

June 2010

Apprenticeship opportunities at Sturts Farm

Sturts Farm is a mixed biodynamic holding, and a Camphill community, in east Dorset. The farm is home to around 50 people, some of whom have learning disabilities. Together we run a market garden, and look after pigs, chickens and a herd of shorthorn dairy cows. We also have some arable land and woodland, and our own butchery and food processing workshop.

We are looking for two apprentices, or an apprentice and a farm worker, to come and join us in the garden and on the farm.

Garden apprentice

We are looking for a garden apprentice to work in our market garden, where we grow a wide range of vegetables, soft fruit, and herbs, and look after a flock of laying hens. We have some protected cropping in polytunnels and greenhouses, and approx 8 acres of vegetables grown on a bed system. Apprentices can learn all aspects of market gardening, including sowing, planting, weed control, harvesting, working with tools and machinery, managing pests and diseases, composting and building soil fertility. We supply our own community, our farm shop, and a weekly market stall. We are always learning and experimenting, and would welcome someone with enthusiasm and commitment to join the garden team.

Farm apprentice or farmer

We are also looking for someone to join our farm team, working with our small herd of shorthorn dairy cows and beef animals, pigs, and forage and arable crops. We would be happy to take on either an apprentice, or someone who already has some farm experience and who is ready to take on more responsibility. We would especially welcome someone who has skills and interest to work with tractors, possibly across both the farm and garden. An apprentice could learn all aspects of running a small mixed farm, including milking, management of pigs, and dairy and beef cows, production of forage and arable crops, farm maintenance work, and working with tools and machinery.

We are part of the national Biodynamic Agricultural Association apprenticeship scheme. The apprenticeship is a two year practical training, well recognised within the biodynamic and organic movement. Apprentices work on the land full time, and during the two years attend four, week-long 'block courses' and 12 weekend seminars covering a range of topics including soils, pigs and poultry, arable crops, farm economics, biodynamic preparations, composting and more.

Apprentices usually live and work full time at Sturts Farm, joining one of our extended family households and experiencing the rich cultural life of the community. Apprentices live and work alongside adults with learning disabilities; this can bring challenges, but also much joy and many rewards. A strong sense of humour would be a great asset for any apprentice! We work hard and play hard, and care for each other and the land.

We are looking for people to start as soon as possible, ideally in summer or autumn 2010.

If you would like to know more, or if you would be interested to come and visit us, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Contact

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You might also be interested to have a look at....

Biodynamic Agriculture Association website, for more on the apprenticeship programme and biodynamics in general: <http://www.biodynamic.org.uk>

Sturts Farm website, for more about the farm and community: <http://www.sturtsfarm.com>

Jessie's blog, for an insight in to the experience of our current garden apprentice:
<http://gardenapprentice.wordpress.com>