

Heartland Rodale Institute Farm Training (RIFT) Program

Farmer Intern Handbook



**KANSAS
WESLEYAN**

U N I V E R S I T Y



**Community
Resilience Hub**

Kansas Wesleyan University

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Expectations for Students

As an at-will program, your participation in this program is strictly optional. However, in order to remain in the program and graduate, you will need to maintain a safe environment both for yourself, your instructors, and your fellow farmer interns.

Expectations for Instructors

Instructors will maintain a professional relationship with students at all times. They will come prepared to class and will assist students to prepare them to grow as farmers in regenerative agriculture.

Farm Safety in the Program

Safety on the farm will be a primary focus for Heartland RIFT. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that every year there are 23 work-related deaths per 100,000 Farmers, making it the most dangerous industry in the United States. Although Agriculture can be dangerous, many of the injuries and deaths can be entirely avoided by taking simple precautions, wearing Personal Protective Equipment, and establishing a work culture that focuses on critical thinking, farmer health, and career longevity.

- **Violations:** Students are expected to adhere to all safety standards established by the Farm Instructor. Any safety violation involving Farm Machinery (string trimmers, saws, mowers, etc.) is grounds for the potential suspension (temporary or permanent) of student machinery privileges and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Egregious safety violations involving the misuse of machinery impacting the safety of other students is grounds for immediate removal from the program.
- **PPE:** Students are expected to wear personal protective equipment (PPE), such as hearing protection, eye protection, and work gloves, where and when appropriate. PPE is required daily and students are expected to bring and maintain their equipment. If PPE provided by Heartland RIFT is lost or damaged in the normal course of work, it

may be replaced once at no expense to the student. Any further PPE losses will be the responsibility of the student to replace. Students may utilize their own PPE (aside from what Heartland RIFT provides) so long as it meets safety standards as approved by the Farm Instructor.

- **Clothing Policy:** Students are to avoid wearing excessively baggy clothing, or any clothing items that can be caught in gears, pistons, belts, or other equipment pinch points. Students are expected to wear closed-toed shoes at all times on the farm. Jewelry such as necklaces, chains, large ear rings, and metal rings or bands are not permitted during farm work. Students will be provided with a personal storage cubby for any sensitive or personal items. If the Farm Instructor determines that a student is in violation of the clothing policy, the student may be asked to change their clothes.
- **Equipment Use:** Students are not permitted to operate any motorized equipment, including tractors, trucks or other vehicles, or heavy equipment on the farm until that student has been adequately trained and assessed by the Farm Instructor. Any safety violation involving a tractor is grounds for potential suspension (temporary or permanent) of tractor privileges. Egregious safety violations involving a tractor and the safety of other students is grounds for potential removal from the program.
- **Tool Use:** Students are not permitted to operate any hand tools, including power tools, harvest knives, pitch forks, or saws on the farm until that student has been adequately trained and assessed by the Farm Instructor. Any safety violation involving a tractor is grounds for potential suspension (temporary or permanent) of tractor privileges. Egregious safety violations involving a tractor and the safety of other students is grounds for potential removal from the program.
- **First-Aid:** First-Aid Kits will be stocked in clearly marked and known locations. Students will become familiar with each location and how to use the contents of the kits.
- **Food Safety:** Students are expected to adhere to all Food-Safety guidelines established by the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)

and Heartland RIFT policy. This will be instructed by the Farm Instructor.

- **Livestock:** Students are not permitted to work with livestock without supervision until their competency has been assessed by the Farm Instructor. Additionally, students must pass an Animal Welfare & Handling assessment. Once students have passed the assessment, they may work livestock in pairs during morning, evening, or weekend chores as assigned. Furthermore, students are not permitted to work Oxen at any time without supervision from the Farm Instructor or the Joe Hale Chairperson.
- **Tools:** Students are expected to use all hand-tools (hoes, shovels, rakes, etc.) in accordance with their purpose. Abuse or misuse of these tools may result in the revocation of associated work privileges.

Livestock Care

Since the Heartland RIFT Program Farm will have livestock, students will be required to do weekend chores on an alternating basis. Students will be allowed to have Friday afternoon off (or another weekday afternoon if there is a class or field trip on Friday) in order to work over the weekend. Weekend chores will be light compared to weekday chores, and will be discussed in further detail by the instructors.

Safety is Everyone's Responsibility

While the Farm Instructor will work to ensure everyone's safety, he cannot be everywhere at once. It is up to each student to ensure their own safety and the safety of their fellow students. If you do not feel comfortable completing a task in a way which may be unsafe or do not feel comfortable with how someone else is completing a task, immediately notify the Farm Instructor or Chairman. Furthermore, you may always ask questions if you are unsure of the safety of a task or need clarification.

Course Completion

A student must pass all twelve courses in the Heartland RIFT Program with a C- or better to earn the certificate. Failure to pass a course may result in the student needing to repeat a course the next year if there is enough room in the next cohort.

KWU Student Handbook

Students are expected to follow the standards listed here in the Farmer Intern Handbook as well as in the Kansas Wesleyan University Student Handbook, which will also be provided.