



Flying Mule Farm Shepherd Apprenticeship Program

Flying Mule Farm's Shepherd Apprenticeship Program offers an exceptional hands-on learning experience in all aspects of grass-based sheep production. Whether you are an experienced shepherd or exploring sustainable sheep production as a possible business enterprise, our Shepherd Apprentice Program will provide you with the skills, tools and experience you need to make an informed decision about grass-based sheep production.

About Flying Mule Farm: Dan and Samia Macon have raised sheep for 20 years. In 2001, the Macon Family established Flying Mule Farm, a small, diversified operation that produces grass-fed meat, sustainable forest products and pastured poultry. We are transitioning to draft power (using mules) for our forestry and farming enterprises. We are growing our current flock of 120 ewes to a flock of approximately 400. We also manage meat goats and beef cows in our operation, and we have recently added a very small dairy sheep enterprise.

The Flying Mule Farm Shepherd Apprenticeship: Our apprenticeship program is divided into four quarters. Applicants have the option of apprenticing for any one or as many as four quarters. Each quarter includes hands-on experience in animal husbandry, pasture management, marketing and business management. In addition, specific practices (like pasture lambing, irrigation management and contract grazing) are season-specific.

Curriculum: In addition to hands-on experience in our sheep operation, we expect our apprentices to read extensively about grass-based livestock production, sustainable agriculture and direct marketing. We are active participants in our local agricultural community, and we encourage our apprentices to participate along with us. We also design season-specific projects for each apprentice to help them gain confidence and experience in self-directed activities. We use herding and guardian dogs extensively, and you'll have the opportunity to learn about stockmanship and sheep dogs from nationally-recognized experts.



- **First Quarter (January – March) – LAMBING**
Hands-on experience includes ewe management, electric fencing, pasture lambing systems, temporary shelter construction, lamb processing and marketing, and business management.
- **Second Quarter (April – June) – SHEARING/WEANING**
Experience includes lamb management, shearing preparation, skirting fleeces, wool marketing, weaning and lamb management, lamb processing and marketing, and business management. Late lambing and spring breeding also occur during this quarter.
- **Third Quarter (July – September) – IRRIGATION MANAGEMENT AND TARGETED GRAZING**
Experience includes hands-on pasture irrigation management, soils management and conservation, contract and targeted grazing, grass finishing of lambs, lamb processing and marketing, and business management.
- **Fourth Quarter (October – December) – BREEDING MANAGEMENT AND TARGETED GRAZING**
Experience includes breeding preparation and management, ram selection and management, fall lambing, targeted grazing, lamb processing and marketing, and business management.

Sustainable Forestry Option: We also offer an option for our apprentices to learn about our sustainable forestry enterprise. We are helping to manage a local tree farm to increase forest health, reduce wildfire threat, and adapt to climate change. We produce firewood, peeled poles and custom-milled lumber.

Terms of Apprenticeship: During this apprenticeship we will provide you with semi-formal instruction, a one-of-a-kind reading list including materials from our own extensive library, and hands-on experience in all aspects of sheep husbandry and marketing. You will compensate us with your labor on the farm.



Housing: We will assist you in finding local housing. Since our operation exists on both owned and leased land, you must have a vehicle and a valid driver's license.

Expectations and Schedule: Hours of work in exchange for teaching will be arranged to suit both of our schedules, and will vary based on the season.

For this to be a positive experience, you should . . .

- Have a strong desire to learn the business of grass-based sheep production and marketing;
- Enjoy working with animals; and
- Be very strong, healthy, physically fit, and love working outdoors.

For our part, we will do our best to make your Flying Mule Farm experience . . .

- Fun;
- Challenging;
- Rewarding; and
- Highly educational

You will leave our Apprenticeship Program with the skills and knowledge necessary to start your own grass-based livestock business or to expand your existing enterprise.

For more information:

Dan Macon
Flying Mule Farm
11515 Joeger Road
Auburn, California 95602
(530) 305-3270
flyingmule@wavecable.com
www.flyingmulefarm.com

