

PSS 209: Diversified Farm Operations  
Internship equivalence

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**PSS 209: Diversified Farm Operations** is a hands-on, experiential course in which students learn principles and practices of sustainable, diversified specialty crop production on-site at the Catamount Educational Farm (Cat Farm). Topics include: vegetable crop families; soil fertility management; composting; weed, insect and disease management; propagation and planting; crop planning; irrigation systems; farm financials and business planning; marketing techniques; broiler chicken management; and tractor operation. The course format consists of a combination of lectures, hands-on fieldwork, and visits to local farms. Lectures are presented by instructors and guest speakers from UVM Extension, the Plant and Soil Science Department and local farmers, and comprise approximately 20% of the course content. Concepts and skills taught are immediately applied through active participation in Cat Farm's ten-acre fruit and vegetable operation that supplies produce to the community through a CSA; a farm stand; and multiple wholesale accounts. This course partners closely with the UVM Farmer Training Program (FTP), a noncredit, 6-month intensive program that prepares students for diversified farm production from seed to fork.

In a typical week, students begin with a crop class in the field, followed by a field walk to assess farm management and work tasks required for that week. After the field walk, students learn farm skills and participate in the weekly farm tasks. Students learn and practice how to harvest, weed, direct seed, transplant, set up irrigation and operate a tractor in a real commercial farm setting.

Students will complete their lectures asynchronously in an online setting. This allows us to maintain flexibility around weather and production schedules. Several curricular themes are presented, including: soil fertility management; pest, disease and weed management; business planning; and farm financials. A Bi-weekly Schedule of specific course topics is provided at the beginning of the course.

**Time required on-site:** 8:30-4:00 MW for twelve weeks (180 hours). Six credits includes 2-3 hours lectures, reading, and/or writing outside of class each week.

**Internship equivalence:** This course is largely hands-on, and students are actively engaged in learning and performing critical farm operations as they would on a commercial farm internship. This course is accepted for internship credit in PSS majors (Agroecology, Sustainable Landscape Horticulture) and meets all requirements for the Food Systems experiential learning credit (substitutes for CDAE 296: Internship). Each season, the class completes a group project, e.g., build a greenhouse; complete a crop fertility trial; build an irrigation system. Students also each complete an independent farm study of a specific crop or farm system.