

## **Creamery Apprenticeship**

### **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.

### **Job Description**

Apprenticeships are a full education and immersion into the operation of a farmstead creamery. No previous experience is required, but an eager attitude for learning and appreciation for artisan cheese is a must. 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: August 1<sup>st</sup> – February 28<sup>th</sup>, longer available based on interest
- Compensation: Room and board, plus stipend of \$150/week, with opportunity for raises up to \$250/week upon successful mastery of assigned tasks.
- Schedule: 50 hours/week over 5 days, with two consecutive days off each week.

### **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. Apprentices 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 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).