



Sustainable Farming Certificate Program

New and Improved SFC program in 2017!

The SFC program has undergone some significant changes for the 2017 season. Students labour has always been valued but the cost of the program has been greater resulting in a balance owing from the student to Everdale. For the 2017 season, a student's stipend will increase as the season progresses to reflect the gain in experience and their increased value to the farm team. The total net financial gain for a student participating in the full 32 week program will be approximately \$1630 (total stipends minus the program deposit). The layout of the schedule will also change with more of the structured trainings taking place in the spring and fall and more of the in-field practical training happening during the summer months.

Overview

The SFC program is for people who are looking for an intensive, on-farm learning experience that provides them with:

- Hands-on training focused on growing organic food on a small-farm and garden scale
- Structured curriculum-based instruction and study of the principles of sustainable farming
- A field-trip based introduction to many of the leaders in southern Ontario's local food economy and movement
- Networking opportunities that lead to career opportunities in the local food sector and in a wide range of other sectors such as Food Security, Education, Entrepreneurialism, and Community Development.

SFC students live, work and learn at Everdale's Hillsburgh Community Farm for the duration of the program.

Program Duration

The full SFC program runs for 32 weeks from mid-April to mid-November. We will consider students for stays as short as 12 weeks. Contact us to discuss your options.

Weekly Schedule

SFC students will follow a five-day work and training schedule. This schedule will change during the season. Work weeks are Tuesday to Saturday with Sundays and Mondays off (with the exception of minor rotating weekend chores)

First eight weeks

- Three half-days per week of seminars, field demonstrations, field trips, and project work. (Wed., Thurs. and Fri. afternoons)
- Three and a half days per week will be spent getting hands-on work experience on our organic farm, mentored by Everdale's experienced farmer staff. (All day Tues. and Sat. as well as Wed., Thurs. and Fri. mornings)



Middle twelve weeks

- One half-day per week of seminars, field demonstrations, field trips, and project work. (Wednesday afternoons)
- Four and a half days per week will be working on our organic farm mentored by Everdale's experienced farmer staff. (all day Tues., Thurs., Fri. and Sat. as well as Wed. morning)

Final twelve weeks

- One day per week of seminars, field demonstrations, field trips, and project work. (Wed. and Fri. afternoons)
- Four days per week will be working on our organic farm mentored by Everdale's experienced farmer staff. (all day Tues., Thurs., and Sat. as well as Wed. and Fri. mornings)

Program Pricing and Wages

The pricing for the SFC program has been carefully calculated. Students get paid an hourly wage for the work they do on the farm, and they pay the cost of the staff time and materials that go into their curriculum-based trainings. Transparency and fairness are very important to us. We want our students to know how we calculate the program costs and students wages. Part of the application process will include an in-depth explanation of the program pricing and wages. The numbers below are based on participation in the full 32 weeks. If interested in a shorter stay, ask us how the numbers change.

Students pay for training and are paid for farm work. That's how it works. By the time a student has completed the 32 week SFC Certificate program, their gross pay will be approximately \$1630.

To secure a place in the program students will pay an \$865 + HST deposit upon acceptance into the program.

Students will receive an hourly wage for the time they spend on the farm and will be required to pay for the education they receive and their food/lodging. At the beginning of the program, a student will receive a modest stipend. As the season progresses and students become more experienced their hourly wage will grow as will the stipend they receive. Total stipends will amount to approximately \$2600 for the full 32 week program.

Included in our calculations a student will receive

Accommodations:

- a furnished, private bedroom in either the dorm or the straw cabins;
- shared use of communal bathrooms, solar showers, kitchens, phone/internet, common rooms, and laundry
- Long distance phone and high speed internet (including wireless in certain spots)
- Shared use of farm facilities during weekends and evenings (e.g. outdoor wood-fired bread oven, fire pits, forest trails)



Food: Our calculations on pricing the program take into account all of a student's food (with the exception of pre-packaged junk food). Preparing and sharing good food is a very important part of the SFC program. Many past students have told us that they have eaten better here than at any other time in their lives. The SFC is structured in such a way that people have an opportunity to celebrate and enjoy food.

- Ingredients appropriate for all diets. Stocked items are almost exclusively organically grown and locally grown whenever possible.
- Lunches on working days are prepared by SFC students and farm staff on a rotating basis using ingredients from the well-stocked pantries and fridges in the main kitchens.
- Breakfast, dinner and meals on off-days are each person's own responsibility (although we do encourage people to continue sharing meals).

The Curriculum

The learning days include:

- Field trips to some of southern Ontario's best farms and community food organizations
- A Seminar series (based on the curriculum established by the University of California at Santa Cruz) taught by Everdale's team of expert farmers and educators and supported by field demonstrations and project work (below)
- The Group Garden Project; a large food production garden managed exclusively by the SFC students with mentorship support from the SFC coordinator and other Everdale staff.
- A personal learning plan developed by each student; students choose additional project work (e.g. compost and compost tea production, livestock care, soil auditing, seed saving, rooftop gardening, etc.) and identify other seasonal training goals.

The SFC Certificate

In order to graduate from the program and receive Everdale's *Sustainable Farming Certificate* students must meet a minimum set of predetermined criteria. These criteria will be laid out for the student group at the start of the season and will be based on a clear standard of participation and completion of curriculum components and assigned work.

Students are expected to complete readings, worksheets, assignments, and some project work during evenings and weekends.

On Farm Experience

The practical farm days are a very important part of the SFC curriculum. It's the best way for students to really learn. The hands-on learning that happens on our farm is the perfect complement to the theory and other learning that the students get during their structured learning days. There is nothing better than real world experience farming alongside experts in the field. It is essential that students are motivated to learn and contribute on the practical farm days.

Students are trained and mentored by our team of experienced farmers. Days are normally 9 hours long plus an hour for lunch. These days happen in all sorts of weather. The primary focus of our farm is



the production of certified organic vegetables. We also have livestock which is an optional project-based component of the SFC program. At the end of the program, students will be proficient in a wide range of farm related tasks and have a good understanding of the theoretical principles behind each one.

There are also certain tasks that need to be done outside of normal hours. They are small chores that don't take a lot of time but are essential to the running of the farm. These will be assigned on a rotating basis and you will be aware of the schedule in advance so you can plan your evening/weekend activities accordingly.

Demands of the Program

The SFC program requires a great deal of physical and mental energy. It is not realistic to have other employment or study requirements during the program. The students who have gained the most from this program have come prepared – physically, emotionally, and financially – to make the SFC program their singular focus while they are here. Learning how to farm is the core of the program but by being fully committed you will gain a deeper understanding of rural life and the communities associated with it.

Vacation/Personal Time/Sick Days

Vacation: Full season SFC's get one week off for vacation.

Sick Days: Everyone gets sick sometimes. Sick people don't work. If regular illness is an issue for you then we would need to revisit whether or not the SFC program is the right fit for you.

Is This Program For You??

We are looking for people who are excited by Everdale's mission and the work that we do. Everdale's farms are consistently busy with farmers, consumers, students, school children, volunteers, workshop and event participants and all sorts of other interesting individuals. Prospective students should be ready to put a lot of energy into learning and working on the farm and be excited by the opportunity to act as ambassadors for the organization and food and farming in general. Please be sure you have explored our entire website and are familiar with all of our program offerings before filling out the application form.
