



## **Position Description: Farm Manager, EarthDance**

**Organization:** EarthDance

**Organizational Mission:** EarthDance sustainably grows food, farmers, and community, one small farm at a time, through hands-on education and delicious experiences.

**Position:** Farm Manager & Educator

**Location:** 233 S Dade Ave, Ferguson, MO 63135 (North St. Louis County, Missouri)

EarthDance is a non-profit organization that operates an Organic Farm School and a nine-month Farm & Garden Apprenticeship on 3+ acres of the 14 acre historic Mueller Organic Farm. We also run a variety of educational programs for youth and adults surrounding agriculture, health, and the environment. Our vision is to operate a community hub farm where agricultural education and community celebration thrive. The ideal candidate is committed to EarthDance's goals of community involvement and education, and can successfully integrate these goals with those of an efficient, productive farm.

### **Job Description Summary**

EarthDance is seeking a seasoned and dynamic leader to direct daily farm operations at the Mueller Organic Farm. The Farm Manager will design and implement innovative systems to maximize production of annual vegetables, fruits, herbs, flowers, and other products. The Farm Manager also directs the design and maintenance of irrigation systems, and manages the upkeep of farm equipment. A significant part of the Farm Manager's responsibilities will also be carrying out on-farm education for EarthDance apprentices and volunteers. The Farm Manager will work closely with the Program Director to ensure that the training objectives of the EarthDance Farm & Garden Apprenticeship are being met, including leading field walks, assisting with class and workshop preparations, and carrying out on-farm demonstrations. The Farm Manager will also train and supervise the Assistant Farm Manager – Americorps VISTA, in addition to managing the first- and second-year apprentices during field work days. The Farm Manager will report to and work closely with the Founding Director.

### **About EarthDance at the Mueller Organic Farm:**

The overall Mueller Organic Farm (all of which is owned by EarthDance) is 14 acres. In 2013 we had 2.3 acres in field production, and will be expanding to just over 3 acres in 2014. 4 graduates of our apprenticeship program and two other farmers rented other parcels from EarthDance for the 2013 growing season, and some of these may rent again in 2014. In addition, EarthDance staff and volunteers manage the Seven Generations Garden at the farm, a one acre parcel surrounding the farmhouse office that demonstrates permaculture principles and a variety of gardening methods and designs from which apprentices and community members can learn. We are not yet certified organic but strictly follow organic/sustainable farming techniques, and will be applying for certification this winter. We will have one high tunnel used for season extension (to be built October 4 & 5). We will be integrating laying hens and a pumpkin patch into our operation in 2014 as well. Future plans include planting an orchard, as



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well as native hedgerows as more of the invasive species overgrown areas are cleared. Since we are in a residential neighborhood, aesthetics and general site maintenance play an important part of our weekly work plan.

Our Farm Crew is composed of 20 – 25 part-time apprentices who are participants in our Farm & Garden Apprenticeship, an educational program designed to train beginning growers on the skills of sustainable agriculture from seed to market. A full-time Americorps VISTA Assistant Farm Manager will work directly with the Farm Manager to meet the production goals of the farm, and assist with farmers market sales. EarthDance also regularly welcomes groups of volunteers to the farm to assist with farm work. In 2014 our distribution will be focused on a 50 share CSA, 1-2 farmers markets/week, and wholesale customers. Some produce will also be distributed to area food pantries and homeless families in our school district.

### **Requirements**

- Driver's license
- Ability to lift 50 lb regularly
- Strong written and verbal communication skills
- Reliable communication via internet and phone
- Passion for the sustainable agriculture movement
- Ability and enthusiasm for educating beginning farmers, interns, and volunteers
- Strong leadership skills and ability to inspire others to do high quality work
- Strong interpersonal skills; the ability to address various issues with staff, volunteers and community members in a diplomatic manner

### **Experience**

- Minimum three full seasons of organic vegetable farming
- Supervisory experience
- Familiarity with tractors, irrigation, cover cropping, and pest management using organic methods
- Experience in greenhouse production of vegetable starts for transplant and sale
- Knowledge of the use and service requirements of tractors, plows, discs, cultivators, and other farm equipment and implements
- Crop planning and CSA production
- Farm record keeping and using Microsoft Excel

### **Desired (not required)**

- Farm management experience
- Teaching experience
- Experience constructing and growing in a hoophouse / high tunnel
- Volunteer coordination
- Machine maintenance
- Experience working in a non-profit environment
- Experience planning and managing small building/construction projects



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### **Goals of the position:**

The complementary goals for this position are to provide a staff person who can effectively:

- Serve as a mentor and educator to beginner farmers
- Optimize mixed vegetable production on 3+ acres of the Mueller Farm

### **Responsibilities**

*\*Keep in mind that these are to be completed with assistance from the Assistant Farm Manager; some of these tasks can be delegated, but the Farm Manager is ultimately responsible for:*

Planning & Recordkeeping: *Lead staff in annual crop planning and daily farm record keeping*

1. Develop a crop plan consistent with organic standards to achieve harvest goals for our various distribution channels. Includes propagation schedule, yields needed, crop selections, plans for rotations & sequencing of plantings, cultivation, pest and disease management, harvesting, and soil fertility.
2. Assist with annual budgeting activities to estimate costs of farm inputs and maximize income.
3. Maintain a daily work-log to plan and record details of field work accomplished
4. Perform or ensure entry of data pertaining to harvest, CSA distribution, wholesale sales, planting, greenhouse seeding, seed source, farmers market sales, pest and disease management, fertility input application and other information as needed in compliance with organic record keeping standards and per EarthDance's needs.
5. Maintain an inventory of seeds and other supplies.

Production & Management: *Maximize crop production while building healthy soil and maintaining high quality standards for produce*

1. Implement crop plan to achieve harvest goals for various channels of distribution
2. Create daily work plans based on the week's schedule of program participants, interns, groups and estimated daily volunteer numbers
3. Conduct purchasing for seeds, tools and supplies in accordance with budget.
4. Implement an organic fertility program (including cover cropping and field-scale composting) and crop rotation plan.
5. Plan, modify and/or expand irrigation system as needed.
6. Oversee on-time harvest and optimal post-harvest handling.
7. Perform tractor and equipment maintenance and upkeep (and as needed identify outside personnel to make repairs).
8. Complete wholesale sales using existing chef email database to advertise available produce to local buyers (e.g. restaurants and grocers) and coordinate delivery and payment for produce.
9. General property maintenance as needed (mowing).



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Education & Community Engagement: *Train beginning growers in sustainable agriculture*

1. Conduct field walks prior to each field work session with apprentices and interns to teach seasonal concepts, identify pests and diseases, and answer questions.
2. Supervise an average of 6 - 8 apprentices and interns and periodic volunteer groups in all aspects of farm work with the help of the Assistant Farm Manager & Volunteer Coordinator
3. Assist in leading classes or workshops, which may include demonstrations on the farm, guest speakers, hands-on activities, and extension staff.
4. Write one weekly field update email to farm apprentices, Board, and CSA members

Other Responsibilities: *Lead by example and be a team player*

1. Participate in staff meetings, bi-monthly site plan meetings and periodic strategic planning activities
2. Promote an atmosphere of hard work, inclusiveness, learning and fun every day

**TIME REQUIREMENTS:** Approximately 40 hours/week, with some seasonal fluctuation. Includes 3 accrued weeks of paid time off annually, preferably taken during the winter (the week between Dec 24th – Jan 1st, plus two additional weeks).

### **OTHER REQUIREMENTS**

- Cell phone communication
- Frequent computer and internet access
- Reliable transportation or the ability to navigate the public transportation system
- A valid driver's license is also required.

### **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:**

- Position may include some travel to farming conferences during off-season for professional development activities.

**SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES:** Manager will oversee 1 full-time Assistant Farm Manager, 3-5 part-time second year apprentices, and 20 part-time farm apprentices (and volunteers as needed).

**COMPENSATION:** Compensation commensurate with experience. Full health insurance is included. Annual evaluation of sales and production goals will determine salary increase over time.

Includes 3 accrued weeks of paid time off annually, preferably taken during the winter (the week between December 24<sup>th</sup> – January 1<sup>st</sup>, plus 2 additional weeks).



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**TO APPLY:**

*Serious inquiries from qualified candidates only please*

The position is open until filled. Target start date: December 10, 2013

1. Complete this survey
2. Send a resume, cover letter, and 2 farming-related references to Molly Rockamann, Founding Director, at [earthdancefarms@gmail.com](mailto:earthdancefarms@gmail.com)

***For more information on EarthDance and our Farm & Garden Apprenticeship program, visit [www.earthdancefarms.org](http://www.earthdancefarms.org)***