Rachel Burmeister

Internship at Mountain Sky Group: The Center for Sustainable Aquaponics

During the summer of 2011, I completed my internship requirement at a company called Mountain Sky Group working on their sustainable aquaponics project.

Prior to finding my internship, I knew that I wanted to work in the field of sustainable agriculture. I sent out many emails to every type of agricultural company that you can imagine in different states and even different countries before finding this amazing company right here in Loveland, CO!

Like most people, I had never heard of aquaponics, which is the combination of freshwater aquaculture and hydroponically grown crops. This is a new and exciting field of sustainable agriculture that has answered most of my questions about how agriculture can be sustainable in areas where traditional methods are not applicable.

During my internship, I worked as a water quality intern. My daily tasks included management of the aquaponics systems, daily water quality tests, weekly intensive tests, and various projects. I was also able to learn an incredible amount about plants, fish, nutrient loads, chemistry, engineering, and business. This internship showed me how diverse and flexible my Environmental Health education was. Though this was not a typical EH internship, I used what I had learned through my EH classes to solve problems and understand complicated biological processes every day.

Overall my experience was wonderful. I am fortunate enough to be able to stay with this company as their internship coordinator and assist with many of their environmental pursuits. I am extremely excited about the future of aquaponics and food security, and I am thrilled to be a part of a company at the forefront of these issues.