Spring Valley Student Farm
Cooperative Housing Application
Fall 2021

Please review the information below before completing the application questions.

Information about the Spring Valley Student Farm Community and Initiative

Spring Valley Student Farm Concept:
Spring Valley Student Farm (SVSF) created in spring 2010 and is an extension of the EcoHouse Learning Community. The Farm provides an opportunity to learn about regenerative farming through applied learning while also providing a residential living option with additional independence and responsibility appropriate to returning upper-class students. Spring Valley Student Farm exists as a collaborative venture between Dining Services, Residential Life, First Year Programs and Learning Communities - EcoHouse, the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources, UConn Service Learning and the Office of Sustainability.

Spring Valley Student Farm Mission:
Spring Valley Student Farm exists to foster meaningful student learning, engagement, collaboration, and camaraderie around environmental and food system sustainability issues. As an extension of the EcoHouse Learning Community, SVSF provides students the opportunity to act on their own interest in sustainable agriculture through regenerative farming. Living and working at the farm allows students to gain practical knowledge and skills through experiential learning, while simultaneously modeling a closed-loop food model. UConn Dining Services uses the produce, grown using organic methods, at their on-campus farm market, select dining halls and restaurants. Spring Valley Student Farm is a place where students, faculty, staff, and Storrs-Mansfield community members can come together to learn about the connections between land, food, health and people.

Spring Valley Student Farm Goals:
- Promote Spring Valley Student Farm as an example of sustainable education and living for the UConn campus, local community and the state of Connecticut
- Model efficient, effective, sustainable farming practices that are economically viable and ecologically sound
- Serve as a vanguard for a local, organic food movement on the UConn campus by encouraging students, faculty, and staff to consider the environmental and human impacts of the foods they consume daily
- Encourage imaginative, innovative, and creative thinking to achieve more sustainable lifestyles and solutions
- Host workshops, seminars, tours, and volunteer work days for campus, local residents, and local schools

**Additional Information:**
SVSF is located 4.5 miles off-campus at 104 and 86 Spring Manor Road in Mansfield but is part of on-campus housing.

**NOTE:**
If you plan to live on campus, regardless if you are accepted to live at SVSF or not, then you should apply for on-campus housing by the fall housing application deadline. If you decide to cancel on-campus housing for any reason, and do not cancel before the cancellation deadline, a cancellation fee is charged.

If you do not plan to live on-campus if not accepted to live at the farm, then you should not apply for on-campus housing until after notification of acceptance to live at SVSF. Applicants will need to apply for on-campus housing once accepted to live at SVSF. Once you apply for on-campus housing, you will go on a waitlist then offered housing at SVSF.

There is no University transportation provided between the farm and the main Storrs campus. There is a UConn bus line that runs Monday through Friday to Depot Campus, which is a 15-minute walk from SVSF. Many SVSF residents carpool or ride their bicycles to campus.

SVSF is open to all undergraduate students. Students who live at SVSF are part of EcoHouse. They act as mentors for the EcoHouse community through on-farm volunteer opportunities and on-campus presentations and meetings. For questions about EcoHouse, please contact Amanda Wilde at amanda.wilde@uconn.edu.

SVSF residents should expect to pay at least $1121 total per semester, due and payable at the start of the semester. The current room rate might be adjusted to reflect any future increase in fees passed by the Board of Trustees. A fee increase is anticipated for fall 2021. Students accepted to live at SVSF will be notified of any changes to the room rate prior to move-in date. The fee includes all utilities including electricity, water, trash, snow removal, cable, and wireless internet. The monthly fee does not include a meal plan.

In exchange for this discounted living arrangement, all students selected to live at SVSF, are expected to contribute 10 hours a week toward running the farm during the academic year. In addition, anyone living at SVSF must comply with the rules contained in the UConn On-Campus Housing Contract. Please read the Residential Life housing contract paying special attention to guest policies and smoking rules. [http://reslife.uconn.edu/housing-contract-forms/](http://reslife.uconn.edu/housing-contract-forms/). All students living at SVSF for fall 2021 will be required to abide by any Covid-19 rules set forth by the university and Department of Residential Life.

Independent study or internship credits are possible with a sponsoring faculty member in the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources. Those interested in additional responsibilities may apply for student employment positions through Dining Services. Email Julia.cartabiano@uconn.edu or phone 860-508-7706 with questions.

**An open letter to all hopeful student farmers, from the current farmers:**

Thank you for everything you have already given to this community. Spring Valley could never be the vibrant place that it is without the support of a large and diverse collection of brilliant individuals.
You are a part of this place. As you explore joining our community, please listen to a few things we would like to share:

First: Spring Valley requires sincere commitment. The ten hours that you will contribute each week aren’t the clock-in, clock-out type. Living at the farm means incorporating the farm into your daily life. This might mean... cranking open the hoop house on Monday morning, washing buckets of baby lettuce in cold water on Tuesday, presenting to an Environmental Engineering class on Wednesday, delivering tomatoes to Whitney on Thursday, leading volunteers to mulch vegetable beds on Farm Friday, cleaning out the seed fridge on Saturday, and cooking for our meeting on Sunday to discuss the next week’s agenda. And all the meanwhile thinking about what you would like to change and improve at the farm— maybe we could be composting more, or cooking together on Thursday nights, or educating students in the dining halls about food waste. For some of us, SSVF commitments fit naturally and comfortably into the kind of lifestyle we want to lead. But it’s not for everyone.

Second: We can’t accept all the people who deserve to be here. That means that we have to say no to some beautiful, creative, kind, dedicated and brilliant people. We are sorry that we don’t have space here for everyone. If you are not invited to live here, please remember that our community is much larger than the eleven students who live here each year. We hope that this community will keep growing stronger by building deep and resilient relationships beyond the residence.

Spring Valley is intended to be a living laboratory that is open to all. Please stay involved in our regular volunteer hours at the Farm, at EcoGarden and on campus during our weekly club meetings. You can also schedule another time to come and work with us on the farm! Students of all majors are invited to earn Independent Study or Internship credit by initiating a personal project or participating in any of our ongoing endeavors. Some current large-scale projects are solar thermal and solar photovoltaic installation, preparing for the installation of a new shed and converting it into a walk-in cooler, and working with our aquaponics greenhouse. Right now, off-farm students are also independently using space at the farm to research IMO (indigenous microorganism) impact on cover crop growth, to monitor pesticide drift, and to design and implement a permaculture project in our Edible Forest Garden. SSVF has been the inspiration of poetry and creative writing projects, too! If you have any ideas of a project or would simply like to spend more time in the field, contact Julia Cartabiano, our farm manager, or talk to any of the student farmers.

It’s only in rare circumstances that we accept people who have not consistently volunteered or otherwise contributed to the SSVF community. We have a set of categories we use, together, to discuss what each applicant would bring to the farm. We are looking for responsible and reliable people with knowledge and enthusiasm to share, people who we want to cook breakfast with.

Know that we will read your application with an open heart and mind. We will work together to determine our new members in a thoughtful way that will hopefully benefit all. We encourage you to reach out to any of the student farmers with questions. We would like to get to know you as well as possible!

Thank you. Keep loving that sunshine,

The Spring Valley Farm Family

Application

In a separate document, please respond to each question briefly, in no more than three total pages, to the following questions.

1) Please provide contact information including name, home address, local phone number, email address and Peoplesoft number.
2) Tell us a little bit about yourself. Who are you? (major, expected graduation year, interests, hobbies, etc.) What is your favorite vegetable and why?

3) Why are you interested in living at Spring Valley Student Farm? Are there any specific projects at the farm you are particularly interested in?

4) What does sustainability mean to you?

5) SVSF residents will be responsible for tending to the farm. Students will, for example: plan crop rotations, keep records, plant seeds, harvest from the fields and aquaponics system, and process and deliver produce to Dining Services at UConn. Please describe your relevant experience.

6) What other activities are you committed to? How will you balance your obligations, including SVSF, for the upcoming semester?

7) How would you be an active member and contributor at Spring Valley Student Farm? How would you further the goals of the community?

8) Do you have any experience living in a communal space? What are your assets as a house/roommate? What qualities might make you difficult to live with? What does healthy communication mean to you?

9) Please use this space if you feel there is anything missing from your application that you would like the current farmers to know.

The following questions are for our planning purposes only and will not affect your admission.

10) Most SVSF farmers share a bedroom with one roommate. Do you request that your roommate identify as the same gender as you? Reply yes or no.

11) If you are not accepted, would you like to be considered for the waitlist? Reply yes or no.

12) Please send interview day/time availability for the week of 2/8/2021.

Please email completed application to Julia.cartabiano@uconn.edu by Monday, February 8, 2021.