

# Aquaponics Greenhouse Assistant

**Aquaponics specializes in growing food by integrating fish (tilapia, bass, catfish and koi) with plants (lettuce, salad and cooking greens, fruiting plants and herbs), in a recirculating system. We also engage community through education, and help others grow their own food through consulting services. The greenhouse assistant position could lead into future opportunities in research, education, community outreach and consulting.**

## **Mission Objectives**

- Personal and professional fit with owners, team members, customers and greater community
- Willing to help educate others and interact with community during classes or tours
- Live within the local area with short commute and ability to respond quickly to the farm when issues arise
- Preferably a bi-lingual person who can speak, write and read English and Spanish (optional)

## **Operational Considerations**

- Fast paced, detail oriented, organized, self-motivated and capable of following guidelines
- Handle a wide variety of normal farm elements including algae, bioslime, fish waste, uneaten fish food, decomposing plant material, bacteria or fungus, dead fish, plant pests, and working in a wet environment
- Work in bright sunlight throughout the day and hot or cool temps (58° to 80°) in the greenhouse
- Physically capable of lifting and possibly carrying up to 50lbs, with repeated bending and standing
- Good hand dexterity performing repeatable tasks such as seeding, transplanting, cleaning and harvesting
- Proficient computer knowledge using the internet, word, spreadsheets, email and social media
- Own a cell phone for receiving calls and text about farm operations during the day and after hours
- Available to work 25-30 hours per week (flexible work days and hours), temporary to permanent

## **Farm Activities**

- Perform scheduled seeding, transplanting, maintenance and harvesting activities (roughly 800-1000 seeds, transplants and harvested units per week, every week of the year), aligned with food safety and GAP
- Pack products to complete orders, create customer invoices, deliver products, receive payment
- Perform water quality tests on a daily basis (up to 8 sample locations)
- Monitor fish health and feed fish on schedule (2-5 times daily, up to 7 tanks)
- Assist with stocking or moving fish, fish sales and harvesting activities
- Monitor plant and fish environment, record key environmental parameters including but not limited to; water quality, water changes, plant harvesting, fish harvesting, fish sickness or death, fish stocking, significant system changes, nutrient or pH adjustments
- Enter data from paper records into online spreadsheets
- Identify and manage plant pests or diseases, perform routine scouting and removal activities, spray or treat accord to agreed applications, record pest management activities
- Monitor plant health for nutrient deficiencies, add nutrients in appropriate quantities while avoiding major shifts in pH or using elements that could be toxic to fish or sensitive plants
- Clean raft beds, filtration system, and plumbing components on a scheduled and as needed basis
- Respond to water overflow, low water levels, greenhouse or fish system temperature issues when these situations occur, maintain proper watering and lighting schedules for auxiliary systems
- Coordinate compost, recyclables, and trash removal
- Maintain clean and sanitary aquaponics system and internal and external greenhouse environment
- Perform proper sanitizing activities to meet food safety guidelines when entering the greenhouse, before and after food handling activities, and for storing all food packaging, supplies and tools
- Develop potential customer contact list and update as necessary with new contact information
- Place orders or pick up parts and supplies locally, keeping all receipts for accounting purposes
- Assist with farm project work to complete maintenance and system improvement projects as required to support the aquaponics systems and greenhouse operations
- Deliver public and private tours aligned to customer's needs (ie type of audience, age, interest, knowledge level, specific topics, time limits, number of participants)
- Assist with social media updates on facebook and twitter, taking farm pictures and writing blog posts
- Update farm operations calendar and procedures as needed
- Perform research projects which yield valuable data, potential revenue, cost cutting measures or are otherwise deemed worth the time and effort to complete the research effort