EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY
Agronomist and Extension coordinator

Position: Agronomist and Extension coordinator
Terms: Full time, 1-year contract, (with opportunity to renew if funding secured)
Salary: $36,000 plus benefits
Employer: FarmStart and the University of Guelph
Locations: Primarily Guelph and Brampton. Including travel to Ajax. Travel required.
Closing date: February 15, 2008
Intended start date: March, 2008

FarmStart is a not-for-profit organization that runs programs and services to support a new generation of farmers. For more information see www.farmstart.ca

In 2007, FarmStart initiated research into the markets and production capacity for world food crops that can be grown in Ontario. The aim is to identify, share and develop knowledge and opportunities for world crops in our climate and markets in connection with private, not-for-profit and public sector partners, the food and agriculture industry, OMAFRA, research institutions and farmers.

The Agronomist and extension specialist will be responsible for the development of our World Crops Research and Extension Project. The position will involve broad based and detailed research, the development of communication materials (such as publications, web and print articles, presentations etc.) and the development and coordination of select new crop trials. Field research will take place at all three farm sites coordinated with the site Farm Managers and directly in partnership with new farmers.

The position will largely be based at our Training and Research Farm in Brampton and our farm facility in Guelph, with travel to other farms and a facility in Ajax to carry out research activities, including crop trials.

Position Responsibilities:

Carry out literature, internet and field research into non-traditional or 'world' crops to determine a range of crops which can be grown in Southern Ontario.

Analyse the cultural practices that have been used to grow these selected crops in Ontario or other northern areas.

Determine the economic feasibility for growing the selected crops for markets in the GTA.

Initiate and coordinate selected crop trials at FarmStart's three farm facilities and in collaboration with farmers and other partners.

Analyse and report on and communicate the commercial and agronomic feasibility of growing the selected crops in Southern Ontario.

Work with private, not-for-profit and public sector partners, the food and agriculture industry, OMAFRA, research institutions and farmers to further the knowledge, extension and opportunities for world crops.

Develop communication materials- such as research publications, plain language web and print articles, and presentations

Provide advice and support to both FarmStart participants and other farmers who wish to grow the selected crops as part of their new or existing farm enterprises.

Develop long-term program goals and strategy.

Participate in securing funds for the development of the program and research.

Skills / experience Required:

Experience with small scale, intensive farming and gardening practices in Canada.

Experience in conducting research and crop trials, particularly with non traditional or 'world' crops.

Knowledge of garden and field crops from tropical and non-tropical areas and cultural practices in raising these crops.

Excellent academic report writing, plain language writing and verbal communication skills.

An aptitude for training and mentoring new farmers.

Computer skills and internet research and communication skills.

Desired Skills and Experience:

Cross Cultural communication skills.

Knowledge of market readiness / processing systems in Ontario.

Commercial agricultural experience in Ontario.

Green House management experience.

Collaboration and inter-personal skills

Willingness to get your hands dirty.

Send Resume and cover letter to: Mike Shook, Program Manager, FarmStart, Box 1875, Guelph, ON N1H 6Z9 or mike@farmstart.ca. Please visit our web site: www.farmstart.ca.