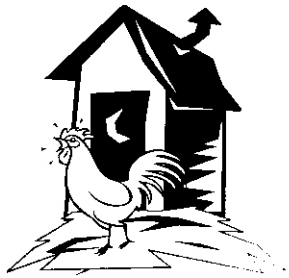


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WHAT IS CERTIFIED NATURALLY GROWN?

Alice Varon, Certified Naturally Grown, Brooklyn, NY

Many farmers nationwide who are committed to organic agriculture choose not to go through the organic certification process. Yet they'd like some way to distinguish themselves from conventional farmers without illicit use of the "o-word". Certified Naturally Grown is a non-profit organization that was founded by farmers in 2002 to provide certification tailored to the kinds of farmers who launched the organic movement – small-scale sustainable farms serving local communities. Certification involves an online application, full transparency, and peer inspections. The standards are based on the National Organic Program, and adhere to internationally recognized guidelines for organic agriculture. CNG's peer inspection process strengthens the farming community by fostering local networks. Last year CNG added an apiary certification program to encourage natural beekeeping and promote honey bee health. Certified farmers and beekeepers may use CNG marketing materials and have a customizable farm profile on the website. Learn more and find members near you at www.naturallygrown.org. ✕



PASSING KNOWLEDGE THROUGH HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

*Legal Farm Internships in
Washington State*

Doug Collins, WSU Small Farms Program
Kristen Koenig, WSU Cultivating Success™ Program
Fred Berman, WSDA Small Farm and Direct Marketing Program

On-farm learning and experiential education have long been considered an essential element of learning to farm. Ideally, an internship allows novice farmers to gain a breadth of experience in growing produce and/or raising animals and also participate in marketing and even value-added processing.

While interns do not have to be monetarily compensated for work done, they are compensated through training and work experience. Problems with internships may arise when work is done on the farm without the educational benefits required for a legitimate internship.

INTERNS ARE TRAINEES, NOT EMPLOYEES

The Washington State Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) is charged with enforcing laws that protect workers' wages and working conditions. They also oversee registered apprenticeship programs and administer the State's workers compensation system.

Workers compensation is an industrial insurance program that provides coverage for most employers and workers in Washington State. Employers must provide coverage for their employees. In return, employers normally cannot be sued for damages when a work-related injury or illness occurs. Workers compensation is paid on a per hour rate depending on the type of work being done. Hourly rates range from \$0.46/ hour for vineyard work to \$2.14/ hour for livestock work.

Workers on the farm can be placed into one of three categories: hourly or salaried employees, interns and underage workers (underage workers will not be discussed in this article; see resources for more). Hourly or salaried employees include apprentices; interns may be student interns or non-student interns. To comply with wage laws, specific criteria must be met for each category.

Hourly or salaried employees. Employees are paid greater to or equal to minimum wage (currently \$8.67/hr or paid piece rate). Employers are required to pay workers' compensation based on what type of work is done and also must cover state and federal unemployment compensation. While the terms "apprentice" and "intern" are occasionally used interchangeably by some farms, they have different legal definitions. Both include hands-on education, but apprenticeships must be paid positions and must be approved by the Washington State Apprenticeship Council (a division of L&I). Apprenticeships must teach highly technical skills and graduate apprentices to "journey workers." Being a registered apprentice requires a long-term commitment on behalf of the farmer/mentor (over one year). This entitles the apprentice