OBISPO — SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93407

IN A NUTSHELL

Started over ten years ago

Apprenticeship commitment greater than two years

Fifteen or more graduates per year

Accredited academic institution with on-campus farm

Faculty and farm staff mentors

Enrolled students participate; no separate application required

AGRICULTURAL FOCUS

Ranch or beef cattle operation; vegetable farm; orchard; permaculture farm; dairy and cheesemaking operation; university on-campus ranch or farm

SPECIALIZED TRAINING TOPICS/PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS

Ranch or farm operations management; land health and management issues (water, soil, air, wild fire); direct sales and marketing; farmers markets

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS PROVIDED BY MENTORS

Curriculum (formal or informal); formal evaluations; skills assessment checklist; non-academic, technical workshops; for-credit college or university classes; business planning and financial management; hands-on training alongside a mentor

COMPENSATION

Stipend; educational opportunities off the mentor ranch or farm (e.g., workshops, visits to other operations)

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Annual fees paid by mentors; program tuition paid by apprentices; donations from foundations or individuals

Nestled between the Pacific Ocean and the world-class vineyards of the Edna Valley, Cal Poly's College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences boasts one of the nation's most prestigious undergraduate agriculture programs. Our expert faculty members take pride in their ability to transform academically motivated students into innovative professionals ready to solve the complex challenges associated with feeding the world in sustainable ways.

At the heart of Cal Poly's educational experience is its renowned Learn by Doing methodology. Our students have access to state-of-the-art laboratories in a broad variety of majors, from dairy science, meat processing, horticulture, and more. The laboratories also include ranchland, orchards, vineyards, and forest, which, in turn, provide the Learn by Doing opportunities that are the essence of the Cal Poly experience. These living laboratories, combined with the attention of faculty members dedicated to their students' success, offer a powerful combination of rigorous academics with hands-on experiences that lead to fulfilling careers and distinctive professional accomplishment. As a result of their ability to combine professional skills and technical competence with a big-picture vision and an innovative spirit, Cal Poly graduates are highly sought after by a broad cross-section of prestigious employers.



APPRENTICES

TYPICAL AGE: Eighteen to twenty-two years old

BACKGROUND: Did not grow up on ranch or farm but had regular experiences on ranch or farm belonging to family or friends

PRIOR EXPERIENCE: One to five years

MOST COMMON OUTCOME: Seek work in ranch or farm management





INSIDER'S VIEW

TOP SUCCESSES

Organic agriculture is a magnet for non-agriculture students. Beekeeping is especially attractive for getting students into agriculture.

TOP CHALLENGES

- Lack of state support for program
- Ongoing stigmatization of agriculture from the general public

WHAT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WOULD BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL?

- Getting the word out to high school students

We have integrated the three separate degree programs of Crop Science, Fruit Science and Environmental Horticultural Science into a combined major, which allows students to specialize in one of three concentrations during their freshman year: Environmental Horticultural Science, Fruit and Crop Science, or Plant Protection Science.

Our facilities feature:

- Six thousand acres of land adjacent to our San Luis Obispo campus core
- Specialized biotechnology and computer labs
- Rangeland for grazing and natural resources research
- Cultivated parcels with orchards, vineyards, fruit and nut crops, vegetable production, field crops, agroforestry, greenhouses, and an arboretum
- Modern plants for meat processing, animal food processing, dairy foods processing, eggs and poultry processing, wine production
- Stockyards for horses, beef and dairy cattle, swine and sheep
- The thirty-two-hundred-acre Swanton Pacific Ranch in Santa Cruz County where students study and research on a working ranch

Agricultural Operations (Ag Ops) is a large, diversified ranching and farming support department within the College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences (CAFES). Ag Ops encompasses Cal Poly's more than six thousand acres of farming and ranching operations, which include Peterson, Serrano, Escuela, Walters and Chorro Creek Ranches. Ag Ops also supports the college's Swanton Pacific Ranch, comprised of an additional thirty-three hundred acres.

Specialized academic learning facilities supported by Ag Ops include the Equine Center, Beef Cattle Evaluation Center, Rodeo Unit, Dairy Science, Swine Center, Poultry Center, Sheep Unit, Beef Center, and Horticulture and Crop Science Units.

These specialized academic learning facilities provide:

- An extension of the classroom for faculty to bring to life Cal Poly's renowned Learn by Doing teaching philosophy and for students to put to practice what is taught in the classroom through outdoor lab experiences, enterprise projects, senior projects, and co-curricular activities
- A place to conduct applied, agriculturally related research in support of faculty, senior projects, and graduate students
- A place to demonstrate principles and new technologies of modern agricultural practices to industry partners and others through events such as short courses and field days

HOW DO APPRENTICES FIT INTO YOUR PROGRAM?

The College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences is proud of our hands-on approach to prepare students in agriculture, food systems, natural resources, and life sciences who are equipped to address the diverse needs of society. Learn by Doing is the bedrock of a Cal Poly education. Here, from day one, students begin to apply what they learn in the classroom to practical situations.

Working side by side with their professors, students are able to choose from a broad array of study options among the three concentrations. They are able to work and study in our fields, groves, vineyards, nurseries, orchards, arboretum and gardens, and greenhouses. They experience real world applications through internships and other collaborations with our industry partners. They also develop a foundational plant science background. The Agricultural and Environmental Plant Sciences major at Cal Poly offers students an opportunity not just to learn, but learn by doing. Students must be prepared to get their hands dirty, work outdoors and in our labs and greenhouses, and enjoy some of the most beautiful California sunshine in the state.

FARM APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL FARMING SYSTEMS (CEFS) – RALEIGH, NC 27695

IN A NUTSHELL

Started six to ten years ago

Apprenticeship commitment eight to twelve months

One to four graduates per year

**Nonprofit within an academic institution
on government-owned land**

Faculty and farm staff mentors

Enrolled students participate; no separate application required

AGRICULTURAL FOCUS

Ranch or beef cattle operation; diversified ranch or farm; vegetable farm; grain farm; mixed animal and vegetable farm; dairy and cheesemaking operation; on-campus ranch or farm; large, long-term farming research unit; agroforestry

SPECIALIZED TRAINING TOPICS/PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS

Business planning; ranch or farm operations management; financial management; vehicle and equipment maintenance, repair, and operation; land health and management issues (water, soil, air, wild fire); farmers markets; production, high tunnels, composting, animal integration, community outreach

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS PROVIDED BY MENTORS

Curriculum (formal or informal); formal evaluations; skills assessment checklist; non-academic, technical workshops; business planning and financial management; hands-on training alongside a mentor

COMPENSATION

Stipend; housing; weekly day(s) off; educational opportunities off the mentor ranch or farm (e.g., workshops, visits to other operations)

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Government (federal or state) grants; donations from foundations or individuals; academic programming through university

In 1994, a small circle of leaders in sustainable agriculture came together with a single vision: to create a center for the study of environmentally sustainable farming practices in North Carolina.

A task force of university faculty and administrators, state and federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, farmers, and citizens was charged with developing strategies to build a strong sustainable agriculture program in the state. To that end, North Carolina's two land-grant universities, North Carolina State University and North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, formed a groundbreaking partnership, creating an institutional home for a new endeavor: The Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS). A third key partner, the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, provided a physical base for research and demonstration projects at Cherry Research Farm in Goldsboro, NC: two thousand acres of land, along with personnel and equipment. The farm became home to CEFS's core research programs and units: the Farming Systems Research Unit, Pasture Based Dairy and Beef Units, Alternative Swine Unit, Organic Research Unit, and Small Farm Unit.

Thriving apprenticeship and internship programs grew to attract students from across North Carolina and around the world, training the farmers who will feed future generations and the students who will become tomorrow's food system leaders.



APPRENTICES

TYPICAL AGE: Twenty-three to twenty-nine years old

BACKGROUND: Did not grow up on ranch or farm and did not have regular exposure to ranches or farms

PRIOR EXPERIENCE: One to five years

MOST COMMON OUTCOME: Seek work in ranch or farm management



The CEFS Apprenticeship is a hands-on work and study program that trains participants in all aspects of sustainable agriculture production. The purpose of the apprenticeship is to equip apprentices with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in their own farming enterprises; examine the larger social and equity issues in agriculture; build connections between apprentices and others working in sustainable agriculture, including researchers, extension agents, university faculty, nonprofits, community members, and other farmers; and develop leadership and teaching skills so that apprentices are able to share their knowledge within their communities.

HOW DO APPRENTICES FIT INTO YOUR PROGRAM?

The majority of each apprentice's work focuses on a particular production system at CEFS. A wide array of topics to study are available, including organic grain and vegetable production, agroecological production techniques, long-term comparative farming systems, livestock and agroforestry.

Apprentices are given the opportunity to:

- Immerse themselves in agricultural production and field research
- Work with a highly diverse team of educators from NC State University, NC Agricultural and Technical State University and the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
- Interact with other Apprentices at various research units and sites
- Attend lectures on various topics of sustainable agriculture
- Give an oral presentation on their research at the conclusion of the program

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO START THIS PROGRAM?

In 1999, we started our eight-week Sustainable Agriculture Internship Program. We have had students from our backyard to the other side of the globe come and participate in this program. Interns receive a host of lectures on all aspects of sustainable agriculture, participate in on-farm research experiences, go on field trips, participate in community programs, and get hands-on farming experience on our Small Farm Unit. Early on, it was easy to see that students fell into two categories: those who wanted to study the theory and science of agriculture and those who wanted to become farmers.

After noticing this trend for several years, we decided to create a much longer, nine-month apprenticeship program where participants would learn more of the production side of the farm, along with business plans, crop rotations, integrated systems, season extension, and much more. This program has been wildly successful and has gone on to foster many new farmers.

With the average age of the American farmer hovering around fifty-eight years old, it is imperative that we "grow" and nurture new farmers. The experience that apprentices gain on a teaching farm is quite different than that of a family farm business. Because our focus is on education, our staff is here to train rather than focus on the bottom line. If, while running tractors through a field, an apprentice accidentally takes out a row, it is an opportunity for us to teach, whereas in a real-world farming situation, it could mean hundreds of dollars lost.

We are not only preparing the next generation of farmers, we are giving them the necessary tools to conduct scientific studies on their own crops and livestock, as well as providing them with a strong background in business planning and a strong network of support. We strive to set them up for the highest level of success and send them on their way as successful farmers and food leaders.



INSIDER'S VIEW

TOP SUCCESSES

- Vast majority of CEFS's apprentices continue to work in the food system
- Receive well-rounded education
- Receive community engagement training

TOP CHALLENGES

- Housing
- Funding
- Keeping up with apprentices after program ends

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING...?

We would build on-site housing.

AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT

COLLEGE OF THE OZARKS — POINT LOOKOUT, MO 65726

IN A NUTSHELL

Started over ten years ago

Apprenticeship commitment greater than two years

Fifteen or more graduates per year

Accredited academic institution with on-campus farm

Work-study program

Faculty and farm staff mentors

Enrolled students participate; no separate application required

AGRICULTURAL FOCUS

Ranch or beef cattle operation; diversified ranch or farm; mixed animal and vegetable farm; dairy and cheesemaking operation; on-campus ranch or farm; hog farm; meat and milk processing plants; agronomy and land management work station; feed mill; farmers market; gardens

SPECIALIZED TRAINING TOPICS/PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS

Ranch or farm operations management; vehicle and equipment maintenance, repair, and operation; land health and management issues (water, soil, air, wild fire); direct sales and marketing; farmers markets

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS PROVIDED BY MENTORS

Curriculum (formal or informal); formal evaluations; for-credit college or university classes; hands-on training alongside a mentor

COMPENSATION

Full or partial board; workers' compensation; unemployment insurance; tuition and an undergraduate degree upon completion with passing grades in both the work and academic areas

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Donations from foundations or individuals; product sales

College of the Ozarks is committed to its founding mission: to provide a quality, Christian education to those who are found worthy, but who are without sufficient means to obtain such training. Instead of paying tuition, all full-time students work campus jobs to defray the cost of education. Upon complete participation in the Work Education Program, the College guarantees to meet the entire cost of education for students, allowing them the opportunity to graduate debt free. The College openly discourages debt by not participating in any federal, state, or private loan programs and leads by example through having no institutional debt of any kind.

Every full-time student must work fifteen hours per week in one of one hundred eighteen campus work stations. This pays for the student's tuition during the fall and spring semesters. Additionally, students have the opportunity to work during the summer while classes are not in session. The summer work program pays for the student's room and board during the summer and also for the academic school year. We discourage any kind of debt. Work areas complement academic majors, providing hands-on experiences that we call "working knowledge."



APPRENTICES

TYPICAL AGE: Eighteen to twenty-two years old

BACKGROUND: Grew up on family ranch or farm

PRIOR EXPERIENCE: One to five years

MOST COMMON OUTCOME: Seek work in an agriculture-related business



The Agriculture Department's strong academic program is coupled with hands-on experiences in on-campus farm production, farm management, and industry internships. Our extensive agricultural operations are incorporated into both classroom and work study program. College properties include nearly one thousand acres on campus and an additional one thousand acres off campus.

We have a fifty- to sixty-cow dairy; the primary breed is Registered Holstein. The beef herd is between eighty-five and one hundred forty cows, primarily of the Registered Polled Hereford breed. It is a pasture system with a small feedlot. The swine operation consists of twenty-five to thirty sows of Registered Hampshire and hybrid stock. It is a farrow to finish operation with a mixture of modern and traditional facilities. The feed mill keeps all the livestock operations supplied with the proper rations. Our USDA certified meat processing plant provides the means to harvest our beef and swine for use in our public restaurant and student dining hall, or for sale at our farmers market. We process more than three hundred hogs and around twenty-four beef annually. The seasonal garden and farmers market supply vegetables and other student-grown and student-made products for sale to the public. Additionally, produce is utilized in our public restaurant and student dining hall. The agronomy workstation helps us to soil test, fertilize, plant, control weeds, and harvest our forages for consumption at our dairy and beef farms.

HOW DO APPRENTICES FIT INTO YOUR PROGRAM?

The students see, work and learn everything from farm to fork.

Over eighty students are involved in the agriculture work program. Students can move between agriculture work stations to enhance their knowledge and skills. The students are an essential component to all our operations. The agriculture academic program usually has more than one hundred forty students in our majors. The agriculture major emphasis areas are; Animal Science, Agribusiness, Conservation and Wildlife Management, Agriculture Education, Agronomy, Horticulture and Dairy Science.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO START THE PROGRAM?

The work study program at our college has been an integral part of the educational system at our institution since its inception in 1906. We need our students to work in order to operate our college, and they enjoy that experience and how it enhances their education. Financially, the student has the opportunity to graduate debt free.

Whenever you can apply the concepts taught in the classroom to actual agricultural operations the learning is enriched. We give our students "working knowledge." It is the best of both worlds. It offers "Education plus Experience." Most of our ag professors are work supervisors of our farms where our ag students work. Therefore lessons taught in class may be applied on the farm the very day they are discussed! We always try to incorporate as many of our farm activities as possible into our classrooms and vice versa. Students find this an awesome way to learn and grasp the principles more thoroughly. That is one of the rewards for professors and students alike.



INSIDER'S VIEW

TOP SUCCESSES

- Students know how to work and are sought after by employers that know about us.
- The maturation of the students as they learn and apply that knowledge to the ag operations. We have very nice students that really want to be at our college.
- Ranking as second best in the nation for colleges or universities with farms by Best College Reviews

TOP CHALLENGES

- Students lacking good farm experiences when entering the program.
- Finding good ag jobs post graduation in the Missouri or Arkansas Ozark region
- Trying to keep-up with all the technological maintenance and managerial changes going on in agriculture

WHAT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WOULD BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL?

Money, of course.

WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU KNEW BEFORE YOU STARTED?

This established and well-run program has been in existence for one hundred eight years. The public knows about our college and has great respect and support for what we do. We have a great and long-standing mission and vision.

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING...?

Money to modernize and improve some of the ag operations. An additional employee would be helpful too.

THE ORGANIC FARM

THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE — OLYMPIA, WA 98505

IN A NUTSHELL

Started over ten years ago

Apprenticeship commitment less than eight months

Fifteen or more graduates per year

Accredited academic institution with on-campus farm

Faculty and farm staff mentors

Enrolled students participate; separate application required

AGRICULTURAL FOCUS

Vegetable farm; orchard; mixed animal and vegetable farm; on-campus ranch or farm

SPECIALIZED TRAINING TOPICS/PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS

Business planning; ranch or farm operations management; financial management; vehicle and equipment maintenance, repair, and operation; land health and management issues (water, soil, air, wild fire); direct sales and marketing; farmers markets; building, carpentry, and using tools; integrated pest management; small orchard; mushroom cultivation

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS PROVIDED BY MENTORS

Curriculum (formal or informal); formal evaluations; for-credit college or university classes; business planning and financial management

COMPENSATION

Educational opportunities off the mentor ranch or farm (e.g., workshops, visits to other operations); college-funded wage

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Mentor ranch or farm; tuition paid by apprentices; donations from foundations or individuals; product sales

Evergreen is a progressive, public liberal arts and sciences college located in Olympia, Washington, in the beautiful Pacific Northwest. Evergreen emphasizes collaborative, interdisciplinary learning across significant differences. Our academic community engages students in defining and thinking critically about their learning. Evergreen supports and benefits from local and global commitment to social justice, diversity, environmental stewardship, and service in the public interest.

At the college's organic farm, students can explore sustainable agriculture, agroecology, and environmental sciences. In addition to three acres of certified organic fields, the farm's facilities include a food-grade laboratory, the student-designed and built Organic Farmhouse, and the student-run Demeter's Permaculture Demonstration Site and Community Gardens.

The college's organic farm is at the center of agricultural learning on campus, helping students learn to grow food using ecologically informed farming methods while also learning management and business skills appropriate for small-scale production. Students focus on Northwest crop and livestock species—including orchard fruit, potatoes, sheep, and poultry—and thus study chemistry, microbiology, and anatomy in a highly practical and experiential context.



APPRENTICES

TYPICAL AGE: Eighteen to twenty-two years old

BACKGROUND: Did not grow up on ranch or farm and did not have regular exposure to ranches or farms

PRIOR EXPERIENCE: Less than one year

MOST COMMON OUTCOME: Work on a ranch or farm; run their own farm; continue with education in other ways; stay in the business in the areas of food, land health, etc.



Connected to main campus by two trails through the campus forest, the organic farm is a working, small-scale organic farm that serves as a learning laboratory focused on small-scale organic agriculture. Located in the northwest portion of the Evergreen campus, the five-acre developed area includes the farmhouse (built by students in the 1970s), three acres of fields and orchards, greenhouses, a closed-tunnel composting facility, and miscellaneous outbuildings. The farm currently produces fruits and vegetables and raises wool sheep, laying hens, and broiler chickens. Produce is sold through a farm stand on campus, open weekly throughout the growing season.

The Organic Farm is Certified Organic by the Washington State Department of Agriculture and has been certified Salmon Safe since 2008. We work diligently to protect riparian areas, maintain appropriate water use, reduce erosion, and practice integrated pest management, animal management and biodiversity conservation in accordance with both Salmon Safe and Organic certifications.

HOW DO APPRENTICES FIT INTO YOUR PROGRAM?

Supported by staff, student farm aides and faculty, students enrolled in the Practice of Organic Farming program (POF) work as interns on the Organic Farm throughout the entire growing season. The growing methods practiced and taught at the farm provide a working example of organic agriculture, with a focus on soil health. Students learn how to plan, plant, maintain, and harvest a diverse array of crops, while also developing a wide variety of agricultural skills.

The internship is supported by academic work in the agricultural sciences. Yearly research projects test new crop and crop varieties, as well as ideas to improve the farm. Students can learn the art and science of making compost at the compost facility. Student-designed composting tunnels rapidly turn farm waste into compost for fertilizing the fields and orchards.

From building the Organic Farmhouse to being a significant part of the design process for the Sustainable Agriculture Lab, student projects have contributed significantly to the farm. Other student projects include the composting facility, installation of the composting toilet, expansion of the orchard, creation of a master plan for the organic farm, design and installation of an aquaponics system, and a compilation of farm history.



ORGANIC FARMER TRAINING PROGRAM

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY, STUDENT ORGANIC FARM – HOLT, MI 48842

IN A NUTSHELL

Started 1999

Apprenticeship commitment eight to twelve months

Fifteen or more graduates per year

Land Grant University with on-campus ranch or farm

Faculty and farm staff mentors

Enrolled students participate; separate application required

AGRICULTURAL FOCUS

Vegetable farm; mixed animal and vegetable farm; on-campus ranch or farm

SPECIALIZED TRAINING TOPICS/PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS

Business planning; ranch or farm operations management; financial management; vehicle and equipment maintenance, repair, and operation; land health and management issues (water, soil, air, wild fire); direct sales and marketing; farmers markets; building, carpentry, and using tools; organic standards and regulations; transplant production; season extension, livestock management, hoophouse production

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS PROVIDED BY MENTORS

Curriculum (formal or informal); formal evaluations; skills assessment checklist; non-academic, technical workshops; business planning and financial management; hands-on training alongside a mentor

COMPENSATION

Weekly day(s) off; no direct compensation, students are enrolled in a nine-month certificate program

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Program tuition paid by apprentices; product sales

The Student Organic Farm was started in 1999 by a group of MSU students who were interested in learning to grow food sustainably. At the time there were no classes in organic agriculture at MSU and students were seeking to acquire knowledge in a hands-on, experiential format. They wanted to apply what they were learning in their classes in the context of a working farm. Inspired by other student farms around the country, these students felt that MSU—the nation's first land grant college—should have a student farm of its own. At the same time, Horticulture Professor John Biernbaum began researching possibilities for four-season farming in Michigan. The connection of these two projects was ideal, as year-round farming provided opportunities for students to engage in farming during the main part of the academic year (September to May).

As the farm developed, it became clear that many students wanted the farm to offer a more formal approach to learning about organic farming. The Organic Farmer Training Program was a product of the evolution of the ideas and vision held by the original group of students and faculty and all those who have come since then. Additionally, MSU now also offers a Bachelors of Science in Sustainable and Organic Horticulture as well as a Sustainable Food and Agriculture Minor.



APPRENTICES

TYPICAL AGE: Twenty-three to twenty-nine years old

BACKGROUND: Grew up on family ranch or farm

PRIOR EXPERIENCE: Less than one year

MOST COMMON OUTCOME: Seek work in ranch or farm management



The MSU Student Organic Farm (SOF) is a fifteen-acre, certified organic, year-round teaching and production farm. Our markets include a forty-eight week CSA, a seven-month on-campus farm stand, and sales to MSU dining halls and other wholesale outlets. We use passive solar greenhouses (hoop-houses) to produce and distribute fresh produce all year long. Winter production includes salad mix, spinach, kale, collards, chard, pac choi, napa cabbage, komatsuna, cilantro, parsley, radishes, carrots, beets, and more. These fresh items are combined with storage crops such as squash, garlic, potatoes, onions, cabbage, and rutabaga to create bountiful shares throughout the winter. The farm also has pigs, cattle, laying hens, and honey bees.

HOW DO APPRENTICES FIT INTO YOUR PROGRAM?

Students engage in the management of the farm, including its twenty-three thousand square feet of passive solar greenhouse space and the production for its primary markets. Students develop competencies in farm skills through skills trainings and by engaging in the day-to-day work and operation of the farm. Hands-on-training is combined with workshops and intensives, readings, and assignments that build knowledge and understanding of organic farming principles and practices.

The program is designed to give participants a strong background in production skills as well as the knowledge, management, and business-planning skills necessary to operate a diversified small farm. The program also provides students with the skills and perspective required to scale up their operation over time. Program components include learning rotations in CSA, farm stand, and propagation, as well as management and oversight of a production field and hoophouse, and individual advising sessions with instructors. Participants use and learn maintenance of equipment, including tractors (driven and walking), implements and other small mechanical hand tools. Students also manage the farm's livestock and learn how to incorporate animals into an annual cropping system.

This training program prepares graduates for careers in organic farming, urban agriculture and community gardening, and other careers related to sustainable agriculture. Program participants who satisfactorily complete the program earn a Certificate from MSU Student Organic Farm, MSU Department of Horticulture and the MSU Center for Regional Food Systems.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO START THIS PROGRAM?

This training program was created to prepare graduates for careers in organic farming, urban agriculture and community gardening, and other sustainable agriculture-related careers. It is extremely meaningful to all of the Student Organic Farm and Organic Farmer Training Program staff! Teaching others how to grow food and start their own sustainable agriculture business is a pleasure and an honor. Feeding people healthy, local, organic food and being a steward of our environment is profoundly important work.



INSIDER'S VIEW

TOP SUCCESSES

- Training new farmers in how to grow organic, diversified vegetables
- Seeing past students thrive as farm business owners or farm managers all over the country
- Providing a venue for farm education and personal growth while producing food for the university and the community

WHAT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WOULD BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL?

- Additional scholarship money for our students to increase access to the program for more individuals

UC DAVIS STUDENT FARM

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS – DAVIS, CA 95616

IN A NUTSHELL

Started over ten years ago

Apprenticeship commitment less than 8 months

ten to fourteen graduates per year

Land Grant University with on-campus ranch or farm

Faculty and farm staff mentors

Enrolled students participate; separate application required

AGRICULTURAL FOCUS

University on-campus ranch or farm

SPECIALIZED TRAINING TOPICS/PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS

Ranch or farm operations management; land health and management issues (water, soil, air, wild fire); direct sales and marketing; hands-on farming skills

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS PROVIDED BY MENTORS

Curriculum (formal or informal); skills assessment checklist; non-academic, technical workshops; hands-on training alongside a mentor

COMPENSATION

Weekly day(s) off; educational opportunities off the mentor ranch or farm (e.g., workshops, visits to other operations)

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Donations from foundations or individuals; product sales

The Agricultural Sustainability Institute at University of California, Davis brings together the expertise of more than seventy UC Davis faculty, staff, postdoctoral fellows, graduate student researchers, and undergraduate student assistants to address big and emerging issues related to food and farming sustainability. Our mission is to ensure access to healthy food and to promote the vitality of agriculture today and for future generations. We do this through integrative research, education, communication, and early action on big, emerging issues.

One of the various programs housed within the Agricultural Sustainability Institute is the Student Farm, which was started in 1977 when a small group of students planted their first crops on a twenty-acre parcel on the west side of campus. Their goal was to explore and learn about alternative farming and gardening through shared physical work, experimentation, and problem solving.

Soon students initiated a number of projects that allowed them to gain practical skills, knowledge, and experience in a number of areas related to organic farming, ecological horticulture, and environmental education. These projects have grown over time, and each quarter scores of students participate as volunteers and interns and through numerous formal courses which use the farm for field-based learning.



APPRENTICES

TYPICAL AGE: Eighteen to twenty-two years old

BACKGROUND: Did not grow up on ranch or farm and did not have regular exposure to ranches or farms

PRIOR EXPERIENCE: Less than one year

MOST COMMON OUTCOME: Seek to develop own business



The Student Farm is a community where students work to create, maintain and explore sustainable food systems. At the farm, students grow in many ways, learning from seasoned field-based educators, from their peers, and from themselves. They come to understand sustainability through the soils, crops, climate, and community in which they work. In the process, they gain the systems-based thinking and doing skills needed to make a positive difference in today's world.

The Student Farm employs undergraduate and graduate students. Most student employees already have significant experience at the Student Farm through volunteer, internship or course participation. Employment in the Market Garden and Ecological Garden is open to both undergraduates and graduate students. There are also graduate student positions associated with the Student Farm's courses in sustainable agriculture, organic crop production, and garden based learning with children. In addition to the above, the Student Farm employs a student community/events organizer and occasionally has other grant funded student positions.

HOW DO APPRENTICES FIT INTO YOUR PROGRAM?

We offer several avenues for students to learn and explore at the Student Farm. Most students participate through internships, volunteer positions, and formal courses. These opportunities are available in various spaces and programs at the farm, including the Market Garden, Ecological Garden, equipment shop, and vineyard.

The Market Garden consists of a seven acre section of the farm where students learn about small-scale, organic vegetable production and marketing by doing it. Produce from the Market Garden is sold on campus via our CSA (community supported agriculture) program and through Dining Services and the UC Davis Coffee House. The Ecological Garden consists of a half-acre garden of flowers, vegetables, culinary and medicinal herbs, fruit trees, vines, and insectary plants used for teaching ecological horticulture, seed saving, and related topics. In the shop, interns gain experience in general farm operations, such as maintaining and operating farm equipment and irrigation systems. The farm's one-acre vineyard of table grape varieties allows students to gain experience in vineyard management, including pruning, training, pest management, and irrigation. A limited number of vineyard internships are offered in Winter and Spring quarters; preference is given to students with viticultural knowledge and skills. We also have composting operations, making it possible for students to gain experience with farm-scale and garden-scale composting.

Student interns earn academic credit (one or more units) for their work at the farm. They typically receive more mentoring than volunteers; they need to sign up prior to the start of the quarter, complete thirty hours of work for each unit they receive, and complete reflective written work weekly.

Volunteers can also have great learning experiences. They do not have specific requirements beyond their participation in farm activities and do not receive academic credit. The Student Farm is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive learning environment. Students with a wide variety of backgrounds and interests are welcome and encouraged to become involved.



INSIDER'S VIEW

TOP SUCCESSES

- Increased participation by higher level students
- Increased production on the farm
- Building an expanding community of support

TOP CHALLENGES

- Housing
- Stipends
- Staff support

WHAT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WOULD BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL?

- Endowments for additional staff

FARM CREW

WARREN WILSON COLLEGE - SWANNANOVA, NC 28778

IN A NUTSHELL

Started over ten years ago

Apprenticeship commitment one year

ten to fourteen Graduates per year

Accredited academic institution with on-campus farm

The role of mentor is filled by a number of people including faculty and farm faculty/staff.

All enrolled students are eligible to participate but must fill out an application

AGRICULTURAL FOCUS

Diversified ranch or farm

SPECIALIZED TRAINING TOPICS/PROGRAM FOCUS AREAS

Ranch or farm operations management; vehicle and equipment maintenance, repair, and operation; land health and management issues (water, soil, air, wild fire); direct sales and marketing; building, carpentry, and using tools

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS PROVIDED BY MENTORS:

Formal evaluations; for-credit college or university classes; hands-on training alongside a mentor

COMPENSATION

Stipend; weekly day(s) off; \$500-899 per month

SOURCES OF FUNDING

Program tuition paid by apprentices

Warren Wilson is the country's only liberal arts college with a national student body and integrated work and service programs. Through a blend of strong academics, work, and service, called the Triad, our students graduate not only with a rigorous liberal arts education, but also with skills such as problem-solving and team leadership that equip them for life.

Founded in 1894 as the Asheville Farm School by Presbyterian missionaries to provide a basic education for boys from the Appalachian region, the school became a junior college in 1942 and a four-year liberal arts college in 1967.

The Warren Wilson College Farm, established in 1894 when the Asheville Farm School was founded, has won numerous awards over the years in addition to producing a lot of delicious farm-to-table food. Now it has received another major accolade: number one college farm in the nation.

In a feature titled "The 20 Best College Farms," Best College Reviews ranks the WWC Farm at the top of the list. Ranking criteria include farm size; integration with the campus; sustainability; courses taught at the farm; students using the farm; and integration with the larger community.



APPRENTICES

TYPICAL AGE: Eighteen to twenty-two years old

BACKGROUND: Did not grow up on ranch or farm and did not have regular exposure to ranches or farms

PRIOR EXPERIENCE: One to five years

MOST COMMON OUTCOME: Varies greatly



The Warren Wilson College Farm is a working farm. With two hundred seventy-five acres divided among twenty-five fields in the Swannanoa Valley, we are a diversified, mixed crop and livestock farm, with beef cattle and hogs making up the majority of the livestock. We strive to practice sustainable agriculture; farming in a style that is environmentally sound and economically viable, provides valuable and satisfying work to us, and is based on the humane and careful husbandry of our cattle and swine. No pesticides or herbicides are used in the farm's crop production.

We are a grass-based farm and market that turns grass into beef and, to some degree, pork. We grow grains (corn, wheat, barley, and oats) in our rich bottomland soils, in rotation with an alfalfa-based hay mix. By plowing the alfalfa down for the succeeding corn crop, we both achieve excellent grain yields and avoid using any pesticides or herbicides in crop production.

Our cattle graze from March until November on permanent pastures—fields too steep to be under the plow. In the past nine years, we have prevented cattle from using streams as their water source by partnering with local conservation agencies to develop independent watering and fencing systems.

The swineherd numbers twenty-five sows, each farrowing twice yearly, making for lots of pigs—and vet work for students. This fall, forty-five to fifty beautiful hogs will be available, all born and raised outdoors on our own grains with no drugs or hormones.

In 1998 we were named a River Friendly Farmer by the Buncombe County Soil and Water Conservation District and have incorporated other wildlife, soil, and water-quality measures such as using grassed waterways and expanded buffer strips. In 2002 Warren Wilson College was awarded the nonprofit Steward of the Year by the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association, recognizing the work of both the College Farm and the College Garden programs.

HOW DO STUDENTS FIT INTO WARREN WILSON'S FARM CREW?

The Farm is managed by two staff managers with the help of a large student work crew—one of more than one hundred student work crews on campus. Although educational in nature, the WWC Farm is managed as a working farm with a commitment to sustainable farming practices. In addition to providing some of the beef served in the Warren Wilson dining hall, WWC's mixed-crop and livestock farm sells beef, pork, chicken, and lamb to the surrounding community twice each year.

Students work fifteen hours per week during the school year on the college farm as part of the college's work program. The farm program is split into General Crew, Ruminant Crew, and Poultry and Swine Crew. Students also have the option to be part of a crew of six during the summer months, a more involved internship/apprenticeship.



INSIDER'S VIEW

TOP SUCCESSES

- Very well rounded students
- High amount of responsibility for those who seek it

TOP CHALLENGES

- Financial need
- Time management of students

WHAT ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WOULD BE ESPECIALLY HELPFUL?

- Endowments for additional staff

BUILDING AN APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

In the following chapter, we provide a step-by-step guide for designing and implementing an apprenticeship. If you are a rancher, farmer, or represent an organization seeking to create an agricultural apprenticeship program, this chapter is for you. If you represent an academic institution seeking to start an educational program on a campus farm, many elements of this chapter will likely prove useful. However, you may want to contact academic institutions with programs similar to the one you're hoping to design for additional insight.

The model detailed in this chapter comes largely from our nine years of experience with Quivira's New Agrarian Program, with additions based on good ideas and tools from programs who responded to our survey. Ours is but one approach of so many that exist throughout the US and beyond. We present a set of lessons learned through our own program, and an example of a model, ever evolving, that has worked for us.

As you set out to design your own program, we encourage you to take the time to seek out other programs that resonate with you, including those featured in the second chapter of this book—no need to start with a blank slate.

ARE YOU A GOOD FIT?

- ☐ Start with Why
- ☐ Skills and Experience
- ☐ Nuts and Bolts

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

- ☐ Describing Your Operation
- ☐ Apprenticeship Structure and Curriculum
- ☐ Hosting and Employment
- ☐ Getting the Word Out

FINDING THE RIGHT PERSON

- ☐ The Application and Selection Process
- ☐ Nuts and Bolts
- ☐ Corresponding with Applicants
- ☐ Interviewing Candidates

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

- ☐ Before Your Apprentice Arrives
- ☐ When Your Apprentice Arrives
- ☐ Over the Course of the Season
- ☐ Completing the Cycle

READY, SET, GO!

ARE YOU A GOOD FIT?

Mentoring the next generation of ranchers and farmers can be extremely rewarding. As an expert in your field with many years of experience running a business, you are in an excellent position to introduce a novice to the many and nuanced aspects of running an agricultural business, from building fence or caring for a sick animal to fixing the farm truck, developing a marketing strategy, designing a label for your products, or making important financial decisions. No one is better qualified to grow a new agrarian than an experienced mentor with many years on the land, yet not every rancher or farmer is cut out for the job. Being a mentor is not the same as being an employer—although the employer hat is one of many you will wear as a mentor.

As a mentor for a new agrarian, you not only teach skills or series of tasks and supervise an employee's work and performance; you work with a whole human, every day, and take her into every aspect of your life in agriculture. You are your apprentice's professional trainer, her teacher, employer, and direct supervisor, and at times her personal life coach. Your apprentice will work alongside you through long and short days, winter storms and heat waves. You'll get to experience her full spectrum of expression and varying moods, and she'll get to know you just as well. You'll share meals during the workday and more than likely you'll sit down to dinner together every now and then, as well.

This is clearly not a nine-to-five-Monday-through-Friday-job kind of relationship. Your apprentice will become a core part of your ranch or farm team and may start to feel a little like family.

If you're ready to consider these implications of becoming a mentor, then also consider that apprentices will have high expectations of you. They will have tons of questions. They will challenge you when you least want to be challenged. They will also bring a fresh perspective and new ideas into your business. They may have special skills or knowledge that will enrich your marketing plan or improve your website design. They will bring youthful energy, spunk, and enthusiasm. They might make you cry, but they'll also make you laugh.

There is no specific set of rules for how to be a good mentor. The important thing to remember is that by committing to an apprentice, you are committing to a whole human—both the positive and the challenging. This is a brave undertaking.

As a mentor, you not only have to consider the needs of your business and what tasks need to be accomplished on a daily basis in order to meet your bottom line, you also have to consider your apprentice's educational goals and how these can be incorporated into your operation. The education you provide is part of the compensation that an apprentice receives in exchange for her work. Again, your apprentice is not your employee. Your commitment to her learning is the greatest gift you can provide and an essential part of the apprenticeship experience.

This brings us back to the original question. You may be an excellent land manager and an astute business person. But will you be a good mentor?

We organized the following questions into three separate sections, starting with the big picture and working toward the nitty gritty. Taking the time to work through these questions will help you understand the extent to which you are ready to take on the challenges of mentorship.

START WITH WHY

- ☐ Why do you want to start an apprenticeship on your ranch or farm?
- ☐ Why do you want to personally mentor a beginning rancher or farmer?
- ☐ Why might you prefer not to create an apprenticeship?
- ☐ What are the long term goals for your ranch or farm? (Think "mission statement.")
- ☐ How might an apprenticeship assist you in reaching those goals?
- ☐ Why is now the appropriate time? Why here?

SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

- ☐ What makes you a good rancher or farmer?
- ☐ Who were the mentors who helped you throughout your life? How and why were they mentors to you?
- ☐ What prior experience do you have as an educator or mentor?
- ☐ What skills and personal qualities will best serve you as a mentor? What aspects of your personality will be challenged by the role of mentor?
- ☐ Mentor/apprentice relationships provide mutual learning opportunities. What are you excited to learn from an apprentice?
- ☐ Realistically, how much time, energy, and patience do you have to share with an apprentice? Are you prepared to be a trainer, employer, counselor, teacher, mediator, and life coach as circumstances require?
- ☐ What experiences and expertise will provide a valuable education to an apprentice?
- ☐ How will you check in with the apprentice to assess her learning?
- ☐ How flexible are you? How easily will you adapt your daily routine, work schedule, and operation to include an apprentice?
- ☐ How comfortable will you be accepting critiques, criticism, or suggestions from an apprentice?

NUTS AND BOLTS

- ☐ Do you have adequate apprentice housing on your property? Is it separate from your own? Does it provide private space for each apprentice, adequate heating and cooling, and easy access to a bathroom, clean running water, and cooking and bathing facilities?
- ☐ Has your operation supported employees in the past? Are the appropriate systems in place (payroll, workers' comp, etc.)?
- ☐ While an apprentice's primary compensation is the education and professional development you will provide in order to help her pursue the next steps in her career, she will also need to support herself financially while she is learning. Are you prepared to offer fair compensation in exchange for her labor?
- ☐ What additional compensation are you able to offer beyond education, housing, and a monthly stipend? Examples might include: regular meals; food from the ranch or farm; additional educational opportunities, such as workshops and conferences; tools and equipment, etc.
- ☐ Are you prepared to develop a structure around your apprenticeship? Examples might include: a seasonal operation calendar and work schedule accessible to all; regularly scheduled planning meetings; monthly or bimonthly check-ins and evaluations; clearly stated expectations; a skills checklist or other tool to track progress; a reading list and written curriculum; etc.

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

Now that you've taken the leap and decided to take on an apprentice, you have some basic groundwork to do. Resist the temptation to jump right into the search and selection process. Taking the time to get organized and make sure you and your ranch or farm are ready for a trainee will help set you up for success from the start.

The following outline provides a suggested list of topics to tackle to help get you ready for the arrival of your first apprentice. Below the outline you will find more in-depth descriptions and suggestions for each step.

DESCRIBING YOUR OPERATION

- ☐ Description and history
- ☐ Philosophy, mission, values
- ☐ Areas of expertise
- ☐ Mentor introduction
- ☐ Typical weekly work schedule
- ☐ Detailed monthly work calendar

APPRENTICESHIP STRUCTURE AND CURRICULUM

- ☐ What's everyone else doing?
- ☐ Apprentice role
- ☐ Apprentice work schedule
- ☐ Curriculum or course of study
- ☐ Feedback and assessment

HOSTING AND EMPLOYMENT

- ☐ Basic requirements for apprentices
- ☐ Compensation
- ☐ Housing
- ☐ Food
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Internet and phone access
- ☐ Visitors
- ☐ Miscellaneous: pets, smoking, etc.
- ☐ Workers' compensation
- ☐ Payroll
- ☐ Liability insurance
- ☐ Day(s) off and vacation
- ☐ Sick leave
- ☐ Photo release
- ☐ Conflict resolution
- ☐ Employment agreement or contract
- ☐ Termination terms and policy

GETTING THE WORD OUT

- ☐ Audience
- ☐ Budget
- ☐ Where to advertise

DESCRIBING YOUR OPERATION

The writing suggested in this section will serve several purposes. First, clarifying details regarding your operation and approach to agriculture will prepare you to answer questions with confidence and consistency during the application process and after your selected apprentice arrives. You don't need to have all the answers ready, but it's helpful to have reviewed the basics of what you do, how you got started, why you do it, etc.

Second, having this information at the ready will save you tons of time during the application and selection process. This is especially true for items outlined in the section, Hosting and Employment. The more potential applicants know about what they're signing up for, the higher quality applications you'll receive. You'll head off applications from candidates who don't meet your basic requirements.

Lastly, completing the exercises in this section will help create the building blocks for getting the word out about your program (discussed below). If you already have a website, take the time now to review it and make any necessary changes or updates to reflect your apprenticeship.

DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY

Start by writing a page or so about your ranch or farm. Resist the temptation to go into your philosophy or values here; just stick with the basics. They will provide an easy context for you to then go into the less tangible stuff. Use the following questions and tips to help you write your description and history:

- ☐ What do you produce on your ranch or farm?
- ☐ Where are you located? Describe your region and ecosystem.
- ☐ What are your main areas of focus and agricultural expertise?
- ☐ How does your operation fit into local and regional communities?
- ☐ Who is your customer base?
- ☐ When did you start your ranch or farm?
- ☐ Why did you start your operation?
- ☐ How did you get started?
- ☐ How has your ranch or farm evolved over time?

PHILOSOPHY, MISSION, VALUES

Consider the importance of working with a like-minded apprentice who shares or at least appreciates your philosophy and values. Even if you welcome a wide range of differing ideas and opinions, making your priorities clear from the start may help avoid or lessen potential conflicts later, especially if your apprentice has a different perspective or set of values. If applicants have this information before applying, then their application tells you they are willing to work within the environment, expectations, and priorities you have defined.

- ☐ Do you have a land ethic, and if so, how do you express it?
- ☐ How do you define land health? How do ecological considerations fit into your operational structure and decision making?
- ☐ How would you describe your land management style? Your animal management style?
- ☐ What are the most important considerations in your everyday work on your ranch or farm?
- ☐ How do you define quality of life for yourself, your staff, the animals in your care, the wildlife on your land?
- ☐ What are your top three to five values?
- ☐ Why do you care so much about what you do and how you do it?

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

You will likely have already addressed your areas of expertise in the description and history section. That's okay. Use this section as an opportunity to boil it down to a couple of sentences. Applicants will use this information to judge whether an apprenticeship with you is a good fit with their career goals.

- ☐ What does your ranch or farm specialize in?
- ☐ What areas of expertise will an apprentice be exposed to during his time working with you?



Gordon Tooley and Margaret Yancy of Tooley's Trees.



2016 apprentice Garrett Sorber at his in-person interview at Tooley's Trees.

MENTOR INTRODUCTION

This is your opportunity to tell future applicants who you are, what you believe, why you do what you do. Write a little about your background and family, where you came from, what got you into agriculture. Talk about why this work is important to you. The quality of the relationship between mentor and apprentice can make or break the experience. Putting some careful thought into how openly you present yourself can make a huge difference in who ends up applying and how good a match he is for you and your operation.



A few of the many apple varieties propagated at Tooley's Trees.

TYPICAL WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Your monthly calendar provides a comprehensive overview of all the activities you will engage in over the course of the year. In contrast, the weekly schedule is not meant to be a highly detailed document. It cannot easily reflect the change of seasons or evolution of activities, but it does provide a general sense of the rhythm and weekly patterns on your operation relevant to your apprentice. The following example is from James Ranch Artisan Cheese, one of NAP's partner operations offering a cheesemaking apprenticeship:

Sunday	Milk cows and make cheese all day
Monday	General ranch/cheese-room maintenance work, or possibly a day off
Tuesday	Milk cows and make cheese all day
Wednesday	Same as Monday
Thursday	Same as Tuesday
Friday	Milk cows, bottle herd-share milk, time for projects (June-September: Farmers Market 7am - 7:30 pm)
Saturday	Farmers Market in the morning, with some rest-time; livestock care in the afternoon.

This, again, is shared with applicants if they inquire and possibly with your future apprentice during the interview process or when he arrives at your operation.

On some ranches and farms there may be no set weekly pattern. For example, if you run a cow-calf operation, you may not have the same level of structure and predictability in your schedule as you would if you ran a dairy. If that's the case, holding a weekly team planning meeting becomes even more important.

DETAILED MONTHLY CALENDAR

This is where you get into the nitty gritty details of your day-by-day existence. This document is typically shared with applicants if they ask to see it, or with your apprentice when he arrives at your operation. Create a month-by-month calendar of activities for the entire year, including important dates, seasonal priorities, and scheduled and anticipated work activities. Use a format that works for you; it can be a simple outline, with the month as each consecutive heading, or it can be a classic grid calendar. If you go with the grid, consider adding a column to the left or right where you can put general activities that may not be easily assigned to a specific date.

For example, if you run a fruit tree orchard, activities included in the early spring months may include grafting, greenhouse work, pruning, planting, getting the vegetable garden going, setting up the irrigation. Activities included in late spring and early summer months might be irrigation maintenance, hand weeding and mulching, and insect and disease monitoring. Summer and fall activities might include more pruning, harvesting, and propagation.

The more details your calendar contains, the more useful it will be for your apprenticeship. Consider creating a version that is easily accessible to your apprentice throughout the season. (Some mentors use an online Google Calendar for this purpose.) This will help applicants and your apprentice understand the big-picture flow on your operation. It will also help your apprentice feel more grounded by giving him an idea of what comes next, even if he doesn't know all the details.

More than just a source of useful information, your monthly calendar will also help you structure your apprenticeship curriculum. It will serve as a visual reminder of what comes next as you plan your weekly team meetings or your next lesson.



Cheese room at James Ranch Artisan Cheese.

APPRENTICESHIP STRUCTURE AND CURRICULUM

In this section we guide you through a series of big-picture exercises meant to help you define your apprenticeship, including how you expect your apprentices to fit into your operation, what tasks and responsibilities might fall on their shoulders, how you will relate to them as a mentor. As with the previous section, the thinking and writing exercises suggested below will help create a basic guide for you to refer back to throughout your apprenticeship.

WHAT'S EVERYONE ELSE DOING?

This may be some of the best news yet: you don't need to reinvent the wheel! Many excellent agricultural apprenticeship programs already exist, and the people who run those programs are often eager to share their experience and compare notes. That's what motivated us to create this book. We all love swapping stories about our work. So before you pull out a blank piece of paper and begin puzzling through how to design an apprenticeship from scratch, check out "Section Two: Case Studies" (pages 26-85), where we provide names and contact information for myriad apprenticeship programs. Don't hesitate to send out an email or pick up the phone. Everyone who participated in this research project is eager to connect with others doing similar work—they are your best resources. Our hope is that this book will lead to productive conversations and the sharing of ideas and resources between programs.

APPRENTICE ROLE

While the tasks you assign an apprentice may be shaped by his existing skill set and his particular career goals, it's a good idea to outline what your apprentice's work will be in general. If you operate a dairy, the apprenticeship may focus on grazing management and herd health, or it may focus on parlor management and cheesemaking. Take some time to reflect on what the apprentice's work is most likely to be. You can adjust the scope of his role according to his skills and goals, but having a general job description will help to set educational and work expectations. Many apprenticeships are entry level, and learning the nuances of a complicated operation from one season of work isn't possible.

APPRENTICE WORK SCHEDULE

Most of the time, your apprentice's daily work flow will mirror your own. Agriculture is not a nine-to-five job, and you would be doing your apprentice a disservice if you didn't allow him to feel the reality of this career path. He needs this experience to be as authentic as possible in order to have the best chances of success with his own future ranch or farm. If you have a late-night calving emergency, take him along. Schedule him into the rotation for early-morning calving checks. If the only time you're able to address an important business planning decision is after dinner, invite him to join you for dinner and work through the issue with you afterward. He will thank you ten years later when grappling with the same late-night challenges.

This said, keep in mind that your operation is not his operation, and don't expect him to be as deeply invested as you are. Involve him in as many aspects of your work as you can while also respecting a few boundaries. Pick and choose those late-night or early-morning issues. Seek a balance of truly authentic experience with reasonable expectations regarding his ability to give 300% to an operation that isn't his own.

CURRICULUM OR COURSE OF STUDY

Many who want to mentor have not taught in a formal education setting and may feel uncomfortable calling themselves teachers. If that word is a little intimidating, the word curriculum is worse, conjuring memories of dull classrooms and duller lessons with little or no relevance to life. That's the last thing anyone wants to offer in an apprenticeship. So let's unpack that word right now.

A curriculum is a course of study required for students who wish to qualify for a particular profession or field of endeavor. Knowing this, we can wrap ourselves around the question: What are the skills a person needs in order to run a ranch or farm like yours? Make a list of those skills, and you are on your way to having a curriculum!

New Agrarian Program mentors create a skills list including all the skills that are essential for the running of their operations. These skill sheets include obvious things like diagnosing and treating sick animals, driving and maintaining tractors, pruning, and milking. They also include less obvious but equally vital skills, such as time and stress management, data and record keeping for organic certification and managing finances.

Now, consider at what time of year you engage in the activities that require those skills. It will give a sense of which things you will need your apprentice to learn first and whether or not they are built into the daily work or require additional reading, conversation, or a structured lesson.

For example, on a ranch where the daily chores include moving a portable electric fence, you would want to spend time with your apprentice in the first week, showing him how electric fencing works, how to take it down and set it up, how much pasture to give the animals each day, and how



2013 NAP apprentice Drew Cole identifies plants for his capstone project.

to fix basic electrical shorts. That's a full week of lessons, built right into a day's work. You might also give your apprentice a few articles on intensive grazing, how to monitor forage utilization, and how to gauge whether overgrazing is occurring. You might then start conversations about those things while you and the apprentice are moving fence during the week. You've just created a lesson plan on electric fencing, intensive grazing, and rotation, and know how you will fit it into your schedule.

While it's time consuming to analyze your operation in this way, the result is a clear course of study, or curriculum, that you can turn to regularly for guidance. As you go through your skills list it will become clear to you which skills take more time to learn, and therefore more time and focus to teach. The skills list will also help you identify additional learning options for your apprentice. For example, you may not be great with soil science, so you'll know to look for someone in your area who is, or for a good book or video, as additional resources for your apprentice.

Creating a curriculum will make evident the expectations you have for your apprentice, help you assess his incoming skill level, and ensure that you schedule training time into your day early on in the apprenticeship. The more mindfully you plan lessons that will teach the skills you want your apprentice to have, the more helpful he can be and the happier you both will be.

FEEDBACK AND ASSESSMENT

When delivered in a timely, thoughtful, and skilled manner, feedback can be a highly effective tool for both professional development and trust-building. The ability to give and receive feedback well does not come naturally or easily for many people; it's a skill that takes time and effort to develop. Like many technical skills, giving and receiving feedback gets easier the more you do it. Depending on your apprentice's previous experience, he may need a little coaching and encouragement to engage in the feedback process.

Criticism, which is often taken to mean negative or punitive remarks, is actually the analysis of qualities and evaluation of comparative worth. Criticism, or feedback, can be either positive or negative. Well-timed, detailed praise can catapult your apprentice to a bolder commitment to your operation and his learning, as well as give him faith that he can push past current hurdles. Vague, non-specific complaints, especially if blurted out in frustration or impatience, risk shutting down his learning. Even an apprentice who presents himself as confident can be negatively impacted by critical feedback given at the wrong time or in the wrong way. When your feedback is offered in service to your apprentice in order to help him grow beyond his current skill level and understanding, it can always be positive—even when the comment itself is constructive correction.

Helpful feedback is characterized by a handful of elements, one of the most important being specificity. Whether you offer praise or suggestions for improvement, including specific examples is essential if you want your apprentice to fully grasp your feedback and use it to improve.

Not Helpful: "You did great this week. I saw some real growth in lots of areas this month. Keep it up."

Helpful: "I've seen you take on some new tasks this month as well as solidify your ability to troubleshoot electric fence. Last week you found that elusive short in the long fence, and fixed it by replacing

the offset and tightening the wire. And you inventoried fencing supplies and gave me a list of what we needed to order. I've also seen real improvement with your pasture planning and analysis. You checked the grazing patterns last week, saw where we'd grazed Pasture Eight too short, and made adjustments in the size and timing of the next paddock. Then you came to me and we revised the pasture plan to account for the resized paddocks. This is excellent work. Keep it up."

Not Helpful: "I'm really frustrated by the sloppy work you've done lately, not finishing chores, leaving tools lying around. You don't seem interested in what I'm trying to teach you and this needs to change."

Helpful: "You seem a little off lately and I'm not sure why. You were late three mornings this week, with no explanation. Yesterday, you didn't finish the fence job and I don't know why. Also, at Monday's team meeting you were looking at your phone quite a lot. I'm concerned about how this is affecting your work. Could you offer me some insight on what might be causing these things?"



2016 New Agrarian Program apprentice orientation in Santa Fe, NM.
Kristin Sigurdson, Garret Sorber, NAP Coordinator Sarah Wentzel-Fisher, Paul Neubauer.

Feedback can present itself as a list of mistakes, or as a recounting of what a person did well, and how he can improve. As the mentor, you set the tone for feedback, and the best way to help the apprentice arrive to check-ins eager to improve is to always acknowledge improvement and work well done, no matter how small, before giving constructive critique. If you feel your apprentice hasn't improved in noticeable ways, giving positive feedback might be challenging, but almost always, your apprentice is trying his best, and you can praise his effort. In these instances, think of feedback as planting a seed in order to grow what is needed. The potential is there, but it will need nourishment, space, and time to set roots and grow above ground, where you can see the improvement.

Helpful feedback can often be future-oriented. For example, brainstorm next steps with the apprentice—suggest watching a video on animal handling and then talking with you about it the next morning as you drive to the range, or taking the initiative to sketch out pasture moves for the

next two weeks. Be specific with the action and give a timeline; ask your apprentice to let you know if he runs into trouble.

To be most effective, feedback should be offered regularly, and both you and your apprentice need to feel comfortable asking for it whenever it's wanted to clear up confusion or a misunderstanding, or as a word of encouragement after a rough day.



Feeding cows in winter at James Ranch.

In the New Agrarian Program, we've found that a mix of different feedback sessions serve the mentor and apprentice. First, informal conversations can provide useful insights for both of you. As you have time for conversation on the job, or in a daily debrief session, ask your apprentice what he found most interesting in the day's tasks. If you have some specific comments on a job well done or how he can improve the skills he used that day, a debrief session at day's end is a great time to share them. Likewise, make it easy for him to offer observations in return. Were your instructions clear and easy to understand? Did you spend enough time working next to him to make sure he took them in?

Second, more focused conversations offer an opportunity for you or the apprentice to cover specific issues or topics between skills assessments. For example, you might want to highlight major improvement in two skills over the past two weeks, and also bring up a time when the apprentice lost his temper with a co-worker. You don't have to wait for a skills assessment to discuss these points, but they may be better suited to a designated time and space, rather than addressing them informally.

The third type of feedback session is a skills assessment, done every two months. The mentor and apprentice pull out the skill sheet, and discuss what the apprentice has learned, and what next steps he can take to further his learning. You might discuss new skills, so you can both plan time to address those topics. If a specific skill, say welding, requires a special time set aside, consider scheduling it when you discuss it. This is also a great time to talk about where the apprentice has stalled in

developing a particular skill, and to brainstorm ways for him to kick-start learning or get additional instruction from you. While these sessions offer the perfect opportunity to discuss the apprentice's skill progression in detail, be sure to leave some time for him to let you know how you're doing as a mentor. Are you adjusting your teaching style to his learning needs? Do you take the time to answer his questions? Do you take his professional goals into account as you schedule daily tasks on the ranch?

Approach feedback and assessment with these questions lodged in your mind and heart: "What can this person learn from my comment? What can I learn from his?" If you approach feedback with the apprentice's growth and goals at the forefront, your conversations will be thoughtful, engaged, and productive for you both.

Equally as important as your ability to provide effective feedback is your willingness to ask for and to receive it from your apprentice.

Model receiving feedback from your apprentice, and he will be much more receptive to your observations. Ask your apprentice to tell you how you are doing on a regular basis. Have you been direct about expectations and what you really want from him? Do you make clear what your priorities are, or is he left guessing what you think is most important? Do you overschedule yourself and run short of time when you are trying to teach him a new level of forage assessment? Are you patient when he makes mistakes, and open to his ideas and suggestions? How can you improve your skills as a mentor, so you are both learning and growing to your full potential? Good feedback not only helps a person develop professionally, it can also act as a trust-building tool in a work relationship.

Without necessarily referring to the term, incorporate feedback into your daily, informal conversations and work culture. If you are comfortable pointing out mistakes, needs for improvement, or tasks well done on a regular basis and in an informal way—and asking for the same in return—formal sessions will start to feel easier and more natural over time.



Dan James moves piglets to pasture.

HOSTING AND EMPLOYMENT

Now that you've addressed many of the big-picture elements of your operation and budding apprenticeship, it's time to dive into the details. As mentioned above, the more information you offer up front about the apprenticeship, the more likely you are to attract a pool of well-qualified, informed applicants. At Quivira, we learned this the hard way. In the first few years of the New Agrarian Program, we didn't have basic apprenticeship information readily available to potential candidates before they submitted an application. As a result, over half of our applicants in any given year either did not meet our basic requirements or opted out halfway through the selection process when they learned the details and realized the program was not a good fit for them. This cost us valuable time and resources. When we were able to post all the details up front—including a basic ranch or farm schedule, an apprentice work schedule, compensation, housing, and other benefits—we received fewer applications, but a higher percentage of them were from qualified candidates. Moreover, applicants knew what they were potentially signing up for, which made our interview and selection process more targeted and efficient. We have also learned that spelling out these details helps reduce conflicts during the apprenticeship. For example, if an apprentice arrives knowing that he won't have Internet access, he can plan accordingly to check and send email from the public library on his day off. Or, if you've clearly spelled out your expectations, it will be easier to say when an apprentice has crossed a boundary.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

It is not safe to assume that everyone who applies to your apprenticeship will understand that most agriculture requires a person to work outside, all day, every day. Make a comprehensive list of the basic physical requirements of the position you're advertising. Does the apprentice need to know how to back up a trailer? To be able to lift fifty pounds? To ride a horse? To work in dusty and pollen-laden environments? This list doesn't need to be long, but you may be surprised by the aspects of your job that you take for granted but that candidates won't have considered.

COMPENSATION

This will be high on the list of questions from potential applicants. As with every other item in this section, the clearer and more upfront you are, the easier and more efficient your selection process will be. While the education and mentorship they receive from you are invaluable and core parts of the experience, apprentices must also be financially compensated for their labor. Take some time to think about what feels like a good compensation package, including wages, housing, food, and possibly other, optional benefits (health insurance, paid time off, profit sharing, and off-ranch educational opportunities are some examples). Take into account the various expenses that your apprentice may need to meet (cell phone, car insurance, gas and vehicle maintenance, health insurance, food, student loans). Educate yourself regarding agriculture labor and employment laws specific to your state (see page 108 for resources).

HOUSING

On-ranch or on-farm housing is commonly expected as part of the apprenticeship. Apprentices rarely make high enough wages to cover rent off the ranch, and living on site ensures a greater level of participation in every aspect of ranch or farm life. We highly recommend providing apprentice housing that is separate from your own. Giving everyone a little private space will help keep everyone happy on a daily basis. Also, make sure apprentice housing includes adequate heating and other utilities, easy access to cooking and bathing facilities, and some private space for each occupant. Clarify expectations with regards to cleanliness and general expectations of use and upkeep before your apprentice arrives.

FOOD

In addition to regular wages and housing, apprentices are often either given food or an additional monthly food stipend. Food produced on site offers mentors a cost-effective way to provide nutritious sustenance for their apprentices. You may choose to give them a specific weekly allowance of farm products or free access to what they need or a combination of the two, depending on your situation. For example, perhaps they can have as many eggs as they want each day, but only get a set amount of milk or cheese per week. Mentors often provide a shared meal each day during the work week. Sharing meals provides excellent opportunities for mentors and apprentices to talk about things other than work and get to know each other better. If your apprenticeship is on a ranch and the only homegrown product is beef (or other meat), shared meals may be your best option for providing a variety of food. You may also require apprentices to participate in meal planning, preparation, or clean up. Whatever the situation may be regarding food, be sure to disclose expectations as early as possible in the apprenticeship, and ideally before, in your apprenticeship description or during the interview process.

EDUCATION

What educational opportunities are you willing to offer your apprentice, outside your own instruction and mentorship? For example, will you send him to specific workshops or conferences that would enrich his hands-on learning? If so, will you cover all associated costs, including event registration, food, and travel expenses? Other ways to enrich his education might include an online course or webinar series relevant to the apprenticeship; books or other educational materials; and visits to other operations similar to your own.

INTERNET AND PHONE ACCESS

Be very clear about what the apprentice can expect with regards to Internet access and phones. Will he have free and unlimited Internet access in the apprentice housing? Should he supply his own computer? More than likely, he will already have a cell phone, but it doesn't hurt to state that he is expected to provide his own telephone and telephone service. Again, being specific early on can help avoid issues part way through the apprenticeship. For example, if you have poor cell phone reception in your area, and no Internet access, make this clear in your application. It may be a problem for some applicants, but others will embrace being off-line.

VISITORS

An apprentice will inevitably want to receive visitors during his stay on your ranch or farm. Are you willing to allow visitors? Do you want to know about visitors before they arrive? Will the apprentice housing accommodate visitors? How many visitors can an apprentice host at a given time? Can visitors be present during work hours? Can visitors participate in the work day, and do you have a liability waiver for them to sign? Will they need to contribute financially to meals, or do you expect them to pitch in with chores during their stay? How long is too long?

MISCELLANEOUS: PETS, SMOKING, ETC.

Will you allow apprentices to bring a dog, cat, or possibly a horse? If so, think through possible implications (who pays for the horse feed? Can the dog or cat roam freely?). How do you feel about smoking or chewing tobacco? What about alcohol consumption?

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Given that your apprentice is considered an employee by the IRS, it is prudent and conscientious to carry a workers' compensation insurance policy. This is especially true given the physical risk inherent in ranching and farming. In some states, carrying workers' compensation is a legal requirement. Talk with your ranch or farm insurance provider, as they often offer such policies and will be able to advise you on requirements specific to your state. If you are a rancher, your state cattlemen's association may also provide you with an affordable policy. Workers' compensation coverage is based on wages, housing, board, and any other compensation you offer, so be sure to calculate the dollar amounts of in-kind compensation prior to meeting with your insurance agent.

Your best insurance is always risk management on-site. Closely observe your apprentice in the first few weeks, assessing actual skill and familiarity with safe livestock handling, machinery use, and driving. Due diligence on your part means continually assessing your apprentice's capacity to perform any task safely, starting with extra oversight until you are confident that he can safely perform the tasks you assign to him.



George Whitten plays music with 2012 apprentice Martha Skelley.

PAYROLL

Depending on the size of your current operation, you may already have either in-house payroll, or an online payroll system. If this is your first foray into employee payroll, be sure to check into options well in advance of your apprentice's arrival. Online payroll services can be expensive if you only have one or two employees. If your business uses a bookkeeping program like QuickBooks, the program may include a payroll option or work with the Intuit online payroll system without additional charge.

Be sure to determine the apprentice's gross pay, prior to taxes, as well as your business's payroll tax liabilities based on that gross pay (social security, Medicare, and state unemployment insurance, if applicable), to be sure you adequately budget for your apprentice payroll. Consider the frequency with which you will do payroll (every week, every other week, etc.), and be sure to communicate this in your application materials or upon hiring your apprentice.

Notify apprentice applicants that you will report their income to the IRS, as they will be considered employees (not independent contractors) by the IRS. Once you have hired your apprentice, have him fill out a W-4 form and designate the number of exemptions he wishes to claim. Use the federal and state online payroll tax tables to determine federal and state withholding; notify your apprentice of the net pay he will receive; and be sure he understands the difference between gross pay and net pay (take-home pay). Consider paying via direct deposit into your apprentice's bank account (we have found most apprentices prefer to receive their paycheck this way). This will depend on your payroll system and your bank.

Speak with your business accountant or check online regarding your anticipated annual payroll tax liability to the IRS and the state, so that you can make monthly or quarterly deposits into those systems if necessary. If you are required to make such deposits and neglect to do so, the penalties and interest can be substantial. Familiarize yourself with your year-end reporting of federal and state payroll taxes to both the IRS (often filing Form 943 for agricultural workers) and your state. Filing deadlines are early in the following year.

LIABILITY INSURANCE

Many ranch or farm insurance policies include liability insurance to cover accidents that occur when a non-employee visits your operation. Most of these liability clauses will not cover a paid employee; therefore, your apprentice will not be covered for work-related accidents by this liability. Check with your insurance agent to see what coverage you have already and what they suggest you should have, given that you will have one or more apprentices on site who will be paid as they learn the occupation.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

One of the most valuable management skills you can teach your apprentice is how to approach and resolve conflict. Conflict is human, inevitable, and will pop up during the apprenticeship; it will also occur throughout the apprentice's professional life. Most conflicts emerge out of simple miscommunication or misunderstanding; don't assume ill-will. Your willingness to discuss conflict with patience, curiosity, and compassion will help you and your apprentice build the honest communication and trust that will serve you both through the duration of the apprenticeship. Model the listening behavior you wish for in your apprentice, and give

clear examples when you offer constructive criticism so that the apprentice knows exactly what he is doing (or not doing) that is causing difficulty for you. Consider how you hope to address conflicts during the apprenticeship and create a clear process that both you and your apprentice understand. This will help you both address conflict early and effectively, rather than have it smolder and grow larger.

DAY(S) OFF AND VACATION

Most apprentices value having the same day(s) off each week, and the benefit is felt by both the apprentice and the mentor. His day off is one of the few things that an apprentice has complete control over, and being able to plan ahead—to meet up with a friend, get an oil change, go out to dinner, visit the dentist, attend an event, etc.—makes all the difference. In addition to weekly time off (highly recommended), consider giving your apprentice some vacation time, either paid or unpaid. Clarity around how much time an apprentice can take off away from your operation will make inevitable negotiations easier later when an apprentice requests to leave for a family reunion, a friend's wedding, etc.

SICK LEAVE

It's not uncommon for someone to feel under the weather and need a day or two off to recover from a cold. But what happens if an apprentice contracts a more serious illness (or injury) and is unable to work for a prolonged amount of time? Consider developing a sick leave policy and including it in the apprentice work agreement. The policy should clarify details regarding compensation within the context of a prolonged absence from work. How long will they receive full compensation? Partial compensation? At what point will termination need to be discussed?

PHOTO RELEASE

You may have no plans to use photographs of your apprentice in presentations, on your website, or in printed promotional, marketing, or educational materials. Nonetheless, you may find that you do wish to use photos at a later date, in which case having a photo release on file will give you permission to do so. Simple photo release forms can be found online. We recommend that you have your apprentice sign one when he signs his employment contract or fills out other employment forms.

EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT OR CONTRACT

We've discovered that employment contracts are not standard practice when ranches and farms hire an apprentice. The reasons are diverse: the operation doesn't use contracts for other employees, the apprentice's duties are hard to quantify and therefore hard to state clearly in a contract, and sometimes the mentors just dislike legal forms. A contract can be as simple or as complex as you make it, and we highly recommend that you create contracts or employment agreements for your apprentices. This protects you as well as the apprentice from misunderstandings.

A basic employment contract stipulates compensation, start and end date, day(s) off, sick leave policy, early termination, etc. The online legal site Nolo (nolo.com) offers useful templates, tailored to your state, as do many office supply stores. If you've clearly thought through the details of your apprentice's employment (weekly schedule, compensation, housing, termination), you will be able to determine which details must be included in your contract. See pages 114-115 for an example.

If you regularly use an attorney for business purposes, he or she will be able to help you clarify your expectations and determine your legal obligations to your apprentice—and his to you—which is, after all, the purpose of a contract.

TERMINATION TERMS AND POLICY

While you will probably never need to terminate an apprenticeship prior to the established end date, should that become necessary, a clear policy will support you in making that tough decision and will protect you from any appearance or claim of unfair termination. Depending on your state, there may be Right to Work legislation, which determines the amount of time that is required when giving notice of termination (often two weeks is the minimum). Even if your state is not a Right to Work state, it is both courteous and good business to give at least two weeks' notice, unless there has been gross negligence, illegal activity, or other serious misbehavior on the part of the apprentice.

Some NAP mentors have implemented a one-month probationary period at the start of the apprenticeship, during which time the apprentice and mentor make sure that the pairing is a good fit. This builds in an option to release an apprentice early, if it is clear that he is not well suited for the position or didn't understand the requirements or schedule. If you have prepared well for your interviews, are concise about expectations and work environment, and are really clear on what you want and need in your apprentice, it is unlikely that you will ever need to terminate an apprentice. Nonetheless, a termination clause is good business practice, and many employment contract templates will include a sample that you can adapt.



Faith the cow at James Ranch.

GETTING THE WORD OUT

If you've made it to this point, you now have all the necessary pieces to build a website or brochure about your ranch or farm and your apprenticeship. If you've never done it before, creating these materials can be a daunting task. Don't hesitate to ask for help; work within your technological capacity; and try to keep it simple.

AUDIENCE

First, think about who you want to reach with information about your apprenticeship—applicants, funders, other programs, peers? Once you identify your audience, think about how they access information. For applicants, you'll probably be targeting individuals under the age of thirty who mostly access employment and education information online. These individuals also rely on career fairs, like the New Agrarian Program Career Connection, and college career counselors. You can also reach them through other ranches or farms and agricultural networks, such as granges, unions, farmers markets, and young farmers coalitions. Think about the best ways to communicate with these groups, and consider what materials you'll need to get them tuned-in to your apprenticeship. Unfortunately, one tool may not work for everyone you're trying to reach.

BUDGET

Next, think about your budget. Getting the word out doesn't have to be expensive, but it will take time. Social media is popular and mostly free, which makes it a good place to start with a basic page about your ranch or farm and your apprenticeship. Consider a Facebook or Instagram account, for example. Be sure to include all of the essentials: where you're located, your agricultural focus, contact information, a link to your website and application materials, and some clear pictures that exemplify your work—perhaps even a photo or two of you and your team. Potential candidates like to see who they're communicating with.

A number of free or inexpensive and relatively easy-to-use online tools also exist for creating a unique web page, including Wordpress.com, Squarespace, and Weebly. We recommend investing in a unique domain name (URL) that's short, easy to remember, and clearly references your ranch or farm. As part of its service, your website tool will allow you to register your domain name for a small annual fee. Think of a website as a digital brochure. Keep it simple and draw on the organization and design strategies of other websites you like. Don't reinvent the wheel.

WHERE TO ADVERTISE

Finally, if you have it in your budget, you might consider some printed materials, but don't overdo it. Often with print media less is more. A simple flier or brochure that lists the bare essentials—name and location, condensed operation and position descriptions, contact info, web address, and a few pictures—can be effective and useful in many different ways. It is a good way to make your apprenticeship known to career counselors and local networks and to hand out at career fairs. Also consider creating an easy-to-print PDF version of your flier to send in response to email inquiries.

In the end, your best resource for getting the word out may be other ranches and farms with apprenticeships. Use the resources in this guidebook to help you get the word out when you launch your application.



Deb and Dennis Moroney of the 47 Ranch, Cochise County, AZ.



Dennis riding through the ocotillo.



47 Ranch criollo herd.

FINDING THE RIGHT PERSON

Hopefully you have resisted the urge to dive into this step before having worked your way through the finer details of how your apprenticeship will work. Taking the time to think through and reassess the why's and how's of your business, your current infrastructure, and all the pesky details associated with bringing a novice employee—and an apprentice!—onto your ranch or farm will essentially build the foundation of your application process. You now have a much clearer idea of the systems you need to create in order to run a successful apprenticeship and the kind of candidate you're hoping to attract.

Finding the right person takes time and effort. If the perfect apprentice shows up at your doorstep without your having to search for her, consider yourself extremely fortunate. In our experience with the New Agrarian Program, we have found that time put into designing a thorough and selective application process is well worth the effort. Our mentors generally prefer taking several weeks during the winter months to interview candidates—including flying them out for in-person interviews—rather than rushing through the hiring process, only to discover halfway through calving season that the chosen apprentice is not a good fit. It's no fun to start over when the growing season is in full swing and work days stretch from dawn to dusk.

Creating a good application also takes time and effort. Do not underestimate the difficulty of this task and put it off to the last minute. In this section, we start by walking you through the logistics of the application and selection process and then bring your attention to the written application. The timeline you create by following the steps outlined below, together with the information you generated about your ranch or farm in the previous sections of this chapter, will stand you in good stead when the time comes to designing an application that truly meets your needs. The written application is the culmination of all the work you will have done to that point. With this in mind and as you dive into designing your selection process, leave yourself plenty of time to devote entirely to the application—two to three weeks, at least.

THE APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

- ☐ Overview
- ☐ Components and Calendar

NUTS AND BOLTS

- ☐ The Application
- ☐ Position Description and Ads
- ☐ Posting Your Application

CORRESPONDING WITH APPLICANTS

- ☐ Candidates You Don't Want to Interview
- ☐ Semi-Finalists to Schedule for Initial Interviews
- ☐ Semi-Finalists You Don't Want to Interview in Person
- ☐ Finalists to Schedule for In-Person Interviews

INTERVIEWING CANDIDATES

- ☐ Conference Call Interview Script and Questions
- ☐ In-Person Interview Schedule
- ☐ Apples to Apples

THE APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

OVERVIEW

Start by creating a step-by-step timeline for your application process, from writing the application itself through the actual apprenticeship start-date, assigning approximate times to complete each task. For example, designate one full day to write your application and four days for interviews (one for scheduling, two for the interviews, and one to evaluate and respond to applicants). For the New Agrarian Program, we've settled on a basic process that has yielded high-quality applicants every year; and yet we still reassess that process every year in our off-season, looking for ways to make it more efficient without sacrificing effectiveness.

The process we've settled on involves a written application and two interviews, one by phone or video conference and one in person. We recently created an online application that candidates fill out at our website. Mentors and Quivira staff then work as a team to select up to six semi-finalists from the original pool of applications, using a general rubric to help ensure we're measuring each application in the same way. We've found that six is a good number for the initial interviews, which are conducted by video conference over the course of two days. We usually have a plentiful number of qualified applicants to choose from, which makes this doable. Often at this stage, applicants will learn something about you or your operation that was not clear to them in the materials available with the application. This new information can alter, positively or negatively, an applicant's desire to continue in the process.

For the video conference, we generally use either Google Hangouts or Skype, both of which allow visual contact between candidates and mentors. This facilitates a more thorough interaction than a simple phone call. We've also found that getting a visual of the humans on the other end of the interview often helps applicants relax and find the words to say more about themselves. They see your smile, you see theirs, and you see each other considering the questions and answers. The more comfortable the applicant is, the more likely you are to see the real person, which helps make it possible to gauge whether or not she is the right person to work with you in the coming months.

Following the first round of interviews, the team selects up to three finalists for in-person interviews coupled with overnight work visits. As a program, we decided from the start that we valued time spent with finalists in person and were willing to reimburse a portion of the travel expenses incurred for this final step. In our experience, these visits are well worth the time and expense for both mentors and applicants.

This is the applicant's chance to assess the environment. Some mentor operations are remote; others are located near towns with attractions that make for a fun day off. Some operations are located in areas with particularly harsh climates. The applicant gets a sense of what the daily rhythm is at your operation, how you like to handle your day, and the kinds of interruption and unpredicted events that arise.

An in-person interview is often less about assessing an applicant's abilities and more about chemistry. You'll get a feel for the actual person and what it would be like to spend months with her, helping her learn. You'll be asking yourself whether you would enjoy her company over the long haul—and she would enjoy yours. This is a great opportunity to let her know who you are, and to help her reveal herself to you. The more honest you are with each of your applicants—and they with you—the more likely you will be to make the best decision.

COMPONENTS AND CALENDAR

We recommend that you begin with your ideal start date and work backward. Depending on the various steps you've settled on for your selection process, you will likely need to spread the activities over one to two months, not counting the weeks during which your application is posted before the deadline. For the New Agrarian Program, we've settled on a basic time frame, outlined below, which is intended only as an example. Consider the details pertinent to your own situation and decide what will work best for you and your applicants. Once you've made a timeline, create an actual calendar with each action item and the specific date assigned to it. For example:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> October 1 | Complete application materials and apprenticeship overview |
| | Begin placing ads |
| <input type="checkbox"/> October 15 | Open application |
| <input type="checkbox"/> December 1 | Close application |
| <input type="checkbox"/> December 1-6 | Read applications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> December 7 | Select up to six semi-finalists and contact them to schedule initial interviews |
| | Send rejection notices |
| <input type="checkbox"/> December 14-16 | Conduct video conference interviews |
| <input type="checkbox"/> December 18 | Select three finalists and contact them to schedule second interviews |
| | Send rejection notices |
| <input type="checkbox"/> January 7-15 | Conduct (separate) in-person interviews |
| <input type="checkbox"/> January 20 | Make your final selection |
| | Send rejection notices |
| <input type="checkbox"/> February/March | Start your apprenticeship |

OCTOBER 1

Complete application materials and apprenticeship overview.

At Quivira, we typically allow ourselves time between completing our materials and launching our application for placing ads in print and web media. We prepare the application page on our website, but don't make it live until the application launch date. We also schedule an email announcement on the date of the launch to remind everyone on our e-mail list that our application cycle is starting.

OCTOBER 15

Launch applications. Once we know that our advertising is ready to launch, we make our online application live. We send out the link to our application in an email and post to social media to make sure that applicants have all the information they need and have ready access to the application.

DECEMBER 1

Application deadline. We've found that having the application posted for at least six weeks provides enough time to yield a good pool of applicants. Eight weeks would probably be better, if you have the time.

DECEMBER 1-6

Read applications and select semi-finalists. Quivira's mentors typically get between twenty and thirty applicants and need two afternoons to read and evaluate them. Mentors and Quivira staff spend a third afternoon discussing applications as a team and deciding who will be invited for an initial interview.

DECEMBER 7

Contact semi-finalists to schedule interviews. We select eight time slots over the course of two days for two interviews, and offer these to applicants. We provide more interview slots than our total number of interviewees in order to give everyone options. Once our interviews are confirmed, we contact remaining applicants as a courtesy to let them know that they were not selected for interviews. We usually delay notifying two or three applicants who almost made the first cut, in order to have backups in the event that one or more of our semi-finalists withdraw.

DECEMBER 14-16

Video conference interviews with up to six semi-finalists. We designate one to two hours for each interview. This gives each interviewer and the applicant the opportunity to ask questions. We spend a few minutes after each interview discussing how it went, and then we try to take a short break during which we relax and re-read the application for the next interview. Three interviews is the maximum in a single day; any more leaves everyone too fatigued to fairly engage the last applicant. Generally, we feel ready to select finalists very soon after completing the initial interviews, within a day or two at most.

DECEMBER 18

Select finalists and contact them to schedule an in-person interview. Have a calendar of possible dates ready to share with applicants, along with information such as how to get to your operation, what kind of activities they can expect, and how you will be helping with travel. We let finalists know that they've been selected as soon as we can, in order to give them adequate time to book travel and keep them engaged in the process. It also keeps them engaged in the process, which minimizes the number of good applicants lost to other opportunities. Most good applicants will apply to more than one program. Once you've confirmed your interviews, contact remaining applicants as a courtesy to let them know that they were not selected for a second interview. Now is also the time to release any candidates you were holding in reserve before the initial interviews.

JANUARY 7-15

Conduct in-person interviews. During the visit, mentors make time to conduct a more thorough, formal interview; work on outdoor chores with the applicant; and sit down with her for a meal together. These activities help the mentor family get to know the candidate pretty well and ascertain her physical ability to complete necessary work, her willingness to ask questions, and her disposition toward people and animals. It also helps confirm for both the mentor and the candidate that there is potential for a strong relationship based on respect, easy communication, and enjoyment of each other's company.

JANUARY 20

Make final selection. The interviews with finalists often require more processing time. Everyone involved must come to consensus on who should be offered the position. Notify your top candidate as soon as her selection is confirmed, but wait to hear back from her before you let the runners up know that they haven't been selected. If she turns you down, you want to be able to offer the position to another of your finalists. Once your offer has been accepted, contact your remaining candidates to thank them and let them know that they haven't been selected.

FEBRUARY/MARCH

Start date. We try to allow at least a month between the time we offer the position and the start date. The apprentice will need time to leave her current position or give notice for rental housing, and she will need time to pack and move her entire life to your ranch or farm.

If you create a process similar to the one we've just described, you'll need six to eight weeks to launch, advertise, and receive applications, and then an additional six to eight weeks for the interview and hiring process. All steps should be complete at least one month before you would like to have your apprentice start. Scrutinize your monthly ranch calendar closely to figure out the ideal timing to launch your application and dive into the selection process. As mentioned above, start with the ideal start date and work backwards.

NUTS AND BOLTS

Once you have a detailed timeline for your application and selection process, you are ready to spend some time putting all the pieces of the puzzle together. Before you post the application and your advertisements, you will want to finalize the application and apprenticeship information on your website. Details like your interview outline, your acceptance and rejection letters, and next steps documents can be taken care of during the six to eight weeks leading up to the application deadline.

THE APPLICATION

Designing a good application takes work and careful consideration. The application should reflect materials you've already created, such as your description of the apprentice's role and your skills list. You will want to get useful information from your applicants without asking for so much that you create unnecessary work for yourself or scare off potentially good applicants. Start by making a list of possible questions, and then group them into logical categories. At Quivira, we start with the basics (name, contact information, etc.) and then work on our list of additional materials, such as resume and references. Think carefully about the kinds of additional material that might tell you what you want to know about your applicants.

We next write questions to gather information in three categories: experience, motivation, and creativity. It's helpful to understand a person's motivation for applying and what she hopes to get out of the experience. It's also helpful to know about past experience and current skill set. We balance multiple-choice questions and those that call for short answers with a few that require more in-depth responses. In most cases, you can teach the technical stuff to an apprentice who has the right character and motivation, and the sheer will to learn, but you can't teach character, motivation, or work ethic. As you work on your questions, be careful not to ask questions that might create the possibility for discrimination (i.e. age, religious affiliation, ethnic background or race, specific medical conditions, family circumstances, sexual orientation, etc.).

Keep in mind that you must compare applications in order to winnow out the best. For this purpose, we like to use a basic rubric or scorecard that helps us evaluate each application fairly, according to a single standard. By breaking the application into sections, you automatically have categories for your scorecard. Create a system and stick to it for all candidates. You don't have to be committed to inviting the highest scores for an interview, but we've found this sort of tool helps us find clarity when we're trying to choose among many good applicants. See pages 110-111 for a sample application, and page 112 for a rubric/scorecard.

POSITION DESCRIPTION AND ADS

We advertise through a number of venues including websites such as Idealist.org, Good Food Jobs, and the Orion Magazine job board, and on social media like Facebook. We used to advertise more extensively in print media, but we've learned that young applicants typically don't search for positions this way. However, if you are hoping for local applicants, you may want to advertise in your local paper. In this case you would need to make it absolutely clear that you are offering an educational opportunity for a beginner, rather than a regular job.

We recommend creating two or three ads, different in length and level of detail. Some websites charge by the word to post ads, and you may want to be succinct. Others are entirely free or have no space limits. Either way, it's helpful to have a couple different ads ready to go. Consider including the following information: position title, term of employment, and start date, the name and location of your ranch or farm; and basic descriptions of your operation and the position. You might also want to indicate wage and benefits offered or refer applicants to your website for additional details. Don't forget to include instructions about how to apply, your application deadline, and who to contact with questions. We have found it helpful to create a list of places to advertise, with details about deadlines, prices, and other requirements specific to the venue. A list of our favorite sties is on pages 108 and 109.

POSTING YOUR APPLICATION

You don't want a frustrating application process to derail your best applicants, so think through how your materials are presented. If you've opted to create a website with all pertinent details about your apprenticeship, make sure everything is ready, working, and up-to-date before launching the application. Also take a little time to consider what materials applicants need before applying. At Quivira's application page, we place detailed descriptions of our apprenticeships above the link to the application with the hope that applicants will read them before they start typing.

As always, work within your technical comfort zone. If you have support to create an online form, or the bandwidth to create one, young applicants will be grateful. If you'd rather post a list of questions on your website that applicants can respond to in an email, do it this way. If you want them to print out an application form, fill it in by hand, attach typed answers to longer questions, and mail it all to you by US post, go that route. You want to prioritize your time on reading and reviewing applications, rather than wrangling the process, so choose the method that suits your needs best.

CORRESPONDING WITH APPLICANTS

We have found it helpful to be as consistent as possible in our communications with applicants. For example, we have pre-drafted text that we can copy and paste into individual emails that require the same information. This saves time and ensures that all applicants receive the same information. We communicate with applicants a number of times over the course of the application process. The following are our basic communications with candidates.

CANDIDATES YOU DON'T WANT TO INTERVIEW

Create a rejection letter thanking candidates you won't interview. Consider including other places they might apply and encouragement in continuing down the path of agriculture.

SEMI-FINALISTS TO SCHEDULE FOR INITIAL INTERVIEWS

When inviting candidates to interview, include a schedule of interview slots (dates and times), directions on how to call in, and what to expect during the interview. Let them know the deadline for accepting the interview and that you're excited to get to know them. Often, we follow up this email with a quick phone call to confirm the interview and answer any questions. If you prefer to call your candidates, consider making a list of what to cover during the call so you don't miss any details.

SEMI-FINALISTS YOU DON'T WANT TO INTERVIEW IN PERSON

Because this is also a small pool, we like to call these folks as well as our finalists. A thanks-but-no-thanks phone call is never easy, but having a script or a list of what you'd like to say will help. We also like to follow up with a personalized email that includes suggestions for improving their application and other places they might consider applying. We write this email with the thought in mind that a candidate eliminated this year may mature and become an excellent candidate next year.

FINALISTS TO SCHEDULE IN-PERSON INTERVIEWS

Because this is typically a small pool, we like to call the finalists to invite them to visit the farm or ranch. Generally, we go over the details of the interview, and then follow up with an email with the same information. We include a list of possible dates, what to expect during the visit, how to get to the site, special considerations for travel, and what to do if the candidate decides that she doesn't want to be interviewed. We then follow up with a confirmation phone call and additional emails about travel logistics. Finally, we check in by phone, email, or both a few days prior to the visit to make sure everything is on schedule to proceed.

INTERVIEWING CANDIDATES

Similar to corresponding with candidates, creating consistency in your interviews will help make the process and the decision more efficient.

CONFERENCE-CALL INTERVIEW SCRIPT AND QUESTIONS

If you are working with a team to conduct interviews (staff member from a sponsoring organization, family member(s), your foreman or manager), it may be helpful to create a loose script with specific questions to be asked by designated individuals. This helps ensure that every applicant is asked the same questions and provided with the same information. It also helps ensure a smooth process for your interview team. See page 113 for the script we like to use.

IN-PERSON INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Unlike the phone interview, the in-person interview is about getting to know your candidates at a more personal level. While this will feel less formal than the video interview, you may want to create a general agenda for the day and a list for yourself of questions you want to ask during the visit, to ensure consistency from one candidate to the next.

APPLES TO APPLES

In a similar way to the written application, a guide for taking notes and evaluating your interview may help you compare candidates' responses to questions. We use a rubric based on our interview questions, which focuses on the qualities we're looking for in candidates. You can use numbers, if you're a quantitative type, or notes or descriptors, if you're more qualitative. Either way, try to create some way to make your evaluations consistent. This will enable you to feel certain of your decision about who to hire and may help you communicate with candidates about why you did or did not choose them for the position.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Now that you've thought through and described your apprenticeship and the application process, you might want to generate a list of milestones and critical communications to ensure a smooth season with your apprentice. Throughout the application process, which can seem long and complicated, it's useful and important to focus on the end goal: a successful season with your apprentice and the long term success of your apprenticeship program. Consider creating a general timeline for your apprenticeship—similar to the one you created for the application and selection process—that will also help organize the materials generated from the Laying the Groundwork section of this book.

When your selected candidate accepts your offer, consider what happens next. Is his housing ready? What does he need to know as soon as he arrives? What will you expect of him in the first days of his apprenticeship? How will you make sure that he's oriented to your operation and the general schedule for the coming months? When will you sit down with him to sign your employment agreement?

Quivira has created an annual orientation that brings together apprentices from all of the ranches and farms that we assist in the first week or two of their apprenticeships. Here is a general list of items that we cover and a guide that we encourage mentors to follow to ensure a smooth season.

BEFORE YOUR APPRENTICE ARRIVES

Send him a welcome with details about what to expect, quirks about living where you live, things he may need to know about groceries, laundry, the library, the post office (details it may be hard for him to explore after she starts working six days a week at a challenging job). Consider sending a draft of the employment agreement, so he's ready to sit down and sign it when he arrives. Also consider sending the skills list, a reading list, and any other materials you think will help him enter his new position fully prepared.

WHEN YOUR APPRENTICE ARRIVES

Consider doing a short orientation with your apprentice including a tour of your ranch or farm, introductions to anyone he might work or socialize with, and a short tour of the surrounding area. Help make him feel at home. Fine-tuning the employment agreement and signing it in the first week will help alleviate potential issues later in the season. This is also a good opportunity to request that he sign a photo release and to discuss any documentation you'd like him to participate in. For example, at Quivira we ask apprentices to write a short biographical statement at the beginning and a short reflection at the end of their season. We use both of these on our website as information for future apprentices and others interested in our program.

Schedule focused time to go over the skills list to establish a baseline for each skill as he begins the apprenticeship. This will help you target your teaching to where it's most needed, measure improvement, and ensure effective use of the list during check-ins. Take this opportunity to schedule check-ins for the full duration of the apprenticeship and mark these dates on the ranch or farm calendar.

OVER THE COURSE OF THE SEASON

Part of developing reliable, high-quality feedback is the practice of checking in regularly. Our mentors and apprentices sit down for a check-in and review of their skills lists about once every two months. Ideally this helps make the apprentice aware of his progress, his successes, and his shortfalls, and also lets you know how you're doing as a mentor.

You might also have regular workshops or meetings to attend while your apprentice is with you. Will you bring him along? Think about other kinds of activities you're likely to engage in and plan to share these with him, as well. Integrate them into your course of study/curriculum and develop ways to evaluate their usefulness.

COMPLETING THE CYCLE

Thinking through how your season will wrap up, how you will evaluate your apprenticeship, and what steps you'll take next will make your program feel more sustainable over time. Our apprentices complete their seasons by attending the Quivira Conference. We hold an agrarian career fair there, and it's a good place for them to meet future employers. Put some thought into how you want to send your apprentice back into the world. Will you celebrate together? Go over next career steps? Is there an event that will help make the apprenticeship feel complete? Will you post something about the apprentice and his experience with you on your website or social media?

Even if it's as simple as writing down the highlights and low points—creating some end-of-season documentation will help you improve your apprenticeship next season. Most likely you will have started your next-season application process by the time you do this, but nevertheless you'll be in plenty of time to refine your process.

Ideally, what you're doing as you go through all the steps above is creating an annual routine that makes having an apprentice an enjoyable learning experience, a benefit to your operation, and a significant contribution to addressing the pressing need for more capable young ranchers and farmers.

READY, SET, GO!

Now that you've done your homework and created a detailed calendar and apprentice skills list, be prepared to let it all go if you need to. Don't be so attached to any particular schedule or curriculum component that you insist on sticking with a plan that doesn't make sense once your apprentice arrives or something unexpected occurs. Be flexible. You may need to adjust the skills list several times or even start from scratch, depending on unexpected circumstances on your operation or who your apprentice turns out to be. The exercise of using this chapter to create all of the components of an apprenticeship has prepared you to provide a well-tailored, highly educational experience for a capable and motivated learner. You've considered many options along the way. Those options all still exist, along with many others you have yet to consider.

Remember that you're working with a whole human made up of a complex mixture of gifts and imperfections, confidence and insecurity, dreams and demons. You probably have your own similar mixture. When in doubt, be yourself. Be honest with your apprentice and expect the same in return. Allow plenty of room for mistakes and broken things. Be forgiving. This fosters honesty when an expensive piece of equipment has been damaged and discourages the urge to hide mistakes, which in turn creates a much safer environment and decreases the likelihood of anyone being injured.

Make your expectations clear.

Bring your apprentice into your life. Find small excuses to celebrate on a regular basis. Make dinners for him and create opportunities for him to do the same for you. Give him an unexpected day off every now and then, especially if your team has just been through a period of especially long days and hard work. Take him with you if you're attending a community meeting or workshop off the ranch. Mix it up a bit; break up the routine when you can.

You may feel like your apprentice is a little underfoot at times, but you're going to miss him when he leaves. So don't take the serious moments too seriously and remember to have fun while you can.

We hope this guidebook proves to be a useful resource in helping you create or improve upon your training program. And we hope you will contact programs featured in other chapters to compare notes and swap stories. Other ranchers and farmers who are doing this work are your best resource.

Lastly, thank you for investing your time and hard-earned knowledge into the next generation of ranchers and farmers. Your time and dedicated mentorship is the best gift you can offer to someone aspiring to do what you've done. No one is more qualified for this job than you.

APPENDICES

The resources offered in these appendices provide a starting point as you research apprenticeship programs. They are by no means comprehensive. The books, journals, and websites suggested here come from our own list of New Agrarian Program resources, and have served to inspire and inform us—we hope they will do the same for you, and also will lead you to other useful titles.

The sample documents are borrowed from the New Agrarian Program and represent only one of innumerable examples for each category. Please utilize or adapt any of these documents for your own use, as per the Creative Commons license terms outlined at the beginning of this book. However, we encourage you to find other examples for any document you need for your own program. The more examples you have, the more likely you will have documents that serve your apprenticeship well.

REFERENCES: BOOKS, JOURNALS AND WEBSITES BY THEME

- ☐ Agriculture - Food
- ☐ Agriculture - Job Boards
- ☐ Agriculture - Policy/Legal
- ☐ Agriculture - Regenerative
- ☐ Agriculture - Statistics
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Leadership
- ☐ Socioeconomics
- ☐ Soil

SAMPLE DOCUMENTS

- ☐ Application
- ☐ Application Rubric
- ☐ Phone Interview
- ☐ Employment Agreement
- ☐ Evaluation
- ☐ Grant Agreement
- ☐ Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

AGRICULTURE - FOOD

BOOKS

Coming Home to Eat - Gary Nabhan
Cooked - Michael Pollan
Diet for a Hot Planet - Anna Lappe
Eating on the Wild Side - Jo Robinson
Empires of Food - Evan Fraser and Andrew Rimas
Farmacology - Daphne Miller, MD
Food Matters - Mark Bittman
In Defense of Food - Michael Pollan
The Botany of Desire - Michael Pollan
The Omnivore's Dilemma - Michael Pollan
The Third Plate - Dan Barber
Where our Food Comes From - Gary Paul Nabhan

WEBSITES

Association for the Study of Food and Society: food-culture.org
The Weston A. Price Foundation: westonaprice.org
Slow Food International: slowfood.com
Slow Food USA: slowfoodusa.org
FoodTank: foodtank.com
Edible Communities: ediblefeast.com
Civil Eats: civileats.org
Center for Food Safety: centerforfoodsafety.org
James Beard Foundation: jamesbeard.org
Sustainable Table: sustainabletable.org

AGRICULTURE - JOB BOARDS

IN PRINT

High Country News: hcn.adqic.com/create/pricing.html
Orion Magazine: jobs.oriongrassroots.org
Range Magazine: rangemagazine.com
Society for Range Management (SRM) jobs board: rangelands.org/jobs
The Fence Post: classifieds.thefencepost.com

ONLINE

Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA): attra.ncat.org
Backdoor Jobs: backdoorjobs.com
Community Food Jobs Listserv: elist.tufts.edu/www/subscribe/comfoodjobs
Facebook Sustainable Ag Jobs Group: [facebook.com/groups/
SustainableAgJobs](https://facebook.com/groups/SustainableAgJobs)
Farm and Ranch Jobs: farmandranchjobs.com
Good Food Jobs: goodfoodjobs.com
High Country News: hcn.adqic.com/create/pricing.html
Idealist: idealist.org
National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS): [inquiries to alumni@nols.edu](mailto:inquiries.to.alumni@nols.edu)
Organic Farming Jobs: organicfarmingjobs.com
Orion Magazine: jobs.oriongrassroots.org
Range Magazine: rangemagazine.com

Society for Range Management (SRM) jobs board: rangelands.org/jobs
Sustainable Food Jobs: sustainablefoodjobs.wordpress.com
The Fence Post: classifieds.thefencepost.com

AGRICULTURE - POLICY/LEGAL

BOOKS

Food Politics - Marion Nestle
The Politics of Food Supply: US Agricultural Policy in the World Economy -
Bill Winders and James C. Scott
Food Fight: The Citizen's Guide to the Next Food and Farm Bill - by Daniel
Imhoff and Fred Kirschenmann

WEBSITES

American Farmland Trust: farmland.org
American Grassfed Association: americangrassfed.org
Cornucopia Institute: cornucopia.org
Farm Commons: farmcommons.org
Food Policy Action: foodpolicyaction.org
Food Democracy Now!: fooddemocracynow.org
Food First: foodfirst.org
Greenhorns: thegreenhorns.net
Institute on Trade and Ag Policy: iatp.org
National Center for Appropriate Technology: ncat.org
National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition: sustainableagriculture.net
National Young Farmers Coalition: youngfarmers.org
The Land Institute: landinstitute.org
Western Landowners Alliance: westernlandownersalliance.org

AGRICULTURE - REGENERATIVE

BOOKS

Animals Make Us Human - Temple Grandin
Consulting the Genius of the Place - Wes Jackson
Cows Save the Planet - Judith Schwartz
Defending Beef - Nicolette Hahn Niman
Grass, Soil, Hope - Courtney White
Grassfed to Finish - Allan Nation
Holistic Management - Allan Savory, Jody Butterfield, Sam Bingham
Kick the Hay Habit - Jim Gerrish
New Roots for Agriculture - Wes Jackson
Resilient Agriculture: Cultivating Food Systems for a Changing Climate - Laura Lengnick
Restorative Agriculture - Mark Shepard
The Carbon Farming Solution - Eric Toensmeier
The Family Cow - Dirk Van Loon
The Raw Milk Revolution - David E. Gumpert
The Soil Will Save Us - Kristin Ohlson
The Unsettling of America - Wendell Berry

JOURNALS

Acres USA: acresusa.com

High Country News: hcn.org

Small Farmer's Journal: smallfarmersjournal.com

The Progressive Forage Grower: progressiveforage.com

The Stockman Grass Farmer: stockmangrassfarmer.com

WEBSITES

American Grassfed Association: americangrassfed.org

ATTRA: attra.ncat.org

Holistic Management International: holisticmanagement.org

Managing Wholes: managingwholes.com

Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service: mosesorganic.org

National Center for Appropriate Technology: ncat.org

Native Seed Search: nativeseeds.org

New Entry Sustainable Farming Project: nesfp.org

Permaculturing in Portugal: permaculturinginportugal.net/blog

Permies: permies.com

Quivira Coalition: quiviracoalition.org

Regeneration International: regenerationinternational.org

Regrarians: regrarians.org

Rodale Institute: rodaleinstitute.org

Savory Institute: savory.global

Southwest Grassfed Livestock Alliance: grassfedlivestock.org

Sustainable Ag Research and Education: sare.org

The Land Institute: landinstitute.org

Western Landowners Alliance: westernlandownersalliance.org

AGRICULTURE - STATISTICS

WEBSITES

Food and Agriculture Organization, United Nations: fao.org/statistics/en

USDA Census of Agriculture: agcensus.usda.gov

USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service: nass.usda.gov

EDUCATION

BOOKS

Education and Experience - John Dewey

Effective Teaching and Mentoring - Laurent A. Daloz

Mentor: Guiding the Journey of Adult Learners - Laurent A. Daloz

The Courage to Teach - Parker J. Palmer

The Mentee's Handbook - Lois J. Zachary

The Mentor's Guidebook - Lois J. Zachary

The Skillful Teacher - Stephen Brookfield

LEADERSHIP

BOOKS

Getting to Yes - Roger Fisher, William Ury

Leaders Eat Last - Simon Sinek

Primal Leadership - Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, Annie McKee

Start with Why - Simon Sinek

The Fifth Discipline - Peter M. Senge

The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People - Stephen R. Covey

The Tao of Leadership - John Heider

WEBSITES

Harvard Business Review: hbr.org

SOCIOECONOMICS

BOOKS

Biomimicry - Janine Benyus

Blessed Unrest - Paul Hawken

Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things - Michael Braungart, William McDonough

Deep Economy - Bill McKibben

Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability, and Peace - Vandana Shiva

The Ecology of Commerce - Paul Hawken

WEBSITES

Food First: foodfirst.org

Worldwatch Institute: worldwatch.org

Food and Environment Reporting Network: thefern.org

Harvest Public Media: harvestpublicmedia.org

SOIL

BOOKS

The Soil Will Save Us - Kristin Ohlson

Teaming with Microbes - Jeff Lowenfels and Wayne Lewis

Secrets of the Soil : New Solutions for Restoring Our Planet - Peter Tompkins and Christopher Bird

The Hidden Half of Nature: The Microbial Roots of Life and Health - David R. Montgomery and Anne Biklé

The Carbon Farming Solution - Eric Toensmeier

WEBSITES

Amazing Carbon (Christine Jones, soil ecologist): amazingcarbon.com

Creating New Soil (Christine Jones blog): creatingnewsoil.blogspot.com

Grassfed Network (Christine Jones): grassfednetwork.com/jones-march-2011

Point Blue Conservation: pointblue.org

Quivira Coalition: quiviracoalition.org

Rodale Institute: rodaleinstitute.org

Soil and Health Library: soilandhealth.org

Soil Carbon Coalition: soilcarboncoalition.org

Soil Foodweb, Inc.(Elaine Ingham): soilfoodweb.com

Soil Health: soilhealth.net

Soil Secrets: soilsecrets.com

APPLICATION

PERSONAL INFO

Full name

Address

Phone Number

Email Address

How did you hear about this apprenticeship?

THE BASICS

Do you have a driver's license?

Can you drive a standard transmission vehicle?

Can you back up a trailer?

Can you lift fifty pounds?

Can you tolerate regular exposure to mold, dust, pollen, and animal dander?

Can you work outdoors in all types of weather?

Have you ever lived in rudimentary housing?

Have you ever lived in a rural place?

Do you have reliable transportation?

What is your highest level of education?

Have you worked on a ranch or farm before in any capacity?

(Please mark all that apply.)

- ☐ Cow-Calf Operation
- ☐ Beef Finishing Operation
- ☐ Plant Nursery
- ☐ Dairy
- ☐ Vegetable Farm
- ☐ Commodity Farm
- ☐ Agriculture-Related Business
- ☐ Certified Organic Operation
- ☐ Educational Institution-Sponsored Farm
- ☐ Other:

Do you have any technical or mechanical skills that could be useful in an agricultural setting? (Please mark all that apply.)

- ☐ Bookkeeping
- ☐ Canning, Drying, Root Cellaring
- ☐ Carpentry
- ☐ Computer Technologies
- ☐ Construction
- ☐ Culinary Skills

- ☐ Drafting
- ☐ Drip Irrigation Systems
- ☐ Editing
- ☐ Electrical Trades
- ☐ Food Service
- ☐ GIS
- ☐ Graphic Design
- ☐ Hoophouse Growing
- ☐ Nursing / Medical Assistance
- ☐ Plumbing
- ☐ Retail / Customer Service
- ☐ Small Engine Repair
- ☐ Surveying
- ☐ Tree Planting
- ☐ Tree Pruning
- ☐ Veterinary Assistance
- ☐ Welding
- ☐ Other:

Please attach a resume along with two professional and one personal reference.

Please indicate up to three operations you would like to apply to. Also, please be sure to read the description for each operation, as every operation offers different opportunities and has different expectations and requirements of apprentices.

- ☐ Brett Gray Ranch / Round River Resource Management (Rush, CO)
- ☐ Cobblestone Ranch (Chico, CA)
- ☐ James Ranch Artisan Cheese (Durango, CO)
- ☐ Ranney Ranch (Corona, NM)
- ☐ San Juan Ranch (Saguache, CO)
- ☐ Sweet Grass Organics (Chico, CA)
- ☐ Tooley's Trees (Truchas, NM)
- ☐ Vilicus Farms (Havre, MT)
- ☐ Zia Queenbee (Truchas, NM)

VISION

In your opinion and with your current understanding of agricultural practices, briefly describe what you see as the ideal direction for agriculture. Also include your top three steps to get there.

How do you see yourself fitting into the answer to the previous question?

How will this apprenticeship help you engage your community in regenerative agriculture?

Please talk about how artisan foods, local foods, and sustainably produced foods are important to you.

EXPERIENCE

Describe your experiences in agriculture, specifically a role on a farm or a ranch and what the job entailed: birth, death, mud, twelve-hour days, etc.

Describe an activity you regularly engage in that requires physical strength, endurance, and repetition.

What life experiences will help you work closely with a small team day after day?

Describe your experience dealing directly with the public (customer service, sales, etc.). What about these kinds of experience do you enjoy most and least?

MOTIVATION

Why is this apprenticeship important to you?

How are you a good fit for the specific operation you're interested in?

What are your long-term career goals? How does this apprenticeship help you along your path?

What do you hope to learn about yourself during the apprenticeship?

CREATIVITY

Please respond to one of the following:

- Describe a moment of joy or happiness you've experienced in the last year.
- You are stranded on top of a mesa and can bring only one tool with you. What is it and why did you choose it?
- If you were an animal, what would you be and why?
- Part of this apprenticeship is helping young persons to completeness. In what ways are you incomplete?
- Is there a question that has changed how you understand the world? What changed?
- If you were to write the story of your life until now, what would you title it and why?
- Tell us three things we don't know about you.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Each of the New Agrarian Program Apprenticeships are physically, emotionally, and intellectually challenging. In most cases, you will be the only apprentice and one of very few employees at the operation where you will be working and learning. If accepted, from March to November of 2016 you will:

- Work both outside and indoors, often doing monotonous and physical activities.
- Live in a rural place, a short drive from town.
- Live in close proximity to your mentors and respect their homes and property.
- Work closely with a small team everyday.
- Work closely with your mentor daily during training, transitioning to independent work as skills and ability allow. Maintain high work quality standards even when working independently.
- Have one day off a week to attend to personal matters during your apprenticeship.
- Receive a stipend of approximately \$700 a month.
- Learn a tremendous amount about yourself, your strengths and weaknesses, how a small-scale sustainable agriculture operation works, and if a career in agriculture is really for you.

- ☐ I understand the scope of the position I am applying for and I am physically and mentally able to perform the tasks it requires.
- ☐ I have read the complete apprenticeship description on the Quivira Coalition website.
- ☐ To the best of my ability and understanding, I have answered questions in this application truthfully and honestly.
- ☐ I have read and understand the scope of the apprenticeship I am applying for. The details of application are true to the best of my knowledge.

APPLICATION RUBRIC

SECTION	RATE	NOTES
BASIC SKILLS		
RESUME		
VISION		
EXPERIENCE		
MOTIVATION		
CREATIVITY		
OVERALL	5 = EXCEPTIONAL 1 = QUESTIONABLE	ACCEPT / REJECT

PHONE INTERVIEW

We created simple scripts to use for New Agrarian Program phone interviews. Because we conduct these interviews as a team consisting of mentors and NAP staff, having a script helps ensure we deliver the same information in a consistent manner for every interview. We also find that, especially for the last interview of the day, it can be reassuring to have a cheat sheet to refer to when, inevitably, you finally draw a blank. The script provides just enough structure to ensure consistent flow, while allowing plenty of room for digressions.

We print enough interview scripts to ensure each member of the team can easily reference it at any point during the interview.

SAN JUAN RANCH INTERVIEW SCRIPT

JULIE: A short explanation of how this process will serve to find a “good fit” for both the Apprentice and the Ranch, and then a description of how this phone-interview process will proceed.

JULIE, then SARAH, then GEORGE: Brief “hello” and introductions by all.

In his introduction, GEORGE includes background on his family and a brief history of the San Juan Ranch, followed by the first question: Tell us a little about your family and childhood (where you grew up, siblings, etc.).

JULIE: What do your family/friends think about your decision to apply for this apprenticeship?

GEORGE: More detailed explanation of the San Juan Ranch operation (certified organic, grassfed, grass-finishing, Holistic Management, partnership with KW Farm, ultrasounding for genetics, low-stress livestock handling, etc.). GEORGE AND JULIE answer any questions that applicant may have posed in their written application now.

SARAH: You have an impressive array of experiences; specifically, I was impressed by your strengths/experience in _____. We now want to talk more about how these experiences and strengths are applicable and a good fit with this operation. George and Julie are going to ask you a few questions first, and then I will follow up with my own.

JULIE: Asks her questions about application/resume

GEORGE: Asks his questions about application/resume

SARAH: Asks her questions about application/resume (possible question: How will they demonstrate leadership during and after the apprenticeship?)

SARAH: Give the apprentice an opportunity to ask questions about ranch operation, nitty gritty, etc. Are you ready to make a twelve-month commitment to this apprenticeship?

JULIE: Our ranch continues to actively direct market, as well as build our Sweet Grass Co-op. Marketing isn’t why anyone chooses to ranch, but it is increasingly necessary for an agrarian to actively sell, educate, and advocate for sustainable, regionalized food production systems. We would like to hear how you think you might enjoy being engaged in these elements of the ranch operation. What would be exciting and interesting, what would be less engaging? What aspects of the whole operation (calving to marketing) will you find fun? What parts will you find challenging?

GEORGE: The unexpected is to be expected in ranching. Can you tell us about a time when, in spite of your best effort and planning, things didn’t go smoothly? What was that like for you? How did you handle it? What do you think about it now, in retrospect?

JULIE: Well, we are going towards the end of the interview here, but we have a few last questions for you (prompts George and Sarah to ask last questions).

GEORGE: What else would you like to share to demonstrate your enthusiasm and commitment to sustainable agriculture and land management?

SARAH: Asks about time availability in the next two to three weeks; clarifies next steps in the process and when applicant can expect next contact; closes the interview.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

For phone interviews especially, we have found it helpful to keep a list of additional questions accessible. We keep a printed copy of this list on the table during the phone interviews, next to the interview script. Occasional lulls in conversation are inevitable, as are momentary mental blanks or slightly awkward moments. Have a cheat-sheet of questions like these to help keep the conversation going in those moments.

- What have you learned from a mistake on a job?
- Tell us about an experience you had that caused you to grow in an unexpected direction.
- What motivates you to do a good job?
- What have you done to improve your knowledge/learning this year?
- Tell us about how you work under pressure.
- How do you plan to compensate for your lack of experience with ____?
- Tell us about the most fun you have ever had on a job.
- How do you alleviate stress? How do you recharge?
- What do you think are your finest personal characteristics?
- How do you like to spend your free time? Do you have any hobbies?
- What are the character traits that get in your way or pose challenges for you and others?
- How will this apprenticeship help you achieve your long-term goals?
- Describe your ideal agricultural operation.
- What does the word sustainable mean to you? Regenerative?
- Where do you see yourself in two years? In five?
- What has been your most challenging/fulfilling experience to date?
- What brings you to do a great joy in your everyday life?
- Why ranching?
- What do you expect out of a mentor?

EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT

The following employment agreement template was designed by the San Juan Ranch for apprentices hired as part of the New Agrarian Program.

[NAME OF RANCH OR FARM] EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT

This Agreement made and entered into this ____ day of [MONTH], 20__, by and between _____ ("Mentor"), and _____ ("Apprentice"). The parties recite that:

Mentor is engaged in agrarian education and maintains business premises at [ADDRESS]_____.

Apprentice is willing to be employed by Mentor, and Mentor is willing to employ Apprentice, on the following terms and conditions. For the reasons set forth above, and in consideration of the mutual covenants and promises of the parties hereto, Mentor and Apprentice covenant and agree as follows:

AGREEMENT TO EMPLOY AND BE EMPLOYED

Mentor hereby employs Apprentice at the above-mentioned premises, and Apprentice hereby accepts and agrees to employment. Apprentice is hired as an at-will Apprentice. Probation period is the first thirty days after employment start date. See section titled Probation, Termination and Disability for details.

DESCRIPTION OF APPRENTICE DUTIES

Subject to the supervision and pursuant to the orders, advice, and direction of Mentor, Apprentice shall perform such duties as are customarily performed by one holding such position in other businesses or enterprises of the same or similar nature as that engaged in by Mentor. Apprentice shall additionally render such other and unrelated services and duties as may be assigned to her/him from time to time by Mentor.

Duties will include all aspects of operating and managing a [TYPE OF OPERATION]. Apprentice will be involved in planning discussions and engage in personal study to support the experiential core of Apprenticeship. In addition to duties, Apprentice will also contribute labor to [OTHER ACTIVITIES NOT ASSOCIATED WITH OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS MAKING MEALS OR HOUSEHOLD UPKEEP].

Apprentice position is a salaried position, and the work schedule is dependent on seasonal activities. Mentor will strive to create a work schedule that allows for one paid day off per week. There is no paid holiday time. Apprentice wishing to take vacation time must schedule in advance and at convenience of Mentor. Apprentice wishing to attend conferences, workshops, and other educational events to augment on-site education will discuss the relevance of said event with Mentor, and these events will be considered work days if both parties agree that the event qualifies as a valid educational experience related to the goals and intention of Apprentice and the Quivira Coalition New Agrarian Program.

MANNER OF PERFORMANCE OF APPRENTICE DUTIES

Apprentice shall at all times faithfully, industriously, and to the best of her/his ability, experience, and talent, perform all duties that may be required of and from her/him pursuant to the express and implicit terms hereof, to the reasonable satisfaction of Mentor. Such duties shall be rendered at the above mentioned premises and at such other place or places as Mentor shall in good faith require or as the interests, needs, business, and opportunities of Mentor shall require or make advisable.

DURATION OF EMPLOYMENT

The term of employment shall be one year, commencing on [DATE], and terminating [DATE], subject, however, to prior termination as otherwise provided herein. Should Apprentice wish to terminate employment prior to said end date, ample discussion will occur prior to termination. Apprentice understands that employment is an educational program and that completion of the full term is required in order to be considered a graduate of the Quivira Coalition New Agrarian Program.

COMPENSATION AND REIMBURSEMENT

Mentor shall pay Apprentice a stipend at the rate of [AMOUNT] per month, gross pay before taxes. In addition, Apprentice will receive room and partial board as discussed during interview. Also, Mentor will reimburse Apprentice for any and all necessary, customary, and usual expenses incurred by her/him while traveling for and on behalf of Mentor pursuant to Mentor's instruction.

APPRENTICE'S LOYALTY TO MENTOR'S INTERESTS

Apprentice shall devote all of her/his professional time, attention, knowledge, and skill solely and exclusively to the business and interests of Mentor, and Mentor shall be entitled to all benefits, emoluments, profits, or other issues arising from or incident to any and all work, services, and advice of Apprentice. Apprentice expressly agrees that during the term hereof she/he will not be interested, directly or indirectly, in any form, fashion, or manner, as partner, officer, director, stockholder, advisor, Apprentice, or in any other form or capacity, in any business similar to Mentor's business or any allied trade.

NONDISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION CONCERNING BUSINESS

Apprentice will not at any time or in any manner, either directly or indirectly, divulge, disclose, or communicate to any person, firm, or corporation in any manner whatsoever any information of any kind, nature, or description concerning any matters affecting or relating to the business of Mentor, including, without limitation, the names of any its customers, the prices it obtains or has obtained, or at which it sells or has sold its products, or any other information concerning the business of Mentor, its manner of operation, or its plans, processes, or other date of any kind, nature, or description without regard to whether any or all of the foregoing matters would be deemed confidential, material, or important. The parties hereby stipulate that, as between them, the foregoing matters are important, material, and confidential, and gravely affect the effective and successful conduct of the business of Mentor, and its good will, and that any breach of the terms of this section is a material breach of this agreement.

PROBATION, TERMINATION AND DISABILITY

Probation Process: As of the first day of work, a thirty-day probation period begins. Job expectations, professional attitude and commitment to the New Agrarian Program will be discussed. Two weeks after start date, an assessment will be made as to the suitability of the position for Apprentice, and Apprentice for Mentor. Concerns serious enough to be possible grounds for termination of employment will be discussed, and strategies for addressing them will be noted. Concerns and strategies will be noted in written form and signed by Apprentice and Mentor.

Four weeks after start date another assessment will occur. If all parties are amenable to employment being continued, the probation period will end. Should either party believe that the work relationship will not be successful for both parties, employment will be terminated with two weeks notice.

Termination Policy: Mentor and Apprentice will have an informal check-in every two to three weeks, or on a jointly determined schedule, to discuss job performance, attitude, and skills acquisition. Concerns or problems will be discussed and strategies determined to assist both Mentor and Apprentice to address challenges. Formal evaluation will occur every three months. Should serious problems persist, Apprentice may be placed on Apprenticeship jeopardy. A meeting between Mentor and Apprentice will occur to address specific concerns in a formal evaluation, and Apprentice and Mentor will co-create clear, measurable steps to address these, which will be contracted and signed by both parties.

A timeline for review will be determined. A copy of this document will be sent to the Quivira Coalition New Agrarian Program Director. Assessment will happen weekly until such time as Apprenticeship jeopardy status is withdrawn or termination is deemed necessary. If termination is warranted, Apprentice will be given two weeks notice. When and if Apprentice is given notice of termination, duties will be revised or limited as Mentor sees fit for the remainder of their tenure.

Disability: In the event that Apprentice cannot perform the duties associated with job because of illness or incapacity for a period of more than three weeks, the compensation otherwise due during said illness or incapacity will be reduced by 50%. Apprentice's full compensation will be reinstated upon return to full time work. However, if Apprentice is absent from work for any reason for a continuous period of over five weeks, the Mentor may terminate Apprentice's employment, and the Mentor's obligations under this agreement will cease on that date.

DISCONTINUANCE OF BUSINESS AS TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT

Anything herein contained to the contrary notwithstanding, in the event that Mentor shall discontinue operations at the premises mentioned above, then this agreement shall cease and terminate as of the last day of the month in which operations cease with the same force and effect as if such last day of the month were originally set forth as the termination date hereof.

APPRENTICE COMMITMENTS BINDING ON MENTOR ONLY ON WRITTEN CONSENT

Apprentice shall not have the right to make any contracts or other commitments for or on behalf of Mentor without the written consent of Mentor.

CONTRACT GOVERNED BY LAW

This agreement and performance hereunder shall be construed in accordance with the laws of the State of (Mentor'S STATE).

Executed on the date first above written.

_____	_____
Mentor	Date
_____	_____
Apprentice	Date

EVALUATION

In the New Agrarian Program (NAP), the skills checklist serves two main functions. First, it serves as a curriculum template for mentors. NAP provides the format, and mentors customize it to their particular operations, with individual categories by table to match the work being done on their ranch or farm. They then create a list of specific skills for each category that they expect the apprentice to develop over the course of their training. The exercise of creating their own customized skills checklist helps mentors think through a full season and all the activities they engage in to run their business.

Second, the skills list help mentors and NAP track apprentice progress and ensure continued learning throughout the apprenticeship.

Below are instructions to mentors on how to use the skills checklist. We've provided one formatted skills checklist, and a sample of other skills categories, as a starting place to create your own.

The skills lists are used as a tool by both mentor and apprentice to ensure apprentice progress in key areas.

SKILL CHECKLIST

- Use the template below to create your own skills checklist tables based on the skills that will be taught on your specific operation during the eight-month apprenticeship.
- Use the additional sample categories and skills lists as a guide to create your own set of tables. List skills that are relevant to your operation; missing skills may be added.
- Once the checklist is final, schedule a meeting with your apprentice to review listed skills and conduct an initial baseline evaluation. Both you and your apprentice should sign and date the document to indicate that you have read it. Make a copy of the signed document for each of you.
- Create a schedule of evaluation meetings about every two months throughout your apprenticeship period to go over checklists and to discuss progress.
- Prior to each evaluation meeting, ask your apprentice to self-evaluate for each category in the list, according to the evaluation guide below. During the meeting, evaluate the apprentice and provide feedback.
- You and your apprentice should each update your copies of the checklist during the meeting, so that they contain the same information.
- At the end of each check-in, confirm a date for the following check-in.
- The checklist should be revisited annually and edited or updated as needed for the following season.

Evaluation meetings also offer the opportunity for mentor and apprentice to touch base on a deeper level with regard to how the apprentice is doing in general, how she or he is handling the work pace and the culture of your operation, and her or his rapport with you and other mentors and crew members.

Use the following guide to evaluate progress on checklist items. Record the date of each meeting and in the appropriate column rank each skill or knowledge area according to the following scale, a scale of your choosing.

NA Not applicable

1 No exposure yet

2 Has been demonstrated and observed

3 Beginner: has been practiced under supervision

4 Intermediate: shows increased skill and competence but requires further instruction/practice

5 Mastery: has successfully performed this task independent of supervision

	BASELINE		MONTH 2		MONTH 4		MONTH 6		MONTH 8	
DATE OF EVALUATION	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
SKILL	APP	MENT	APP	MENT	APP	MENT	APP	MENT	APP	MENT
Basic safety procedures: noise, movement, facility issues, etc										
Feeding and watering										
Moving/Herding										
Animal Handling										
Health: diagnosis and treatment										
Breeding										
Calving										
Castrating										
Branding										
Culling										
Organic protocols										
Nutritional needs										
Mineral supplements										

BUSINESS PLANNING AND FINANCES

- Annual budget, planning
- Quickbooks, record keeping
- Market research
- Marketing, designing and packaging
- Website design and maintenance
- Understanding certification process
- Customer service
- Supervising others
- Planning and facilitating weekly team meetings
- Time management

LAND MANAGEMENT AND STEWARDSHIP

- Basic soil health and ecology
- Grass, plant, forage ID
- Making a grazing plan
- Setting up and moving single-wire electric fence
- Manure composting, management
- Pasture management
- Holistic Management essentials
- Managing animals to heal the land

DAIRY

- Moving the dairy herd
- Milking
- Milk handling, storage
- Recognizing common health issues
- Treating common health issues

CHEESEMAKING

- Raw versus pasteurization
- Basic cheesemaking
- Cheese aging, affinage
- Aging room maintenance and care
- Cheese room maintenance and care

TREE AND ORCHARD MANAGEMENT

- Basic soil science
- Beneficial versus harmful plants and weeds
- Beneficial insects versus harmful pests
- Planting bare root trees
- Weed control strategies
- Bench and bud grafting
- Tree pruning
- Fruit production, processing, marketing
- Drip irrigation, installation, maintenance
- Compost making, processing, utilizing
- Healthy physical labor, body mechanics
- Tree planting and transplanting

TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

- Truck and tractor basic operation
- Truck and tractor troubleshooting and mechanics
- Changing a tire
- Changing the oil
- Operation of hand tools
- Operation of power tools
- Chainsaw safety, maintenance, operation
- Backing up a trailer
- Operating manual transmission
- Basic welding

HORSEMANSHIP

- Approach and catch horse safely
- Halter, bridle, and saddle
- Lead, turn, and back horse
- Loading into a trailer
- Tying safely
- Grooming
- Picking up and cleaning hooves
- Mounting and dismounting
- Posture, balance, body positioning
- Hand position and use of reins
- Start and stop
- Comfort walking
- Comfort trotting

PLANT CULTIVATION AND MANAGEMENT

- Basic soil science
- Beneficial and harmful plants and weeds
- Beneficial insects versus harmful pests
- Irrigation installation and maintenance
- Compost making, processing, using
- Healthy physical labor, body mechanics
- Weed control strategies
- Nursery crop production
- Cover cropping
- Soil mixture and preparation
- Preparing seedbeds
- Crop planning and rotations
- Harvesting
- Canning and preserving
- Seed saving
- Marketing

WORK PLACE ETHICS AND ETIQUETTE

- Adaptable to changing schedules
- Reliable, good follow through
- Punctual, good time management
- Open and clear communication; good listener
- Inquisitive, engaged, eager, self-motivated
- Observant and attentive to detail
- Proactive, pays attention, anticipates needs
- Friendly, polite, engaged with mentors and others
- Physical fitness and stamina
- Good self-care, shows up in morning ready to go
- Able to express needs
- Able to receive feedback
- Good stress management

GRANT AGREEMENT

As a nonprofit organization collaborating with private, for-profit ranches and farms, we needed a formal document stating the terms of our working agreement. For those of you who represent a nonprofit organization, we encourage you to develop your own version of a Grant Agreement, to be signed by your organization's lead executive and representatives of partnering apprenticeship locations. The following example may not be a perfect fit for your particular circumstances or organization, but will hopefully provide helpful insights and guidance for creating your own. We encourage you to work closely with an attorney able to provide legal counsel with regards to terms and language.

[ORGANIZATION] GRANT AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT is entered into on [DATE], by and between [ORGANIZATION], a non-profit [NAME OF STATE] Corporation (hereinafter referred to as [ORG SHORT NAME] and [NAME OF MENTOR] at [NAME OF MENTOR'S RANCH OR FARM] (hereinafter referred to as "Grantees").

RECITALS

WHEREAS, Grantees have certain skills and abilities needed by [ORG SHORT NAME]; and Grantees are an independent party willing to provide the service of mentorship for [ORG SHORT NAME] for the period contemplated by this agreement;

WHEREAS, the parties have entered into a separate Memorandum of Understanding (hereinafter referred to as "MOU") and WHEREAS the rights and obligations set forth in the MOU are hereby incorporated into this Grant Agreement.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual promises and covenants herein contained, the parties hereto agree as follows:

1. Delivering Funds to the Grantees The parties agree that no employment arrangement exists between [ORG SHORT NAME] and Grantees. Consistent with Grantees' status as an independent party, [ORG SHORT NAME] shall carry no Workers' Compensation Insurance or any health or accident insurance to cover Grantees or their employees. [ORG SHORT NAME] shall not pay any contribution to social security, unemployment insurance or federal or state withholding taxes to the Grantees. Grantees agree to report and pay all contributions for taxes, unemployment insurance, social security and other benefits that may be owed as a result of this Agreement. It is understood that the monthly stipend provided for apprentice will cover all payroll taxes and withholding.

2. Terms of Agreement Termination This Agreement shall commence on [DATE] and terminate on [DATE]. However, [ORG SHORT NAME] may terminate this Agreement with thirty days' notice upon Grantees' uncured breach of this Agreement, or upon the filing by or against Grantees of a petition for bankruptcy, the making by Grantees of any general assignment for the benefit of creditors, or the sale, merger, consolidation, or assignment of Grantees' business. Grantee may terminate this Agreement with thirty days' notice upon [ORG SHORT NAME]'s uncured breach of this Agreement, or if [ORG SHORT NAME] loses their 501(c)(3) status, or becomes insolvent. Notwithstanding the provisions of this Section, [ORG SHORT NAME] and Grantees may terminate this agreement by mutual consent.

In the event of a termination prior to the above scheduled date, [ORG SHORT NAME] shall pay Grantees any fees and expenses due them as of the date of termination, and Grantees shall return any remaining grant funds not yet spent on the NAP mentorship program to [ORG SHORT NAME].

3. Fees Based on mentorship services to be provided by Grantees to [ORG SHORT NAME] under and during the term of this Agreement, [ORG SHORT NAME] shall award a grant to the Grantees in the total amount of [DOLLAR AMOUNT], to be disbursed over the course of applicable apprenticeship term as per the MOU incorporated herein (see attached). The first payment will be made in the month when [ORG SHORT NAME]'s Apprentice is due to begin her/his apprenticeship.

4. Copyright Grantee and [ORG SHORT NAME] shall jointly retain the copyright to any curriculum and administrative materials jointly created as part of the apprenticeship program.

5. Indemnification Grantees hereby agrees to indemnify and hold [ORG SHORT NAME] harmless for any claims, damages, costs or expenses of any kind arising out of Grantees' intentional or negligent actions, representations, or misconduct hereunder, including specifically, but not limited to, any copyright infringement or defamation claims arising out of the work to be performed hereunder. [ORG SHORT NAME] gives the Grantees a reciprocal indemnity for its intentional or negligent conduct.

6. Extent of Services Grantees shall devote such time, attention, and energies to the performance of duties hereunder as is necessary to accomplish Grantees' agreed-upon tasks. During the term of this Agreement, however, Grantees shall be free to engage in any other business activity, whether or not such business activity is pursued for gain, profit, or other pecuniary advantage, as they see fit, and with such other persons, firms, or corporations as they deem advisable.

7. No Authority to Bind This Agreement shall not be construed as creating a partnership between [ORG SHORT NAME] and the Grantees. The Grantees shall have no authority, and shall not hold themselves out as having any authority, to enter into any contracts binding upon [ORG SHORT NAME], or to create any obligations on the part of [ORG SHORT NAME], except as may be specifically authorized by [ORG SHORT NAME]. Similarly, [ORG SHORT NAME] shall have no authority, and shall not hold themselves out as having any authority, to enter into any contracts binding upon the Grantees, or to create any obligations on the part of the Grantees, except as may be specifically authorized by the Grantees.

8. Travel and Other Expenses [ORG SHORT NAME] shall not reimburse Grantees for expenses above any amount jointly agreed upon by Grantees and [ORG SHORT NAME] without express prior approval by [ORG SHORT NAME].

9. Death or Disability If one or both Grantees die during the term of this Agreement or are unable to perform services by reason of illness or incapacity, this Agreement shall immediately terminate. Grantees or Grantees' estate shall receive any fees due as of the date of such death or disability, and shall be reimbursed for all approved expenses incurred as of that date.

10. Assignment The rights and obligations provided by this Agreement are not assignable unless prior approval of such assignment by both parties is obtained in writing.

11. Notices All notices or other communications provided for by this Agreement shall be made in writing and shall be deemed properly delivered when (i) delivered personally, or (ii) by the mailing of such notice to the parties entitled thereto, by registered or certified mail, postage prepaid to the parties at the following addresses (or to such address designated in writing by one party to the other), or (iii) electronically by email.

GRANTEES:

[Mentor Ranch or Farm]

Attn: [Name of Mentor]

[Address]

[Address]

[Email]

ORGANIZATION:

[Organization]

Attn: [Name of Lead Executive, Title]

[Address]

[Address]

[Email]

12. Entire Agreement and Waiver Clause This Agreement contains the entire agreement between the parties hereto and supersedes all prior and contemporaneous agreements, arrangements, negotiations, and understandings between the parties hereto, relating to the subject matter hereof. There are no other understandings, statements, promises, or inducements, oral or otherwise, contrary to the terms of this Agreement.

No waiver by conduct or otherwise, in any one or more instances, shall be deemed to be, or shall constitute a waiver of any other provisions hereof, whether or not similar, nor shall such waiver constitute a continuing waiver, and no waiver shall be binding unless executed in writing by the party making the waiver.

13. Amendments This Agreement may be amended from time to time. However, no supplement, modification or amendment of any term, provision or condition of this Agreement shall be binding or enforceable unless executed in writing by the parties hereto.

14. Parties in Interest Nothing in this agreement, whether express or implied, is intended to confer upon any person other than the parties hereto and their respective heirs, representatives, successors and permitted assigns, any rights or remedies under or by reason of this Agreement, nor is anything in this Agreement intended to relieve or discharge the liability of any other party hereto, nor shall any provision hereof give any entity any rights of subrogation against or action against any party.

15. Subject Headings The subject headings of the articles, sections and subsections of this Agreement are included solely for purposes of convenience and reference only, and shall not be deemed to explain, modify, limit, amplify or aid in the meaning, construction or interpretation of any of the provisions of this Agreement.

16. Severability Should any term or provision of this Agreement, or any document required hereunder be executed, be declared invalid, void or unenforceable, all remaining terms and provisions hereof shall remain in full force and effect and shall in no way be invalidated, impaired or affected thereby.

17. Applicable Law This Agreement shall be governed by and construed and enforced in accordance with and subject to the laws of the State of [NAME OF STATE].

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned have executed this Agreement as of the date hereinabove written.

ATTEST: [ORGANIZATION]

[Lead Executive, Title]

[Mentor Ranch or Farm]

[Name of Mentor]

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Like the prior grant agreement example, the memorandum of understanding (MOU) is meant to be drafted by nonprofit organizations working in partnership with private ranches and farms to implement apprenticeships. Whereas the grant agreement stipulates only the most general, legal terms of the partnership, the MOU goes into detail with regard to specific roles and responsibilities for each included party.

This template included here is designed specifically with Quivira's New Agrarian Program apprenticeships in mind, and will likely not be a good template for your own program. It is meant to be used as a guide only or simply an example of what an MOU might contain. This document can take many different forms. We recommend that you start by listing all the components of your apprenticeship, detailing who is responsible for which component. Organize your draft MOU into two sections, one addressing your organization's roles and responsibilities, and the other the mentors'. Include enough detail to ensure clarity but not so much that you risk promising more than you can realistically deliver. This document is meant to be helpful, first and foremost. As with the grant agreement, we encourage you to work closely with an attorney familiar with this kind of document. We also encourage you to revisit this document with each mentor operation at least once each season and to update it as needed to reflect changes in your program or partnership.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Between: The [ORGANIZATION] and [MENTOR NAME] of [MENTOR'S OPERATION]

For: Agricultural Apprenticeships in partnership with [ORGANIZATION]

This Memorandum of Understanding (hereafter "MOU") describes a collaboration between [ORGANIZATION] (hereafter [ORG SHORT NAME]) and [MENTOR'S NAME] (hereafter "Mentor") for the purpose of creating and implementing an agricultural apprenticeship on the [MENTOR OPERATION] for a period of [NUMBER] months, beginning with the apprentice application launch on [DATE] and ending with the end of the apprenticeship period on [DATE].

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

[ORG SHORT NAME] and Mentor enter into this collaboration to serve the goals of [ORG SHORT NAME]. [ORG SHORT NAME] apprenticeships target beginning farmers and ranchers with a serious commitment to employment and life in regenerative agriculture and a willingness to make a [NUMBER] month commitment to the Mentor. [ORG SHORT NAME] offers on-the-ground opportunities for aspiring practitioners, transferring experience-based knowledge in all aspects of a regenerative and resilient agricultural enterprise to a new generation. Apprentices emerge from [ORG SHORT NAME]'s apprenticeships with technical and interpersonal skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are essential for successful employment as a ranch or farm hand, foreperson, manager or as a land manager in another capacity.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Each party will appoint a person to serve as the official contact and coordinate the activities of each organization in carrying out this MOU. The appointments of each organization are:

[Lead Executive, Title]	[Mentor Name]
[Organization]	[Ranch or Farm]
[Address]	[Address]
[Address]	[Address]
[Email]	[Email]

Mentor, as a collaborator with [ORG SHORT NAME], agrees to the following tasks for purposes of this MOU:

ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL

Place apprentice on operation's payroll as formal employee with access to workers' compensation and unemployment insurance and in full compliance with local labor laws.

Create a work contract—to be signed and dated by both Mentor and apprentice—which includes details regarding employment period, work description and expectations, compensation (stipend, housing and other components as applicable), days off, vacation and sick leave, and termination policy.

Pay monthly stipend to apprentice. Specific amount of stipend is at the discretion of Mentor, but must meet minimum amount agreed upon with [ORG SHORT NAME].

Provide regular, scheduled day(s) off to the apprentice, ideally same day(s) each week.

[ORG SHORT NAME], Mentor, and the apprentice will jointly decide how to spend the Travel and Education discretionary funds of [DOLLAR AMOUNT] allocated for each apprentice through [ORG SHORT NAME] for purposes of: travel, materials, and supplies. Apprentice is encouraged to prioritize travel costs to attend the [ORG SHORT NAME]'s annual conference (attendance required for apprentices).

Maintain disbursement and expense records relevant to apprentice Travel and Education fund for [ORG SHORT NAME]. Submit final report to [ORG SHORT NAME] before the expiration of this MOU.

Host annual site visit from and conduct a thorough check-in with [ORG SHORT NAME] staff member (program coordinator or program director), including overnight accommodation if distance requires it.

I have read and understood the Administrative and Financial obligations stated above: _____ (Mentor initials)

RISK MANAGEMENT AND INSURANCE

Monitor apprentice health and well-being as part of risk management.

Review apprentice's personal health insurance policy to ensure it is adequate for emergency concerns.

Carry Worker's Compensation insurance, based on industry standards, which covers the (PROGRAM) apprentice when working under the supervision and direction of Mentor. Mentor is not liable for accidents or injuries incurred by, or caused by, the apprentices, when not under the supervision of Mentor.

Carry liability insurance, included in Farm and Ranch insurance policy, for visitors.

Clearly identify risk management factors and practice industry-standard due diligence to avoid accidents and injury.

I have read and understood the Risk Management and Insurance obligations stated above: _____ (Mentor initials)

HOUSING AND FOOD

Provide apprentice housing on or near Mentor's ranch or farm, separate from Mentor's housing unless approved by [ORG SHORT NAME]. Housing must include adequate heating and other utilities, easy access to cooking and bathing facilities, and some private space for the apprentice. Strive to provide Internet access on host operations, although it may or may not be directly accessible in the apprentice housing. Apprentices are expected to provide their own telephones and telephone service.

Provide at least partial board to apprentice. Clarify details and expectations related to food with the apprentice as soon as possible once the apprentice has accepted position (or before if possible). Some mentors will provide a variety of food in the form of ranch or farm products, while others will provide shared meals or possibly additional food stipends. Apprentices may be expected to participate in food preparation and clean-up for shared meals.

I have read and understood the Housing and Food obligations stated above: _____ (Mentor initials)

EDUCATION AND MENTORSHIP

Design and implement an experiential apprenticeship education program that exposes the apprentice to all aspects of regenerative agriculture as practiced by Mentor.

Work with [ORG SHORT NAME] administrator to create text and other needed materials to use for ads, webpage, and other outreach efforts.

Assess incoming skill level of apprentice to determine appropriate learning curve, especially as it relates to issues of safety.

Ensure apprentice attendance and/or timeliness with [ORG SHORT NAME] components and/or deadlines that are either required (Holistic Management International weekly webinar, Apprentice Reports, Skills Checklist and Evaluation, [ORG SHORT NAME]'s annual conference, or options that Mentor has agreed to include in apprenticeship (see optional program components below).

Ensure apprentice completion of required reports (Introduction and Final), and submission to [ORG SHORT NAME] by deadlines: [DATES]. Assist apprentice as needed—read drafts and provide feedback and editing.

Strive to balance more work-intensive days or weeks with less intensive ones, allowing for seasonal and operation fluctuations and unexpected needs, and ensuring adequate rest and recovery for the apprentice

Conduct weekly planning meetings with apprentice to outline workload expectations, tasks and goals for the week, and to answer questions about or clarify the previous week's tasks

Spend regular time with apprentice, ideally daily, including teaching time

Conduct bi-monthly apprentice evaluations using the [ORG SHORT NAME]'s skills checklist template—once during the first week to establish baseline skill level and thereafter every other month. Update the apprentice skills checklist and discuss any additional concerns; final evaluation will also serve as an exit interview. Provide a copy of each updated skills checklist to [ORG SHORT NAME].

Occasionally host other [ORG SHORT NAME] apprentices for ranch/farm overnight work visits, as able

Participate in [ORG SHORT NAME]'s scheduled orientation for Mentors and seasonal group conference calls

Provide a final report to [ORG SHORT NAME]'s administrator regarding apprentice learning for delivery at the end of the apprentice's term. The [ORG SHORT NAME] administrator will provide Mentor with the format for this final report.

Strive to attend [ORG SHORT NAME]'s annual conference, Career Connection, and Mentor Meeting.

I have read and understood the Education and Mentorship obligations stated above: _____ (Mentor initials)

[ORG SHORT NAME] WILL PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING:

ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL

Provide funding for [ORG SHORT NAME] staff to cover all activities related to apprenticeships and within the responsibility of [ORG SHORT NAME]. These include but are not limited to: creating and maintaining a custom webpage on the [ORG SHORT NAME] website for each mentor operation; conducting regular outreach and communications for the benefit of individual [ORG SHORT NAME] apprenticeships; posting apprenticeship application ads online and in print to help ensure a strong applicant pool; creating and maintaining a standard [ORG SHORT NAME] application on the [ORG SHORT NAME] website and available to participating mentors; overseeing the application and selection process for apprenticeships, as needed; developing curriculum and other program materials for the benefit of mentors and apprentices; conducting annual site-visits to each mentor operation; designing, planning and conducting annual Apprentice Orientation; providing support to mentors and apprentices as needed and able; receiving apprentice reports and bi-monthly skills checklist updates, marking progress in the apprenticeship; creating and coordinating [ORG SHORT NAME] alumni network. (Approx. value of staff time: [DOLLAR AMOUNT] per apprentice, plus travel expenses—varies per location.)

Manage [ORG SHORT NAME]'s annual budget as it relates to the successful implementation of [ORG SHORT NAME] apprenticeships on mentor operations.

Provide extensive advertising for the application process and [ORG SHORT NAME] in relation to the Mentor's apprenticeship (value: [DOLLAR AMOUNT] per apprenticeship). [ORG SHORT NAME] will work with Mentor to create text for advertisements.

Provide partial travel reimbursement for up to three apprenticeship candidate finalists, in the amount of [DOLLAR AMOUNT] per finalist, for host operations that opt to include required in-person interviews. Mentors are encouraged to contribute an additional [DOLLAR AMOUNT] for each finalist (value: maximum [DOLLAR AMOUNT] per mentor operation).

Host New Apprentice Orientation in Santa Fe, NM each spring (approx. total cost not including staff time: [DOLLAR AMOUNT])

Provide Holistic Management International (HMI) weekly webinar education for apprentices (value: [DOLLAR AMOUNT] per apprentice). Mentors have access to webinars as a benefit of participation in [ORG SHORT NAME]'s apprenticeship program.

Conduct annual site-visits to Mentor's operation (cost varies per apprenticeship depending on location).

Provide a Travel and Education fund (i.e. travel, materials/supplies) for each [ORG SHORT NAME] apprentice (value: [DOLLAR AMOUNT] per apprentice).

Provide conference registration and hotel accommodations for each [ORG SHORT NAME] apprentice to attend [ORG SHORT NAME]'s annual conference (attendance required for apprentices) (value: [DOLLAR AMOUNT] per apprentice).

EDUCATION

Oversee content, schedule and implementation of apprentice online education through partnership with HMI.

Provide template for Apprentice Skills Checklist to each mentor operation, and work with mentors to customize checklist to their specific needs and operation. Keep mentors' customized apprentice skills checklist on file, together with copies of updated checklists following each apprentice bi-monthly evaluation.

Receive apprentice reports (introduction and final), work with apprentice and mentors as needed for any final edits on reports.

Strive to provide access to [ORG SHORT NAME] staff and other operations for occasional field trip learning opportunities, if deemed appropriate and necessary by Mentor and [ORG SHORT NAME].

Communicate [ORG SHORT NAME]'s goals for the New Agrarian Program so they can be included in Mentor's curriculum.

Assist Mentor's operation in designing, developing and implementing their [ORG SHORT NAME] curriculum.

I have read and understood the Administrative and Financial, and Education services provided by [ORG SHORT NAME]: _____ (Mentor initials)

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM OPTIONS

Mentor voluntarily opts into the following optional [ORG SHORT NAME] components and/or services. By choosing any of the following options, Mentor agrees to commit to any associated costs, tasks and responsibilities for the duration of this MOU (Mentor marks selected items with an "X" and initializes on line following item, indicating that they have read and understood that item, and agree to terms.

Note regarding [ORG SHORT NAME] optional services: [ORG SHORT NAME] understands that agricultural apprenticeships include a wide range of lengths, start- and end-dates, and application deadlines. In order for participating mentors to maximally benefit from [ORG SHORT NAME] services and program components, both required and optional, [ORG SHORT NAME] encourages mentors to adapt their application and selection calendars, start-dates, and program calendar to match the [ORG SHORT NAME] calendar as much as possible.

APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

[ORG SHORT NAME] Standard Application: [ORG SHORT NAME] has designed a standard application for apprenticeship candidates to fill out and submit

on the [ORG SHORT NAME] website. Mentors who choose to use the [ORG SHORT NAME] Standard Application agree to follow the [ORG SHORT NAME] application schedule, with applications posted [DATE], and deadlines for submissions on [DATE]. [ORG SHORT NAME]'s administrator will forward all applications to mentor upon receiving them. *Mentor initials:* _____

[ORG SHORT NAME] Standard Interview and Selection Process: [ORG SHORT NAME]'s interview and selection process includes three steps to selection: (1) a written application; (2) an audio-visual conference call interview for up to 6 semi-finalists; (3) an in-person interview and work visit for up to 3 finalists. Mentors who choose to participate in the [ORG SHORT NAME] selection process agree to follow the interview and selection calendar set by [ORG SHORT NAME]. Both [ORG SHORT NAME] and Mentor will review applications and collectively select semi-finalists. [ORG SHORT NAME] will help prepare mentors to conduct effective audio-visual interviews and may participate in initial interview, as needed. [ORG SHORT NAME] will help prepare mentors for in-person interviews but will not participate. [ORG SHORT NAME] will conduct communications with applicants up until and through the selection of finalists, then hand off communications to mentors. *Mentor initials:* _____

[ORG SHORT NAME] Promotion: for mentors who either go through the full [ORG SHORT NAME] application and selection process, or who use the [ORG SHORT NAME] application and then implement their selection process, [ORG SHORT NAME] promotion is included. This option is meant specifically for mentors who opt to use their own, custom application, interview and selection process from application launch through apprentice hire. [ORG SHORT NAME] will work with Mentor to create text for advertisements. [ORG SHORT NAME] will advertise for apprenticeship position extensively online, in print and through other means available, and during time period that coincides with [ORG SHORT NAME] application process. Mentor understands that in order to take full advantage of this service, their application and selection calendar should be similar to the [ORG SHORT NAME] schedule. [ORG SHORT NAME] posts ads beginning in late September and ending with the application deadline in early December. *Mentor initials:* _____

OPTIONAL APPRENTICESHIP COMPONENTS

New Apprentice Orientation: [ORG SHORT NAME] will design, schedule and implement a new apprentice orientation, to be held in Santa Fe each year in March. Orientation covers a wide range of topics including, but not limited to, using the skills checklist, conducting an effective evaluation session, giving and receiving feedback, good communication skills, keeping a daily log, writing reports, general [ORG SHORT NAME] program components and requirements, what to expect on the mentor ranch/farm, etc. [ORG SHORT NAME] will cover all costs associated with designing and conducting orientation, including any necessary materials, food, and lodging for participating apprentices. Apprentices who attend orientation will be given an Apprentice Workbook customized to their particular apprenticeship. Mentor will cover apprentice travel cost to and from orientation in Santa Fe, NM.

Mentor initials: _____

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Monthly apprentice stipend will be [DOLLAR AMOUNT], as agreed upon collectively by Mentor and [ORG SHORT NAME]. Mentor agrees to pay [PERCENTAGE] of monthly stipend, or [DOLLAR AMOUNT]. [ORG SHORT NAME] will pay remainder of [DOLLAR AMOUNT] each month. Mentor will receive quarterly grant disbursements from [ORG SHORT NAME], to be applied toward apprentice stipend and associated taxes, including payroll tax, for that quarter. See budget and schedule below. *Mentor initials:* _____

TERMS OF UNDERSTANDING

The term of this MOU is for a period of [NUMBER] months from the effective date of this agreement and may be extended upon written mutual agreement. It shall be reviewed at least once during the term of the apprenticeship to ensure that it is fulfilling its purpose and to make any necessary revisions. Either organization may terminate this MOU upon 30 days' notice, without penalties or liabilities.

AUTHORIZATION

By signing this MOU, signatories confirm that they have read the entire document; that they understand each included item; and they agree to fulfill the roles and responsibilities described herein.

The signing of this MOU is not a formal undertaking. It implies that the signatories will strive to reach, to the best of their ability, the objectives stated in the MOU.

[ORGANIZATION LEAD EXECUTIVE, TITLE] [MENTOR]

DATE

DATE

We would like to thank Paper Tiger of Santa Fe, New Mexico for their support in publishing this book.



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Across the US, the idea and practice of agrarian apprenticeship has started taking root as an excellent educational methodology for transferring vital, land-based knowledge from one generation of ranchers and farmers to the next. The Quivira Coalition explored many such apprenticeships and apprenticeship programs operating from coast to coast—the various models, educational curriculums, and financial structures; the successes and challenges; and the motivation driving the many mentors and program directors overseeing these opportunities. This book is the culmination of that work. It includes individual profiles of many of the programs we surveyed for our research—plus a step-by-step guide for creating an apprenticeship opportunity from the ground up, based on Quivira’s own apprenticeship initiative, the New Agrarian Program.



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