



Contented Acres Produce

Gustine, California

	MESA Notes - Public	
	Website :	https://www.localharvest.org/members/profile_gen.jsp?id=1592
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Blog, Online Newsletter, etc. :	https://www.facebook.com/ContentedAcresProduce/
	Public Contact Information:	contentedacresproduce@gmail.com

About the Placement:

Detailed Placement Description

Contented Acres Produce is dedicated to building a healthy soil and garden ecology. Production from the garden is sold and distributed as locally as possible.

Steward will work directly under the farm owner who has a lifetime of experience in farming with the last 18 years working at Contented Acres Produce. The garden has always been managed according to approved organic methods, but the acreage is not certified organic.

Most of the work at Contented Acres Produce is done on a human scale with some heavy tillage done by tractor. The methods used here are applicable to small farms. The backyard garden will develop an intensive type of growing that will be an additional experience for a MESA steward.

Crops vary through the seasons with an emphasis on tomatoes, peppers, and melons during the summer and early fall; root crops and crucifers in late fall and winter. The winter varieties continue through the cool part of spring with the addition of lettuce and other salad greens plus bunching greens for cooking.

Seeds are saved from some mustards, most of our tomato varieties, peppers, cucumbers, summer squash, melons.

Nearly all of the work at Contented Acres Produce is done by the owner with a little help



from a volunteer. In recent years, five MESA stewards have spent time on the farm. While we focus on the training aspect for MESA stewards, their work is always important to the operation.

Some past stewards have lived with other families in Gustine, but at this time I will be able to house a steward in my home. My wife and I are finishing up the remodel of an old farmhouse now located in the city of Gustine. This is the backyard where we will be developing intensive raised bed gardens, a walipini greenhouse, and other growing areas.

Primary Production :

[Poultry, Tree fruits, Vegetables](#)

About the Internship

Training Hours:

Variable hours and a somewhat flexible schedule. Stewards will be expected to work about 40 hours per week at a variety of tasks as necessary. Stewards will be exposed to all the activities of running a market garden with the possible exceptions of driving tractors and motor vehicles.

Training Expectations :

Steward will work directly with the owner much of the time. As skills and responsibilities permit, steward will spend some work time on their own, still under the supervision of the owner. Our Mediterranean climate allows us to produce year round. On any day or week activities could include sowing, transplanting, cultivating, watering, weeding, harvesting, selling of a variety of products which change with the seasons throughout the year.

On-Site Training, Steward's primary activities :

Steward will receive training and experience in most of these activities, depending on time



of year:

Direct sowing of seasonal crops using a push planter and/or by hand.

Sowing seeds in starter flats to grow out in the greenhouse or outside.

Transplanting. Watering using sprinklers or drip tape.

Weeding with wheel hoe, long handled tools and hand tools.

Scouting crops for insect or vertebrate pest damage, weather related damage, and disease and appropriate remedies as needed.

Staking and tying tomatoes, cucumbers, beans and other crops that work well in vertical systems. These beds are also being converted into permanent no-till areas.

Harvesting and post-harvest handling of crops for sale at the farmstand and for assembly into CSA baskets. Farmstand sales and CSA deliveries to local customers.

Seed harvest of about 15 different varieties for which we save our own open-pollinated seed each year.

Season extension using low hoops with plastic or fabric row covers.

Possibly limited tractor driving. Operation of small motorized tools: chain saw, tiller, weeder.

Depending on time of arrival, the steward may assist in building of raised wooden beds for a backyard garden which will be developed over the coming year in a different location.

Care for a small number of laying hens that are used in the garden for fertility, weed and insect suppression, and egg production.

Food preservation, including drying, canning, freezing, jam and syrup making, fermentation. These are currently being done only for home use, but this may be expanded into the sale of value added products.

Climate and Location Description

Gustine is located in California's Great Central Valley. We have hot, dry summers, a short spring, and mild winters with the lowest temperatures typically 20 - 24 fahrenheit. Average rainfall (mostly September - February is 11" - 12" per year, which necessitates irrigation for most of the year.

We are only two hours from Sierra Nevada mountains and less than that from the Central Coast, Monterey Bay Area.

Gustine is a small community of about 5,000 residents. The area is agricultural with supporting industries (food processing and transport, farm services).

The county seat of Merced as well as the county seat of Stanislaus County (Modesto) are only 35 miles away. One drawback is that public transportation is quite limited. But family members are sometimes available for private transportation.



We are located about two hours from San Francisco and a bit less to the MESA office in Berkeley.

Compensation :

\$400/mo., Separate bedroom, shared bath. Living in our home with my wife and myself. Access to kitchen for food preparation. Meals shared with family., Free, daily food, Medical insurance

Accommodations and amenities provided :

In addition to those mentioned above: wireless internet. Opportunity for interaction with our large families and possibly sightseeing/entertainment with family members. Interaction with Gustine Rotary Club, which will be a partial host, most likely paying monthly MESA fees.

Preferred start date :

Flexible

Preferred length of internship :

Flexible
