

Long Hungry Creek Farm has an apprenticeship program, sort of. In an effort to expand interest in local food production, we encourage young folk to experience life on a working organic farm. People come and go through regularly. Some of our apprentices have gone on to start their own farms, and some realize that farming isn't for them.

How will you know if you don't try? Farm life offers great lessons even if you don't take it up as a career life calling. The demand for local, organic produce is greater than the supply, so there is a huge opportunity here for enjoyable employment. We have a lot of fun growing vegetables. We have never used grant money; that farm pays it's own way.

For 30 years, friends and visitors have helped on the farm. Eventually I hired a few friends, and we work on something most days. We don't depend on labor from others, but appreciate when it happens. It frees us up a bit to either get extra stuff done, or relax a bit more than we would otherwise.

We offer room and board, and the chance to learn what goes on here. I don't give classes, although we occasionally study the Agriculture Course, by R. Steiner, together. A library of farming books is available of independent study, and I love questions. I have lots of questions myself, and I learn much from the apprentices and visitors who pass through.

Lodging consists of the apprentice house, with three bedrooms, kitchen and bath. Two of the barns have loft space, and my cabin has a guest room. If you like privacy, bring a tent. Beautiful campsites by the creek are near spring water, and there are two outhouses.

There are no set hours. We let the farm tell us what to do. Wet spells are vacation time. When it dries up, we get busy. Seven acres of vegetables need planting, hoeing, mulching and harvesting, fences need repaired, fruit crops need attention, herbs are propagated, cows are moved, and the list goes on.

If you go hungry here it's your own fault. Meals are often shared together, and the music parties never stop. I stress the social aspects of farming; you don't want to do this by yourself. Farms build community.

My community is Red Boiling Springs and has been wonderfully accepting of us. We try to be helpful, good neighbors. Apprentices have to get along with each other, and the community at large. Not much else is required.

Every farm is unique. Ours has no greenhouse, doesn't use irrigation, and relies machinery. Other local, organic farms have quite different methods. The apprentices help these other farms, too, so they can broaden their experiences.

My book (which is finally reprinted and available) serves as a textbook. I am prone to impromptu, rambling lectures, usually sparked by a question or the job at hand. The land is breathtakingly beautiful, and has mature forests and wet lands for nature study and hiking. Besides growing organic vegetables, maybe we can grow a few more organic farmers, too.