

Tide Mill Farm Synopsis:

We are a nine generation family farm located on the coastal waters of Downeast Maine. Carly and Aaron and a hardworking farm crew operate a diversified organic farm with 100 dairy and beef cows, 50 pigs, 500 turkeys, 7000 broilers, 40 acres of pasture, cover crops, 3 acres of row crops and composting.

Farm Name	Tide Mill Organic Farm	MOFGA Member?	Yes
Contact Person	Carly DelSignore	Phone	207-733-2551
Mailing Address	91 Tide Mill Road	Best time to call	Morning between 7 and 9
	Edmunds, ME 04268	County	Washington
E-Mail	eatlocal@tidemillorganicfarm.com	Website	www.tidemillorganicfarm.com
Number of apprentices sought: 2, Ideally a couple who can live well together.			
During what time period? April 1-December 10th			

Physical setting, description and the nature of our community:

Our farm is located along the shores of Cobscook Bay in downeast Maine. We are situated on Rt 1 about 30 minutes north of Machias and 45 minutes south of Calais and between Lubec and Eastport. It is a very rural setting. There are 40 acres of prime pasture, 40 additional acres we are converting to pasture, 3 acres of cropland, 1500 acres of woodland, and 6 miles of shore frontage. Hiking, canoeing and sea kayaking are common recreation pastimes for people to enjoy the amazing raw beauty of this area.

We have a large free stall barn that houses our dairy herd, calves and beef cows with an attached shop. We also have a greenhouse with an attached brooder for our baby chicks. We have a hoop house and various outbuildings that house pastured animals. There are 6 Bell families that each have houses on the farm and a renovated century-old farmhouse that hosts an office and the occasional renters and school groups .

Recreation includes the exploration of the woods, the stony beach, and the bay. The Cobscook Community Learning Center (www.theccclc.org) is located 4 miles from the farm and offers a network of social individuals; the arts and events including an Old Time Music jam twice a month, a pottery studio, and a place to gather. We are also strong believers and supporters of the Weston A. Price organization. (www.westonaprice.org)

Description of Farm Operation:

Carly and Aaron run a diversified, certified organic farm that includes ~4 acres of row crops and cover crops, with some herb and companion flower production. We have a greenhouse where we start our own vegetables, herbs, and flowers as well as an annual Seedling Sale. Our livestock that we raise for meat include 30-50 pigs, 6000-8000 broilers, and 400-600 turkeys. We harvest and process our own poultry once-twice a week from June-November. We are milking 40 cows that are rotationally grazed during the growing season. We have an additional 50 cows which consist of dry cows, calves, steers and heifers. We run a Farm Stand on our farm, participate in the Senior FarmShare program (with about 60 shares), have a 20 member CSA, and deliver to customers via home deliveries, buying clubs and health food stores from Calais to Rockland. Our milk is primarily sold to MOO Milk (Maine's Own Organic Milk company we started with 9 other dairy farms, the Maine Farm Bureau, MOFGA, Department of Ag, Oakhurst, Smiling Hill and Crown of Maine Cooperative, see www.moomilkco.com). We do bottle our own raw milk for local customers and local stores. We work closely with Crown of Maine Organic Cooperative (www.crownofmainecoop.com) and are involved in developing an agricultural cooperative in our county. Aaron's cousin has a certified cheese kitchen on the farm where she makes yogurt and various other cheeses. We preserve a lot of our vegetables for our family to eat during the winter, as well as prepare whole foods for delicious healthy meals.

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Work to be performed and Skills to be gained:

Veggies: Spring: Tending Seedlings, Seeding and Transplanting Crops into the Field, Cultivation, Record Keeping

Summer: In addition to tasks in the Spring there will also be Planting Cover Crops, Pest Control, Irrigation, Harvesting, Washing and Packaging Vegetables, On-farm Marketing and Delivering

Fall: Harvesting crops, Washing and Packaging Vegetables, On-farm Marketing and Delivering, Drying and Preserving Food and Seed, Planting garlic, and Cleaning the fields of debris.

Animals: Spring, Summer, & Fall: Settling in pigs and day-old chicks, Daily animal care of cows, pigs, chickens and turkeys (feeding, watering, clean bedding, fresh pasture, & fence maintenance), Chicken Harvesting & Processing, On-Farm Marketing and Delivering, Calf feeding and care, Assisting with milking and barn chores.

Other: Piling brush and making fences to make way for new pasture, haying, delivery runs, packing orders, loading livestock, castrating piglets.

Skills to be learned: Holistic care of organic livestock for maximum health and vitality, Raising organic livestock within a pasture based system, Harvesting poultry safely and efficiently, Seedling production, Mixed vegetable production from seeding through harvest and preserving that harvest for optimal nutrient density, Building and maintaining relationships with customers, Observation skills to maintain animal and crop health, Basic record keeping and analysis for farm profitability. How to make yogurt and cheese and preserve vegetables as well as learning to make stock, ferment foods and prepare whole foods.

We expect to train you and be patient while you get accustomed to the tasks and routine, but do expect you to become efficient, developing and honing your farming skills throughout your stay with us.

Expectations:

You can expect to work six days a week and are guaranteed one day off a week. Occasionally the sixth day will include only animal chores. We expect an average of a 9 hr day, but there will be at least one 10-11 hour day a week.

We operate with a weekly “to do” list and then try to get those tasks accomplished within the week based on the weather and other deadlines. Farming, especially when you are depending on it for your sole source of income, is very physically demanding work in adverse conditions. You will be expected to work in the rain and heat and bugs (black flies and mosquitoes). Many farming tasks are tedious (weeding and thinning) and repetitive (basic animal chores that need to be done everyday). You should be able to lift and carry 50 lbs of weight and squat or kneel (or those equivalents) for an hour or two at a time.

Intentions of how to train apprentices:

We tend to operate more with the “learning by doing” philosophy. We will demonstrate how we want a task to be done and go into the details about why we do it that particular way. Aaron or Carly or an experienced field worker will work along side you for the most part, but there will be a fair amount of time where we will be present for the beginning part of the project, to get you started and answer the questions that come up, and then you will finish on your own. You must be accountable and reliable. We intend to share at least one meal per week with you, sharing in the experience of learning to prepare the foods you are working hard to grow. You are welcome to respectfully use our large selection of farming books and Internet use, as well as other local library resources. We are also open to going to visit other farms in our area.

Other Occupations of the Farmers:

Carly and Aaron are also parents, raising their 4 young children ages five, nine and twelve with number 4 due in early May.

Wage and Stipends:

Without farming experience, we offer \$75 a week per person, with a raise to \$100 per week per person after working for 4 weeks. If you have farming experience there is room for negotiating a higher stipend. We also offer \$10 per week per person for additional food that we don't have that you may want (coffee, bread, peanut butter, etc.). We offer a bonus for a successful apprenticeship if you are in good standing when you finish the season.

Room and Board Arrangements we offer:

Our housing situation is a large camper trailer. It has electricity and a hose for running. It has a kitchen with a gas stove and oven and small refrigerator. It has propane heat. Bathroom facilities include an outhouse and we offer our home to bathing facilities and for washing clothes. You will primarily be expected to be independent and eat on your own, but are invited to share at least one meal a week with Rachel and one meal a week with Carly and Aaron and their family if you want.

There is also an option to live in a house occupied by another farm worker 15 miles from the farm. We house some of our cows and our turkeys on this farm. The farm is operated by Dan Colby who has his own flock of laying hens and is hoping to run a few chicken tractors and have some mixed vegetables on this farm as well. This option would involve helping with chores at that farm in addition to your work here.

You must bring appropriate footwear (eg, rubber boots and work boots) as well as your own rain gear, sun hat and protection and bug protection. There are many wet, mucky days that we will be working in the fields. We also provide insurance if you should get injured while working for us.

Partly because it is so rare in the growing season, our privacy and exclusive family time is extremely important to us. There will be a designated afternoon where you are welcome to use our shower and washer, as well as internet and library. We practice a Weston Price diet using traditional foods that contain animal products but do have the occasional non-meat meal. We will provide food from the farm

and some additional staples, like coffee and sugar and some additional vegetables in the early part of the year when produce is hard to come by. We provide seasonal vegetables, fruits and herbs, cow milk, yogurt, eggs, turkey, chicken, pork and beef that we grow on the farm.

Our family has soon to be 4 young children. We incorporate our children into practically everything we do and value their participation, even though that participation takes more time and care. You will not be expected to do any childcare.

Other considerations that make our situation unique is the fact that multiple Bell families live on the farm. There are 6 households consisting of 10 adults and 7 children. That has many positive qualities, but we also need to pay more attention to co-habiting with many people in regards to respect for other people's space. There is an 18th century farmhouse that can host renters. We need to be aware of keeping the farm aesthetic and being conscious of the presence of renters, guests, and other family members. With that said, it is also a great opportunity to meet and interact with many really neat, diverse people. We do not allow apprentices or hired help to bring their pets with them to work unless they are leashed or otherwise contained and special permission has been granted.

Descriptions of ourselves, our family, background, farming experience, philosophy, goals & interests:

Aaron Bell and Carly DelSignore are the husband/wife team that own and operate the farm, the certified organic meat, dairy and produce business. They work together to manage their different passions within their business and to balance their different strengths and weaknesses. Carly currently manages the greenhouse, vegetable, pig and chicken ventures as well as the direct marketing of the meats and vegetables. She also manages the poultry processing and financial recording keeping of the farm. Aaron focuses his energy on managing and working with the dairy and beef herd, field management for feed for the cattle, and maintenance of equipment and buildings.

Since January of 2000, we have been farming and trying to figure out how we can make our living from our farming endeavors. We believe we can make the world a better place by helping to connect people to the production of healthy food. We would like to exchange our knowledge and experience for an extra set of hands or two who value hard work, dedication, and the desire to provide healthy food for a community of appreciative people.

Our mission, values, and goals can be found on our website, www.tidemillorganicfarm.com

References:

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