



On Farm Internship Agreements

-----2008 Farmer Mentor Handbook-----

On Farm Internship Agreements



It is advisable that each farmer mentor writes up an agreement between the farmer and the intern. Farmers and interns often have different ideas about the amount of work required, time spent on education and training, and issues like housing and compensation. Coming to an agreement at the beginning of the internship, and having things outlined in writing, can avoid problems down the road. By outlining some basic rules and expectations, the farmer mentor and the student intern can be assured of understanding each other more clearly. The more you have written in your agreement, the fewer things can become an issue.

Each farm and situation is unique. The following outline will give you some ideas to review and consider for your specific circumstances in creating your individual intern agreement.

ROOM & BOARD

As a farmer, what kind of living arrangement will you have with your intern? Will they receive room and board? Does this mean three meals a day, seven days a week? Are you preparing the meals? Are they living in your house with you or will they be staying in separate living quarters? Each situation is unique and needs to be clarified with the intern staying on your farm.

LIVING QUARTERS

Whether the intern is living in your home or in separate living quarters, it is good to outline your expectations. Are they using your laundry facility? If so, is there a specific day that you would like this to be available to them? Will you be sharing a refrigerator? If they are living in a trailer or separate quarters, what are they responsible for?

WORK SCHEDULE

How many hours per week? What days of the week will be the established workweek? What is the starting and ending time each day? It is important to define a work schedule as well as to think about teaching or training specific aspects of your program. Some situations for on farm internships provide opportunity for the students to work or live off of the farm. A work schedule will define what both of your needs are and provide continuity for on-going projects during the season.

TELEPHONE

If you have one telephone line available, and your intern has numerous calls coming in, this could become an issue. Will you allow the intern to answer your telephone? If you do, you need to outline the correct answering and message taking procedure. There are many ways to deal with this, and having this outlined in the rules up front is advisable.

VISITORS

It may be worthwhile to clarify visitor rules in your agreement. Again, this is unique to each farm. Do you allow visitors to bring dogs? You need to clarify this.

-----2008 Farmer Mentor Handbook-----

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Example: Greentree Naturals Internship Agreement 2007

ROOM & BOARD

We will provide lunch for the days that you are working on the farm. We will also provide a CSA share as a weekly provision of produce to supplement your food staples for weekly labor exchange. If you are staying on the farm, details will be outlined and discussed.

WORK SCHEDULE

We need a minimum 28 hours per week, with an established workweek of Monday, Tuesday and Thursday – 7 hours per day; Starting time at 9 AM – 5 PM, with an hour off for lunch. The additional hours will be dedicated to marketing aspects of our operation and may vary during the season. A portion of each workday will be devoted to educational purposes. During the heat of summer, we will start work at 7 AM.

SHOWERS

Water is a limited resource from a shallow well on the farm. We will pay for three showers a week, available at the Pack River Store at a cost of \$2.00 each. Additional showers will be at the expense of the intern. Store hours are 8 AM to 8 PM. There is also a laundry facility available there which is at your own expense.

TELEPHONE

Greentree telephone is a business line not to be used for personal calls. You may give our number out for EMERGENCY ONLY; this means your parents or family. There is a pay phone at the Pack River Store. Cellular telephones are available for approximately \$25.00 per month and will be at the expense of the intern.

VISITORS

Your friends and visitors are welcome and are your responsibility. We want you to be comfortable in your summer home. When your visitors come, they are here to visit you. Please respect our privacy.

TRASH

Please recycle your glass, cans and aluminum. Food scraps can be fed to the chickens. There are bears in the adjacent woods! Please keep your home site clean at all times or you will be having a black bear, mice or other uninvited critters visiting your trailer!

VALUE

There is more value to this experience than monetary. Working as an on farm Intern, we hope to provide you with experience and perspective of what is involved with growing a certified organic market garden. We need to hear from you as to specific details of what you most want to learn. We are open to suggestions and any ideas that you may have to offer. We can't know if you don't tell us!

-----2008 Farmer Mentor Handbook-----
On Farm Internship Agreements

Example: Skylines Farm Sheep and Wool, 2008 Spring Intern Agreement

SKYLINES FARM SHEEP & WOOL 2008 Spring Apprentice

GUIDELINES & AGREEMENTS

1. Room & Board

Room: I will provide a private room and bath in the upstairs of the house. If you choose, you may move into the camp trailer once the weather warms up (or not).

Board: I will provide 1 meal a day (dinner), 7 days a week (TBD-this arrangement is negotiable), and you are responsible for your remaining meals and snacks. Your suite is equipped with a refrigerator and microwave oven. You are welcome to prepare and eat your snacks/meals downstairs using the kitchen, or upstairs. Please return dirty dishes to the kitchen daily.

2. Schedules for Work, Learning, & Evaluations

- **Work:** Five days a week, Monday through Friday, average 6-8 hours/day. Some days you may work fewer hours, and it's possible that longer hours may be required some days during lambing season. Of course, you're welcome to spend as much additional time as you wish with the sheep during your off-hours.

- **Learning:** Class Day. One day a week we'll spend 2-3 hours in formal lecture and hands-on experience with one or more aspects of running a sheep farm (**See Lesson Topics**). The Class Day schedule will have to be flexible during the 4 major weeks of lambing season Feb 15-March 15, but we'll cover all of the material during the course of your apprenticeship. You'll have reading assignments to be completed before each class day.

In addition, you'll be learning every day as we work together with the fleeces, the ewes and the lambs, rams, fencing and various other projects. I will discuss the how's and why's of each job that we do, make sure you get hands-on experience with the activity, and allow ample time for questions.

- Ongoing Evaluation Process:

- 1) Each day will begin and end with a brief discussion of the day's activities.
- 2) At the start of our weekly Class Days we'll allow time to address any issues that might have arisen over the week, such as work schedules, personal issues, etc.
- 3) Halfway through the apprenticeship, about March 15, we'll have an evaluation of the apprenticeship thus far. Are you learning what you had hoped to learn? Is your learning

-----2008 Farmer Mentor Handbook-----

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Example: SkyLines Farm Sheep and Wool, 2008 Spring Intern Agreement

proceeding at a good pace? Changes? Improvements? Am I happy with the work you're performing? Changes? Improvements?

4) During the final week of your apprenticeship, we'll have a final evaluation. We'll discuss how the apprenticeship went for both of us, how it might be improved in the future, how you plan to use the information you've gained during this time, and anything else that comes up.

3. Remuneration

- Your work performed on the farm is payment for my formal and informal training and hands-on experience in raising sheep by organic methods. I will pay you \$100 per month to help defray your incidental expenses, payable on the last day of each month of your apprenticeship (February, March, April 2008).

- We might also agree on additional payment for additional work outside of your general farm duties. TBD.

- Also, I will contact Theresa Griener at Fiddler's Ridge Nursery about possibly hiring you part-time for spring nursery help. This will be on weekends only during lambing season and during your off-time hours after lambing season.

4. Housekeeping Responsibilities

We are sharing this house, so it's only fair that we share basic housekeeping duties (during your off hours), such as dishwashing & wiping down stove and counters, sweeping the kitchen floor, vacuuming the living room, sweeping the decks occasionally, filling the firewood box, tending to the fire (after training period), taking out garbage, taking recycle containers into town when we go.

I would appreciate it if you would remove your shoes/boots when entering the house, hang your wet and/or dirty barn gear by the door, pick up after yourself, and keep your suite in generally good order. This includes cleaning your bathroom periodically, washing your clothing and sheets regularly, and watering the houseplants that live with you.

Please recycle glass, tin cans, pop cans, plastic bottles, newspapers.

5. Facilities Use

- **Phone:** The phone line is my business line and my personal line and includes an answering machine. Since I will receive the vast majority of calls, when I am in the house I will answer the phone. If I am not in the house you can let the machine answer or pick it up yourself.

If you take calls, please answer the phone with: **Good morning/afternoon/evening, SkyLines Farm.** If it's for me, explain that I'm out of the house, take detailed messages with phone numbers, and make sure that I receive them as soon as possible.

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Please limit your telephone time to 2 hours a day (during your off hours), maximum 1 hour per call, with at least 1 hour between calls so my callers are able to reach me. And please, no incoming calls after 9pm.

- **Computer:** You are free to use the laptop computer and printer in your suite for personal use (during your off hours). The satellite Internet access is on 24/7 and you have unlimited use of it. I may also ask you to do some computer and/or online work during your work hours.

- **Entertainment:** You are free to use the TV, VCR, and stereo in your suite (during your off hours). I only ask that you respect my desire for quiet and keep the volume reasonable. TV reception here is poor. Feel free to watch any of my 50+ feature-movies, or the Netflix films. Please return Netflix movies downstairs the following day. If any of my music DVDs interest you, you're welcome to listen to them. You're also welcome to read any of the books in my library. Again, please return downstairs when you're finished.

- **Laundry:** You are welcome to use my washer and dryer, located in the basement. Please limit use to 3 loads a week. You need to provide your own detergent, bleach, etc.

- **Bathing:** Your suite is equipped with a shower, but you're welcome to use the downstairs tub for baths. Just let me know in advance.

6. Privacy

We will be spending a great deal of time together, and we both need some alone time each day. If we have no decided otherwise that day, I would appreciate it if you would plan on retiring to your space by about 8pm each night. On your off days, or evenings when there is no lambing emergency, you're of course welcome to leave the farm and go to town or...

Private Spaces: Your private space is the entire upstairs of the house. My private space is my office, bedroom, and bathroom. Let's both respect that. Our shared space is the living room, kitchen, decks...and the entire farm ☺

7. Visitors

You are welcome to invite friends to the farm, but they are coming to visit you, so please respect my privacy. You are responsible for their respectful behavior and their safety, and no dogs are allowed. If you want to have overnight visitors please check with me first, and they will be expected to help out in some way.

Melissa Lines

Apprentice

Date