



Farmer Education Program

Course Overview: October 25, 2011 – May 20, 2012

A program of *Agriculture & Land-Based Training Association (ALBA)*

Introduction

ALBA provides educational and business opportunities for farm workers and aspiring farmers to grow and sell crops grown on two organic farms in Monterey County, California. Our mission is to advance economic viability, social equity and ecological land management among limited-resource and aspiring farmers. We work to create opportunities for family farms while providing education and demonstration on conservation, habitat restoration, marketing and whole farm planning. The Farmer Education Program or *Programa Educativo Para Agricultores (PEPA)* is a core program that ALBA operates to carry out its mission.

PEPA is a comprehensive learning experience designed specifically for individuals and families that want to pursue the development or expansion of an agricultural enterprise, and/or gain valuable job skills to increase their career opportunities in agriculture. PEPA imparts experiential entrepreneurship and job training in small farm management and organic vegetable production, with a focus on sustainable practices. The course has been designed to serve primarily aspiring farmers, and farmers that want to transition to organic. The PEPA curriculum utilizes classroom instruction, hands-on field based training, farmer mentoring, and field trips to give participants the necessary tools and experience to improve their career options. As much as possible, ALBA seeks to create an environment driven by *aprender por haciendo* – a learning-by-doing model.

Weekly Schedule

Tuesday 6:00pm-9:00pm (primarily lecture and classroom-based activities)

A total of four and a half (4 ½) lab hours per week on:

Sunday 1:00pm-5:30 pm (primarily field-based activities and field trips/tours)

This schedule applies to Modules 2-6. Module 1 is an exception to this schedule, as noted below.

Course Location

Rural Development Center (RDC) at 1700 Old Stage Rd. Salinas, CA 93908; approximately 8 miles south of Salinas.

Orientation- October 20, 2011 from 4-6 pm or October 22, 2011 from 9-11 am

Course Modules

The course is taught over 5 separate modules or sections:

Module 1: Soil Fertility & Irrigation Management Planning (**October 25 – November 20, 2011**)

Module 2: Pest, Disease & Weed Management Planning (**November 22 – December 18, 2011**)

Module 3: Organic Crop Planning (**January 10 – February 19, 2012**)

ABT 101 - Organic Vegetable Production

Module 4: Agricultural Market Planning (**February 21 – April 1, 2012**)

ABT 105 – Agriculture Marketing Opportunities and Growth for Organic Farming

Module 5: Agriculture Business Planning (**April 3 – May 20, 2012**)

ABT 104 – Agriculture Business Development for New Organic Farmers

Graduation: Saturday, May 26, 2012

The bulk of course academic material is presented during the evening class on Tuesdays - focusing on a different topic and crop family each week. With experts from the Salinas and Pájaro Valleys as guest speakers, information is put into a real-world context to present material in a manner as interactive and engaging as possible. PEPA graduates and other regional farmers play an integral role in teaching the course and serving as mentors to students. Students are provided with handouts and a practical resource manual pertinent to the subject area being covered when available bilingually, and are expected to complete short practical homework assignments relevant to each module.

Field classes are held on a Sunday afternoons to provide students with the opportunity to develop practical farming skills and knowledge of the local agricultural industry. Skills will be built in areas such as planting, harvesting, and crop & land management. Weekend field trips are scheduled to give students a broader exposure to available agricultural resources, farming practices, and the agricultural sector in general.

Farm Business Plan

An integral part of the course is the development and completion of a farm business plan helping students envision and plan for their first season of farming. The plan has three components, business plan summary (corresponding to each module: a leadership and personnel management self assessment component, marketing plan, crop plan, business management plan, soil fertility and irrigation management plan, and a pest, disease and weed management plan), a profit and loss statement, and a cash flow statement. Students will turn in each component of their Farm Plan as the course progresses. Students are then required to present their Farm Business Plan to industry experts, ALBA staff and experienced farmers for final evaluation. *All students must finish a Farm Business Plan to be eligible for ALBA's Apprenticeship Program. An additional Farm Business Plan is required to enter ALBA's Small Farm Incubator Program. All students must create and present their individual business plan.*

Evaluation and Assessment

Students will be evaluated based on attendance, class participation and group work, equipment skills tests, completion of homework and successful written and oral presentation of their six-component Farm Plan.

PEPA course graduation requirements are as follows:

- Attend 50% of classes
- Obtain a passing grade (70% or better) on all homework and exams
- Adequately complete all five components of the Farm Business Plan
- Demonstrate adequate skills acquisition and proficiency in farming skills.

Farm Apprenticeship Program

The *Farm Apprenticeship Program* is a new pilot program that ALBA will introduce following the 2012 PEPA course. It is an opportunity for students that have the desire and capability to become an independent organic farmer to enter a supervised farming environment on a small plot of land. Only students that demonstrate proficiency in farming skills during the *Farm Apprenticeship Program* will have the opportunity to apply to enter the *Small Farm Incubator*.^{*} Applications for the *Farm Apprenticeship Program* will be available during the month of April 2012. There will be a separate fee for this program.

1.) Eligibility for Farm Apprenticeship Program

- a. Attend 80% of PEPA classes
- b. Demonstrate ability to financially meet farm business costs
- c. Classroom Business Plan presentation (Crop map, cost of production projection, cash flow projection)
- d. Course fees paid in full or up to date module payments
- e. Completion of all module assignments and exams before presenting business plan

** ALBA has limited land available and **does not** guarantee that all eligible applicants will be accepted into the Farm Apprenticeship Program. In addition, ALBA does not allow more than one immediate family member to obtain land in the Farm Apprenticeship Program individually. For example, if you and your husband/wife both take the course and meet Farm Apprenticeship Program requirements, your family can only apply to participate as a group.*

Small Farm Incubator

The Small Farm Incubator is a business incubator, providing a reduced-risk environment to support primarily beginning and limited-resource farmers in the development of successful small farm businesses. In addition to subsidized land rents for up to six years, the “Incubator”, provides farmer-participants with access to basic farm equipment, water through a shared irrigation system, and ongoing technical assistance. The program is designed to provide subsidized access to land, water and equipment, as well as intensive technical assistance in the first three years. Beginning in the fourth year, farmer-participants are required to obtain their own organic certification, and create and begin a plan for their transition out of the incubator over the following 3 years. Additional information in the form of a *ALBA Small Farm Incubator Fact Sheet* will be available to course participants.

Students that successfully complete the *Farm Apprenticeship Program* will be selected based on their Farm Business Plan and demonstration of farm management abilities and skills.

** ALBA has limited land available to lease and **does not** guarantee that all eligible applicants will receive a land lease. In addition, ALBA does not allow more than one immediate family member to obtain land in the Small Farm Incubator individually. For example, if you and your husband/wife both take the course and meet ALBA’s Small Farm Incubator requirements, each of you cannot apply to lease one parcel of land. Only **one land request per family** will be considered.*

Fees for course

ALBA’s mission is to serve limited-resource and aspiring farmers. To that end, ALBA receives funding from a number of public and private sources to ensure that job and entrepreneurship training, as well as business opportunities in agriculture are available to low income individuals, as well as beginning¹, limited-resource² and socially disadvantaged farmers³, as defined by the U.S.

Department of Agriculture (see footnotes below and fact sheet attached for more details). However, ALBA does not discriminate (see non-discrimination statement below) in any way in providing access to its programs. In other words, our first priority, given our mission and funding sources, is to provide individuals with access to our programs that meet income *and* the criteria for at least one of the USDA farmer categories described above. We will consider applications from individuals who do not meet any of the income or farmer category criteria; however, if admitted, such students will make up only 20% of the 2011-2012 PEPA class.

Note re: Hartnell fees: *Hartnell fees, explained in the attached letter, are in addition to ALBA’s fees described below.*

In order to fulfill its mission and funder requirements, ALBA uses a sliding scale to assess course fees. Fees are determined by student’s annual household income and number of dependents (based on HUD 2008 median incomes for Monterey County). *In order to be eligible for reduced course fees, applicant must fill out a reduced course fee application and provide documentation to substantiate their income and dependent declaration.* Full price course fee is \$2,500.

How to read this graph:

1. Find your family income range on the left margin.
2. Determine how many dependents you have (which can be children or disabled adults).
3. Find the price at the intersection of those two areas above.
4. That is your fee for enrollment.

Rate for entire course

<i>Annual family income*</i>	<i>0 dependents</i>	<i>1-2 dependents</i>	<i>3-4 dependents</i>	<i>5+ dependents</i>
0-\$16,525 (under 25% median income)	225	200	175	150
\$16,525-\$33,050 (25-50% median income)	400	350	300	250
\$33,050-\$52,880 (50-80% median income)	875	750	625	500
\$52,880-\$79,320 (80-120% median income)	1,500	1,300	1,100	900
over \$79,320 (over 120% median income)	2,500	2,250	2,000	1,750

* Based on HUD 2010 median income (of \$66,100) for Monterey County.

You can also take the course per individual module:

Rate per module (prices listed here are 25% of normal costs listed in the above table)

¹ USDA defines a beginning farmer as an individual who has been operating a farm for less than ten years.

² USDA defines a limited-resource farmer according to farm and household income limits.

³ USDA defines a socially-disadvantaged farmer as one that has been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudices because of their identity as a member of a group without regard to their individual qualities.

This graph also pertains to Ag-Waiver/ Water Quality credits and Department of Pesticide Regulation credits

Annual family income	0 dependents	1-2 dependents	3-4 dependents	5+ dependents
0-\$ 16,525 (under 25% median income)	56	50	44	38
\$16,525-\$33,050 (25-50% median income)	100	88	75	63
\$33,050-\$52,880 (50-80% median income)	219	188	156	125
\$52,880-\$79,320 (80-120% median income)	(base rate) 375	325	275	225
over \$79,320 (over 120% median income)	625	563	500	438

* Employers sending their employees will be charged the base rate regardless of employee income or number of dependents

Hartnell College Credit

You can earn 4.5 units at Hartnell College while attending ALBA's program. Students who successfully complete any of Modules 4, 5 and 6 are eligible for 1.5 units per module. Module 1 and 2 are not eligible for academic credit at Hartnell at this time. Fees for credit through Hartnell are in addition to ALBA's fees for the course described above. Eligibility for a registration fee waiver is determined by family size and a yearly income schedule. If you qualify you will be asked to fill out an Application for Admission with Hartnell College and Enrollment Fee Waiver application in class.

For additional questions or to request an application, please contact:

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