

Stroud Community Agriculture Farm Worker (fixed term)

Stroud Community Agriculture is a 350 member CSA, farming 70 acres of land on 3 sites in Gloucestershire, producing both vegetables and meat for our community of members. The horticulture unit consists of 9 acres of field vegetables and 1000 sqm of polytunnels on two separate sites. We breed and rear traditional Hereford cattle, Wiltshire horn cross sheep and Berkshire cross pigs.

The farm is a registered non-profit co-operative run by the members for the benefit of the members. The livestock is managed by our farmer, Sam Hardiman, and the horticulture by our grower, Kate Winters. Together they manage and coordinate work at the farm and are accountable to a group of executive directors drawn from the CSA members on a rolling voluntary basis.

SCA was set up nearly 20 years ago, in 2002, and we are now in a time of transition in many senses. Due to the sale of one of the farms that we tenant, we are moving various aspects of our horticultural operation and livestock farming to a new site during the next 18 months. This is leading us to review and update much of our equipment and infrastructure, to set SCA up for the next two decades of feeding local people in a truly sustainable way.

Over the autumn/winter of 2021-22 we will be continuing all aspects of our food production and also undertaking a number of significant infrastructure projects and auditing and upgrading equipment and machinery. We have a core team of 3 full time members of staff, supported by two more part time staff. We are looking for a general farm worker to join the team to help with all aspects of our farm work and the projects and activities related to our new infrastructure and set up of equipment.

We are looking for someone with farming experience with either vegetable production and/or livestock to work with us from September (start date flexible) until the end of March 2022. This is a full-time post of 40 hours per week, generally 8am-4pm, with inclusion in the weekend rota. You will need to be physically fit and able to work well with the existing farm team. Ideally we are looking for someone with experience of tractor and/or ATV driving and some general building and very basic plumbing skills. If you know the difference between a drill and an impact driver, a mitre saw and a jigsaw, between Plasson and GEKA (and how to use them all) then you are the person we are looking for!

Closing date for applications Thursday 26th August. Zoom interviews on 3rd September. Visit and trial day to be arranged after Zoom interview.

Please email your CV and covering letter to Kate Winters:
grower@stroudcommunityagriculture.org

Please refer to the job description below when telling us why you would like the job and why you'd be good at it. Try to give us some examples of things you've done in the past to help us understand what you can bring to the job.

Please also feel free to get in touch by email if you have any questions or would like to discuss the role.

Job Description

Purpose of Post. To help with all aspects of work on the farm as decided by the farmer and grower who manage operations at the farm.

Responsible to

The farm worker will be responsible to the farm managers.

Tasks may include (dependent on your skill set):

- Harvesting vegetable crops for the share
- Packing vegetables for delivered shares; preparing the veg shed for collection by SCA members; monitoring stock levels in the veg shed and replenishing appropriately
- Feeding and handling livestock with support from the Farmer
- Assisting the Farmer and Grower with infrastructure projects and equipment testing/ auditing eg.
 - o Testing irrigation equipment and compiling an inventory
 - o Installing new irrigation systems in the polytunnel and market garden
 - o Building the new propagation facility (construction and electrical wiring)
 - o Setting up a new composting system
 - o Fixing/general maintenance on hand tools
 - o Assessing crop covers and helping to order new stock for our new sites
 - o Landscaping around polytunnels
 - o Converting polytunnels to min-till
 - o Helping to clear out the sheds at the site we are vacating and consolidating our equipment across our sites (“The Big Tidy”)

Conditions

- The hours worked in this post will be flexible according to the needs of the farm and as negotiated with the staff team. This will be no more than an average of 40 hours per week
- The farm worker will be part of the weekend rota, working one in four weekend days (eg. 1st and 3rd Saturdays of the month)
- This is a full-time employed post from September 2021 (start date to be agreed) to the end of March 2022
- The pay will be real living wage - a salary equivalent to £9.50 per hour for 40 hours per week

- There is a total of 2 days paid leave accrued each month worked (including bank holidays)
- There will be a two week trial period.

Unfortunately due to the transition between sites we are unable to provide on-farm accommodation so you would need to find accommodation in the local area. We will do all we can to support you in doing this by asking amongst our members for potential accommodation that may not be. However we cannot guarantee any accommodation and you would need to be prepared to arrange this for yourself.

Person specification

Essential

- Knowledge and experience of farm work - horticultural and/or livestock
- An interest in sustainable small-medium scale organic horticulture
- Some confidence using power tools and mechanical tools (drill, impact driver, mitre/chop saw, socket set)
- Some basic knowledge of plumbing relevant to installing a water supply and irrigation equipment
- Full driving license
- Ability to work with in a team but also motivated and focussed to carry out tasks independently
- An interest in community supported agriculture and a willingness to work with members of the co-operative and volunteers.
- Be physically fit and have stamina for the demands of the job.
- An interest in the principles of organic/biodynamic farming.
- Supportive of the guiding principles of SCA

Desirable

- Experience of driving a tractor and/or ATV
- Knowledge of organic/biodynamic livestock rearing
- Knowledge of organic/biodynamic horticulture
- An interest in designing and installing farming systems and equipment

Background

Stroud Community Agriculture was one of the first 'CSA' initiatives to be established in the UK. It began in 2002 and since then has been successfully providing locally grown biodynamic produce to a committed community of local citizens.

The farming approach is entirely organic. The soil is kept in good heart with the farm's own composts and animal manures, the cattle and sheep are grass fed and the farm is as self-sufficient as possible. Biodynamic measures are also applied to enhance the vitality of the crops, improve livestock health and develop soil fertility.

Our work is guided by a set of principles

- To support organic and biodynamic agriculture.

- To pioneer a new economic model based on mutual benefit and shared risk and ensure that the farmers have a decent livelihood.
- To be fully inclusive. Low income shall not exclude anyone.
- To encourage practical involvement on all levels.
- To be transparent in all our affairs. To make decisions on the basis of consensus wherever possible. To strive towards social justice.
- To offer opportunities for learning, therapy and re-connecting with the life of the earth.
- To network with others to promote community supported agriculture to other communities and farms and share our learning (both economic and farming).
- To encourage Stroud Community Agriculture members, in co-operation with the farmers, to use the farm for their individual and social activities and celebrations.
- To develop a non-exclusive sense of community around the farm.
- To work co-operatively with other enterprises that share our principles.