



Training the Next Generation of Farmers & Ranchers

roguefarmcorps.org

Rogue Farm Corps trains the next generation of farmers and ranchers through hands-on educational programs and preservation of farmland for future generations. We support our local agricultural economy and serve as a model for other communities.



History of Rogue Farm Corps



- Founded by farmers in the Applegate Valley
- Identified need for new farmer training
- Rapidly aging farmer population
- Generational transfer of knowledge lost
- Limited educational opportunities for young farmers
- Tasked with finding legal solution for on-farm internships

Apprentice vs. Intern vs. Employee

- **Apprentice:** Officially recognized training program through Oregon Apprenticeship Council.
- **Intern:** Must meet all of the criteria established by US Department of Labor and BOLI.
- **Employee:** Defined by Fair Labor Standards Act as “to suffer or permit to work.” Anyone whose work primarily benefits an employer is entitled to all the protections of the FLSA.

Test for Unpaid Internships

Six criteria established by US DOL

1. The internship, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to training which would be given in an educational environment;
2. The internship experience is for the benefit of the intern;
3. The intern does not displace regular employees, but works under close supervision of existing staff;
4. The employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the intern, and on occasion its operations may actually be impeded;
5. The intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship; and
6. The employer and the intern understand that the intern is not entitled to wages for the time spent in the internship.



FIELD BASED EDUCATION

- *FarmsNext* program is for beginning with little or no experience farming
- A full season of hands-on training, classroom learning, farm tours, peer discussion, journaling and independent study
- *FarmsNOW* program is for aspiring farmers with a minimum of two years experience
- One to two seasons of hands-on training, one-on-one mentoring, classroom learning and seminars, farm tours and peer discussion



- A land-based network of 20 farms and ranches in the Rogue and South Willamette Valleys, the Portland area, and Central Oregon
- Led by dedicated mentors and agricultural professionals
- Opportunities to learn organic vegetable, herb, seed and flower production, animal husbandry and a diversity of marketing and distribution techniques

Rogue Farm Corps provides:

- Assistance with recruitment and placement of student/interns,
- Interpretation and understanding of legal concerns and risk management,
- A shared responsibility for mentoring,
- A structured framework for education and training,
- A social network and community immersion



Classes, Farm Tours, Discussion Groups



Topics Include:

- history of food and agriculture
- poultry management
- grazing systems
- post-harvest handling
- seeds
- winter farming
- animal husbandry
- grazing systems
- farmland conservation
- intro to business & marketing
- food & farm advocacy
- intro to horticulture
- greenhouse 101
- direct seeding & transplanting
- soil science
- crop rotation & cover cropping
- irrigation systems
- composting
- entomology and plant pathogens
- weed management



- *“I fell in love with farming! The most significant change for me was personal. I really came to be confident in who I am and what I feel like I’m supposed to do for this world and our society.”*
- *“The part that benefitted me the most was on-farm time. Nearing the end of the season, I can really understand that the only way to learn how to farm is to be totally immersed in a farm and do the work. The strengths of the classes and discussions were that you got a big picture understanding of the region’s small farms and gardens, and [got to] connect with the agricultural community around you.”*
- *“During this program I’ve developed skills in decision-making, operating equipment, communicating with new people, record-keeping, understanding soil... There is an endless list of skills I’ve gained from this.”*
- *“When I began I knew very little and had never done actual farm work. Now I have a way of thinking of problems that helps me solve or begin to solve them instead of become overwhelmed.”*

On-Farm Skill Evaluation and Assessment

Rogue Farm Corps On-Farm Evaluation			
Student:		Site: By George Farm	
Date:		Mentor: Jonathan Steiger and Tyson Fehrman	
Work Place Ethics			
Evaluation Key:			
N/A = Not Applicable		3 = Sometimes	
1 = Never		4 = Usually	
2 = Rarely		5 = Always	
Student demonstrates:	Student's Self-Evaluation	Mentor's Evaluation	Needs More Exposure/ Additional Comments
1 Reliability			
a) Is punctual and has good attendance			
b) Notifies farm supervisor of absences in a timely manner			
c) Gives adequate notice when requesting time off			
d) Observes all farm policies and safety procedures			
2 Productivity			
a) Accepts responsibility to complete assigned tasks on time			
b) Follows direction: oral, written, multi-step			
c) Stays on task, even without direct supervision			
d) Shows accuracy with details			
e) Works hard, seeks additional work if time allows			
f) Keeps tools and materials organized and in good condition			
3 Problem Solving and Decision Making			
a) Recognizes when problems exist and tries to solve them			
b) Seeks help when needed			
c) Plans and organizes work to achieve efficiency			
d) Communicates suggestions to improve farm systems			
4 Management and Leadership			
a) Ability to understand and work within program			
b) Ability to instruct and lead others			

Mentor Self-Evaluation

Please assess the following statements. How often do you...

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Usually	Always
1) Communicate clearly with intern					
2) Set clear work expectations and daily/ weekly schedules					
3) Lead weekly crew meetings/farm walks					
4) Make time to work one-on-one with intern(s)					
5) Provide hands-on demonstrations when teaching a new task					
6) Supervise intern activities					
7) Take time to answer intern questions					
8) Provide constructive performance feedback					
9) Help students set and achieve goals					
10) Build students' confidence and motivation					
11) Provide living accommodations that meet the needs of intern(s)					
12) Respect interns' privacy					

Oregon's Beginning Farmer

RFC, OSU Small Farms, Headwaters Incubator Farm, Adelente Mujeres, Huerta de Familia, Friends of Family Farmers

- Multiple training levels - from beginner to advanced
- Different training venues in locations across Oregon
- Accessing diverse audiences
- Ongoing support and professional development-farmer networks, business training, continuing education
- Help in accessing land, capital
- Succession planning, land transition, conservation easements

National Farmer & Rancher Apprenticeship Leadership Team- BFRD EET Grant

- Research existing apprenticeship program design, curricula, and operations to understand best practices and successes/challenges,
- Liaison with the Department of Labor to understanding formal Apprenticeship requirements for diverse agricultural sectors,
- “Designing and Delivering a Quality Legal Apprenticeship Program for Beginning Farmer and Ranchers” Toolkit for national distribution.
- A national “Apprenticeship” clearinghouse website
- Webinars, conference presentations, and train-the-trainer workshops will describe administering quality apprenticeships, and highlight case studies on successful apprenticeship programs.

Together, we can...



- Provide legal farm internship and apprentice programming
- Influx of new youthful energy into our farming communities & urban areas
- Deepening connections between farming community & educational community
- Pioneering new models on our own terms
- Reversing the trend of aging farmers and consolidation of farmland
- Develop and sustain new farm businesses