

MOFGA APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

Meeting Prospective Mentors: Guidelines for Apprentices

Communication is the key to apprentice-mentor relationships. Use this checklist as a guide during your initial meeting/interview to make sure everyone is clear about what they're getting into.

Things to ascertain about the farm, the farmer, and the experience

Work

- The work schedule – hours/day, days/week, when & how often to expect to work overtime
- Type of work to expect – repetitive, boring, independent
- Time off – hours per week, days per season
- Usual rising and quitting time
- Allowance for emergency time off
- Expectations of apprentices during time off, i.e., watering, stoking stoves, animal chores, child care
- Work/safety clothing and tool requirements - boots, rain gear, ear protection, gloves, etc

Education and training

- Mentor Farmer's teaching style and techniques
- Educational plans and resources available
- Amount of time farmer can/will spend working alongside and training apprentices (does the farmer work off the farm during the growing season?)
- Use of machinery – unlimited, restricted, supervised, unsupervised
- Access to Farm Training Projects – time off, transportation

The exchange arrangement

- Stipend – fixed, graduated, reward for staying to end of season, profit-share, incentives
- Room & board
- Insurance coverage

The household & living arrangements

- Housing, bathing & cooking arrangements
- Meals – shared or separate, dietary restrictions, how much food is provided as part of compensation (which non-farm-raised items are provided? Which are your responsibility?)
- Expectations for cooking and clean-up chores, routine house cleaning
- Terms of access to amenities in main house – phone, internet, laundry, tv/video, shower, hot tub, etc
- Privacy needs of farmers and you.
- Visitor policy – length of stay, work requirement, paying for meals, etc

Health concerns

- Any disabilities or chronic issues that may slow the farmer down or limit his/her activity
- Allergies

Personal

- Personal temperament
- Philosophies and ideologies
- Taste in music and art
- Approach to smoking, drugs, alcohol, gambling, etc

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Meeting Prospective Mentors: Guidelines for Apprentices, continued

Things to share with prospective mentors about you

Work

- General attitude about work
- Work ethic and experience level
- Enthusiasm and desire to learn
- Strength and stamina – how well you know your body and your physical limits
- Availability for overtime & weekend work
- Feelings about selling & marketing
- Feelings about boring, repetitive work
- Feelings about working alone
- Time off and vacation needs

Education and training

- Expectations for learning and training – what you want to get out of your experience
- Your personal learning style – experiential, visual, auditory, autodidactic, etc
- Your appetite for reading and research
- Your intellectual approach to farming & agriculture
- Your motivations for apprenticing and plans for future

The exchange arrangement

- Your financial needs
- Your insurance needs

The household & living arrangements

- Your needs for interaction/privacy
- Your level of creature comfort needs
- Your cooking experience
- Your dietary restrictions
- Your household skills and organization
- Pets

Health concerns

- Any disabilities or chronic issues that may slow you down or limit your activity
- Allergies

Personal

- Personal temperament
- Philosophies and ideologies
- Feelings about killing animals (if applicable)
- Taste in music and art
- Hobbies, interests, ancillary skills
- Approach to smoking, drugs, alcohol, gambling, etc

Special considerations for couples

- Length of relationship
- Commitment level
- Ever lived together?
- Ever worked together?