Spring Valley Student Farm
Cooperative Housing Application
Spring 2022

Please review the information below before completing the application questions.

About Spring Valley Student Farm

Spring Valley Student Farm Concept:
Spring Valley Student Farm (SVSF) was 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 (SVSF) provides an opportunity for UConn students and the greater community to join together to learn about environmentally, socially and economically ethical regenerative food production through hands-on experience. The Farm allows students to gain practical knowledge and skills through experiential learning while simultaneously modeling a closed loop food model in which organic produce is grown on campus for UConn Dining Services. Spring Valley Student Farm aims to be a place where students, faculty, staff, and Storrs-Mansfield community members can come together to learn about the connections between land, food, 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 workdays for campus, local residents, and local schools
Additional Information

Housing at SVSF is open to all full-time undergraduate students at the sophomore level or above. In exchange for a discounted living arrangement, all SVSF student farmers contribute 10 hours a week toward running the farm during the academic year. This includes **Sunday meetings 5:30-8:00pm every week**, and leading volunteer activities on **Farm Friday 4:00-6:00pm** during the growing season.

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: [http://reslife.uconn.edu/housing-contract-forms/](http://reslife.uconn.edu/housing-contract-forms/). All students living at SVSF will be required to abide by any Covid-19 rules set forth by the university and Department of Residential Life.

SVSF is part of on-campus housing but is located 4.5 miles away from the center of campus at 104 and 86 Spring Manor Road in Mansfield. There is no University transportation provided between the farm and the main Storrs campus. Many SVSF residents carpool or ride their bicycles to campus. SVSF students may speak with Parking Services to become eligible for a commuter parking pass.

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. 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: heat, electricity, water, trash and snow removal, laundry, and wireless internet. The houses are equipped with kitchens and so the fee does **not** include a meal plan.

**NOTE:** If you do not plan to live on-campus if not accepted to live at the farm next semester, then you should not apply for on-campus housing until after notification of acceptance to live at SVSF.

Once a student takes up residence at Spring Valley, they are eligible to stay each semester until graduation, assuming they do not break code of conduct outlined in the SVSF Constitution. Student Farmers have housing priority for the summer months to continue their 10hr/week volunteer commitment. Those who wish to work on the farm from May-August may also apply for a 30hr/week paid position.
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 the idea of 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 leading cooking events or educating students in the dining halls about food waste. For some of us, SVSF commitments fit naturally and comfortably into the kind of lifestyle we want to lead. But it’s not for everyone.

It’s only in rare circumstances that we accept people who have not consistently volunteered or otherwise contributed to the SVSF community. We are looking for responsible and reliable people with enthusiasm to share.

Second: We are sorry that we can’t accept all the people who deserve to be here—we don’t have room. If you are not invited to live here, please remember that 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 and at EcoGarden and our weekly club meetings on campus. You can also schedule another time to come and work with us on the farm, perhaps even for academic credit!

Students of all majors are invited to conduct Independent Study or Internship by initiating a personal project or participating in any of our ongoing endeavors (like solar, aquaponics and constructing the walk-in cooler). Off-farm students have also independently used space at the farm to research indigenous microorganism (IMO) impact on cover crop growth, to monitor pesticide drift, and to design and implement a permaculture project in our Edible Forest Garden. SVSF 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 our farm manager.

Know that we will read your application with an open heart and mind. We encourage you to reach out to any of the student farmers or manager with questions.

Thank you. Keep loving that sunshine,
The Spring Valley Farm Family
Application

We are now accepting applications for Spring 2022 housing at Spring Valley Student Farm. In a separate document, please respond to each question in no more than two total pages.

1) Please provide introductory information, including: name, preferred pronouns, home address, phone number, email address, major, expected graduation date, and Peoplesoft number.

2) What interests you about this program? Why do you want to be a Spring Valley student farmer?

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

4) The accepted applicant will be sharing a bedroom with one roommate in a house of seven students. Why are you interested in living in community? What are your assets as a house/roommate? What might be challenging for you?

5) How does this program fit into your personal goals?

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

6) What is your favorite vegetable and why?

7) Do you request that your roommate identify as the same gender as you?

8) If you are not accepted, would you like to be considered for the waitlist?

Please email completed application to Jessica.larkin-wells@uconn.edu
Applications for Spring 2022 will be reviewed on a rolling basis.