

Burning River Farm

Full Time Crew Job Description 2017



The Farm

Burning River Farm is a small farm specializing in vegetables for a 250+ member CSA, farmers markets and some accounts. The farm is [Certified Naturally Grown](#), the grassroots alternative to USDA Organic. Working on the farm is a great job, or opportunity to gain real experience to put towards farming goals.

Overview

Employment at Burning River Farm is an opportunity on a small, locally based, for profit vegetable farm. The FT crew is the backbone of the farm! The primary goal through the season is to grow exceptional, nutritious, clean food without the use of chemical inputs, and to improve the quality of the soil for the following season. We strive, with the help of the crew members, to provide an employment experience that is positive and productive for both the farm and employees. Employees will be involved in aspects of farming within the perimeters of the season itself. This includes, but is not limited to: greenhouse production for transplants, field production, planting, weeding, harvest, washing and packing vegetables for CSA and market, and general farming tasks.

Working at Burning River Farm is an excellent opportunity for those willing to work hard. Each full season employee is responsible for specific areas of production through the season. Specializing the tasks for each crew member allows for the farm to run efficiently while providing hours of practical experience.

We also hire a part time crew to help with weeding and harvest tasks.



Work Schedule

The season runs from beginning of April through the final full week in October. The work week schedule is Tuesday-Saturday, April through July. Starting in July until Mid-September due to expanded harvest needs, a short Monday morning shift is added for some harvest and weeks planning, along with full days Tuesday-Saturday. Full work days are generally from 7 a.m.-4:00 p.m. with an hour lunch, however we may work later or earlier on any given day to complete needed tasks. The schedule may change in response to weather or working conditions.

Crew members need to be ready at 7 a.m., prepared to work and for the days conditions. **This means having appropriate clothing for the day on hand.** At that time, there is an overview of the day and what needs to be accomplished. Although there are ongoing tasks throughout the season, farm tasks are ever changing. Tasks are dealt with either as a crew or on an individual basis.

Responsibilities

I try to delegate to each FT employee a specific area of production for the season. Each of these is integral to the farm and invaluable experience for future farming.

Crop cultivation and weed control: This is the use of small cultivating tractors to control weeds in the crops. Each of our 3 cultivators are set up for different crop spacings. This takes attention to detail, coordination and problem solving. We are cultivating from May into late September. Weed control is a timely task, and a good execution means that the whole crew spends less time hand weeding. Included is flame weeding and stale bedding.

Bed making and seeding: This is the forming and finishing of beds for planting. We use a mid sized tractor, bed shaper and rototiller for this task. We do many direct seeded crops and plant almost weekly. All our seeding is done using push seeders with various settings for different crops. This position also needs a good attention to detail and problem solving.

Field prep and cover crops: This is the prepping of larger areas using a disk or field cultivator, cover crop sowing, mowing and incorporating to ensure that we are building our soils and providing fertility for our crops, spreading amendments, fertilizers, composts and manures. These tasks require a large (for us) tractor. Wide lens awareness is important and well as the ability to troubleshoot on the fly.

Other responsibilities delegated to specific crew members includes:

Working at farmers markets: We attend the Mill City Farmers Market, the NE Minneapolis Farmers Market and the Midtown Farmers Market, all located in Minneapolis on Saturday mornings. Responsibilities at the farmers market include set up and creating an attractive farm stand, handling transactions, providing friendly and expedient customer service and enjoying the experience. Farmers Markets require and 5am Saturday morning start usually returning by 4pm. They are long, exhausting and enjoyable days. These are great farmers markets and are an invaluable experience for anyone who is looking to run a farm and get hands on experience with marketing.

Deliveries: We deliver weekly to the Twin Cities and Du-



luth area. Employees may be responsible for some deliveries.

Harvest: timely harvest of many varieties of vegetables, with an eye for quality and efficiency.

Harvest shed: Intake and processing of produce coming in from the fields. This includes cleaning and packing for CSA, market and wholesale accounts.

Beyond the specialized responsibilities, tasks on the farm vary, day to day and week to week. Spring time generally includes planting in the greenhouse, prepping fields and beds for planting, transplanting and field planting, etc. At this time we also work on any building projects that are slated for the season.

In early June, the focus shifts to cultivating and maintaining crops, harvesting for the CSA and farmers markets, packing CSA shares, and lots of weeding. We still are planting a lot in the Summer. Long days can be expected at this time to get tasks completed. This pace continues well into September.

In the last month of the season, we shift to field prep for the following season, harvesting storage crops, and general cleanup.

Many tasks happen on a weekly basis. For example, loose greens and salad mix are major crops on the farm. We may be harvesting, washing and packing greens 2 days a week through much of the season. Another ongoing task through the season is hand weeding crops, which entire days may be devoted too. These tasks are monotonous, requiring an eye for detail, a focus on completing the task at hand, and a fresh approach each day. It can't be stressed enough that these and other farm tasks must be carried out efficiently and with care.

Employees are responsible for providing their own lunch most workdays (occasionally lunch will be provided for the crew). There is a kitchen available on the farm for any food preparation needs.

Farming is challenging work that can often be physically difficult and uncomfortable. The ability to work through and remain effective is highly valued. Employees must remain flexible to the needs of the farm.

Housing



Housing is provided off the farm in a shared crew house in the town of Frederic, 3 miles from the farm. Each crew members has a private bedroom in the 3 bedroom house. There are 2 bathrooms (one with a shower, one with a bathtub) and a full kitchen. The house is modern and comfortable. Housing is provided as part of employment, however a damage deposit of \$500 will be deducted from each employees first paycheck to be refunded at the time of move out, provided there are no damages to be covered. For more info, see the housing agreement.

Crew members are responsible for maintaining the house and grounds. This includes keeping the house clean and the yard presentable (lawn mowed at least every other week and weeding around the house). In general, pets are not allowed. The farm is also not able to accommodate the family of a perspective crew member in the crew house. Crew members must sign a housing agreement before moving in (see [Housing Agreement](#)).

Compensation

Compensation consists of salary and housing.

Monthly salary for 1st year employees is \$1700 before taxes. This is approx. equivalent to \$9.25/hr for 45 hour weeks, not including the value of housing provided.

Monthly salary for a second season FT employee is \$2200. This is approx. equivalent to \$12.00/hr, not including the value of housing provided.

For an applicant with previous farming experience, additional pay may be considered. A bonus is payed upon completing the season as a percentage of market sales (5%) split between FT crew members (2014's bonus was \$600 per person, 2015 was \$725, 2016 was \$1000). This is an end of season bonus based on our performance at the farmers markers AND successful completion of the season. **Payment of the market bonus is contingent upon an employees completion of the season (November 1st)**. If employment is ended, either by the farm or employee, then a market bonus will not be paid to that employee. For an employee who starts the season later than April, the bonus may be prorated.

When available, employees an take a dozen farm eggs each week and any excess produce at no cost.

Taking Time Off

FT employees may take **5 paid days** off during the season for personal use. These may be taken separately, or all at once. However, they need to be okayed by the farm at least 2 weeks ahead, and must not conflict with another employees time off.

Taking a day off due to illness must be communicated ASAP.

Other

This position is for a full season on the farm. Therefore, commitment to the season is required. As a crew member on the farm, you are expected to be punctual, honest and have a strong work ethic. Applicants need to be positive and self starting with good communication skills. You must also be capable of daily physical labor and have the ability and desire to carry out tasks efficiently. It is important for crew members to be on task when on the clock. Though there is no formal education given for this position, this opportunity provides on the job training and is a

great outlet for the right person to gain experience towards a farming career. Questions about the what's and why's of farming are accommodated and encouraged throughout the season.

The Surrounding Area

Frederic is located in rural Polk County, WI. The area has wonderful natural beauty, a good community, a [food co-op](#) and a [cafe nearby](#), along with great [hiking](#), [biking](#), swimming and [outdoor opportunities](#) with a chance for quiet in a rural setting. There are also opportunities to meet other farm folk and spend time in the Minneapolis/St. Paul or Duluth areas. Having a car is recommended, but not essential. We've had many past employees do well with just a bicycle.

Thank you for your interest in working at Burning River Farm.