

Goat Herd Health Intern (Spring, 12 weeks)

Prairie Fruits Farm & Creamery

Overview

Prairie Fruits Farm & Creamery is seeking an **unpaid Goat Herd Health Intern** to work directly with our Herd Manager to support daily and weekly herd health monitoring and basic animal care. This internship is an excellent opportunity to learn hands-on in the only commercial goat dairy in Champaign County, while building practical skills in parasite management, body condition assessment, hoof care, and pasture-based herd health.

Term & Time Commitment

- **Season:** Spring semester (12 weeks)
Start: February (exact start date flexible)
Weekly commitment: 6-8 hours per week (schedule coordinated with the Herd Manager)

Key Responsibilities

- Assist with collecting samples and running fecal egg counts (FEC) to assess parasite loads and determine course of treatment
- Perform FAMACHA scoring, body condition scoring (BCS), coat health assessment, and weigh animals under supervision/training, as part of monthly herd health checks
- Assist the herd manager with routine hoof trimming and herd vaccinations, while practicing basic livestock handling skills and techniques
- Help maintain clean, functional animal areas: building pens, checking/ repairing fencing, bedding barns, maintaining livestock buildings and feeders, and cleaning waterers
- Observe and report changes in individual goat behavior, appetite, mobility, and overall well-being to the Herd Manager
- Support pasture-based routines as needed (moving animals, maintaining fencelines, monitoring water access, and checking for signs of heat stress)

What You'll Learn

- Practical herd health monitoring: how FEC, FAMACHA, and BCS inform day-to-day decisions
- How nutrition and intensively managed pastures impact parasite load, body condition, and overall herd resilience
- Safe and effective animal handling and goat herd stewardship
- Foundations of preventive care and operational routines in a commercial goat dairy
- How herd health and behavior monitoring is critical for successful dairy operation
- How seasonal challenges affect herd management and impact every system on the farm

Ideal Candidate

- Interested in animal science, veterinary/production medicine, dairy systems, or regenerative livestock management
- Comfortable working outdoors in all weather and around large animals (training provided; prior experience is helpful but not required)
- Calm, attentive, and detail-oriented. Able to follow protocols carefully and think independently
- Reliable and punctual with a willingness to learn and ask questions
- Able to bend, squat, pull, and lift up to 50lbs, walk long distances, and carry light-to-moderate equipment as needed

How to Apply

Please send a brief letter about your interest in dairy operations, goat health and regenerative agricultural practices (please include any relevant experience with animals, farms, or labs) along with a resume to rose@prairiefrutisfarm.com

Location: Prairie Fruits Farm and Creamery, Champaign IL

Contact: Rose Rutzen, rose@prairiefrutisfarm.com