JOB POSTING

Just Cut Production Manager

POSITION SUMMARY
The Center for an Agricultural Economy (CAE), based in Hardwick, VT, seeks a Production Manager for Just Cut, a farm-to-institution program! Just Cut has two primary goals; fair prices for our farm partners, and consistent, high-quality local products for our institutions, with an emphasis on those that feed food-insecure individuals such as schools, hospitals, and colleges. We purchase, inspect, wash, prepare, and deliver Vermont-grown produce to kitchens both large and small. By partnering with local farmers, food buyers across New England, and a regional delivery network, we help ensure the viability of Vermont’s working landscapes and provide greater accessibility of high-quality produce to all markets. The Production Manager role is a critical position for the aggregation, processing, and distribution of our ready-to-use produce products for institutional and bulk buyers. As the manager of our awesome Just Cut team, the Production Manager will be a strong communicator and problem solver, a leader, and a team player. The ability to balance some office and administrative tasks while also working in the kitchen with our team is essential to this role. Just Cut operates out of a dynamic shared-use kitchen and warehouse. Diplomacy, initiative, efficiency, and clear communication are crucial to operation. If you know food safety, have a background in industrial kitchen work, strong leadership qualities, and an active interest in our local food system, farms, and community, we’d love to hear from you!

JOB DETAILS
Position: Just Cut Production Manager
Reports to: Just Cut Program Manager
Schedule: Full-time: 40 hrs/week, Monday through Friday (8:30 am - 4:30 pm)
Compensation: $50,000 - $55,000 a year, exempt
Work Environment: Ability to work in an industrial kitchen setting, work in hot and cold settings, and work with food processing equipment is a necessity. Office work occurs in the warehouse and in a shared indoor office, located within the warehouse.
Benefits: Paid Time Off, SIMPLE IRA, Qualified Small Employer HRA, Employer-paid short-term disability and life insurance, quarterly phone stipend, professional development compensation

REQUIRED SKILLS/EXPERIENCE
- Comfort using Microsoft Office software (Excel proficiency a plus) and/or Google Suite
- Kitchen and/or food processing experience
- Proven managerial/supervisory experience
- Strong communication skills

PREFERRED SKILLS/EXPERIENCE
- Direct communication, spoken and written
- Able to support and respond to needs in stressful situations, as they arise
- Knowledge of performance evaluation and budgeting concepts
● The ability to work under pressure, efficiently, and to multi-task in and outside of the kitchen environment
● Understanding of quality standards and health & safety regulations
● Deep knowledge of production management

SUMMARY OF RESPONSIBILITIES
Office/Administrative work (40%):
● Supervise Just Cut team
  ○ Schedule and lead weekly production meetings, quarterly work planning meetings, and annual conversations, provide weekly work schedules, and approve timesheets
  ○ Train, monitor, and support all team members on proper food safety practices, working ergonomics, and production timing efficiencies
● Work with Program Manager to adjust sales goals to optimize production capacity
  ○ Provide regular and timely feedback on production status against orders & schedules, track production, and develop sales goals and R&D products
● Lead the production planning process on site in coordination with the Program Manager
  ○ Relay successes and challenges in and outside of the kitchen to the Program Manager
  ○ Order produce and schedule bills of lading for both good faith agreement (GFA) and non-GFA produce, fill gaps when necessary
● Track and manage raw and processed produce and materials inventory
  ○ Procure and manage the raw product supplies with the support of the Production Team Lead and Program Manager, ensuring that deliveries and supplies are appropriate for the program's needs and sales goals
  ○ Coordinate incoming and outgoing produce with attention to receiving, record-keeping, and food safety protocols

Kitchen, scullery, and warehouse (60%):
● Manage production and kitchen space including food safety protocols and SOPS:
  ○ Prepare, package, palletize, and ship weekly fresh and frozen Just Cut product orders (particularly beets, cabbage, potatoes, and carrots)
  ○ Communicate all irregularities to the Program Manager
  ○ Follow all food safety protocols, maintain a high level of cleanliness throughout production kitchens and warehouse, clean and sanitize equipment
  ○ Prepare production kitchen: arrange equipment according to production day, set up, prepare packaging materials follow SOP’s instructions
  ○ Dress in required production footwear: uniform, hair & beard nets, or other safety gear necessary for working in the kitchen
● Oversee aggregation, preparation, packaging, and shipment of weekly Just Cut product orders:
  ○ Create and delegate production efficiencies in order to meet pricing benchmarks
  ○ Manage quality control – shelf life testing, R&D, samples, storage, and waste/donations
  ○ Identify solutions as issues arise if product quality is jeopardized or no longer safe for consumption
• Support ongoing maintenance and logistics of the VFVC facility:
  o Assess, schedule, and delegate facility sanitation and equipment maintenance routines
  o Monitor health and preventative equipment maintenance; coordinate maintenance or conduct as possible in house
  o Review and implement the Just Cut Food Safety Plan to maintain compliance with third-party auditing standards

EOE STATEMENT
Building community leadership, investing in relationships, and listening to the needs of the community are core principles CAE applies to all our work. We strive to foster an inclusive and supportive staff culture where learning and growth are supported. CAE is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Qualified applicants are considered for employment without regard to age, race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetics, disability, or veteran status.

BACKGROUND ON CAE
CAE is a food systems hub in Hardwick, VT whose reach extends statewide and beyond. Our work touches all aspects of the food system in support of rural food businesses, farms, and communities. We work alongside our neighbors and partners to cultivate interdependence, take risks, and initiate change. CAE operates a full-service food hub at the Vermont Food Venture Center, and business advising and technical assistance to farm and food businesses. Our enterprises include Just Cut, a farm-to-institution program; Farm Connex, a local food delivery service; and Vermont Farm Fund, a revolving farm fund. Our community programs are focused in the greater Hardwick area and include a community greenspace and gardens at Atkins Field; Grow Your Own, a food independence collaboration with the Hardwick Area Food Pantry and others; Place-Based Education partnerships with our local schools; and community organizing for food sovereignty. We invite you to participate in our work to create a rural food system in which everyone has agency, support, and access to local food.

HIRING PROCESS
This position is open until filled. The hiring process is led by a team of CAE staff. After an initial review of materials, selected applicants will have an initial phone screening (15-20 minutes), which may be followed by an in-person interview (1-1.5 hour) and a tour of CAE spaces. Candidates who go on to interview with us will be asked to provide 3 professional references. Interview questions will be shared ahead of time and will be conducted by a team of 3-4 CAE staff. We will hold interviews in early August with an ideal start date in early September.

CAE is committed to the full inclusion of all qualified individuals. CAE will make any reasonable accommodations needed for individuals with disabilities during the interview process and for our staff. For accommodation inquiries, please contact our Admin Operations Coordinator at jobs@hardwickagriculture.org.

TO APPLY
Email jobs@hardwickagriculture.org with your resume, a cover letter, and please include ‘Just Cut Production Manager’ in your email subject line. In your cover letter, please address why you are interested in working with CAE, why you are interested in this particular role, and how you feel your skills and experiences align with the responsibilities described here. Let us know if you have any questions!