



Production Manager

The Talking Farm is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit with the mission to provide education, example, and hands-on experience to members of the community to expand the awareness, importance, and availability of food grown sustainably. The Talking Farm operates the Howard Street Farm, a 2.5-acre urban farm in Skokie as well as offsite educational gardens and sells produce at local farmers markets and restaurants and through its CSA/weekly produce membership program.

Job Description

The Production Manager is an intensive field farming position for a full-production urban farm using organic farming methods who reports to the Director of Farm Operations and/or Executive Director and is primarily responsible for the cultivation, maintenance, harvest, and operation of the 2.5-acre Howard Street Farm by implementing the crop plan and facilitating the smooth operation of the farm.

Duties & Responsibilities

- Daily tasks (during the growing season, approximately 85%-90%) consist of fieldwork and hoop house organic farming for the Howard Street Farm, from pre-season crop planning to the cultivation, management, maintenance, harvest, processing and packaging of crops, to season extension, ending with winterizing the farm
- Manage production at 2.5-acre organic urban farm with some consultation on off-site gardens
- Be responsible for the starting, maintenance and inventory of seedlings to be planted on the farm and sold to the public during annual Spring Seedling Fundraiser
- Develop and execute the crop plan for the farm in line with the strategic, business, sustainability, and non-profit objectives of the organization
- Oversee the field and row development, planting, cultivation, watering, weeding, pruning, pest management, irrigation, harvesting, processing, packing, composting, and winterizing of farm and its vegetable, fruit, and herb crops
- Know their way around a wash pack and experienced with produce and market preparation
- Ability to train, manage and oversee interns, staff farmers, job trainees and/or volunteers in urban farming activities
- Execute, assist and/or oversee filling of produce orders for CSA, farmers markets and/or restaurant-partners
- Assist staff with on-farm volunteer programming
- Must be able on a weekly basis to accurately track and report crop and seed inventory and willing to learn or be proficient with Excel spreadsheets/Google sheets and online commerce platforms such as Shopify and/or report information to others for tracking and storage

Preferred Qualifications

- Minimum of 2 years' experience in all aspects of intensive organic field and hoop house farming including crop planning, planting, weeding, watering, pest management, fertilizing, harvesting, bed prepping, composting, soil health management, pruning, site management, washing, processing, packing, and overwintering crops
- Certification, degree or job training in urban or organic farming practices a plus



- Certified in or knowledgeable about safe food handling including any state, local, federal or trade regulations, Product Safety Alliance guidance or USDA GAP/GHP practices
- Experience with and ability to manage and train farm staff and interns
- Ability to stay focused on and mentally engaged in the task at hand no matter the pace
- Physical requirements: Ability to lift up to 50 pounds; bend and crouch; walk on uneven surfaces, use hands and arms to pick/pull/grasp; be around stinging insects; see at close range, as well as at a distance; hear and speak to communicate with staff, volunteers, students and the public; and work outdoors in all types of weather.
- A positive outlook and disposition and willingness and ability to multitask and adjust to the myriad “moving parts” of a working full-production farm including maintaining a friendly attitude towards the public, staff, visitors, volunteers, and community partners.
- Valid driver’s license and ability to operate cargo van.
- Ability to think both creatively and critically as well as problem-solve.
- Excellent follow-through and communication and organizational skills.
- Ability and willingness to collaborate as part of a team but be able to lead the team and work unsupervised to complete the job.
- Willingness to put in 40-50 hours during the main growing season over the course of 5-6 days with some occasional weekend duties related to weekend markets, events and/or farm maintenance.

Compensation & Benefits

- Year-round, salaried, exempt position, \$45,000-\$50,000 depending upon experience (paid biweekly). 10 days paid time off along with (5) paid sick days annually. Opportunity for health insurance benefits on a pre-tax basis as part of overall compensation package.

To apply: Please submit a resume and cover letter along with (3) references to jobs@thetalkingfarm.org. All applicants will need to complete an application.

The Talking Farm provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sexual orientation, sex, gender identity, national origin, age, disability or genetics.