

## Balfour Farm

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### Farm Apprenticeship Opportunity

Please read through the following information and contact the farm if you have additional questions.

- An apprentice should have the following skills:

- Be able to follow directions**

- Ask for clarification if you are not sure about something.
  - It is helpful to have some experience with animals, or be comfortable around them
  - Don't be afraid to get dirty!
  - A good sense of humor- be able to see the light side of things
  - Patience with animals
  - Willing to work long days- hours will vary from day to day. There is often down time during the day, or we may work longer to finish a job (ie. before it rains, or while someone else is milking)
  - Be efficient in your work, and show up on time
  - Valid driver's license

- Farm Description:

- Pittsfield, Maine, population 4500
  - 101 acres: ~37 acres in pasture/hay, 65 acres of mixed woods. We are a certified organic dairy farm, our herd is about 30 animals. We are milking 14 cows. We have Normande and Jersey cattle. We are a grazing based dairy and feed only a small amount of grain to get the cows into the milking parlor. We have a deep bedded pack barn that the cows use in the winter. In the grazing season, we utilize intensive rotational grazing.
  - We milk at 6 am unless there is a morning market, then we milk earlier. Currently, in the summer Wednesday and Saturday are days we start around 3 am to finish chores before markets. Think of these days as 'all hands on deck' days. There is a lot to do in the morning, so everyone is needed. We are usually back from market by 2-3 pm on Saturday and then take it easy the rest of the day.
  - We have a creamery to process our milk into bottled milk, yogurt and cheeses.
  - We have a small apple orchard and plant a large garden each year. Extra help is appreciated in the garden-after all, you will be eating the food too! We also preserve

much of our food by pickling, canning, freezing, and we would like to start drying as well.

○We raise much of our own food: chickens for meat and eggs, as well as pigs for pork and beef from our cull cows.

•Farm Work

○Skills you will learn:

▪All aspects of dairy management and care: calving, disbudding, castrating/ banding, heat detection, feeding, pasture management, fencing, organic herd health practices.

▪Sanitary milking practices: udder prep, hand and machine milking, milk handling, equipment sanitation (pipeline system).

▪Creamery skills: creamery sanitation, basic cheesemaking, packaging, waxing, culturing yogurt, and bottling of fresh milk.

▪Farmers' Market: setting up our display, customer interaction, deliveries, invoicing. The apprentice will be expected to go to farmers' markets when needed (at least twice a week)

▪Feeding and caring for livestock, chickens and pigs (piglets, depending on the time of the year)

▪Harvesting chickens: slaughter, cleaning, packaging

▪General farm work: weedwacking, mowing, painting, barn repairs, safe tractor operation, general construction and maintenance of buildings, firewood, gardening for farm use, occasional deliveries.

•Education and Training: apprentice will work side-by-side with farmer on a daily basis for most tasks. When apprentice is comfortable completing a task by themselves, they will be expected to work independently. We are firm believers of "learn by doing"! Apprentice will be encouraged to attend MOFGA workshops and visit other farms at least once a month, aside from their weekly scheduled day off.

•Exchange: the farm will provide housing and all meals as well as a small stipend.

○Housing: In the farmhouse, family style living. We have a couple options for housing, depending if the apprentice is single, male/female and others living in the house. We have two large bedrooms in the upstairs of the farmhouse that can sleep 2-3 people. For common areas, there is a large room living room located off the kitchen. The large windows overlook the pasture. There is a full bath in the downstairs of the house (which also contains the laundry), a ¾ bath upstairs (between to the bedrooms). There is one television in the house, in the living room. We do not have cable (this means we are able to receive three channels), we do have wifi internet. Being in a rural area, we have a difficult time with streaming media and there are download limitations on our service.

○Meals: all of the meat we consume is produced on the farm. Most of the fruits and veggies are raised here on the farm or sourced from local producers. This will be a family style living arrangement, so apprentices are encouraged to take part in meal planning, preparation and clean up. Often times, the summer farm work will create erratic eating schedules, so all help is appreciated.

○ **There is absolutely no smoking allowed on the farm. This is not negotiable.** We will also not tolerate drug use or underage drinking. Responsible use of alcohol is OK.

○We strongly encourage the apprentice to have a cell phone, not only for personal use, but for emergency roadside needs and communication on the road between markets.

•Health concerns: apprentices should be in good physical condition and capable of lifting ~50lbs without assistance. You need to be able to run faster than a cow that is heading the wrong way, and nimble enough to catch a loose chicken or piglet. These are essential skills on a farm! ☺ We have two dogs and one cat that live in the house with us– they are all very well behaved, but do shed from time to time( ok, all the time). There are also barn cats– friendly, but not allowed in the house. If you have pet allergies, this may be a concern for you. No one in our household has dietary restrictions, so please let us know if you do!

•Personal: We are generally quiet people, up early in the morning and in bed by 10 pm. There are four people in our family: Doug and Heather, Emily and Erin. Erin is a senior in HS, Emily is in college and currently living in NY. Doug and Heather worked on the farm full time since beginning the dairy in 2006. Before that, Doug operated a construction business, and worked as an Artificial Insemination Technician for Genex. Heather worked as an office manager at an OB/GYN office and taught middle school science. We began farming on a small scale in 1998, with our first 12 chickens. We moved to Pittsfield in Dec 2010 and began setting up the creamery. We have a lot of projects on the farm in order to take this property from an old farm that was not actively farmed, to the vibrant farm we know it can be. We have made a good start during our first year here, and are looking forward to building and growing our farm business in the coming years.