

Work and Learning Opportunities at The Tucker Family Farm Creamery

About Us

Tucker Family Farm is a farmstead sheep dairy and creamery. We craft many (currently 9) different sheep cheeses from our East Frisian dairy flock. We also raise lamb and pork for local markets. We strive every year to become more sustainable in our agricultural practices; from rotational grazing to supporting soil fertility to the protection of stream bed and wetland areas, we are continually moving to a low impact, sustainable system. We manage the farm organically, meaning we don't use herbicides, pesticides, non-organic fertilizer, steroids, unnecessary antibiotics, etc. We are driven to provide the highest quality, humanely raised animals and food products for our region.

Positions Available

For the 2017 season, The Tucker Family Farm Creamery is offering two employment opportunities – a full season apprenticeship and 12 week internships. Our Farm also offers 1 apprenticeship; please send an email to tyler@tuckerfamilyfarm.com for more information.

2017 Creamery Apprentice: apprenticeships are a full immersion into the operation of a farmstead creamery. The training and exposure builds in complexity, starting with affinage, cleaning dishes, maintenance projects and fresh cheese making techniques, and building towards learning our farm's full range of 8-10 cheeses (which vary among hard cheeses, aged blues, and young semi-soft small wheels). The apprentice is also responsible for packing orders for our wholesale and distribution customers and Farmer's Markets. On Saturdays, the apprentice will manage the stand at the Missoula's Farmer's Market where he/she will be well versed in the history, techniques and flavors of our cheese.

- Dates: January 31st, 2017 – December 31st, 2017
- Compensation: Room and board, plus stipend of \$150/week, with opportunity for raises up to \$250/week upon successful mastery of assigned tasks. Every month we will review your progress with you and decide on a stipend increase.
- Schedule: 50-60 hours/week over 5 days, with Sundays and Mondays as days off. You must come expecting to work this amount. If you have any doubts about being able to physically or mentally handle this schedule and to do it with enthusiasm, then this position is not for you.

Creamery Intern: internships are a great introductory opportunity to working at a farmstead creamery business. Tasks include milking sheep three times per week, affinage, making fresh cheeses, packing cheese for orders, and cleaning dishes and maintenance projects. We will look to hire the 2018 Creamery Apprentice based on the pool of 2017 interns and their interest, commitment, attitude, and abilities demonstrated during their internship.

- Dates: three openings for the 2017 season
 - 1) Winter: February 1st – April 24th*
 - 2) Spring: April 26th – July 17th
 - 3) Summer: July 19th – October 9th
- Compensation: Room and board, plus stipend of \$150/week, with opportunity for raises up to \$175/week upon successful mastery of assigned tasks. Every month we will review your progress with you and decide on a stipend increase.
- Schedule: 50-60 hours/week over 5 days, with Tuesdays and Wednesdays as days off. You must come expecting to work this amount. If you have any doubts about being able to physically or mentally handle this schedule and to do it with enthusiasm, then this position is not for you.

* Winter Internship: We will start milking our yews mid-February/early March. For the first month of the winter internship, cheesemaking will be minimal (only once per week). There will still be a lot of learning focused around affinage and cheese making, but in addition the winter intern will spend the first month assisting with lambing and supporting the farm during this busy time by helping cook meals and other tasks.

Working in the Creamery

Cheesemaking is an inspiring artform supported by focused hard work and 100% consistency in process. Without a high attention to detail and a meticulous focus on each batch or wheel of cheese, we will not be able to achieve the results we need for our customers. A lot of trust and responsibility is given to the creamery teammates and it is critical that the processes are followed exactly. Applicants should have a very detail oriented and focused working style and be comfortable taking full responsibility for their tasks. The creamery training philosophy is to provide thorough education to empower our teammates to excel in their specialties independently. While we take our cheesemaking and work very seriously, it's also important that everyone maintains a positive attitude and has fun. Listening to music, dancing and joking around are just as much a part of our day to day. Feeling comfortable in this type of working environment is critical.

"Cheesemaking is 70 percent washing," Vivien Straus.

Cheesemaking, affinage, and handling cheese requires very strict adherence to sanitation guidelines. Interns and the apprentice will have between 10-15 hours of equipment cleaning and dishwashing per week, 10-15 hours of affinage each week and additional cleaning and maintenance projects. Also days in the creamery can be long (10-12 hours) and we are on our feet much of the day. Applicants should feel comfortable doing this type of work.

Living on the Farm

Apprentices and interns live on the farm in Victor, MT. The farm sits in the Bitterroot Valley, surrounded by gorgeous views, hiking, biking and camping

opportunities right on our door. Victor is a small town with only a few restaurants and stores, but is an hour south of Missoula (a very active and young college city) and 15 minutes north of Hamilton (a bigger town with coffee shops, breweries, shopping and thrift stores).

Bunkhouse, Trailer and Farm Upkeep

Apprentices and interns live in campers or a bunkhouse private bedroom based on a first come first serve basis. They share a common area (kitchen, living room, bathroom, washer/dryer) with the farm apprentice and the other employees on the farm.

All apprentices and interns share responsibility of farm upkeep. This includes the bunkhouse, individual trailers and the area outside of the bunkhouse. Upkeep includes: trash disposal, composting, recycling, sweeping, mopping, dusting, cleaning the fridge, weed eating, mowing etc. As we have inspectors, guests, and tours at the farm, you will be expected to keep your area neat and clean on your own time. We will provide a rotating schedule for upkeep tasks to be completed.

Meals and Breaks

With the exception of our one shared meal each week, all other meals are not scheduled at a particular time and are not shared meals. Lunch can be taken at a time that fits best with your individual schedule. Everyone is responsible for being aware of their individual tasks and determining the best time to eat. The allotted time for lunch is 1 hour.

Compensation

We provide housing, a stipend, and some farm-produced food. We have two trailers and a room in our bunkhouse for apprentices and interns. The bunkhouse has a shared bathroom, kitchen and living/dining room. The stipend starts at \$150/week for the first month when the vast majority of training will be taking place, and **can** increase over the course of employment. Every month we will review your progress with you and decide on a stipend increase.

Meetings

We will have once a week meetings with everyone on the farm to review general happenings for the upcoming week and to review any positive/negative events from the previous week. These meetings will be for all farm staff and everyone is expected to contribute. We will also meet as a Creamery team once a week to go over specific goals/objectives for the week and to review completed objectives. These meetings are designed to inform as well as improve the way we work individually and as a team. I will also meet once a month with the apprentice and the intern individually to go over any concerns you or I may have. This is also when we will review your stipend.

Application

Please send your resume and a word document to creamery@tuckerfamilyfarm.com with answers to completed application questions.

A. Employment Questions

- a. Are you applying for the 2017 Apprenticeship or one of the 2017 Internships? If internship, which season?
- b. Are you able to commit to the exact dates of the apprenticeship or internship? If not, please advise any adjustments that would be required.
- c. Are you available for a 1-day work visit before your start date?
- d. Will you have your own vehicle?
- e. Are you able to be flexible with your schedule depending on the needs of the season; work late if needed, get up early, do a split shift?
- f. Do you believe you are able to work 5 days a week at 8-12 hours a day? Have you had a job with similar demands?
- g. Please take a minute to complete a Myers Briggs personality test. And let us know what your four-letter MB personality type is. If you are curious, mine is an INTJ. Please use this website's test, it's short and simple: <http://www.discordia-inc.co.uk/misc/mbtitest.html>
- h. Do you have health insurance?
- i. Have you ever been convicted of a felony? If yes, you may explain.

B. Short Questions (2-3 sentences minimum)

- a. Why are you interested in learning about cheese making?
- b. Do you have experience working on a farm, creamery or kitchen environment? Please describe in detail.
- c. Do you prefer to work independently or in groups/teams?
- d. In what type of working and learning environment do you feel the most successful?
- e. How would you describe your communication style – with peers and with superiors?
- f. Tell us about an interesting book you read lately or a music album you listened to, and what you appreciated about it.
- g. What are some of your hobbies or favorite things to do?
- h. What kind of physical exercise do you currently engage in? Are you able to carry 40-60 pounds at a time?

C. Short Essay (2-3 paragraphs minimum)

- a. Detail what interests you most about working at Tucker Family Farm Creamery and what you are looking to take away from an apprenticeship or internship.

Thank you for your interest in the farm, and for taking the time to read through this document and fill out an application. We are looking forward to talking with you.

If you have any questions, please email creamery@tuckerfamilyfarm.com or call (406) 880-0246.

Allison Dembek
Head Cheesemaker and Creamery Manager