

CULTIVATING SUCCESS

FARMER MENTOR POSITION DESCRIPTION

Introduction: The role of the Cultivating Success Farmer Mentor is critical to the success of the program. Farmer Mentors contribute to the program by providing the on-farm educational component of Cultivating Success (CS). The level of involvement and types of educational programs offered by a Farmer Mentor may vary from farm-to-farm, and may be different with each individual internship or mentorship. The Cultivating Success program requires that CS Farmer Mentors should all have a commitment to offering educational on-farm work experiences that encourage new farmers and promote their future success in sustainable farming.

The CS Farmer Mentor will work with their state Cultivating Success program coordinator and (sometimes) an academic advisor (an extension educator or other faculty member) to develop an on-farm teaching plan. The farmer mentor plans and directs student farmers on the practical skills and concepts of intensive, sustainable small acreage farming and/or ranching and market gardening.

Farmer mentors will go through a short formal training to be certified as a Cultivating Success Farm Based Learning instructor. The training will include sessions on farm based curriculum, adult education, experiential education, mentoring, conflict resolution, engaging students, farm liability and risk management.

Please see the sample "on-farm teaching plan" or "farm-based curricula" in the Farmer Mentor Handbook or online at www.cultivatingsuccess.org

Skills, knowledge and Abilities

Farm mentors are accomplished with a set of unique skills, knowledge and abilities. The farmer mentor is a teacher of the farm classroom and has previous teaching experience, or has a strong desire to teach, in a garden or field setting. The farmer mentor has the ability to deliver information and instruction in a clear and thorough manner both verbally and by demonstration. The farmer mentor must have experience and knowledge in operations involved with maintaining all aspects of *sustainable productions* of integrated farming systems and instruction, including knowledge in general equipment maintenance, irrigation, hand tools, wheelbarrows, seeders, etc. He/she may have experience with direct marketing, and should be proficient in record keeping for planning, production, and marketing. The farmer mentor must be able to prioritize and must demonstrate organizational and time management skills. They will need to be able to coordinate and complete a number of concurrent tasks to ensure both production and trainee instruction requirements are fulfilled.

Required Qualifications

- ❑ Minimum three years experience in farming or ranching.
 - ❑ Contact information for three references with direct knowledge of your experience and sustainable farming practices. References may be peers, Extension educators, former interns/apprentices, etc.
 - ❑ Must be owner/operator of production area (not necessarily owner of land, but must be the primary operative).
 - ❑ Willingness & ability to have intern/mentee working on the farm.
 - ❑ Must be willing and able to develop an on-farm teaching plan. *See examples on Cultivating Success website at www.cultivatingsuccess.org*
 - ❑ Must attend a Cultivating Success Farmer Mentor Orientation
 - ❑ Agree to a site visit by one or more representatives of Cultivating Success.
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The farmer mentor will:

1. Work in a partnership between the intern/mentee, a Cultivating Success representative, and sometimes, an academic or extension advisor to: identify the learning objectives, tasks, and responsibilities for intern/mentee that clearly states expectations, instructional sessions, and anticipated outcomes.
2. Instruct and oversee the intern/mentee at farm site on the practical skills and concepts of sustainable small acreage farming and/or ranching and market gardening to include any or all of the following:
 - Vegetable production
 - Flowers production
 - Herbs
 - Berries
 - Tree crops
 - Planting
 - Composting
 - Fertilizing
 - Irrigating
 - Harvesting
 - Pest control
 - Greenhouse/season extension
 - Marketing and record keeping

Specific for livestock producers:

- Animal Husbandry
- Animal health
- Animal facility needs
- On-farm feed production
- Animal breeding
- Recordkeeping and productivity
- Fencing
- Pasture management
- Applications of intensive livestock pasturing
- Rotational schedules
- Pasture and hay production

3. Direct daily activities of intern/mentee in production, marketing and maintenance of the sustainable small acreage farm/ranch or market garden.

4. Work with a Cultivating Success representative,(possibly an academic or extension advisor) and the intern/mentee to clarify and evaluate the learning program.