

# New Agrarian Program

## James Ranch Artisan Cheese Application

*“There is another way to live and think: it’s called agrarianism. It is not so much a philosophy as a practice, an attitude, a loyalty and a passion – all based in close connection with the land. It results in a sound local economy in which producers and consumers are neighbors and in which nature herself becomes the standard for work and production.”*  
– Wendell Berry

Mentoring the next generation of agrarian leaders

In 2008, the [Quivira Coalition](#) (Santa Fe, NM) partnered with several ranches and farms around the Southwest to launch a leadership development program that offers apprenticeship opportunities for people committed to a life at the intersection of environmental stewardship and regenerative agriculture. The [New Agrarian Program](#) offers comprehensive, in-residence experiential training in all aspects of a resilient agricultural enterprise. We seek to pair eager apprentices with experienced mentors in regenerative agricultural operations. NAP apprenticeships strike a balance between mentorship activities and self-directed initiatives, with opportunities to attend workshops, classes, and conferences that support apprentice learning. We seek applicants with a diversity of experiences and a *sincere commitment to a life in sustainable agriculture*. **Immediate opening requires a 4-month commitment.**

Agriculture drives economies, creates green jobs, and directly affects the health of our nation. With national average age of US ranchers/farmers approaching 60, and less than 2% of the population currently dedicated to producing food, it is critical that we increase training opportunities for a new generation of conservation agrarians. Failing to take proactive measures to train this next generation of leaders will lead to further degradation of natural resources, food insecurity, and the loss of prime agricultural land to development. Our apprenticeships teach regenerative agricultural methods that increase land/soil health and help mitigate effects of climate change, while offering sustainable strategies for dealing with drought and water shortages.

**Before** completing the apprenticeship application, please read all information available on the Quivira website, including both the [James Ranch Artisan Cheese](#) page, and the associated [Apprentice Application Details](#) page.



*From the Left, JRAC NAP Graduates:* Jo Myers (2011); Josh Lang (2012); Jo and Dan making cheese (2011); Patrice Treu (2013). *To the Right:* NAP Mentor Dan James, James Ranch Artisan Cheese (Durango, CO).

Founded in 1997, [The QUIVIRA COALITION](#) is a nonprofit conservation organization, based in Santa Fe, New Mexico, dedicated to building bridges between ranchers, environmentalists, scientists, public land managers, and others around the concept of land health.

**THE JAMES RANCH** is nestled in the Animas River Valley just north of Durango, Colorado. Three generations of James family have stewarded the property for the last forty-nine years, and cooperatively produce: 1) grass-fed and finished Red Angus beef (Dave and Kay James), 2) Raw milk artisan cheeses from 100% grass-fed Jersey cows raised and milked right on the ranch (Dan and Becca James), 3) pasture-raised pork from heritage breed pigs (Dan and Becca James), 4) brown & green eggs from pastured chickens (Julie and John Ott), 5) vegetables, flowers, and fruits (Jennifer and Joe Wheeling), and 6) native spruce trees (Julie and John Ott). This growing family uses Holistic Management to guide the management of their operations, and their mission statement encompasses considerations for the land, their animals, their family, their finances, and their future: *“The integrity and distinction of the James Ranch is to be preserved for future generations by developing financially viable agricultural and related enterprises that sustain a profitable livelihood for the families directly involved, while improving the land, and encouraging the use of all resources, natural and human, to their highest and best potential.”*

# 2013 APPLICATION

James Ranch Artisan Cheese Apprenticeship



**IMMEDIATE OPENING for a 4-month dairy/cheese-making apprenticeship in Durango, Colorado.**

The **NEW AGRARIAN PROGRAM** was designed for people who have a sincere commitment life at the intersection of sustainable agriculture and environmental stewardship. We seek applicants who are willing and able to make an **immediate** (July 2013), **4-month** commitment to an in-depth, hands-on education program that offers experiential training in all aspects of a sustainable and resilient agricultural enterprise.

**JAMES RANCH ARTISAN CHEESE APPRENTICESHIP:** Aspects of the curriculum include animal husbandry (dairy cows, heritage breed pigs, and chickens), pasture health monitoring, pasture rotation planning, Holistic Management, low-stress livestock handling, dairy infrastructure maintenance, milking, making cheese, marketing, business planning, and small-scale gardening. In addition, the curriculum may include a series of professional development opportunities. Apprentices emerge from the program with tangible skills, both technical and interpersonal, that are essential for successful employment as an agrarian leader, and eventual owner/manager of their own operation.

Important information on this opportunity — including expectations, stipend, room & board, etc.— are available on the Quivira website. Please read all available information carefully before you begin the application process: [www.quiviracoalition.org/New\\_Agrarian\\_Program](http://www.quiviracoalition.org/New_Agrarian_Program).

*☞ Please provide answers for the following questions in a separate WORD or PDF document ☞*

**CONTACT INFORMATION.** Provide the following information as the header for your application: **name, address, phone number, and email address.**

**BIG PICTURE:**

- 1) What role does regenerative agriculture play in your everyday life?
- 2) What are your long-term goals, and how will a 4-month apprenticeship with James Ranch Artisan Cheese help you start down that path?

**NITTY-GRITTY:**

- 3) What experience have you had with the actual operations side of ranch/farm/dairy life: birth, death, 14-hour days, mud, etc.?
- 4) What experience have you had with the use of hand tools, large animal handling, land management, driving trucks (manual transmission)? Can you back a trailer?
- 5) The apprenticeship requires a certain level of physical competency, specifically upper body strength focused on the shoulders. With reasonable certainty, can you say you would be able to lift a 15 pound cheese over your head, flip it, and put it back down and then do it again 100 times? Could you carry two five gallon buckets full of water 100 yards? Similarly, can you say, with reasonable certainty, that you would be able to handle regular exposure to mold, dust, pollen, and animal dander?

**MISCELLANEOUS:**

- 6) Have you read through the Apprenticeship Application Details, available on the Quivira Coalition website?

**REQUIRED DOCUMENTS:**

1. **Your updated resume.**
2. **Two professional references.** Please include reference's name, phone, and email, and the context in which you know each person. We will be contacting these references in the next few weeks.

**Send completed application  
as soon as possible via email:**

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*Position open until filled. Please apply as soon as possible.*