

# New Brunswick Organic Farm Apprenticeship Program Falls Brook Centre

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## Farm Application / Description

Farm Name: GOOD SPRING FARM

Farmer(s): Brock and Karen Davidge

Address: 730 Rte. 616, Keswick Ridge, NB E6L 1T1

Phone / E-mail: Hm. 506-363-3744, Fax: 506-363-2783, [brock.davidge@rvh.nb.ca](mailto:brock.davidge@rvh.nb.ca)

Number of apprentices sought: 2 females or 2 males

Our farm can host married couples/small family: yes

We are interested in hosting a Farming Organically Workshop. Yes

### Section A: Farm Description

**1. Farm Description:** (Include a brief history, crops or livestock, size of farm, main activities, etc.)

- Established in 1980. Consists of our own 40 acres (25 acre .select-cut woodlot), and rented land.
- Approximately 11 acres of mixed vegetables, CFIA Certified seed potatoes (most sold as table stock), small fruits, tree fruit, 2000sq. ft. double walled greenhouse, and poultry pastures.
- Chickens – We do our own breeding, hatching, raising and slaughter at a NB provincially inspected slaughter facility. It is a closed unit for bio-security purposes. The three breeds fall under rare breeds; 2 dual-purpose, 1 meat.
- Farm has been organic since established; OCIA (Organic Crop Improvement Assoc.[[www.ocia.org](http://www.ocia.org)]) certified since 1987. OCIA is an internationally accredited, farmer owned certifier.

### **2. Area Description:**

The farm is located on Keswick Ridge, ½ hour from Fredericton, NB., and 5 minutes from the Mactaquac Provincial Park with swimming, boating, walking and cross country ski trails, golf course, camping. Our own property also offers swimming as it is on the Mactaquac Arm. The community is expanding rapidly and is considered a bedroom community of Fredericton. The Mactaquac Fish Hatchery (salmon) and Hydro Electric generating station are open to tours. We have a beautiful view of the area from our farm and amazing sunsets. Being so close to the 2 universities in Fredericton means lots of sports, arts, craft college, farmers market (year round), etc. Karen is a member of the Fredericton Guild of Fibre Artists and has taught Traditional Rug Hooking.

### **3. Experience**

Brock and Karen have officially farmed since 1980 – always organically. That same year we became permanent vendors at the Boyce Farmers Market. Over the years Karen has been involved with the Organic Crop Improvement Assoc. in the following capacities: certified grower, Chapter President, Chair chapter certification committee, Executive member of the OCIA International board of director, and NB Chapter Administrator for 14 years. On the executive of the NB Federation of Agriculture and chaired it's Ag Awareness Comm. for 8 years. Represented NB on the federal National Agriculture Environment Committee which identified environmental issues for Canadian farmers, and, possible solutions. Represented Canadian Agriculture on a national task force seeking ways to preserve our natural heritage despite the impact of various industries, ie mining, forestry, agriculture; climate change; urbanization etc.. She also served on

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ACORN's (Atlantic Canada Organic Regional Network) board of directors, and was a 4H leader for 14 years.

Although Brock works mainly off farm, he looks forward to farming full time. He has played a significant role in the establishment of a retail store in the fall of 2006 along with 2 other farm families, which sells only NB agricultural products.

**4. Farming Philosophy:** (Include info on why you farm organically, and why you do it in the Maritimes.)

- We are both New Brunswickers and believe organic agriculture best demonstrates true Christian stewardship of the land, plants, animals, and people.
- It combines the best of "old" technology with the best of new production techniques.
- Also, we work with "at risk" youth and ex-offenders to give them an opportunity to stabilize, learn life skills, have a support system, and reach their full potential as individuals. They may be here as residents or day participants.
- The ideal is "local farm production for local consumption".

**5. Time:** We will be on the farm full time for the apprenticeship season.

### **Section B: Apprentice Job Description**

**6. & 7. Job Description and Hours:** (What do you expect of an apprentice? How many hours per day, days per week, heavy physical work, office work/research, etc.)

- Generally an 8 hr. day (depending on whether windows of opportunity may involve some evenings)
- 5-6 days per week (Fridays and Saturdays are essential) we try not to do anything more than necessary on Sundays, e.g. feed chickens and water greenhouse. Willing to arrange other days weekends and may be longer to be off.
- The work is varied, at times physically demanding. However, we have a policy of working smarter rather than harder. Labor saving equipment is used as much as possible e.g. Electric vegetable washer.

**8. Compensation:** Will you be able to provide an apprentice with any compensation in addition to room and board (i.e. stipend)? If so, what are you offering and under what conditions?

- A weekly stipend will be \$25.00, and depending on performance, contribution and success of crops, an end of season bonus. Opportunities exist to earn extra at the farmers market by busking or producing saleable items on their own time.

**9. Learning opportunities:** (List any learning opportunities your farm can offer. E.g. Tractor work, animal husbandry, seed saving, farm market stalls, CSA management, etc. How will you provide instruction and training to an apprentice?)

- Market Stall – We have been permanent stallholders for 26 years at the Fredericton Farmers Market
- Operated a CSA for one year.
- Marketing – Karen led the development of the present NB Grown program and logo.
- Operating equipment – 3 tractors, small equipment
- Seed Saving
- CFIA seed potato system
- Good Spring Farm works closely with the Canadian Potato Heritage Gene Bank in Fredericton

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- Farm Management – planting and marketing decisions, finances, cost of production, organic certification process, computerized records and finances.
- Planting, growing, harvesting, washing, grading, storage
- Poultry production and processing

**10. Mentorship:** What is your experience in on-farm mentorship and instruction?

- One agricultural student of the Woodstock Community College did her apprenticeship here.
- Participated in and helped organize 6 NB Open Farm Days.
- WOOFERS
- Karen has taught at many workshops, conferences etc. for farmers, and the public, elementary students through to university classes re various agricultural topics.
- Brock and Karen mentor and instruct various “at risk” youth and ex-offenders in life skills and farming practices.
- Host family and work place for 2 Canada World Youth 2005 (from Winnipeg and Senegal, Africa)
- 2006 NB Organic Farm Apprenticeship farm with 1 apprentice
- Safety and bio-security are important on this farm.

**11. Style:**

This will be taught at the kitchen table, in the field, literature, computer, and hands on.

**12. Resources:**

Lots of books, magazines, newsletters available, plus access to internet and the NB Dept of Agriculture library, plus, department specialists in Fredericton.

**13. Mid-season Exchange:**

We are open to hosting a mid-season exchange for up to a couple of weeks.

### **Section D: On Farm Research**

**14. Projects:**

a. A continuation of the 2006 project which was as follows:

- How can our poultry pastures be enhanced by a greater selection of plant species?(In 2006 this part was partially completed with the seeding of a mixture of forage annuals and tissue analysis) Perennial forages plus the inclusion of selected annuals should be also examined.
- Can a portion of winter poultry feed be supplied by chopped and dried summer forage crops?

b. Trials for determining the best varieties for direct seeding of onions, especially for winter storage.

c. What do consumers in the Fredericton area want and/or need in local cert. organic agricultural products. Fresh, frozen,

### **Section E: Life on the Farm**

**15, 16, 17 Food, Housing, Transportation, Visitors:**

a) Describe the housing (i.e. guest house, room in house, etc.) including laundry facilities.

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- The participant will have their own bedroom, family room, and use of a full bathroom in a sunny, finished, walk out basement located on farm.
- Also includes laundry,
- Piano.

b) What kinds of bathing and cooking facilities are available?

- Bathing – full bath, house has 2.
- Cooking – all meals provided, a participants help with cooking and clean up is always appreciated. The family is not vegetarian, but will accommodate anyone who is. 98% of the food consumed is organic and most produced on farm.

c) Will all food be provided? Outline limits to consumption of farm food, if any. Are meals shared?

- Participant will eat with the family. Farm food production feeds family first than our customers.

d) How will the apprentice get around off the farm (bike, foot, car, are rides available)?

- Car, when it is going where the apprentice needs to go or arrangements have been made. Brock works weekdays in Fredericton when not on vacation. A bike is available and neighbors are willing to help out.

e) Are visitors welcome? For how long? Are they expected to contribute to the farm during their stay?

- Visitors are welcome. Length of stay depends on circumstances and arrangements. Beds are limited. Co-habiting unless married is not permitted. A helping hand is not necessary but appreciated if appropriate.

### **18. Leisure activities**

Previously described.

### **Section F: Getting Started**

#### **19. Ideal Apprentice:**

- Trustworthy, dependable, honest, respect for people and property, can persevere
- Has a strong desire to use present skills and develop new ones
- Willing to communicate with people, and, has a real desire to help others.
- Valid drivers license required to drive tractors and other vehicles.
- Interested in “joining the family”.
- Physically capable of doing farm work, has stamina, will complete tasks.
- Has a heart for agriculture, intends to use this farm experience and knowledge in the future even if not as a farm owner.

**Qualifications:** (List any qualifications you expect a successful apprentice will have when they apply.)

- Speak enough English that they can work safely and learn steadily.

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**20. Trial period:** Do you want an apprentice to visit and/or work on your farm before the final arrangements are made?

- An in-person interview is desirable and a one to two week probationary period is encouraged.

**21. Additional information:** (Is there anything else a person considering working on your farm needs to know?)

- Use of illegal drugs is prohibited.
- Although we are not non-drinkers of alcohol, it is rarely used due to the others who may be at the farm who are overcoming substance abuse themselves or were affected by it.
- Smoking is permitted outdoors and away from all buildings and equipment. Butts not to be thrown around.
- Musical instruments and ability are welcome if used responsibly.
- The Davidges' are active Christians by faith. Church, grace at meals etc. are very important components of our lives. All people are valued.
- Our family at Good Spring Farm presently consists of Brock, Karen.
- We have three children all living elsewhere. Tanya, husband Fred and three children in Calgary. Mark and wife Krissy in Ottawa. Carrie and husband Tom in Calgary. Tanya and her family will be here for 1 month this summer.
- 1 dog – Wirehaired Pointing Griffon for chicken management and varmint control. He has 3 levels of obedience training and is very people friendly plus full of energy.
- 2 cats