Rodale Institute Veteran Farmer Intern
Josiah Remy

BACKGROUND
This summer I had the opportunity to Intern at Rodale Institute as part of the Veteran Farmer Training program. Rodale Institute is a 330-acre training, research and working farm located near Kutztown Pennsylvania. Rodale has the longest running comparison of conventional versus organic agricultural practices and is widely considered the birthplace of the organic food movement. Rodale Institute seeks to grow the organic movement through:
1. Research
2. Farmer Training
3. Consumer Education

On The Job
Farming is dictated by the season and your routine can become very consistent with moments of spontaneous excitement and irregular opportunity. Most day-to-day operations revolved around the production of vegetables on the farm consisting of weeding, harvesting, planting, and processing the crop for distribution to customers. Additionally, livestock must be cared for daily with feedings and pasture rotation often requiring fencing prep and movement. Opportunities to visit and learn from local farmers weekly were a highlight during my experience.

Accomplishments

Broiler Chickens from Egg to Slaughter
Cornish cross chickens have a life cycle of eight weeks from chick to slaughter. During these eight weeks I was able to monitor feed intake, growth progress, grazing movements, and help with processing the birds-all crucial skills for a small poultry operation to get started. Rodale’s broiler chickens are Cornish cross chickens have a life cycle of eight weeks from chick to slaughter. During these eight weeks I was able to monitor feed intake, growth progress, grazing movements, and help with processing the broilers.

Vegetable Production
As mentioned previously most daily duties consisted of vegetable production related tasks. This continuous practice allowed for me to gain a comprehensive understanding of multiple crops from seed to eventual sell to customer. These skills will be crucial to running a profitable business that includes vegetables at any capacity.

Passion Reassurance
As someone who has struggled with direction, I consider it an accomplishment that this internship has provided me with the knowledge and assurance that farming is a passion I wish to pursue on a professional or personal level. This reassurance through my opportunity drives my academic performance and professional goals on a day-to-day basis.

Reflection
After my experience at Rodale I hope to complete my undergraduate degree and begin farming on my family farm in Richland County near Blevins Ohio. I plan on seeking additional hands-on learning opportunities in agriculture to assist my aspiration of running a small farm. This experience was everything I needed to help me make up my mind if farming is a viable and suitable career choice for me. For students considering this opportunity or others in the field of agriculture there is no replacement for getting hands-on experience and participating with the day-to-day activities of a farm operation.

Acknowledgements
I want to thank the staff at Rodale Institute for investing their time and resources to help me grow as an individual and farmer. Without the assistance they offer to veterans seeking to farm I would not have been able to participate in this wonderful opportunity.