



Vermont Commodity Program

Educational Overview

Program Description:

Salvation Farms is a nonprofit that gets local food to local folks. The Vermont Commodity Program is Salvation Farms' food hub and training program. It does two things: 1) moves fruits and vegetables that otherwise wouldn't be eaten to Vermont's food shelves and meal programs and 2) offers trainees work-readiness skills and valuable certifications.

Packing Experience (roughly 2/3 of the total program): You will receive, clean, pack, and ship fruits and vegetables, while following Standard Operating Procedures for quality. You will manage product inventory, track product movement, and ensure workplace safety and food safety. Produce handling takes place throughout the program and is usually a dirty and wet job, sometimes requiring heavy lifting.



Classroom Learning (roughly 1/3 of the total program): You will have a variety of classroom and learning activities throughout the 16-week program that happen when you're not packing crops. These experiences range from a two-hour training with a guest teacher, to an ongoing course that meets for a few weeks, to a field trip to learn about a local business. Below are examples of learning activities that trainees will participate in throughout the program:

- **ServSafe** - Learn how to safely prepare food and work in a kitchen setting. This includes group study sessions, formal review, and a final exam over the course of a few weeks.
- **CPR/First Aid** - Learn how to respond to someone having a first aid emergency – anything from a small cut to a heart attack. This course is taught over two mornings.
- **OSHA 10 General** - Learn to recognize and prevent health and safety issues in the workplace during a week-long training.
- **Food Safety Training** - Learn how to safely manage, store, and handle food, as well as understand and follow Standard Operating Procedures, which are important in many food or manufacturing jobs. This is taught over a few weeks.
- **Job-Readiness Skill-Building** – Prepare for job applications, learn what employers look for in candidates, and explore what careers interest you. Learn about food and manufacturing opportunities through field trips to local businesses – this could be gleaned at a local farm, visiting a farm’s wash & pack house, touring a manufacturing plant at Ben and Jerry’s, exploring a shipping and receiving department at Hannaford’s, or see Standard Operating Procedures in practice at the Vermont Smoke and Cure plant.
- **Extracurricular** - Learn about food waste and the greater food system through documentaries, readings, and guest speakers.

