

Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center (UPREC) Farm Incubator Description:

The purpose of this program is to establish a beginning farmer incubator at the Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center in Chatham, MI. The main purpose of the farm incubator is to provide educational and extension programming focused on entrepreneurial four-season nutrient rich food production. The incubator farm will stress sustainable practices focused on soil health leading to nutrient rich food production and will serve as the center for educational and extension programming.

Educational efforts will concentrate on two categories of learners, Novice Farmers and Apprentice Farmers. Both programs will be competency based allowing students to achieve the competencies through a mix of intracurricular and extracurricular learning experiences culminating in practicums located on the farm. Soil health will be monitored throughout the project. Initial funding for this project will be derived from an USDA Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) grant with the farm eventually becoming self-sustaining.

UPREC Farm Incubator Assistant Position Summary:

The UPREC Farm Incubator Assistant, under direct supervision of the Farm Incubator Manager, will be responsible for day-to-day maintenance and upkeep of farm facilities, vegetable production and harvest. The Assistant will help the Manager conduct variety trials on various vegetable crops both in a hoophouse and in the field. Trials will be on-going to examine the efficacy of cold storage methods as well. Developing the infrastructure on the farm will be another primary task in preparation for the Apprentice and Novice farmer program.

General Responsibilities:

- Assist with diversified year round vegetable production, harvest and storage at a MSU Research Center
- Assist with applied research opportunities related to season extension, including variety trials to determine appropriate crops for region
- Assist with sampling and record-keeping related to research
- Assist with infrastructure development including passive solar greenhouse and heated greenhouse
- Assist with farm facility development and maintenance, including fence building, small construction tasks, etc.
- Assist with development of a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program

Minimum Requirements

- Currently working towards a degree, or have acquired a B.S. or B.A. in related field
- Farming and farm management experience
 - Cold climate sustainable vegetable production, including organic farming experience
 - Experience using various farm equipment

- Season extension experience with high tunnels
- Strong research skills, including an understanding of the scientific method
- Strong organizational skills
- Passion for sustainable agriculture production

Desired Qualifications

- Self-starter
- Prior experience with vegetable crops
- Knowledge and experience related to cold storage
- Experience working in extreme northern climates

Compensation:

The Incubator Farm Manager assistant position will be a temporary, hourly position, beginning on May 1, 2014 (flexibility on start date), not to exceed one year. Beginning pay rate is \$11/hour and on-site housing is provided. Please provide a resume, three references, and a cover letter explaining how your education, skills and experience make you a strong candidate for this position. Applications must be submitted to Ashley McFarland via e-mail (ashleymc@anr.msu.edu) by Friday, April 4, 2014.

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