



Hunger and Environmental Nutrition Dietetic Practice Group's School-to-Farm Program

To help facilitate the rapidly growing interest within the profession of dietetics regarding sustainable food and agricultural systems, The American Dietetic Association's (ADA) Hunger and Environmental Nutrition Dietetic Practice Group (HEN DPG) is implementing a means of connecting ADA's members who are farmers and growers with dietetic students and interns seeking volunteer experiences related to HEN's Vision, Mission, and Definition of Sustainability (www.hendpg.org).

HEN Vision

Optimize the nation's health by promoting access to nutritious food and clean water from a secure and sustainable food system.

HEN Mission

Empower members to be leaders in sustainable and accessible food and water systems.

Sustainability

HEN defines sustainability as: "A sustainable and resilient food system [that] conserves and renews natural resources, advances social justice and animal welfare, builds community wealth, and fulfills the food and nutrition needs of all eaters now and in the future."

(Harmon A. & Tagtow A., 2008)

HEN School-to-Farm Placement Eligibility

This HEN sponsored program is open to all ADA members who are involved in commercial agriculture and food production and who meet the eligibility requirements outlined later in this document.

The program is also open to all student members in The American Dietetic Association who meet one of the following:

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- is a student enrolled in a CADE accredited/approved dietetics or dietetic technician program or supervised practice program who does not meet requirements for Active membership, or
- is a student enrolled in a regionally accredited, post-secondary education program which is non-CADE accredited. This classification is available to students who state their intent to enter a CADE accredited program, or
- is a current Active ADA member returning to school on a full-time basis for a baccalaureate or advanced degree or to complete a CADE accredited supervised practice program (Dietetic Technician Program, Dietetic Internship, or Coordinated Program) — annual verification required.

In addition, a host farm may also give consideration to hosting Active members of ADA if an ADA member(s) desires to participate in and/or develop activities to meet individual professional goals and/or CPEUs that would be related to sustainable agriculture and food systems and also be of benefit to the ADA hosting member. Active members should complete a Sponsored Independent Learning Contract in order to obtain CPEUs.

Site Selection and Identification

The farms of ADA members have the potential to offer a wide variety of learning opportunities involved with sustainable food and agriculture systems, as well as, whole foods nutrition including (but not limited to): hands-on experience growing fruits, vegetables and other foods, keeping bees, raising animals, making wine, or developing and implementing various educational experiences and activities involving from “farm to fork.”

Step 1. HEN DPG will solicit within ADA and publish an online HEN DPG Farm Placement Directory on the HEN DPG Web site. The Farm Placement Directory will include a list of ADA members (hosts) who will provide a work experience for ADA student members to participate in a volunteer educational opportunity “on-the-farm.”

HEN/ADA has a resource for creating multiple potential projects and experiences that may be incorporated into a hands-on farm learning experience:

- (1) The Position of the American Dietetic Association: Food and Nutrition Professionals Can Implement Practices to Conserve Natural Resources and Support Ecological Sustainability, *J Am Diet Assoc* 2007;107:1033-1043.
- (2) Healthy Land, Healthy People: Building a Better Understanding of Sustainable Food Systems for all Food and Nutrition Professionals, available at <http://www.hendpg.org/members/hen.cfm?page=sustainable-food-system-task-force-primer-2>).

Step 2. It is the responsibility of the student and/or a faculty member to contact potential hosts to evaluate if the farm is a good match for the learning activities desired by either an individual student or for an entire class. If an ADA member is a teacher they may take their dietetic

students to farms through this program. It is also the responsibility of the student, faculty, and farmer to ensure they are acting within the labor and industry statutes of their state.

Volunteers generally work for 5-6 hours/day, 5 days/week, participating in farm work and projects as needed. In exchange, ADA member farmers/growers (hosts) provide volunteers with meals, accommodations, and education. HEN suggests that the student and farmer sign an agreement so that the arrangement is clear to all parties. It is also suggested that each party sign a waiver of rights for liability. The length of stay on a farm is determined by the host and can vary from one day or an extended time frame from a few days to an entire season. Clear and extensive communication between the student/faculty and potential host is strongly recommended in order to find a mutually agreeable situation that matches the hopes and expectations for both parties.

There will be no expectation of money exchanged between host and student; however, this situation is open to discussion in individual circumstances. For example, if the student completes work above and beyond the original learning agreement the farmer and student may discuss compensation for said work. Such agreements should be made in advance. Most importantly this is an educational opportunity for the student.

How Students Arrange for a Work Experience

Once a student ADA member has received access to the HEN DPG School-to-Farm Placement Program Directory, they can begin searching for a farm that matches what s/he is looking for. At this time s/he can contact the host and initiate the discussion regarding an experience and stay on the farm. Both parties may want to begin with a trial stay of one week, evaluate the status of the experience, and then extend the time if it is a positive experience. It is very important that clear communication happens at this time regarding:

- expectations for hours and length of stay
- tasks where help is needed
- expected learning outcomes
- accommodations and meal arrangement

Both parties must have open and clear communication regarding expectations plus listen to the other party's hopes and expectations. Each party has an opportunity to guide the process toward an agreeable situation.

Children and pets may be welcome at some farms; however, be sure to ask the host farmer before arriving with children or pets. HEN suggests that the student and farmer sign an agreement and waiver (see above) so the arrangement is clear to all parties.

The student is responsible for their travel to and from the farm and/or student visa. The student should check with hosts if they have special needs, such as diet, or if the student is interested in bringing children or pets. Different hosts may make different accommodations.

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Once both parties are satisfied that they are a good match and the expectations are clear, the student must submit a letter of recommendation/introduction from an ADA member/faculty to the host before a final offer is made. Once a recommendation has been accepted the host may contact the student to schedule the experience and accommodations.

Is Seeking a Hosting Experience as an ADA Member's Farm Right for You?

The HEN Farm Placement Program offers an exceptional opportunity for ADA members involved in agriculture to open their farm in order to share their knowledge with future food and nutrition professionals. Hosts will welcome food and nutrition students onto their property to help get work done with the intention of sharing knowledge and promoting the vision and mission of the HEN DPG. Being a host may be appropriate if you:

- Support HEN DPG's mission and vision;
- Are willing and able to provide a warm, safe, and welcoming environment for student volunteers;
- Are participating in organic or sustainable agricultural activities;
- Have projects and tasks for which you could use help;
- Are interested in sharing your knowledge and daily life with ADA's student members; and
- Host site does not need to be a HEN member.



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How to Have Your Farm Included

ADA Member Host Farms submit an annual profile (see below) to be included in the HEN DPG Farm Placement Directory (updated annually). Host farms have complete discretion to decide their individual criteria for accepting volunteers: length of stay, experience required, hours worked per day or week, etc. HEN DPG has discretion to add or remove sites at will without reason.

Special note: Hosts are requested to please respond to all inquiries, even if you are unable to accept a student volunteer during the time frame requested.

To be listed in the HEN Farm Placement Directory, a profile containing the following information is requested:

- Farm name
- Contact name
- Phone, email, and/or Web site address
- Location (address and description of land)
- A brief description of activities (crops, projects, goals, etc.)
- Suggested length of stay for volunteers
- When volunteers are needed
- Accommodations (number and type)
- Non-farming activities (alternative construction, restoration projects, green energy, etc.)
- Expectations of work for volunteers
- Nearby area sights and fun things to do
- Is transportation available to your farm?
- Languages spoken
- Are children or pets accepted?
- Special diets accommodated?
- Any other farm or area specifics, i.e. focus on sustainability, local markets, organic agriculture, farmers markets, etc.

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Please email your farm profile to dianadyersrd@provide.net so it can be entered into the database electronically.

Is Seeking a Volunteer Experience on an ADA Member's Farm Right for You?

ADA's student members who seek to volunteer on host farms must have the intention of helping to get work done while learning new skills and information about sustainable agriculture while also meeting and working with new people. Being a student farm volunteer may be appropriate if you:

- Support HEN DPG's mission and vision;
- Are a respectful and courteous guest in the homes of others;
- Are interested in learning about sustainable and organic methods of agriculture; and
- Are willing to meet new people and work hard (typically 5 hours/day, 5 days/week) both individually and cooperatively on projects and tasks presented to you.

Contact Information: All inquiries of interest to participate in this opportunity from students/interns, educators, and farmers may be sent by email to dianadyersrd@provide.net with HEN Farm Placement Program in the **subject** line. Further information will be sent by return email to help facilitate a match that is mutually beneficial.

Frequently Asked Questions

How long do the volunteer workers stay?

This is entirely up to the host. We recommend that the host arrange a short period of time (a few days or 5 -7 days) as a trial period at first with the possibility of extending should both parties wish to do so. This gives both parties an opportunity to "opt out" in case of either unforeseen circumstances or you simply just do not get along. Although not always the case, it is possible that some student volunteers may end up staying for much longer than originally anticipated and some become life long friends!

What type of accommodation is the host expected to provide?

Again this depends and is entirely up to the host. Several reasonable options include providing a space for a tent in the garden, tent or trailer accommodations, or the guest room of your house. Access to clean personal washing and toilet areas must be provided. The important thing to stress is that volunteers know the type of accommodation to expect **before** their arrival.

What about food?

Food is normally included in an exchange that involves volunteer work, and in most cases the tasks of cooking and cleaning up are also shared. This means that the host is not expected to prepare three meals a day for the volunteers and likewise the host can not expect the volunteers to cook for the host every day on top of the work the host provides unless part of the work arrangement is cooking. Again the best thing is to set clear expectations from the start

to eliminate problems in the future. HEN suggests creating an agreement document outlining the expectations and waiver of liability both signed by all parties.

As an ADA member providing the farm, am I expected to help the student or Active ADA member determine if experiences on my farm will meet any CADE competencies (<http://www.eatright.org/CADE/>) or CPEU's approved by CDR (<http://www.cdrnet.org/>)?

At this time (January 2010), no. However, it is possible that discussion between you as the host, the student, and a faculty member from a CADE-approved dietetics undergraduate program or dietetic internship will help blend a student's expectations and goals with such opportunities. The same type of discussion may also occur between you and an Active member of ADA seeking independent experiences that would be accepted by CDR as CPEU's, However, the ultimate responsibility for determining if any activity is approved and accepted belongs to the volunteer.

Does CDR award CPEUs for this experience?

There is not currently a CPE activity type for this specific experience. However, credit for this experience may be available as a Sponsored Independent Learning activity (CPE Activity Type 220 – see Professional Development Portfolio Guide). The ADA member providing the farm would serve as the Sponsor, and both sponsor and learner would complete and sign the Sponsored Independent Learning Contract, which will set out the learning needs to be addressed, the learning resources and activities to be used, and the learning outcomes expected, as well as the expected hours and timeline. It should be noted that not all hours spent in the experience may be creditable as new learning. As an example, one may learn all one needs to learn about weeding a garden in two hours, so those two hours would be creditable. However, two weeks spent weeding the garden would not be creditable unless some new skill is being acquired. Discretion will need to be used to delineate the difference between experiences that contribute to new learning versus work.