

Compost & Pasture Management Intern (Spring, 12 weeks)

Prairie Fruits Farm & Creamery

Overview

Prairie Fruits Farm & Creamery is seeking an **unpaid Compost & Pasture Management Intern** to support our on-farm operations team with data collection and monitoring across our composting and pasture systems. This internship is a great fit for someone who enjoys fieldwork, measurement and observation, and learning the practical science behind zero-waste farm management, soil health, and regenerative practices.

Term & Time Commitment

- **Season:** Spring semester (12 weeks)
- **Start:** March (exact start date flexible and weather dependent)
- **Weekly commitment:** 2-4 hours per week (schedule coordinated with the farm team)

Key Responsibilities

Compost System Monitoring

- Collect temperature and pH readings from multiple compost windrows
- Maintain clear, accurate data logs (paper and/or digital)
- Assist the operations team with consistent monitoring routines that support an actively managed aerobic windrow composting system
- Note visible indicators of compost progress (moisture, texture, odor, structure) and communicate observations to the team

Pasture & Soil Health Data Collection

- Track pasture conditions, including forage growth patterns and seasonal changes

- Support soil sampling efforts (following established protocols and labeling procedures)
- Take visual notes on soil structure and pasture health (ground cover, compaction signs, diversity, bare spots, erosion indicators, etc.)
- Help organize photos and field notes into useful summaries for the farm team

What You'll Learn

- The fundamentals of aerobic windrow composting, including how temperature, oxygen, moisture, and carbon/nitrogen balance influence outcomes
- How farms use data to manage toward zero-waste goals and close nutrient loops
- Field-based monitoring skills: sampling consistency, recordkeeping, and turning observations into operational insights
- Core concepts in pasture ecology and soil health, including forage dynamics and how soil structure relates to productivity and resilience
- How compost and pasture management connect to whole-farm sustainability

Ideal Candidate

- Interested in composting, soil health, regenerative agriculture, ecology, or farm operations
- Comfortable working outdoors and doing routine measurements carefully and consistently
- Detail-oriented and dependable with logs, labels, and repeatable process steps
- Able to lift light-to-moderate tools/equipment as needed
- Willing to learn and ask questions, curiosity encouraged!

How to Apply

Please send:

- A brief note about your interest in composting and/or soil and pasture health
- A resume (and any relevant coursework or experience)

Location: Prairie Fruits Farm and Creamery, Champaign IL

Contact: Lauren Brokish office@prairiefruitsfarm.com