

Tennessee Department of Agriculture

Food Science Internship

The Tennessee Department of Agriculture (TDA), Division of Consumer and Industry Services (CIS) is seeking an intern for the spring of 2027 (January 18, 2027 – April 14, 2027). The selected candidate will spend time with the Food & Dairy (F&D) program area under CIS. This internship is designed to offer the chosen candidate a full hands-on experience with food safety and associated state regulatory activities performed by the Tennessee Department of Agriculture.

Location:

Ellington Agricultural Center
Porter Building
436 Hogan Road, Nashville, TN 37220

Major Duties by Food Program Discipline:

Food Manufacturing & Retail:

- Become familiar with Tennessee's regulatory framework for retail food stores and food manufacturers.
- Assist the Food & Dairy team with reviewing applications, including facilitating review meetings.
- Assist office and field staff with change of ownership applications and new owner compliance checks.
- Visit industry partners with Food & Dairy inspectors during routine inspections of food production facilities.
- Shadow follow-up and re-inspections in retail food facilities.
- Observe and assist with food label reviews while learning about federal and state requirements.

Dairy:

- Become familiar with key provisions of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Pasteurized Milk Ordinance (PMO).
- Shadow TDA laboratory personnel while performing regulatory testing of dairy products and containers.
- Shadow TDA inspectors while performing on-farm visits and dairy sanitation inspections.
- Assist TDA office staff with the collection and reporting of required dairy data.
- Help collect dairy and water samples from processing facilities and dairy farms.

Produce Safety:

- Assist the Produce Safety Program Coordinator in managing and implementing the Farm Inventory Maintenance Project in Tennessee.
- Gather relevant producer information using phone contact information provided by Food & Dairy staff.
- Alongside Food & Dairy team members, represent TDA and the Farm Inventory Maintenance Project at local farmers markets.
- Work with TDA staff to create social media posts sharing Farm Inventory Maintenance Project goals with stakeholders.

Other duties may be assigned based on needs and interests.

Education Requirements:

- Applicants must possess a high school diploma and be currently seeking a degree in food science, agriculture, or a related area of study.
- Recent college graduates, master's students, and doctoral students may apply.
- Must be in good academic standing with a GPA of 2.5 or higher.

Essential Knowledge and Required Skills:

- Ideal candidates should have an interest in state regulation and public safety.
- Ideal candidates must have the ability to work independently.
- Familiarity with Microsoft Office is required.
- Ideal candidates must be comfortable making and accepting phone calls.
- General knowledge and understanding of the agriculture industry is preferred but not required.

Comments:

- This is a paid internship.
- Some travel may be required.
- This internship is part of the TDA's central internship program. In addition to regular project work, interns may be expected to participate in internship-specific events and activities that support learning, professional development, department outreach, and program engagement.
- All participants in the Tennessee Department of Agriculture Internship Program are required to complete an improvement project within their assigned division. Interns will identify an opportunity for growth, develop a project outline, and explain the project's intended outcomes and contributions to the Department. At the conclusion of the internship term, participants will present their projects to Executive Leadership during a luncheon.
- For more information on the food safety activities conducted by CIS please visit:
<https://www.tn.gov/agriculture/consumers/food-safety.html>.



Working Conditions:

- This internship is primarily office-based with the possibility of some travel along with the opportunity to work remotely at times.

How to Apply:

To apply for this internship opportunity, please send the following documents to

Jamye.Freeman@tn.gov :

- Resume
- Letter of intent
- Most recent transcript
- Two professional letters of recommendation
- DD214 (**veteran candidates only**)

PLEASE NOTE: Once your application has been received, you will receive a confirmation email. If you do not receive a confirmation email, please reach out to Jamye.Freeman@tn.gov.

ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2026.

Other Information:

Pursuant to the State of Tennessee's Workplace Discrimination and Harassment policy, the State is firmly committed to the principle of fair and equal employment opportunities for its citizens and strives to protect the rights and opportunities of all people to seek, obtain, and hold employment without being subjected to illegal discrimination and harassment in the workplace. It is the State's policy to provide an environment free of discrimination and harassment of an individual because of that person's race, color, national origin, age (40 and over), sex, pregnancy, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status or any other category protected by state and/or federal civil rights laws.