



Algoma Highlands Wild Blueberry Farm and Winery

2018 Harvest Season

Employee Information Package

Welcome to ALGOMA HIGHLANDS

Algoma Highlands is a wild blueberry farm which was established in 2006. Trevor and Tracy Laing are the proprietors – you will mostly find Trevor on the farm and Tracy in the office. Trevor can be reached at 705-852-6642.

Forms to be completed BEFORE commencing work (enclosed)

- Employee personal details
- Signed employee information package
- Federal and provincial tax forms
- Completed Health and Safety Certificate

Job Description: At Algoma Highlands Wild Blueberry Farm you will be expected to perform a multitude of duties dependent on the incoming orders, weather, and the inflow of fruit into the processing facility. Major duties that will be carried out will include;

- the inspection of harvested fruit upon arrival to facility,
- operating the blueberry processing equipment ensuring continual sound function of the sorting lines,
- performing quality control measures during the sorting process of the blueberries,
- preparing freshly harvested, quality blueberry baskets for immediate sale and outbound shipments,
- ensuring the processing facility remains clean and functional for a safe day's work,
- welcome visiting tourist/locals into the farm and assist in any retail transactions.

Payment of Wages:

- Minimum wage (based on a minimum 2 week employment period) will be paid.
- You must sign in every morning and sign off when finished for the night
- The pay week is from Sunday to Saturday
- You must keep the pay stub we give you for your records
- Payment is made by cheque and will be available for pick up the following Friday



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Phone: 705-856-4401

Work Hours

Blueberries cannot be picked when they are wet from dew or rain. Therefore, picking does not begin until the morning dew has dried from the berries, usually between 10:00-11:00am. Picking continues until 7:00 pm. With that being said, the processing facility will run in accordance with the amount of fruit harvested each day. If the processing room is efficient and can keep in line with the pickers, 11 am start times will occur. However, if there is an abundance of blueberries being harvested and the processing facility becomes overwhelmed, earlier morning starts and longer days can be expected. The processing plant can operate 24 hours a day if there are berries to process, in which case shift work will be allocated.

Picking crews are encouraged to stay out as late as possible on good days, because good picking weather is never guaranteed. Rain days do occur and picking/processing crew will not work unless the processing facility is behind on sorting the harvested bins.

Quality

Quality is of the upmost importance at Algoma Highlands Wild Blueberry Farm. Pickers will be trained on how to harvest only quality, sound fruit thus making the operations in the processing facility more efficient. The crew in the processing facility will also be trained on how to inspect the fruit and discard of any unsuitable fruit. There are two main things to consider for quality. 1- *Broken berries* can spoil the whole bin and 2- *foreign field materials* picked up the harvesters can contaminate the baskets. Once trained, it becomes second nature to pick/sort quality fruit. Our farm motto is: "if you won't put it in your mouth, don't put it in the basket (harvest bins)".

When quality fruit is harvested the processing lines are able to run at maximum speed, resulting in higher outputs of quality blueberries and more efficient work days. Our goal as a farm is to produce the best quality fruit we can so that our customers know that when they place an order they will be getting a product that is of the highest standards.

Work Conditions

Both the processing facility worker and field workers will be subject to an abundance of physical work. The days are long and demanding but rewarding all in all. Standing and keeping up in a fast paced environment is a crucial aspect within the farm. The ability to perform repetitive tasks efficiently and effectively, while remaining mentally focused, will be a day to day occurrence. You will required to work both indoors and outdoors in a variety of weather conditions, including hot, dry, damp, wet, buggy, etc.



Safety on the farm

- Machinery hazards- stay within the designated areas to avoid farm machinery which may be working on the farm
- All rules within the processing facility will be followed to ensure full safety at all times. Rules will be gone over before the commencement of work, but include things like, no running anywhere inside the plant, no jewelry is to be worn on the lines, appropriate clothing is to be worn, etc.
- Speed limits - when driving any vehicle on any internal farm roads you must not drive faster than 15km/hour
- Physical hazards – There are creeks and logs around the farm and the ground is uneven. Please be aware of your surroundings
- Nature’s hazards - You should be aware that there may be stinging insects, bees, and bears on the farm.
- Unsafe water – Irrigation water, creek water and dam water is not safe to drink. It is not safe to drink from any tap around the farm unless it has been confirmed safe by one of the managers. We recommend that you bring your own water jug to work each day.
- On-site training incorporates a session on safety during the first day of operation

Smoking Policy

There is NO smoking allowed:

- While picking or handling fruit
- At or around the picking station
- In farm vehicles
- In or around packing or processing plant
- In or around offices
- Within the accommodation provided

Please take any cigarette butts home with you or dispose of them in the designated area. If you are caught tossing your cigarette butts, this will be immediate grounds for dismissal. Even though we are working on a farm, forest fires are a real threat for our farm and homes.

Your personal comfort and safety

- Sun protection – it is important to bring and use a hat, clothing and sunscreen to protect yourself from the sun
- Footwear – it is necessary to wear closed shoes or boots while working in the orchard. Sandals or opened toed shoes are NOT PERMITTED



- Food – you will need to bring sufficient food to meet your needs for a full day in the open air
- Water – it is extremely important to drink plenty of water during the day. You should bring your own water (at least 2 liters or more)
- Toilets – Toilets are located at High Falls at the edge of our property and at the processing plant. Please take care to leave them clean after use, and do not flush sanitary napkins, tampons or other foreign items
- Meal breaks, you are entitled to take a 30 minute meal break after 5 hours of work.
- Hand washing – you should sanitize or wash your hands frequently throughout the day. It is mandatory in the food industry to wash after each washroom break or smoke break or after eating. (or as needed –every hour is recommended)

Behavior on the Farm

Algoma Highlands supports a work environment which includes respect and consideration for all employees. Any behaviour which is bullying, sexual harassment, or physical or verbal abuse will not be tolerated and is grounds for immediate dismissal. For employees where the accommodation is provided, the same rules apply within this living area.

Parking

- Please park in designated parking areas.
- Do not block the entrance or the roads
- Do not park or drive on any fields as this will cause crop damage

Pets - Leave your pets at home

Food Scraps

Please do not leave any food scraps or litter in fields. This goes for cigarette butts as well.

Dismissal

The following behaviors will be considered grounds for dismissal:

- Failure to follow reasonable instruction or a supervisor or other members of the management
- Bullying, sexual harassment, physically or verbally abusing any person on the farm
- Stealing from Algoma Highlands, any other employee or neighbours



- Smoking infraction
- Operating equipment or machinery in a manner dangerous to the operator or others
- Tampering or interfering with irrigation or irrigation monitoring systems, weather stations, insect traps, or pest monitoring systems or intentionally damaging any other farm property
- Failure to observe speed limits
- Commencing work while under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol
- Not meeting picking requirements

Accommodation

Algoma Highlands has dorm style accommodation located on the farm. Accommodation is provided however each employee is expected to provide his/her own food. There is a shared kitchen, washroom and shower, and lounging area. We have a picnic area on the farm and supply barbeques for the nice weather days. Our kitchen has refrigeration and freezers and we will provide transportation to the grocery store on early morning or on rainy days for your convenience. We expect everyone to keep the communal areas clean and tidy, picking up after yourself.

Note: please bring a bed roll or sleeping bag and pillow.

Algoma Highlands currently has 6 fulltime and seasonal employees who will assist you in any way they can. They have been with Algoma Highlands Farms from the beginning. They know the area and if you have any questions they would love to tell you about their lives or the region in which we live.

Tracy and Trevor pride themselves on treating employees as part of their family.

Thank you for your interest in working for our farm this coming season!

I have read and agree to all conditions above

Name _____ Signature _____

Date: _____



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