



# THE FARM SEARCH AND CHOOSING AN APPRENTICESHIP

**There are many ways to approach your apprenticeship selection, but there are some general steps we recommend taking to guide your decision.**

First, write out the following points before browsing the farms listed in our directory.

- What type of products are you most interested in? Animals? Annual vegetables? Fruits? Dairy?
- Is the scale or size of the farm important?
- Does it need to be Certified Organic or have a specific production philosophy (i.e. non-mechanized, biodynamic, etc.)
- What type of marketing strategy would you like to experience?
- What type of payment will you want? For example, are you alright with a small stipend as long as the farm provides you with meals or groceries? Will you be hoping to set money aside to put towards post-apprenticeship needs?
- What sort of rooming situation will you need?
- How will you expect to be taught about agriculture besides on-the-job training?

Second, sort through the farms in the directory and identify any you could see yourself working on, keeping in mind the list of preferences you just wrote.

When you are ready to contact a farm, it is a good idea to outline any questions you have for the farmer about their production style. Remember that the interview process is to set up a learning experience which will take place over many months (in most cases), so don't be shy about asking or having a clear opinion.

You may want to ask about:

- The living/rooming situation
- The work schedule, expectations for hours, diversity of tasks

- How you will be involved in or learn about farm decisions and planning
- Education opportunities: in-field, out-of-field, off-farm, self-directed, etc.
- The safety and insurance policies in place
- The community in which the farm is located
- Time off, visitor policies, meals, chores, rules and other quality-of-life expectations

If it doesn't feel right at this point, take that as a sign to ask for more time to think about the opportunity. Out of respect for the farmer, make sure to contact them if you decide to not move forward with their offer.

Make an effort to see any farm you would seriously consider apprenticing on. During an in-person meeting or interview, plan on being asked to draw up or sign an agreement or letter of commitment stating:

- Schedule and wage expectations
- Education and training expectations
- Duration of the apprenticeship
- Ways you and your host farmer will evaluate the experience and handle if expectations are not being met

