

## 2007 Farm Application

Farm Name: Speerville Farms

Farmer(s): Stu Fleischhaker and Nancy Cantafio

Address: 140 Speerville Rd., Speerville, NB, E7N 1S2

Phone: (506) 277-6301

Fax: (506) 277-1014

E-mail: N/A

Number of apprentices sought:   1  

Our farm can host couples/small family: Yes   X   No       

We are interested in hosting a Farming Organically Workshop. Yes   X   No       

### Section A: Farm Description

1. **Area Description:** Describe the area around your farm (ie. landscape, local attractions) and the community in which you're located.

**We believe we live in the most beautiful part of New Brunswick with rolling hills, lush forests, many lakes and rivers nearby. Our community is a thriving one with a local flour mill and a local abattoir. Woodstock, the nearest town, is 10 miles away, with several good biking trails close by.**

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

**Speerville Farms has been certified organic since certification began in the 1980's. Our main marketing is through the local farmer's market in the summer and a door-to-door delivery system of organic food in the winter. We have an on-farm bakery using a wood-fired oven. We produce storage vegetables, strawberries, grain, hay, eggs, and keep cows, pigs and chickens. We also have a large home garden and a young orchard with some small fruits like raspberries and gooseberries. Stu manages our woodlot sustainably. We always have an ongoing building project. We are also kept busy raising our two young children Layla (5) and Maryn (3).**

3. **Experience:** Describe your own experience/skills as a farmer (ie. number of years, types of operations, involvement in related groups/organizations).

**Stu has been farming organically for over 30 years and established the Speerville Flour Mill, located in the centre of our farm. It is a thriving enterprise serving all the Atlantic Provinces with locally produced grain products. Stu also helped establish organic certification in New Brunswick, as well as helping start several form groups in our area.**

**Nancy's baking and cooking is famed throughout the area, and we have been told by WWOOFers and apprenticeship that we have "the best food in Canada".**

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

**We strongly believe in producing food for local consumption. We farm organically because it is the only sane thing a person can do. Building up the soil and leaving the earth better than we find it is a very rewarding vocation, and also takes a lot of work! We**



**also believe strongly in sustaining ourselves – thus we buy-in very little food and do a lot of home-scale processing (making cheese, butter, beer, etc.).**

**5. Time:** Will you be on the farm full-time for the apprenticeship season (May-mid October)?

**Yes. We have no off-farm jobs and this is our life and passion and full-time work.**

### **Section B: Work Description**

**6. Job Description:** Describe the jobs that your apprentice will be expected to perform on your farm.

**The apprentice will be expected to participate in the entire farming operation, from planting through to harvest. Because of the diversity of our farm, the opportunity exists for the apprentice to focus on a particular interest. Last year, for example, our apprentice took over the care of the egg laying production. Responsibilities come as skills develop.**

**7. Work Hours:** What is the average work day (hours) and work week? Include when an apprentice can have time off.

**Our expectation is a 40-hour work week which can vary with the season. After the initial learning period, some time off can be arranged as long as it is not during critical farming periods, i.e. haying.**

**8. Compensation:** Are you offering a stipend or living allowance to apprentices, and under what conditions?

**We offer a small weekly allowance to cover any personal needs. However, most of the apprentices needs could come from the farm. We feel we provide an exceptional learning experience, that in many cases one would have to pay for. We give it willingly in exchange for help on the farm.**

### **Section C: Mentorship and Learning**

**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.)

**With the diversity of our operation, many learning opportunities exist. For example, our apprentice last year ran her own booth at the local farm market and earned extra money from her efforts.**

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

**We have had WWOOFers for many years. We have had two apprentices here for the whole season in two separate years.**

**11. Style:** How will you provide instruction and training to an apprentice? Describe your teaching and mentorship style.

**We teach through doing. Stu enjoys working alongside the apprentice, not expecting the apprentices to do any jobs he wouldn't do himself. Because this is our farm, our life, our work, we are always here and available. Stu really enjoys being a teacher/mentor.**

**12. Resources:** Do you have any farming books, magazines, newsletters, etc. on the farm available to the apprentice?

**We have small farm and related library.**

**13. Mid-season Exchange:** Are you open to hosting a mid-season (July/August) exchange with an apprentice from another farm?

**We have found there is an accelerated learning curve early in the apprenticeship. We strongly support the idea of a mid-season exchange to keep the experience for both farm and apprentice fresh. It's another great opportunity for learning. Our apprentice last year spent time at other farms and came back to our farm with renewed energy and enthusiasm.**

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

**14. Projects:** List and briefly describe 3 possible on-farm research projects you are interested in:

- a. **Squash/cucumber beetles: They are a serious pest in your squash plants. We wish to test several different control methods: 1) floating row cover; 2) increasing plant resistance with liquid seaweed; and 3) burning male blossoms to kill insects.**
- b. **Grain density: Determining grain density by measuring plats and calibrating the grain drill.**
- c. **Forage quality: Testing quality of forage cut at different times.**

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

**15. Living Arrangements:** Describe the housing/accommodation and food arrangement you provide to apprentices. Include bathing/washing and laundry facilities.

**Our apprentices will live in their own rustic cabin built last year by Stu and our apprentice. Meals are shared in our house with the family. The food is 100% organic and mainly grown on farm or from the mill next door. For bathing, we have a solar shower and the pond. If you need a daily morning shower, this might be difficult. We have a washing machine for laundry and a 'solar and wind powered' clothes line.**

**16. Transportation:** Do you provide transportation for apprentices to get off the farm, including monthly workshops?

**We have a bicycle available which gets much use by WWOOFers and apprentices. Hopefully, between the other farms involved with the apprentice program nearby, arrangements can be made to get apprentices to monthly workshops.**

**17. Visitors:** Are visitors welcome? For how long? Are they expected to contribute to the farm during their stay?

**We are open to visitors; much depends on length of stay and time of year or how involved they become with the farm.**

**18. Leisure activities:** (List any leisure activities or opportunities available to apprentices. E.g. bike riding, nature trails nearby, town is 20 min away, annual family trip to cabin in October, etc.)

**As we have already said, there is a bike available, bike trails, lakes and rivers nearby. The apprentice should realize this is a rural area, town is a 1 ½ hour bike ride away. Our usual weekly trip off the farm is on Saturdays to our farm market, which is a great social experience! As a family we get together with friends and neighbours and go to the nearby river for picnics and swimming. It would be helpful for the apprentice to get to know people in the local area.**

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

**19. Ideal Apprentice:** Describe your ideal apprentice below (the apprentice's own training goals, life experience, farming experience):

**The ideal apprentice is one that is excited about learning about farming, enjoys hard work and learning-by-doing and self-motivated. It would be ideal if they were planning to settle and farm in the Maritimes! Having some former agricultural and or food experience and interest is a definite asset. The ideal apprentice is an early riser and is cheerful. They also need to be someone who enjoys interacting with children, as they are always present and intimately involved with the farm. They should enjoy their own company and have some of their own interests or hobbies.**

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

**A trial period would be great and we would encourage it from both the apprentices' and our own standpoint.**

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

**No.**