

ALBA's Farmer Education Program



Course Overview : October 2007-April 2008

The Farmer Education Program or *Programa Educativo Para Agricultores* (PEPA) is a six-month course offered at the Rural Development Center (RDC) that teaches small farm management and production, with a focus on sustainable practices. Geared primarily to serve aspiring English and Spanish-speaking farmers and farmworkers, the PEPA curriculum utilizes classroom instruction, practical training workshops, farmer mentoring, and field trips to give participants the necessary tools and experience to improve their career options. The course places emphasis on marketing, small business management, farm equipment use and maintenance, and organic production practices. As much as possible, ALBA seeks to create an environment driven by *aprender haciendo* – a learning-by-doing model.

Weekly Schedule*

6-9 pm weekday evening class / 4 hrs. weekend field day/tours

Fees for course

Fees are determined by student's annual income and number of dependents (based on HUD 2007 median incomes for Monterey and Santa Cruz counties). If special circumstances or financial hardship make our fees unattainable, you may complete a **scholarship application** for ALBA's consideration. For more information on our fees please call 831-758-1469.

Classes

The bulk of course academic material is presented during an evening class during the week-focusing on a different topic and crop family each week. With experts from the Salinas Valley as guest speakers, information is put into a real-world context to present material in a manner as interactive and engaging as possible; group exercises, demonstrations and hands-on activities are common. Graduates from PEPA who are farming independently are also integral to discussions about production practices. Students are provided with handouts and practical resource guides pertinent to the subject area being covered, and are expected to complete short practical homework assignments relevant to each week's topic. Field Days are held one weekend day to provide students with the opportunity to develop practical farming skills in areas such as tractor use and maintenance, pump operation, planting, harvesting, soil management, and irrigation systems. Weekend field trips are scheduled to give students broader exposure to available agricultural resources, farming practices, and agribusiness.

Farmer Mentors

Each participant in PEPA will be assigned to a resident RDC farmer who will serve as his or her mentor for the duration of the course. The purpose of establishing mentor/student relationships is to 1) provide a one-on-one, farmer-to-farmer learning exchange where students can benefit

from the experience of PEPA graduates who are currently farming, 2) introduce students to the value of networking for continued field improvements as soon as possible, and 3) provide PEPA graduates the opportunity to help shape and improve the PEPA curriculum through a formal feedback loop.

Farm Plans

PEPA students are encouraged during the course to complete a Farm Plan based on a 1/2 acre farm. The goal is to get students thinking about and planning for their first season of farming. The plan has five components: a self evaluation, marketing and business plan, a crop plan, a fertility management plan, and an insect, disease and weed management plan. Students will turn in parts of their Farm Plans every few weeks as the course progresses. ALBA staff are available for advising individuals and providing feedback particular to their situation.

Evaluation and Assessment

Students will be evaluated based on attendance, class participation, equipment skills tests, and completion of homework and Farm Plans. To be eligible for a 1/2 acre parcel at the RDC, students must have 80% attendance, pass the equipment skills tests, complete a satisfactory Farm Plan, and make an oral presentation.

Please find Syllabus & Fees below...

2007- 2008 Farmer Education Course Guidelines & Syllabus:

PEPA will cover the four separate units: *Agricultural Marketing, Organic Crop Planning, Organic Field Production and Methods, and Business Development and Whole Farm Planning*. Classes will be given bi-weekly with one 3 hour evening class during the week and a 4 hour field practice course during one weekend day. Actual days and times for the course listed here are tentative and are subject to change following a vote among all participants the first day of the course.

Unit One: Agricultural Marketing *October 27-November 15th 2007*

1. Organic Produce in the Marketplace
2. Marketing Analysis, Competition and Risk Management
3. Marketing Opportunities and Distribution Channels
4. Product Pricing and Marketing Promotion
5. Inventory and Storage Management

Unit Two: Organic Crop Planning *November 22- December 13th 2007*

1. Crop Selection and Successive Planting Designs
2. Seed Stock Resources, In-Row Seeding and Transplant Production
3. Harvest and Quality Control
4. Post Harvest Considerations
5. Food Safety Management

Unit Three: Organic Field Production and Methods *January 1-February 14th 2008*

1. Organic Principles in Soil Fertility Management
2. Organic Fertilizers, Pesticides and Fungicides
3. Farm equipment handling and maintenance in organic field preparation
4. Irrigation Systems and Management
5. Integrated Pest and Disease Management
6. Weed Control and Vertebrate Pest Control

Unit Four: Business Development and Whole Farm Planning *February 19th-March 22nd 2008*

1. Starting up a Small Farm as a Business
2. Whole Farm Recordkeeping
3. Financing, Tax Reporting and Accounting
4. Farm Worker Labor Laws, Protection and Insurance
5. Organic Certification and Marketing Programs
6. Financing and Leasing/Buying Agricultural Land
7. Final Whole Farm Planning Review
8. Final Ranch Plan Presentations

Graduation April 5th 2008

Fees:

Rate for entire course

<i>Annual family income*/ Ingresos de la familia*</i>	<i>0 dependents</i>	<i>1-2 dependents</i>	<i>3-4 dependents</i>	<i>5+ dependents</i>
0-\$18,088 (under 25% median income)	375	338	300	264
\$18,089-\$36,175 (25-50% median income)	555	500	445	390
\$36,176-\$57,880 (50-80% median income)	975	878	780	683
\$57,881-\$86,820 (80-120% median income)	1,500	1,350	1,200	1,050
over \$86,820 (over 120% median income)	2,500	2,250	2,000	1,750

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's your fee for enrollment.
5. If special circumstances or financial hardship make this cost unattainable, you may complete a **scholarship application** for ALBA's consideration.

* based on HUD 2007 median incomes for Monterey and Santa Cruz counties

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

<i>0 dependents</i>	<i>1-2 dependents</i>	<i>3-4 dependents</i>	<i>5+ dependents</i>
94	85	75	66
139	125	111	98
244	220	195	171
(base rate) 375	338	300	263
625	563	500	438

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

You can also earn 4.5 credits at Hartnell College while attending our program. Eligibility for a registration fee waiver is determined by family size and a yearly income schedule as set by the US Department of Health and Human Services federal poverty guidelines.

Family Size	2006 Income
1	\$ 14,700
2	\$ 19,800
3	\$ 24,900
4	\$ 30,000
5	\$ 35,100
6	\$ 40,200
7	\$ 45,300
8	\$ 50,400

If you qualify please fill out an Application for Admission with an Enrollment Fee Waiver application, which are both available at Hartnell College Office of Admissions and Registration 156 Homestead Ave. Salinas, Ca. 93901(831)755-6755. Or apply online at <http://www.hartnell.edu/admissions/apply.html> -or for the fee waiver at http://www.hartnell.edu/financial_aid/2007-08_forms/2007-08_BOGFW_Application-Income.pdf. Applications are also available at ALBA 1700 Old Stage Rd. Salinas, Ca. 93908 or call us to learn more at 831-758-1469.