

Tucker Family Farm Dairy and Farm Apprenticeship Information

1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to give you the information we believe is essential in making your decision to apply as an apprentice. Please take time to read this document carefully before filling out the application form.

2. Introduction

Tucker Family Farm offers a One-year Sheep Dairy apprenticeship program. The goal of this apprenticeship is to prepare you for a career in the dairy industry, first as a milker, and to prepare you for jobs such as a dairy manager or introduce you to some of the necessary skills required for starting your own operation.

3. About our Farm

Tucker Family Farm is a farmstead dairy and creamery. This means that we use our milk to produce a finished product which we sell to the public. In our case, we sell cheese. We sell cheese throughout the state of Montana and are currently working on contracts in Idaho, Washington and Oregon, with the end goal being nationwide distribution. Along with cheese sales, we also raise lamb, which is sold primarily at local markets including, three farmers markets, local restaurants, and directly to customers. Any surplus is sold to a Montana livestock auction. We are a pasture based dairy, meaning that we allow our dairy herd to consume primarily pasture during the months that we have grass, and we source local hay for the times of year that the grass does not grow. Our lambs are finished entirely on pasture. During the summer we also raise a small number of pigs for local markets.

4. Time commitment/Daily Schedule

The apprenticeship program is a yearlong commitment. Typically, the year starts after Christmas and before New Year's and continues to the following Christmas. We only take apprentices at other times if we need a replacement. We only accept those that are willing to stay for the entire yearlong process; this ensures that those applying have the desire and commitment to learning.

The daily schedule will vary throughout the year depending on what is taking place. There will be two primary schedules: a lambing schedule and a milking schedule. Lambing happens three times a year and lasts for roughly four weeks. During this time apprentices will be asked to work either an AM or PM shift. The AM shift will start at 4:00 AM and will be over at 3PM. The PM shift starts at Noon and is over at 11:00 PM. Each shift is a 10-hour shift plus a 1 hour break. Once lambing is over we will move into our milking schedule. The milking schedule will start later and end earlier than our lambing schedule but will still be 10-hour days. Apprentice will be required to work 2 split shifts during the week. Please see schedule document at the end of the application for more detailed schedule information.

All apprentices are expected to manage and excel at one of the local farmer's markets we attend on Saturdays.

5. Expectations

While previous experience is great, it is not a requirement to apply for this position.

We do, however, have a few requirements that apprentices must follow. These two primary expectations must be met in order for you to stay with the farm, and should be strongly considered before deciding to apply.

- a. Apprentices must display a positive attitude and strive to be the best team member for the dairy, farm and creamery as a whole, that you can be. Negative attitudes bring everyone down, we function as a team and need everyone contributing to the betterment of the farm. Examples of a positive attitude include
 - i. Being more concerned about others well-being before your own
 - ii. Being flexible with time and schedule to help out the farm
 - iii. Focused on others and the farm's success before personal success
 - iv. The absence of negative talk about fellow employees
 - v. Bringing up issues in a constructive way, in the appropriate setting
 - vi. Must be able to accept criticism; own your mistakes and fix them
 - vii. You are not going to like every task or every person, but it has to be done well and with a good attitude
 - viii. Work must be completed in compliance to our procedures. Suggestions or improvements are welcomed but need to be discussed and implemented as a team before being implemented individually
 - ix. Being patient; realizing that not all things can be fixed immediately
- b. Apprentices must show up on time to all shifts. Anything later than the allotted start time is considered late. Showing up late can become a slippery slope, five minutes grows to 10, and the farm operates as a whole, your being late effects everyone else's day. Showing up late relates to the first expectation of aiding your team, being late places added stress on the farm/creamery as a whole.
- c. Consequences of not following the above guidelines:
 - i. There is a three-strike rule in regards to showing up on time. You will be warned after the first. After the second you will be notified that you cannot miss another day. The third day late will result in immediate dismissal.
 - ii. A negative attitude has an immediate impact on those around you and the farm as a whole. If we see a problem we will address it with that person and expect a change. If the desired change does not happen then that person will be asked to leave. There is not a third strike for this. If a behavior is identified that affects everyone it must be changed or you will be dismissed.

6. Learning Experience

Dairy apprentices will progress through three stages of the internship. During the first stage, you will learn the basics of milking, lambing and general farm tasks. There is a lot to learn in this initial stage and you may feel overwhelmed at times. Be persistent and keep a good attitude and it will all come together. The first stage must be completed in three months in order to continue on the farm, as these are the necessary set of skills required to work on your own. Stage two will introduce apprentices to tractor and trailer maintenance and

operation as well as flood irrigation practices. Stage three will consist of more advanced tractor and trailer skills, skills of interest and additional decision making responsibilities also occur during this stage. See additional information (**Intern Education Tiers**) for exact learning experience and requirements to progress to the next stage.

7. Compensation

We follow Montana State laws in regards to internship compensation. We will go over these laws upon arrival, or we can email them to you beforehand if you would like to look them over. Apprentices will be provided with; education, housing, workers compensation insurance, and a **monthly** stipend. Note, a portion of your stipend will be withheld by the Montana and Federal government for tax purposes. Apprentices will also have Workers Compensation Insurance. Any injury on farm will be covered through this insurance, however, we strongly encourage personal health insurance.

We have both on-farm and off-farm housing options. Those staying on farm will live in a trailer and have access to our bunkhouse which has a kitchen, bathroom, and living and dining area. Off-farm housing will be mostly furnished apartments as near to the farm as possible. Because of the chance you will be living off farm, a vehicle is required of all applicants. Apprentices are responsible for maintaining their living areas and caring for the provided furniture, appliances, etc. The farm is responsible for appliances and building maintenance under normal wear and tear circumstances.

Apprentices will be paid once a month, this is a state requirement for interns/apprentices. Your monthly pay will be \$725 in addition to housing and workers compensation, this amount far exceeds the minimum allotted amount to be paid an intern by the state of Montana. It is important to remember, this is considered a learning experience, not a job, you should be here to learn, not to make money or pass the time. You will be happy with these accommodations if you are here to learn but unhappy if you are here for any other reason.

Apprentices receive five unpaid days off during their apprenticeship, these will be covered by Tyler if we are unable to figure out a schedule change. In addition, one can have up to 10 days off (in total, including 5 mentioned above) if covered by the other farm apprentice. There are times of the year where days off will not be allowed; this includes during lambing as all help is needed at this time. Because of this a one month notice and acceptance must be obtained for days off. Please remember, you are here to learn, this is not a “staycation”.

Additional Information

a. House rules (this includes on and off farm living)

These rules are based on years of experience of having people living on farm and in rental properties. These rules help to ensure a positive living environment for all.

- i. Overnight guests are not permitted
- ii. Guests stopping by at any other time need to be okayed with your roommate if you are living off farm, and needs to be okayed with Tyler, Kendra, or Allison if you want to bring someone on farm (at least a week in advance).
- iii. Your living space and public areas must be kept clean. We will do checks to make sure this is being done. Pay will be withheld if your area is not clean.

b. Whole farm schedule/seasonality

Our schedule is going to change throughout the year depending on the work load. In addition, days off will change as well so that both interns get to experience everything on the farm.

In general, we will work the most during lambing seasons. There is a lot to cover during this time and there will only be three of us to do it. You will learn a lot during this time. During lambing we will be working 6 days a week. After lambing we will move to 5 days a week, but switch back to 6 days once lambing starts again.

Lambing normally takes 3-4 weeks. Hours will depend on how fast tasks are getting done. Expect to work 10 hours a day (maybe more during lambing); this may be reduced as you become more proficient in your tasks, and as long as you are moving through them quickly. The farm has a joint start time and a list of things that have to be accomplished each day, we will work together to complete those tasks. End times will vary dependent on the workload of the day.

c. Intern education levels (see next page)

These are the skills you will learn and the expected time frame for learning the task. If you try and have a good attitude it is not difficult to learn the tasks within the time frame provided.

Intern Education Tiers

Intern Tier 1 (First 3 months)

- All skills must be learned by the end of the 3-month period in order to continue on the farm. Those unable to meet these objectives will be asked to leave after 3 months.
 - The first two points will be the same at every tier and are the most important aspects to create a valuable experience for all and to allow us to operate in a way that allows the farm to succeed.
1. Interns must be able to operate as a functional team, not only with members of the farm/dairy but also with members of the creamery. It should be your primary goal to aid all those around you and to help them be the best intern/employee/person that they can be.
 2. Interns must show up on time for every shift. Late is anything after the start time.
 - a. Third offense will be grounds for dismissal
 - b. In addition, you cannot move up to the next tier if you are late
 3. Display competence with chores (feeding/watering)
 4. Be able to tube a lamb
 5. Able to bottle feed difficult lambs
 6. Able to get lambs on to the lamb bar
 7. Notice when animal bedding is soiled, and put down fresh straw
 8. Able to recognize when a ewe is about to lamb, and be able to follow lambing procedures to ensure a safe delivery
 9. Able to do basic parlor maintenance (Fill cleaning solutions, keep post dip full, replace sanitation wipes, fix leaky milk line joints)
 10. Know how to properly clean parlor
 11. Able to competently milk by yourself
 12. Can empty and clean bulk tank
 13. Identify mastitis and treatment plan
 14. Identify sick sheep and know general treatments
 15. Notice fence and gate issues
 16. Able to notice sick or unhealthy lambs, how to correct problem, and communicate it with rest of team
 17. Demonstrates ability to clean up after self and put tools back where you found them
 18. Pick up blue barrels and clean when empty, without being told

Intern Tier 2 (Months 4-6 at minimum, more as needed)

1. Interns must be able to operate as a functional team, not only with members of the farm/dairy but also with members of the creamery. It should be your primary goal to aid all those around you and to help them be the best intern/employee/person that they can be.
2. Interns must show up on time for every shift. Late is anything after the start time.
 - a. Third offense will be grounds for dismissal
 - b. In addition, you cannot move up to the next tier if you are late
3. All Tier 1 skills must be maintained and improved upon to stay at this level of training
4. Introduction to tractor operation (move whey, brewery grain, and grain; switch implements)
5. Tractor maintenance (diesel, lube, check fluids)
6. Flood irrigation
7. Introduction to driving with a trailer (able to hook up/un hook trailer, reverse trailer into parking spot)

Intern Tier 3 (Remainder of season)

1. Interns must be able to operate as a functional team, not only with members of the farm/dairy but also with members of the creamery. It should be your primary goal to aid all those around you and to help them be the best intern/employee/person that they can be.
2. Interns must show up on time for every shift. Late is anything after the start time.
 - a. Third offense will be grounds for dismissal
 - b. In addition, you cannot move up to the next tier if you are late
3. Introduction to advanced tractor skills (plowing, mowing, disking, seeding, etc.)
4. Full trailer operations, able to back into position to get and drop off animals
5. Parlor, vehicle, equipment repairs
6. Brewery grain pick up
7. Trailering animals to butcher (must demonstrate complete trailer competence)
8. Construction skills
9. Start to schedule tasks, and come up with own weekly tasks based on the needs of the farm/creamery team
10. Help with breeding/lambing/milking decisions
11. Learn to train and be a team leader