General Manager/Farmer at Brookfield Farm
Amherst, MA
Full-time, Year-round Position
Posted August 26, 2020

Who We Are:

Brookfield Farm is a community farm that celebrates the relationship between shareholders, farmers and friends supporting our soil and our community. As the 3rd Community Supported Agriculture project in the US (1986), we have a long-term commitment to growing food solely for this purpose. We tend 30 acres of crops and grow on average 250,000 lbs of vegetables, fruits, flowers, and herbs annually for over 600 supporting households. Our mission is to create and support responsible agriculture by furthering all aspects of sustainable, biodynamic, organic, or other environmentally, economically, and spiritually healthy agricultural techniques. All of the land, buildings, and equipment of Brookfield Farm are owned by the Biodynamic Farmland Conservation Trust, Inc. (BFCT). BFCT is a non-profit 501(c)3 corporation which was created in 1986 by Claire and Dave Fortier for the sole purpose of supporting Brookfield Farm’s existence into the future.

For us, community supported agriculture provides the best chance to practice sustainable agriculture using biodynamic principles as its core, which we like to think of as having a triple bottom line of ecological, economic, and social results.

- We don’t use any synthetic pesticides or petroleum-based fertilizers. Instead, we use compost and mechanical weed control (humans and tractors). We build soil health year after year by keeping a herd of beef cows on the farm and making their manure into biodynamic compost.
- We are economically self-sustaining, not depending on grants or donations to make ends meet.
- We cultivate the connection with our community of shareholders to build resilience through mutual dependence. Shared risk and shared reward is our credo and we take it seriously.
- We’re not the fanciest or the flashiest. We like growing onions more than cinnamon basil blossoms. We distribute the good and the pretty good and feed the rest to the pigs. There’s no preciousness here. There’s hopefully just lots of great food and good people.

Brookfield Farm is also a living learning center. Agricultural education is a central part of our mission and becoming an apprentice provides a comprehensive experience of our farm, from the inside out. Each year, we train three or four apprentices in sustainable farm management and many of our past apprentices have gone on to own or manage their own farms. Others have gone on to work in extension or research. Apprentices work in all aspects of the farm’s production, from soil preparation to harvest, from tractors to hand hoes, from administration to marketing farm products. Their friendly faces in the Farm Shop become an integral part of the on-farm shareholder experience.

Position Description:

Brookfield Farm is situated in the bucolic, vibrant town of Amherst, Massachusetts, two hours west of Boston and 3.5 hours from both New York City and Burlington, VT. Amherst is a college town surrounded by the rivers, lakes, and mountains of the Pioneer Valley. Amherst has a top-rated school system, provides extensive food, music and cultural offerings, and outstanding outdoor recreation opportunities. The Pioneer Valley has a strong, supportive network for farming and sustainable, local food.

Biodynamic Farm Conservation Trust (BFCT) is seeking a Farmer/General Manager to run our biodynamic farm. The CSA serves 600 households, both local and in metro Boston, and provides shares from June until November. The share includes a weekly farm shop pick up as well as many “u-pick” crops throughout the season. We then run a smaller winter share program which provides root crops and other longer keeping vegetables to shareholders who wish to purchase a winter share. This position requires all functions necessary to run a CSA, including crop production planning and management, training and supervising staff, educating apprentices, budget management, reporting, marketing, procurement and shareholder relations.
The Farmer/General manager is currently supported by an Assistant Manager, Bookkeeper, Farm Mechanic, three or four Apprentices, a Farm Educator, and harvest and weeder crews. Brookfield Farm is renowned for its apprenticeship training program, and apprentices apply nationwide to train as biodynamic farmers for 1-2 seasons at the farm.

**Essential Functions of the Farmer/General Manager:**

**Leadership and Management**
- Cultivate a relationship between shareholders, farmers, and friends supporting our soil and our community
- Continue the 30-year legacy of educating the next generation of sustainable farm managers
- Operate the farm in an economically self-sustaining manner
- Create structure & plans for institutional memory, legacy, and operation including annual plan, budget, capital plans and progress updates
- Oversee farm personnel. Select 10-15 hours/week of the tasks listed in this document to delegate to another farm employee (who will be hired after the General Manager/Farmer is hired)

**Farm Operations**
- Plan and plant crops and keep crop records; ensure soil fertility
- Manage greenhouses, tillage and bed prep, direct seeding, planting and plant care, mechanical cultivation and irrigation.
- Create and communicate Daily Work Strategy to all employees
- Oversee & participate in daily and bulk harvests
- Oversee & participate in weekly CSA distribution (regular, winter, Amherst, Boston)
- Manage farm animals such as cows, chickens and pigs
- Maintain and ensure safe use and maintenance of farm buildings, equipment, tools and infrastructure
- Manage equipment repair with outside vendors; purchase equipment
- Manage Farm Shop sales and marketing

**Apprentice Program Management**
- Train and guide the next generation of sustainable farmers and farm managers
- Create educational materials
- Recruit and hire new apprentices
- Train and orient apprentices
- Support development and learning of apprentices based on their strengths and needs
- Evaluate apprentices

**Business and Financial Management**
- Provide quarterly and annual reports to the Board of Directors of the BFCT
- Convene and participate in Board of Directors meetings and file minutes
- Meet with accountant and file taxes
- Oversee and manage all financial aspects of the operation including banking, bookkeeping, payroll, grants received and taxes paid.
- Manage personnel including updating policies and procedures, hiring, supervision, evaluation, conflict resolution and health care.

**Shareholder Communication & Outreach**
- Communicate regularly with our community of shareholders, sharing the story of the farm, building community and resilience through mutual dependence
- Write/publish/post weekly Shoptalk E-Newsletters
- Write/publish/post annual BFCT Newsletter
- Market CSA shares through various channels
- Communicate in an open and friendly manner with shareholders and community members
- Create/manage Farm Community Outreach activities including educational workshops, farm tours, site rentals to outside groups, and on-farm educational programs.
Accountability of the Role:
The Farmer/General Manager is accountable to the Board of Directors responsible for sound agricultural and business management of the farm operation. He/She/They will share the progress and challenges of farm operations at Board meetings through written reports, updates, emails and discussions. The Board also serves in an advisory capacity to the Farmer/General Manager and must approve all yearly budgets and plans before they are implemented.

Other duties as assigned with or without accommodation.

Qualifications:

Essential Knowledge and Skills:
• Minimum of 5 years running a commercial-scale organic or biodynamic vegetable crop production farm. More experience preferred.
• Minimum of 3 years of tractor and equipment operation experience is required as well as basic mechanical skills.
• A strong understanding of CSA and agricultural principles, Biodynamic farm principles, whole-farm planning, crop rotation, soil enhancement methods, soil science, and general ecological principles.
• Demonstrated experience with planning and budgeting.
• Training or teaching experience.
• Strong written and oral communication skills.
• A passionate commitment to the CSA model and growing food in a sustainable way with an emphasis on Biodynamic agriculture.
• Responsive to and appreciative of a diverse shareholder community.
• Committed to training the next generation of farmers.
• Entrepreneurial spirit, flexibility, and a positive sense of humor.
• Ability to build strong relationships and professional partnerships with the many farm constituencies, including land owners, local institutions, organic and non-organic farmers, board members, shareholders and local businesses.

Preferred Knowledge & Skills:
• Experience managing or working at a CSA with both vegetable and livestock production.
• Strong inspirational leadership, financial management, and human management skills, preferably with experience managing entry-level employees and volunteers.
• Excellent communication, public speaking and presentation skills.
• Proficiency in Microsoft Office suite.
• History of working in partnership with other farmers, farming associations, extension service, and academic institutions.
• A calm, grounded presence.
• Deep humility and a good sense of humor.
• Collaborative and interested in others’ ideas and allowing others to be engaged in the farm operation.

Compensation & Benefits:

Brookfield Farm offers a competitive salary, profit sharing and benefits package including medical insurance, pension fund contributions, paid vacation, sick and personal time as well as farm benefits like produce and use of farm vehicles. Our new Farmer/General Manager will continue the legacy of one of the first CSAs in the country while determining its direction for the decades ahead.

Salary is dependent upon qualifications, skills and experience.

Working Conditions:
Working Conditions include working in variable outdoor weather conditions. This position requires lifting of up to 50 pounds. This is a full-time, year-round position.

Application Instructions:

Interested applicants should send a cover letter and resume to NewFarmer@brookfieldfarm.org. **Deadline for all applications is: Friday, October 16, 2020.**

Brookfield Farm is an equal opportunity employer. We celebrate diversity and are committed to creating an inclusive environment for all employees. We welcome all applicants regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation or marital status.