FARRMS 2015 intern program will still accept applications for this year’s growing season. Currently there are eight host farms and 15 intern applications in the program with room for several more.

Many of the interns come from backgrounds with zero farming experience all the way to graduates of farm courses across the nation. FARRMS program offers an opportunity to learn hands-on farming and ranching skills with real North Dakota farmers.

The program provides beginning farmers and ranchers’ real world training in sustainable agriculture through an innovative cooperative education program. FARRMS combines hands-on training, classroom learning and farm-based education on a diverse network of family farms in North Dakota. Experienced farmers have the opportunity to share their skills and knowledge with the next generation of farmers.

Interns choose the type of farm or farming they would like to learn. Participants that qualify for the program live and work full time on a host farm receiving ongoing instruction learning in-depth skills unique to the farmer’s operation. Openings are limited and interns are placed on a first-come first-serve basis. Farm tours and a free library of books will broaden each experience and expose interns to the vast array of knowledge and expertise in North Dakota’s farming community.

In addition to the hands-on education and training, participants in the FARRMS program are offered social networking in the spirit of community and sharing. The goal of the FARRMS internship program is to prepare beginning farmers and ranchers with the fundamental skills and concepts of operating a successful farm.

Interns begin realtionships with potential farms anytime after applying and we would like them to be matched to a farm by May 15. The season continues until the end of November or earlier based on the type of operation. Farm and intern applications can be downloaded at http://www.farrms.org/farrms-intern-program.html and should be submitted as soon as possible. Room and board, tuition and a $200 a week stipend will be provided based on individual host farms. Farms may host up to three interns.

For more information contact FARRMS at info@farrms.org or 701-527-5169; or email sbalcom@farrms.org.

FARRMS programming helps bridge the gap between farmer and consumer. This relationship is so important because people want to know where their food comes from and how it is raised. At the same time, consumer feedback is important for farmers because it will ultimately dictate the way they manage or raise their food. This symbiotic relationship is essential for both parties and FARRMS is a leading organization that helps bridge that gap.

Paul Brown
FARRMS Board Member

Every October, FARRMS offers the Land Stewardship Project Farm Beginnings Course to anyone interested in turning their farm dream into reality. This fall’s class was held at the Heart of America Library in Rugby with eight farms enrolled.

Not every farm completes the eight-session program. But everyone enrolled is invited to attend missed classes the following year until they reach their farm enterprise goals. Even without completing all the assignments, farmers gain invaluable networking and insight into what it takes to run a successful farm.

Graduates are required to present a business plan, work on a farm food safety plan and attend all the sessions. The course is offered online as an option for being in attendance in the event of inclement weather, but the peer-to-peer networking is invaluable.

Farm Beginnings has proven to be a successful program in many states and as a facilitator organization, FARRMS belongs to the Farm Beginnings Collaborative. The FBC is a national alliance of independent regional groups of farmers and farmer-training support organizations working together to promote Farm Beginnings, a farmer training model that is community based, rooted in sustainable principles, and farmer led.

Many of our graduates become presenters at following Farm Beginnings courses sharing experiences and barriers to creating their farm dreams. Over the course of six years, we have graduated about 20 farm families, many are still in business.

FARRMS offers the class in conjunction with its Grants to Grow program and would like to expand education offerings to grow these farmer’s businesses after the first three years of business by offering a second tier of classes.

If you are interested in the next session or would like to sponsor a farmer’s tuition to attend Farm Beginnings in October of 2015, please contact Sue Balcom, facilitator at 701-527-5169 or sbalcom@farrms.org.


Sarah Vogel - Bismarck
Fred Kirschenmann - Iowa
Annie Kirschenmann - Windsor
Brian McGinnness - Mandan
Carol Nelson - Valley City
Mindi Schmitz - Jamestown
Pfifer Auction and Reality
Wallace St. Onge
JC and Sue B. Balcom - Mandan
Laura Halvorson - Bottineau
Keith Knudson - Bottineau
Karen Ehrens - Bismarck

Dwight Duke - Hensler
Britt Jacobson - Langdon
Roger and Alyce Lunde - Rolette
Donald Frye and
Laurie Pavlicek - Jamestown
Bradshaw Knight Foundation
Otto Bremer Foundation
Slavic Heritage Farm
‘keeping the dream alive’

By Julia Petrovic
Slavic Heritage Farm
Rugby, ND

When you fall in love with living on the land farming becomes a way of life. It gets under your skin, soaks up into every molecule of your body, starts dominating your way of thinking, and it becomes impossible not to dream about it even during the hours when the stars shine the brightest. Your “dream up” your farm just to realize that the sky is the limit!

When the morning sun rays knock at the horizon, I bag my dreams and go to plant them everywhere around the farm. Some dreams look like tiny seeds that will probably sleep for a long time. I carefully label my “seed dreams” and put them away to wait for the right time. They warm my heart. Other dreams have just started sprouting, so I jubilantly plant them away to wait for the right time. They warm my heart as well. Some dreams look like tiny seeds that will probably sleep for a long time. I carefully label my “seed dreams” and put them away to wait for the right time.

And as a whole, the farm will become a place that would draw in those who are curious to experience, learn about and explore the mysteries of a growing seed, the intelligently designed life cycle and ultimate connection of soil, water, air, plants, animals and humans. I see our farm as a tangible proof of making things work when almost all hope is lost.

Once you put your hands into the fresh moist dirt and inhale the pungent aroma of a living world beneath you, you wake bare feet in the garden, you sink your teeth into a fruit freshly picked off the vine, your feel a bug on your skin, you see an amazing array of colors all around you, you hear the notes of the bird songs you’ve never heard before, then you’ll finally start to get it. Life is an amazing adventure and if more of us spend it on the farms fewer of them by seeding a variety of grasses and legumes over the years. And the milk that comes from those pastures is sweeter than sweet and enables us to create a most delicious cheese that will be suitable to serve at the royal banquet. And Julia’s goat cheese desserts with fresh berries that would come from the farm will be talked about between the prominent confectioners.

And, after reading that article may you be inspired to ‘be the change you want to see’. It’s overwhelming to think about changing the world when all you can do is change something in your own backyard. However, if everyone did that, collectively we could move a lot of things in a greater direction, don’t you think?

So, plant a garden, buy some eggs, cook dinner with your children and don’t forget to support your local farmer - and your local farmer advocates like FARRMS and its partners.

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