

THE MANAGER

INDUSTRY GROWTH

By Dr. Paula Ospina and Thomas R. Maloney

As farms grow, the need to manage non-family labor increases

Recruiting, interviewing, and hiring qualified individuals in an expanding dairy

Information from the 2010 Dairy Farm Business Summary suggests that farms with more than 199 cows have more hired labor (67%) compared to family labor (33%) and this trend persists as more cows are added to the operation. Given the need for hired employees, it is important to focus on recruiting, interviewing and hiring qualified individuals. In addition, simply “asking around” is not enough to attract qualified individuals; instead you need to take an active approach that will help you attract an applicant pool.

Recruiting: The process of searching for qualified candidates for your job and getting them interested enough to apply. Here are a few of the most common methods for attracting good farm help:

1. Want ads, posting on bulletin boards and using social media. These methods may result in many applicants, but often, not

the kind of applicants you want to hire. It is up to you to make sure the ads are descriptive and encourage the right kind of applicant. For example, instead of stating, “Wanted: worker for dairy farm,” write something like, “Farm employee, 100 cow dairy. Responsibilities

include milking, feeding, and some machinery operation. Competitive wages, health insurance, one week paid vacation.”

2. College placement offices. Colleges are a great source of highly qualified, interested applicants. If you need extra work during the summer, contact the universities in your area early in January/February with an internship announcement. Very often, waiting until late spring will result in missing out on the highly qualified students because most will have secured internships by that time.

Interviewing: The first step in the interview process is to make a list of the behaviors you are looking for in a new employee. In a middle manager, for example, these may include: the ability to make decisions, the ability to work with people, technical skills, ambition, the ability to be trained, and leadership. Next, formulate a list of questions that will help you determine if the applicant meets these qualifications. Open ended questions are best because they offer the opportunity to learn about

Classified Ads

2010 Dairy Farm Business Summary

ratio of hired labor to family labor as herd increases

1-29 cows – NA	87% family, 13% hired
30-49 cows – 23.5 cpw,	78% family, 22% hired
50-99 cows – 29.4 cpw,	56% family, 44% hired
100-199 cows – 36.5 cpw,	33% family, 67% hired
200-399 cows – 41.9 cpw,	19% family, 81% hired
400-699 cows – 45.6 cpw,	12% family, 88% hired
700-999 cows – 45.7 cpw,	11% family, 89% hired
1000-1299 cows – 52.2cpw,	7% family, 93% hired
1300 and greater – 51.3cpw,	

FYI

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the applicant. The third step is to use a rating scale, in an attempt to quantify each applicant's answers for comparison. An example interview check list is as follows:

Hiring: After you have scored the applicants and selected the top applicants, it is important to check references. When checking references you may want to ask previous employers the following questions:

1. What was the individual's job description?
2. How long did you employ the individual?
3. What was the individual's quality of work?
4. How much responsibility was the worker given?

5. How did the individual get along with fellow workers or agribusiness reps?

6. Was it necessary to provide very close supervision?

7. Why did this worker leave your farm?

8. Would you hire him/her again?

While checking references it is important to remember that previous employers may have furnished an inferior employee with a good reference to get him/her to leave, in addition previous employers may not feel comfortable saying negative things.

Once you select the successful candidate, it is important to set up a meeting with them, discuss the details of the job and follow The Top 10 Things Employees Expect From You. □

Application Period Open for Cornell Dairy Executive Program
Class X *continued from page 25*

"CDEP has provided me with practical tools and ideas that I can take back to the farm and, with some modifications, implement immediately," said Josh Littlejohn of Forget-Me-Knot Farms, Kansas. "We have used concepts learned at CDEP related to everything from employee management to strategic planning on our farm. Many ideas come from the speakers CDEP brings in, but just as many ideas come from the other participants in the class."

After attending this program, 97 percent of Class 8 participants made changes in how they manage their business, and 93 percent said these changes improved their overall business.

Timely topics in dairy business management are presented by

a team of national experts from within and outside of the field of agriculture through three multi-day sessions over a 12-month period. Program content focuses on four different areas within the dairy business: business planning, financial management, human resource management, and risk management.

Participants who attend the program will develop 1- and 5-year strategic business plans through a comprehensive self-evaluation of their business, while building a network of dairy executives and business relationships. All sessions take place at The Statler Hotel on the Cornell University campus, where a typical day includes presentations, individual study, small group discussions and roundtable discussions with faculty.

Detailed information, including an application, can be found online at: www.ansci.cornell.edu/prodairy/dairyexec.

Group-Housed Dairy Calf Systems Conference

December 12-13, 2012

Doubletree Hotel, Syracuse, New York

Hold the date for this innovative symposium designed to provide progressive dairy producers and agriservice personnel the opportunity

to increase their knowledge of dairy calf group housing systems and feeding technologies. An evening session on December 12 is designed specifically for producers who have just converted to a group feeding system. For more information, visit www.ansci.cornell.edu/prodairy/calssystem

Operations Managers Conference: Managing for Consistency and Continuous Improvement

January 16 - 17, 2013

RIT Inn and Conference Center, Henrietta, New York

This conference provides an opportunity for people responsible for day to day activities to increase their management and operations

skills while interacting with other managers. Sessions on January 16 will be followed by a tour and interaction with a local dairy operations team on January 17.

For more information, visit www.ansci.cornell.edu/prodairy/OMC/