



# **Managing A Workforce - Collect ideas to improve your farm**

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Most of us have heard the saying, “Two heads are better than one.” That’s still good advice. Don’t overlook the experience, knowledge and skills of your employees when it comes to solving problems or fine-tuning your operation. As farms become larger and more complex harnessing the problem solving capacity of individual employees or work teams becomes even more critical to the long-term success of the operation.

When employees contribute ideas rather than just their labor, they become more involved in the farm operation. Good ideas can lead to increased profitability through savings in time, money and effort. And the opportunity to submit ideas and have them listened to allows employees to feel more important and become more dedicated to the operation.

Soliciting employee input and ideas can be done informally during everyday discussions. Or formalize the process through problem solving sessions or suggestion and comment cards.

You don’t need to implement all employee ideas. But you must develop good listening and feedback skills so there is no question in employees’ minds that you heard, considered and valued their ideas and suggestions.

Reward creative ideas even though they may not be applicable to your operation at the time. One thing you don’t want to do is stifle the creativity of employees in helping you solve farm problems or improve profitability.