

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.

We are located in the Bitterroot Valley in Southwest Montana. We are minutes away from mountain trails for those who enjoy hiking/backpacking, and we are also very close to the Bitterroot River. There are bike paths and great roads for biking. In short, it is a great place for weekend recreation.

Type of Apprenticeships and Internships

We offer 1 dairy/farm apprenticeship starting in Mid-January and continuing through October or November.

Our creamery also offers 1 apprenticeship and 1 internship; please send an email to creamery@tuckerfamilyfarm.com for more information.

The following document is intended for dairy/farm apprentices.

Dairy/Farm Apprenticeship

This position is not for everyone. You need to be independent, able to see problems and decide how to fix them or know when to get help, determined to do all tasks to the best of your ability every time – even though no one is watching, okay rising early or working late, able to work in any kind of weather, and to do this and more with a good attitude. Individuals with a natural curiosity, who can observe something, and ask the right question, will get the most out of this position. You need to be an independent learner, which means seeing and questioning. We can help you figure out the answers.

This individual also needs to be confident and caring towards animals. This position is for those who have worked in an agricultural setting or are fiercely determined first timers.

Tasks include: milking, chores, fencing, building, irrigation, herding, lambing, pasture management, and helping with farmers markets. Assigned tasks depend on experience and how fast you pick up new tasks. Apprentices will be responsible for milking and chores at least once every day, and some days twice. Milking is a big time component – you need to be okay with milking 3 hours most days, and 6 hours on double milk days.

New tasks will be added as you progress.

Again we want to reiterate that it is important to be independent. After training, you will be by yourself for the majority of your hours. Others will be around to help if needed, but the farm requires us to be many places at once. You need to be self-sufficient and able to perform your tasks well.

Agricultural experience is preferred but not required for the right person.

Personal Attributes: Independent thinking and doer, Observant, Hard Working, Driven, Athletic, Able to rise early, Able to work long days in all kinds of weather, Able to do all of this with a good attitude; must be excited about taking on significant responsibility

Work Schedule and days off

Farm apprentices will work 5 days a week (6 during lambing) with work days varying between 8-12 hours depending on the day of the week, the time of year and the tasks needing to be completed. 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.

Daily Structure

The specific hours worked will vary from day to day and seasonally depending on the most important tasks to be completed. During lambing season apprentices may be asked to help with night shifts as well as helping on the farm in the afternoon. After lambing we will step into a more routine schedule. Weekly schedules should remain the same from the end of March to August before being adjusted again. The milking times are at 6:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M. You will always cover at least one of these shifts and potentially may cover two during the week. As the year goes on you will have your own individualized schedule, and set of tasks to be completed.

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 up to \$250/week over the course of the year. 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 farm/dairy 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 individually to go over any concerns you or I may have. This is also when we will review your stipend.

Bunkhouse/trailer/farm upkeep

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.

Length of Commitment

The farm apprenticeship program starts in Mid January and concludes in November. It is possible that we may ask you to stay through December if there are projects and that is something you are interested in.

Application Questions

1. What interests you most about working at Tucker Family Farm?
2. What are some of your hobbies or favorite things to do?
3. What is your favorite book and favorite type of music?
4. What kind of physical exercise do you currently engage in? Are you able to carry 40-60 pounds at a time?
5. What is your availability? Are you able to commit to a full year apprenticeship?
6. Do you believe you are able to work 5 days a week at 10-12 hours a day? Have you had a job with similar demands?
7. Are you able to be flexible with your schedule; work late if needed, get up early, do a split shift?
8. How do you handle working with people whose values and work styles are different from yours?
9. Have you lived in an area similar to Montana? Are you familiar with weather extremes (below zero and 100 plus degree days)?
10. Are you available for a 1-day work visit before your start date?
11. Do you have any farm experience? Please describe in detail.
12. Do you have dairy experience? Cow, goat, and/or Sheep? What was the parlor setup (how many animals did you milk, number of milkers, type of parlor, etc.)?
13. Do you have any fencing, construction, and/or vehicle repair experience?
14. Farm apprentices often work alone (morning/evening milking; driving tractor; doing chores; fencing; etc.). Do you think you are well suited to this type of independent work? Please explain why and give any examples of similar work situations.
15. Why are you interested in working with sheep specifically?
16. Do you have health insurance?
17. Have you ever been convicted of a felony? If yes, you may explain.
18. Will you have your own vehicle?

19. Please take a minute to complete a Myers Briggs 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>

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.