

## **BECOMING A HOST FARM OR AN APPRENTICE IN THE GROWING GROWERS TRAINING PROGRAM**

We are looking for 8-12 farms in the Kansas City “food shed” that are interested in hosting an Apprentice to work on their farm. Host Farms will be currently producing:

- ❑ Vegetables,
- ❑ Fruits,
- ❑ Specialty Crops such as mushrooms,
- ❑ Meat and/or
- ❑ Dairy Products

for retail sales at farmers’ markets, through Community Supported Agriculture Programs, farm stands and “You Pick” operations or wholesale through grocery stores and local restaurants. The primary market for the host farms will be the Kansas City metro area.

The host farms will be organic or using sustainable practices.

Apprentices will be individuals who are interesting in starting their own farming operations. Paid Apprentices will be expected to do an average of 20 hours of fieldwork per week, plus participate in monthly educational activities. Volunteer Apprentices will be expected to work a minimum of 4 hours of fieldwork per week, plus participate in monthly activities.

Host farmers will be paid \$600 to \$900 over the course of the season to provide one-on-one training and to help in development of the Apprenticeship program through attendance at a spring Planning Meeting and a fall Evaluation Meeting. Apprentices will not be paid for their training time.

**Paid Apprenticeships:** Host Farms will be expected to pay the Apprentices regular farm wages in exchange for the work any farm laborer would do. Training time is extra and unpaid. We expect that wages and housing/room/board will be different on each Host Farm depending on the location and type of farm, but must pay at least minimum wage, with possible deduction for room and board.

**Volunteer Apprenticeships:** Host Farms will treat Volunteer Apprentices with the same degree of seriousness and responsibility as paid positions. The Volunteer will work a minimum of 4 hours per week during the growing season, and may be compensated with free vegetables or other farm products at the choice of the host farm.

### **What will an Apprentice get through the Growing Growers Training Program?**

#### **1. Hands-On Experience**

The best way to learn farming is to do it. Apprentices will work on an area farm through one farming season, doing the hands-on work of planting, weeding, harvesting, and selling. They’ll get exposed to all aspects of the farming operation. They’ll get to work with a farm that has a demonstrated record of experience and success.

#### **2. Monthly Workshops, Field Days and Educational Programs**

A list of “Competencies for Local Food Production” has been developed to identify the skills and knowledge a person needs for successful farming. These include such skills as Plant Production, Marketing your Product, and Financial Management. Workshops will be offered on a monthly basis to address the key areas important for a beginning farmer. The workshops will be led by experienced farmers and food production specialists.

### 3. One-on-One Training from the Farmer to the Apprentice:

One of the hardest aspects to farming is the overall management of the farm- deciding what to plant and when and in what quantities, figuring out how much labor you need to manage the crops, figuring out how to find the money to get the season started, what to do if the tomato crop comes in late and negatively affects cash flow, deciding how to market your products each year, etc.

These are some of the experiences and skills that host farmers will share with the apprentices in one-on-one training training. The host farmer will be to spend approximately 12-15 hours over the course of the year in focused training time with the apprentice.

### 4. Resource Materials

Apprentices will get a packet of books, pamphlets and informational brochures that have proven useful to Midwestern farmers.

#### **Who will make a good Host Farmer?**

We are looking for farmers with good experience and reputations. Host farmers must be willing to share what they know with generosity and honesty. They must be willing to remember when they started farming and try to give the apprentice some of the tools they’ll need in order to start their own operations.

The Host Farm will be responsible for interviewing, hiring, paying, and supervising the Apprentice. They will provide 12-15 hours of one-on-one training to the Apprentice, plus provide more informal training as the Apprentice does fieldwork.

Host Farms will do an initial written application to the Training Program.

#### **Who will make a good Apprentice?**

We are looking for Apprentices who are sincere in their interest in starting their own farming operation and who are interested in gathering the skills necessary for success. They must be willing to work hard under often stressful conditions and must be open to a way of life that is not necessarily financially rewarding but is rewarding in other ways.

Apprentices will apply to the Apprenticeship Program by submitting the Apprenticeship Application 2006 form along with a \$25 application fee. The Growing Growers staff will arrange for an in-person interview and then will direct potential apprentices to area farms interested in supervising and hosting an Apprentice. Once a would-be Apprentice has found a Host Farm to work with, the GG Advisory Board will review all applications and make final determination about participation in the 2006 program.

There are two options for apprenticing:

Paid Apprenticeships: Farmers will hire an apprentice to work an average of 20 hours per week during the growing season.

Volunteer Apprenticeships: Volunteers will work a minimum of 4 hours per week as a volunteer, in exchange for this they can participate in the Apprenticeship program similarly to the Paid Apprentices.

The farmer will interview interested people, have them visit their farm, perhaps work a few hours, and then decide if they are interested in working with this particular apprentice. If they are, they will negotiate wages, room and board, and any other benefits directly with the Apprentice. The Apprentices will not receive any income from the Growing Growers Program; they will receive ongoing training through workshops, field days, and farm exchange activities.

### **How will we select Host Farms and Apprentices?**

We will be accepting the Host Farm and the Apprentice as a team. A Host Farm can identify their own potential Apprentice, or the Training Program can direct potential apprentices to the Farmer. When a Farm has selected an Apprentice they are willing to supervise and train, the Advisory Board of the Growing Growers Training Program will review their applications and make a final decision.

### **What if we are accepted into the Growing Growers Program and issues arise between the Farmer and the Apprentice?**

Farm work is hard, stressful work and it isn't unusual for issues to arise between the farm supervisor and an employee. If this happens, we expect the farmer and the Apprentice to work with the staff of the Program to resolve the problem. The Program will do its best to help resolve the situation to everyone's satisfaction. If the issues can't be resolved, the Apprentice can leave the farm's employ, but can continue to take workshops for free. We will try to place them on another farm, but cannot make any guarantees. We will also try to find a new Apprentice for the farm, but again cannot make any guarantees. If a Host Farm loses its apprentice, no further payments will be made to the farm for training time and for participation in the program, but the farmer can still attend educational events for free.

### **Other Questions?**

Email or call Katherine Kelly, Program Manager at [growers@ksu.edu](mailto:growers@ksu.edu) or 913-488-1270.