

## Working Effectively With Interns Students and Apprentices



- UMass Student Farming Enterprise Program – *farming with an educational mission*
- Employees, Students, Intern and Apprentices- *What's the difference?*
- Planning Ahead – *how to cultivate a happy and productive work environment on your farm.*

## Student Farming Enterprise Growing and Marketing Vegetable Crops



PSIS 398E (spring) and PSIS 498E (fall)

- Two semesters, 5 credit each semester plus part time summer work for pay or credit.
- Diversified vegetable operation on 2 acres or certified organic land at the UMass Crops Research and Education Center in South Deerfield, MA.
- Markets include a 50 member Fall CSA, Earth Foods Café, Student Farmers Market, Dining Services, special events and other on-campus student run businesses.

*As UMass student farmers, we commit to providing our campus community with nutritious, organically grown, local produce. We cultivate student empowerment through hands-on agricultural production and by educating our peers about the importance of creating a healthier food system.*



Students are involved with all aspects of running a profitable farming business including crop planning, greenhouse transplant production, field crop production, harvesting, post-harvest handling, marketing and sales of crops.

Ideal enrollment in the program begins with planning during the spring semester; continuing with work at the farm during the summer; and marketing and sales during the fall semester.



### Spring Semester PSIS 398E

- **Planning for markets and specific crops** – Crops grown are based on the needs of specific markets.
- **Participating in weekly classes** - Class will include lectures, discussion, hands-on training, meetings with invited guests, group decisions and problem solving.
- **Skill building** – Includes taking and using soil tests, calculating seeds needed, planting, yield and fertility rates, using spreadsheets with formulas, using tractors and implements safely for field work, market development and working in group.
- **Implementing field and greenhouse work** - Transplant production, field preparation, and planting.
- **Service Learning** - Each student is required to spend 12-16 hours volunteering on two different vegetable farms.
- **Fundraising & Education** - Raising awareness on campus and funds to support the program.



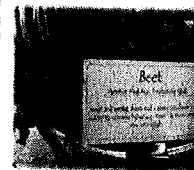
### In the Summer we are farming!


- Students work at least 15 hours per week.
- Hours worked count towards pay or credits depending on budget and student needs.



### Fall Semester PSIS 498E


- **Field Work, Marketing and Sales of Crops**-Students continue field maintenance of crops being grown. They harvest, clean, store and market crops, and interact with their buyers, farmers market customers and CSA members.
- **Weekly On-campus seminar**- Held to organize field work, harvest and marketing, review progress on our crop analysis and other written work.
- **Service Learning** - Each student is required to spend 12-16 hours volunteering on two different vegetable farms.
- **Written Work**- Includes a crop analysis for each crop grown and recommendations for next generation of student farmers for print in UMass Student Farm Handbook.






And we have a lot of fun.....

With great people all focused on a common goal of providing their campus community with local organic produce.



Grown by students for students



### Major Challenges


*Teaching and Growing*

- Twelve new students each year with little or no farming experience.
- Teaching production methods for 36 different vegetable crops.
- Group dynamics.

### Major Benefits


*Loving what we do*

- Enthusiastic, positive hard working students.
- Access to qualified staff and beautiful land.
- Solid relationship with markets.

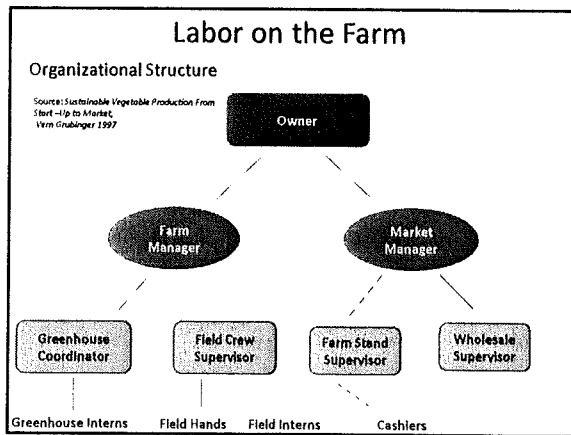


### Profit = Income-Expenses

- The USDA reports that labor accounts for an average of 18% of production expenses on horticultural farms.\*
- Good employees need good management to be efficient.



\* Source: Sustainable Vegetable Production From Start-Up to Market, Vern Grubinger 1997




### What do you need to increase profitability?


**Hiring**

- Begin with clear job description
- Know who you are hiring
- Interview and check references
- Define expectations before employment begins

Help!  
I need somebody  
Help!  
Not just anybody



Maintain same hiring standards for all types of labor on the farm



### Interns

Six major criteria have to be met in order to "pay less than minimum wage".  
-US Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division

An intern must be registered in an internship program at an accredited educational institution such as a college, community college or university where a student pays the school and receives academic credit for the work they are doing.\*

An internship allows an employer to be exempt from:

- paying wages; and unemployment insurance tax


An internship still requires that an employer:

- provide a safe workplace with an educational or training component.

\* Source: Washington State Department of Agriculture, Small Farm & Direct Marketing Handbook

### Apprentices

The term "apprentice" is an employment classification with a formal structure set by federal and state law. The business employing the apprentice designs a personalized program that must be proposed to and approved by local state law.\*



**Employers Must:**


- Have an Employer's Identification Number (EIN).
- Pay at least minimum wage with raises based upon demonstrated competencies.
- Pay industry premium for workers compensation insurance that covers on the job injuries.
- Pay Unemployment Insurance tax.
- Provide a safe workplace for your employees.
- Provide a set amount of hours of pre-planned instructional time per year.

*The employer benefits from apprentices by training someone from the beginning with their knowledge and techniques.*

\* Source: Washington State Department of Agriculture, Small Farm & Direct Marketing Handbook

### Employees

In general someone whom an employer determines their work schedule, hours, and job responsibilities.\*



**Employers Must:**

- Have an employee Identification Number (EIN).
- Pay wages.
- Pay industry premiums for works compensation insurance that covers on the job injuries
- Provide a safe work place.
- File payroll tax forms.


\* Source: Washington State Department of Agriculture, Small Farm & Direct Marketing Handbook

### Planning

Outline of Daily Jobs to be completed  
owner should decide what needs to get done and in what order  
have target times for completion  
mix bad work with good work  
partner up  
have a plan "B" for when the inevitable happens


Weekly meetings with bigger picture  
Everyone should know the plan and goals for the farm  
Define roles among the group  
Delegate responsibility where appropriate  
Give options where appropriate

**Create and post a  
DONE list  
&  
TO DO list**




### Policies & Things to Have in Writing

- Expectations
- Grievances
- Pay
- Educational Contracts
- Employee Handbook
- Others????



### Labor Management

- Hiring - the right people
- Planning - for the now and later.
- Guidelines - what should be in writing?
- Communication – crucial to overall success.



*If you need labor of any kind, treat them well.*

For more information about the Student Farming Enterprise visit  
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