



Ignatius Jesuit Centre
A Place of Peace

Ignatius Farm

2020 Request for Proposals – Farm land Acreage Rentals

Seeking entrepreneurs to locate their ecological agricultural enterprises at Ignatius Farm

Purpose of the RFP

A diversity of agricultural enterprises located on the IJC lands has demonstrated synergies for all involved. The patchwork of fields is where we address pressing issues: climate change, farm resilience, regional and individual food insecurity, rural-urban divisions, new farmer training, and demand for local, organic food.

This RFP is seeking entrepreneurial individuals, groups, or organizations to rent available acreages to implement complementary ecological or regenerative agriculture projects at the Ignatius Jesuit Centre.

For 2020, a large number of fields totalling 158 acres are available for rent.

Background

The Ignatius Jesuit Centre (IJC) is a not for profit charity situated on 600 acres of woodlands, wetlands and farmland just outside of Guelph Ontario. IJC welcomes all and is home to Loyola House Retreats & Ignatian Training, Ignatius Farm and the Ignatius Old-Growth Forest. The Mission of the Ignatius Jesuit Centre is to cultivate spiritual growth and ecological engagement.

Ignatius Farm is a regional leader in organic farming - focused on community and training. The farm grows certified organic produce (10+ acres) for Community Shared Agriculture (CSA) members, the Milton Farmers' Market, local businesses and service agencies. Farm programs include Community Gardens (3 acres), Acreage Rentals (175 acres), Internships and farmer training courses, Working Shares, volunteer opportunities, and seasonal community events. A good portion of the land is dedicated to cover crops and soil building every year. The Guelph Loam and Sandy-Loam soils are known for producing great-tasting crops. Annually, over 2000 people visit, consult with, and participate directly with Ignatius Farm projects.

Acreage Rentals are available to individuals, groups and organizations to raise food, feed, fibre, trees, and plant products. Businesses may be for profit, social enterprise, education, and/or research. Prospective candidates already have some experience in the proposed enterprise(s). They have a foundation of skills, knowledge and financing so that they are capable of caring for the entire field(s) they seek to rent – both for production and soil care. Proposals are welcome for mixed cropping and livestock systems, and the use of sites for a combination of enterprises.

Individuals who are still building their foundation of skills, knowledge and financing may benefit from the various Ignatius Farm opportunities for training (full season internship, workshops or courses offered in collaboration with Everdale and EFAO), or very small plot agriculture within a Community Garden plot, before proposing a field rental.

RFP Parameters

Details

1. Organic certification of products is optional; following the Canadian Organic Standard is required.
2. Farmland tenancy begins May 1.
3. Most fields will have a 3-year lease, with potential for renewal.
4. Basic field rent is for non-prepared lands with no amenities or structures:
 - \$95/acre for >75 acres
 - \$115/acre <75 acres
 - \$150/acre for fields proximate to water access or other desirable infrastructure (extremely limited)
5. Barn and storage rental space is available at \$5/ ft² per annum. This is not adjacent to the rented fields.
6. This is a rural facility - there is no city water faucet or hydrant available to turn on! There is no water access for most fields. Some fields are adjacent to gravel roads on which a water truck could make a delivery to containers during dry conditions, but these fields are best suited to crops with low water needs. If you need water, you need an external source since we are at capacity for our well. Tenants are responsible for covering their water sourcing and distribution costs. Over the next few years, we are fundraising towards an additional water supply to support current enterprises during dry periods, and that will enable one field to be subdivided into ½ acre plots for small plot horticulture farmers who need water. Water access and usage fees will apply.
7. Livestock farmers are responsible for secure fencing of their livestock.
8. Construction of structures may be permitted after approval of design and placement. The tenant must follow building permitting requirements.
9. Ignatius Farm does NOT provide equipment for use by tenants.

Fields available:

- a) Numerous fields of various shapes, between 2.5-29 acres. Most are 10-20 acres. In a field crop rotation of various certified organic grains, beans, and corn since 2006, with compost as main input.
- b) Farmhouse barn pasture, 2.5 acres. in fallow since 2014 - available with rental of Farmhouse Barn lower animal pens, and potential rental of upper mow section
- c) 'Sleepy Hollow B,C,D' (6.3, 7.4, 4.1 acres) field shaped by the contours of the land: Sections B in hay since 2014; Section C in mixed vegetables & fallow and grains; Section D in fallow, rocky slope

Farm infrastructures open for proposals:

- a) Farmhouse Barn: lower level with animal pens; some upper mow sections available for storage; water and minimal electricity usage included
- b) Large equipment shed near Main Barn available for shared usage in the fall of 2020
- c) NOTE for livestock farmers: the Farm House is NOT available for 2020

Proposals of complementary interest that Ignatius Farm is especially interested in:

- Field crop tenant who can provide good quality straw for mulch for Ignatius Farm Community Gardens and enterprises.
- Livestock farmer who can supply manures and/or composted manures for other enterprises.
- Complementary food and fiber crops or livestock to be marketed in part to existing Ignatius Farm community and clients.
- Plant propagation nurseries – perennial and annual native plants, nut trees, fruit trees...
- Seed-saving enterprises
- Christmas tree farm
- Forest gardens, alley cropping and implementation of permaculture designs.

- Farmer utilizing draft power (horse or oxen) who could demonstrate, instruct, and provide custom draft work for other tenants or Ignatius Farm enterprises.
- Research, education, and outreach programs showcasing ecological and regenerative agriculture, ecological restoration

RFP Evaluation

Proposals will be evaluated by the Ignatius Farm advisors. Evaluation criteria include:

- Meets organic standards
- Synergies with the Ignatius Jesuit Centre Mission, with Ignatius Farm activities, and other tenants
- Expertise and experience of the applicant
- Plan is well thought-out
- Plan is relevant to site
- Integration of triple bottom line strategies – for Ecological, Economic, and Social benefits
- Soil improvement and water protection plans complementary to production plans

RFP Deadline & Application Procedures

Proposals are to be submitted to Ignatius Farm by **February 3, 2020**. The proposal is a concise plan, five pages or less, and includes:

- Full contact information of lead applicant: first & last name, business name, postal address, email & phone, website or LinkedIn address if available
- Objectives
- Summary: proposed use of lands
- Acreage required and any limiting conditions
- Activity outline with timelines
- Crop List and/or Livestock List with stocking rates and shelter plans
- Inputs planned: fertility, pest management, structures & their fit with organic standard
- Infrastructure needed: storage, water, electrical usage
- Equipment and resources: current assets and intended capacity creation (purchase/hire/other) to meet plan
- Intended markets
- Collaborations/partnerships: existing and potential
- Expertise & experience – a brief description for lead applicant and any core team members, along with 2 references (names, association, phone, email)

Proposals should be addressed to: **Heather Lekx, Farm Manager**
Ignatius Jesuit Centre
5420 Highway 6 North, Guelph, ON N1H 6J2

Proposals must be sent electronically in Word or PDF format by February 3, 2020 to farmmanager@ignatiusguelph.ca.

Inquiries may be directed via [email](mailto:farmmanager@ignatiusguelph.ca) or to 519.824.1250 x243. The Farm Manager is available for up to 1 hour of consultation or site visit per proposal in advance of submission.

Selected candidate(s) will be shown available parcels and an addendum to the initial proposal will be required to clarify outstanding questions. Final approval and preparation of leases will occur in April.