

Fact Sheet - Working at Costa Berries, FNQ

What can you expect when working at Costa FNQ? Below is some key information that might be useful for you to know.



Accommodation

Whilst we are not able to provide accommodation at the farm, there are many hostels and shared houses in the surrounding areas of Atherton, Tolga & Mareeba.

Gumtree and Facebook can be useful to find accommodation in the surrounding areas.



Travel to the Farm

You will need to arrange your own travel to and from the farm. During your working day you will need to drive for up to 10 minutes between different farms so if you have your own transport or can share with someone on the same crew, this is the best way to arrange it. For everybody's safety, speed limits are in place on the farm.

You can talk to other people at your hostel or shared house to see if they are able to give you a lift.



How pay is calculated

Most of the positions on the farm are paid a piece rate – this means you get paid for the number of or kilograms (in blueberries) that you pick. Some maintenance roles such as pruning may be paid a piece rate.

The rate is calculated daily to ensure the average competent picker for that day earns the award rate (this is above the minimum wage).

A small number of roles on the farm are paid at an hourly rate of \$23.62 per hour.



What pay can you expect to receive?

As an average competent picker you can earn around \$23-\$26 per hour (although this is not guaranteed and depends on your picking speed). This is increased if you can pick above the average rate for the crew.

The average rate for each crew will vary depending on the volume and quality of fruit in the blocks.

In reality, a competent picker who picks at the average speed for the crew can earn between \$700 - \$900 per week. The pay period runs from Wednesday to Tuesday each week, with your pay generally entering your account on the Thursday.



The Farm Environment

All work is performed (apart from the pack shed) outside therefore you need to be aware of some of the hazards, including animals/bugs, uneven ground, hot temperatures and physical work.

During working hours we provide you with cold water and clean toilets. We have a Work Health and Safety Team on site that helps to ensure that the work environment is safe for work.



Working Arrangements

Blueberry crews will work between 5 and 7 days per week. The start time will change each day depending on the weather conditions. Pickers check Facebook each morning to find out the picking start time. Picking will be between 6 and 8 hours per day on average.

For roles in the packing shed work hours are based on the blueberry picking hours.

Pruning and Maintenance roles will usually work 7/8 hours per day, 5 or 6 days per week.



FNQ Weather

The weather is variable, with temperatures averaging around 25°C in winter and 30°C in summer. However temperatures can go below, and well above these averages, sometimes as high as late-thirties.

Picking, pruning and maintenance roles are performed either outside or in growing tunnels. You need to be able to work in hot conditions, and need to be prepared to work in the rain.

Packing shed work is performed indoors in cold conditions.



Working Holiday Visa's

The work performed at the farm does qualify for the specified work in regional Australia for the purposes of applying for a second year visa.

You will be emailed your pay slip on a weekly basis and you must keep copies of these as proof that you have undertaken the required work.

If your performance is sufficient and there is enough work available, you may be able to complete your 88 days with us. However we are not able to guarantee this.

How long will the work last?



Blueberries are picked between May and November each year.

All performance is monitored and we will train and coach everyone to help them achieve the required standard. Where someone is not able to reach the required speed or standard they may be asked to leave. This feedback is also used when we have quieter periods and need to reduce crew sizes to decide who to retain. *Agricultural/farming work has many variables- unforeseen circumstances may mean we need to reduce staff numbers at short notice.*



The Application Process

When we have received your application, we will check your application, including your right to work status for Australia. We will then contact you to invite you to attend an induction on site with us.

You will usually start work between 2 and 14 days following the induction.

We look forward to receiving your application!