

Human Resource Management for Farm Business

in Manitoba



Human Resource Management for Farm Business in Manitoba

The surest way to reach a business goal is to plan on it. Successful Manitoba farmers are focused business people. They have clear, flexible, short and long term business plans – and they monitor their plans regularly.

Whether you're starting, growing or passing along your business, you need a solid business plan. Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (MAFRI) can help you build a plan for success.

Human resource (HR) management is an important part of farm performance. For a high-performing farm you need high-performing employees. Use this tool to learn about the important parts of an effective HR plan, read case studies and conduct exercises to help you build and implement a strong plan for your farm.

Copyright Notice

Copyright © 2012, the Government of Manitoba. All rights reserved. The Government of Manitoba is the owner of the copyright in all information contained in this Manual, unless otherwise stipulated.

Trademark Protection

Certain names, graphics, logos, icons, designs, words, titles or phrases used in this Manual may constitute trade-names or service marks of Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, the Government of Manitoba or third parties. The display of trade-marks in this Manual does not imply that a licence of any kind has been granted. Any unauthorized copying or modification of trade-marks or the contents hereof may be a violation of federal or common law, trade-mark or copyright laws and could be subject to legal action.

Disclaimer

This Manual is designed for informational purposes only. The information contained in this Manual is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional advice. Users of this Manual should consult with their professional advisors to determine the appropriateness of the information contained in this Manual for their own situation.

While care has been taken in preparing and assembling the information contained in this Manual, the Government of Manitoba and its Ministers, officers, employees and agents make no representations, expressed or implied, as to the accuracy, adequacy, completeness or reliability of any such information. The information contained in this Manual may be changed or updated without notice. The Government of Manitoba and its Ministers, officers, employees and agents will not be liable to any person, organization or entity for any damages of any kind which may arise from use of the information contained in this Manual.

Use Restrictions

No person may modify, reformulate, adapt, alter, adjust, change or disassemble this Manual or commercially exploit the contents of this Manual, except with the express prior written permission of the Government of Manitoba. Approval requests may be submitted to:

Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives
1129 Queens Avenue
Brandon, MB R7A 1L9

Governing Law

Use of this Manual and any disputes arising out of or in relation to this Manual shall be governed by, construed and enforced in accordance with the laws of Manitoba, Canada.

This publication is available in multiple formats upon request.

Aussi disponible en français.

Introduction

This manual is designed to be a tool for human resource management, and to help your farm business be productive and profitable, with a team of reliable, engaged and productive people – whether you employ family members or other individuals.

As your farm business grows, relying on family and friends and an ever-changing line-up of people won't work anymore – especially when you're working seven days a week, at an ever-increasing rate of speed.

For a high-performing farm, you need high-performing employees. Without them – you're putting your farm at risk.

The term 'employees' in this manual refers to family and non-family members who are working for your farm business.

Human resources (HR)

Of course, the official name for what we're talking about is 'human resources' – a term that means a whole lot more than just 'hiring.' It includes managing family and non-family members, full and part-time staff, and seasonal employees – and the policies and practices that relate to them.

People are as essential to farming as are weather, prices and technology. Human resources must receive your careful attention – they affect most production, financial and marketing decisions.

Whether you're running a small farm, or a large corporation, aligning your business for success requires a strong and effective human resources plan, which includes hiring and keeping high-performing, engaged people.

About this manual

In this manual, you'll learn about the important parts of an effective HR plan, read case studies from real farm businesses faced with HR issues, and source some valuable tools which will help you build a strong HR plan for your farm business.

By following this manual and using the tools, you can:

- 1 reduce turnover
- 2 improve the quality of the people you hire
- 3 run a HR plan that has a positive and direct impact on your business

The result will be a strong, engaged and skilled team, working with you and your family to manage risk and give your farm a competitive advantage.

Icons used in this manual

This manual uses these icons to alert you to useful information, forms and examples:



EXERCISE: This icon indicates a form or exercise to help you through the HR process.

Some of the forms and exercises will have a blank copy included in the Form Appendix at the back of this manual.



EXAMPLE: This icon indicates an example that further explains and illustrates the HR process.



CASE STUDY: This icon indicates an example from a real farm that faced a similar HR issue, and shows how the farm worked through the process.

Some of the examples will have a blank copy included in the Forms Appendix at the back of this manual.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

Self Evaluation	1
What is human resources?	2
Why do you need to implement human resources into your farm business?	2
Does my farm business really need a human resources plan?	2
What is a human resources evaluation?	3
Four steps to complete a self evaluation and HR priorities for your farm	4

CHAPTER 2

Developing an Identity for Your Farm Business	9
Creating an identity for your farm.....	9

CHAPTER 3

Recruiting	15
What is recruiting?	15
How do I recruit?	16
How does recruiting work when I hire family members?	16
The recruitment strategy	17

CHAPTER 4

Hiring	25
What is hiring?	25
Hiring family employees?	26
A four-step hiring process	26

CHAPTER 5

New Employee Orientation and Training	35
What is new employee orientation and training?	36
How do new employees feel when they arrive at your farm to begin work?	36
Planning your new employee orientation and training program	37
Is orientation and training necessary when I hire family?	39

CHAPTER 6

Communication	41
What is communication?	42
Something's gone amiss – miscommunication	43
How do I communicate with a family member?	43
What's your communication style?	44
Ways to implement communication on your farm	45
What type of communicator are you?	47

CHAPTER 7

Motivate Employee Performance	49
What are the attributes of motivated employees?	50
Learn about your employees	50
What motivates and demotivates an employee	50
Ways to motivate employees	51
Motivation and performance management	52

CHAPTER 8

Important Handbooks, Employee Manuals and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)	55
Do I need an employee manual and SOPs manual when working with family?	55
SOPs manual – where do I start?	58

CHAPTER 9

Resolving Employee Conflict	61
Understanding employee conflict	61
How do you manage conflict between employees?	62
How do I manage conflict when the employee is a family member?	65

CHAPTER 10

Handling Discipline Issues Effectively	67
Dealing with employee performance problems	67
Think before you discipline.....	67
Coaching your employee before disciplinary action	69
Implementing a progressive discipline procedure	70
Congratulations	73
Your blocks to building an HR plan for your farm business	75
Glossary	77
Forms Appendix	79

The image features a complex abstract design. At the top, there are two solid rectangles: a dark grey one on the left and a dark blue one on the right. Below these, a large light blue rectangle spans across the middle. To the right of this rectangle, the text 'CHAPTER 1' is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A large, dark blue horizontal band is positioned below the light blue rectangle, containing the text 'Self Evaluation' in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The bottom right corner contains a dark grey rectangle. The entire composition is overlaid with a series of curved, dashed grey lines that originate from the top left and fan out towards the bottom right, creating a sense of movement and depth.

CHAPTER 1

Self Evaluation

CHAPTER 1

Self Evaluation

Why do you need to evaluate HR in your farm business?

An HR self-evaluation helps you identify and measure:

- what you're doing now (in terms of human resources) and whether you should keep doing it
- what you're not doing now (in terms of human resources) and whether you should start doing it.

Because HR has changed so drastically in the agriculture industry over the past few years, it's important for you to understand what you're doing well on your farm, and what you need to improve on (or start doing).

A self-evaluation is important, so you can fill in these gaps, make decisions on hiring/keeping employees and create a successful HR plan for your farm business.

What's in this chapter?

This chapter includes:

- What is human resources?
- Why do you need to implement human resources into your farm business?
- Does my farm business really need human resources?
- What is a human-resources self-evaluation?
- A step-by-step process to evaluate HR on your farm and prioritize your HR objectives.

You will conduct an HR self-evaluation for your farm business, using the questionnaire, to get a better understanding of your farm's HR strengths and weaknesses.

What will I have when this is done?

Once you've completed the exercise in this section, you'll have the information you need to improve your HR processes and plan, so that your farm becomes a place people want to work and want to remain working.

Once you've read this chapter and completed the exercise in this section, you'll have a better idea of what your focus should be to create a successful HR plan and attract, hire, motivate and retain employees.

What is human resources?

Human resources (HR) is the job function that manages people in an organization by providing an assortment of activities and policies and procedures, which relate to developing, utilizing, maintaining and retaining the appropriate number, and skills, of employees to accomplish your businesses objectives and goals.

You can implement human resources into your farm business by creating a human resources plan. It can include:

- employee recruitment and selection
- training and development
- organizational structure (who reports to whom/pecking order, job skills and knowledge)
- labour relations (managing compliance with various legislation and regulations)
- employee performance management and succession planning
- human relations (discipline, performance management, complaint handling, counselling and coaching)
- employee benefits
- health and safety
- employee communications
- strategic planning
- management of employee records

Why do you need to implement human resources into your farm business?

A skilled and effective employee is key to your farm's success and profitability. Human resources helps you select, attract and keep employees by leading them appropriately and successfully, and aligning them with your farm's objectives and goals.

Does my farm business really need a human resources plan?

All businesses – no matter their size or structure – benefit from HR. The key is to create and implement a successful human resources plan.

Where are you with your human resource plan? The following evaluation will help you determine if your current HR plan is successful, or has gaps that need to be filled.

What is a human resources evaluation?

A **HR evaluation** is an assessment of HR policies, processes, documentation and procedures of a farm business that helps ensure the HR plan is working efficiently, and identifies areas that need improvement.

An HR evaluation can help assess:

- the hiring process
- employee retention
- training
- employee compensation
- management and employee relations
- processes or practices that affect an organization's people

You should conduct an HR self-evaluation annually. This is to account for your workforce, and the efficiency with which your farm deals with its people – from the beginning to the end of their employment with you.

This process allows a farm business to get a general idea of where its HR currently stands, where it can be corrected or improved, and how to plan for the future. It also helps prevent employee issues that may directly impact your profitability.

Managing your workforce gives your business a competitive advantage, especially when labour and skills are limited. Assessing the effectiveness of your current HR practices can help ensure that you attract and retain not just qualified workers, but the best people for the job.

Four steps to complete a self evaluation and HR priorities for your farm



EXERCISE: Take a few moments to complete the exercise below. It will help you understand where your farm business is excelling and where it needs improvement when it comes to hiring and keeping your employees. Go to the Forms Appendix (at the back of this manual) for a blank form.

Step 1: Complete the self-evaluation form

YOUR FARM'S IMAGE	YES	NO
We are considered a great place to work in our community and the agriculture industry.		
If someone asked one of our present or past employees, they would say positive things about working on our farm.		
Our vendors, suppliers, and customers speak positively about our farm and the employees.		
Our employees are encouraged to attend agricultural events and trade shows, and promote the farm.		
Every year, we conduct an employee satisfaction survey to understand what our staff members are thinking and feeling about working for us.		
Total your "yes" and "no" answers:		<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>

RECRUITMENT	YES	NO
We always keep our eyes and ears open for possible future employees.		
We understand how a "bad hire" directly impacts our profitability.		
We've integrated a social media campaign to attract people.		
We pay bonuses to employees who refer new hires to us.		
We are willing to consider training a candidate who is new to agriculture and has no experience in this industry.		
Total your "yes" and "no" answers:		<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>

SELECTION	YES	NO
Our hiring decision is based on more than just doing interviews, and background and reference checks.		
More than one person from our farm is involved in interviewing a candidate.		
More than one person from our farm is involved in selecting the final candidate.		
We use behavioural-based interview questions to ensure our interviews are effective. (If you're not sure what these are, select "No").		
Our compensation and benefits packages are individualized to meet the needs of each employee.		
Total your "yes" and "no" answers:		<input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>

NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION	YES	NO
We have a formal new-employee orientation program.		
We make a great first impression during a new employee's first week on the job.		
Our process for training new employees is designed to instil values, not just teach procedures.		
Our entire team/family is involved in creating a positive new-employee experience.		
We have a 30-day check-in meeting to ensure the new employee is still engaged in his/her work and is proud to work for us.		
Total your "yes" and "no" answers:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP	YES	NO
All of our managers and supervisors have training and experience to be effective leaders.		
Our managers and supervisors are great at motivating our employees.		
We have regular staff meetings that are effective and informative.		
We reward people – not necessarily with money – for going above and beyond.		
Our employees assess their manager or supervisor every year about his or her leadership performance.		
Total your "yes" and "no" answers:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

RETENTION	YES	NO
We are focused on creating an environment that minimizes employee turnover.		
We practise strategies to avoid losing a valuable employee.		
We conduct exit interviews with departing employees, so that they feel free to explain why they are leaving.		
We help our employees achieve their personal and career goals.		
We meet on a regular basis (no less than annually) with each employee to discuss his/her future employment goals.		
Total your "yes" and "no" answers:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Step 2: Review the results

Calculate your totals: Calculate the total number of “yes” answers for each category.

CATEGORY	TOTAL NUMBER OF YES ANSWERS
Your Farm’s Image	
Recruitment	
Selection	
New Employee Orientation	
Management and Leadership	
Retention	
Total number of “Yes” answers:	

Congratulations, you’ve just evaluated the HR priorities of your farm business. If you have:

- **25 or more “yes” answers:** Your farm’s HR plan is on the right path to becoming an employer of choice.
- **24 or fewer “yes” answers:** Your farm’s HR plan has areas of opportunities for improvement.

TIP: Even if you’ve received 25 or more “yes” answers, you should work to ensure that each question becomes a “yes,” so you can hire and keep employees to the best of your ability.

Below is a list of what you need to achieve your objectives and become an employer of choice.

- **Recognizing and rewarding staff well:** providing regular feedback to employees about their performance, growth prospects, accomplishments and areas needing improvement, and rewarding staff for a job well done
- **Work-life balance:** allowing employees to find a balance between work and other aspects of their lives
- **Respect:** listening to employees and encouraging feedback and suggestions
- **Commitment and engagement:** committing to becoming involved and engaged in working with employees and customers
- **Fairness:** developing and applying clear guidelines and policies and enforcing them equally, so you treat all employees with the same regard and consideration, whether they’re family or not.

The next two steps in this chapter will help you prioritize your objectives and create a to-do list for your farm’s HR plan. Once you’ve set your priorities, the remaining chapters will help you build on the ones you’ve identified as opportunities for improvement.

Step 3: Make a list of HR priorities

Make a list of HR priorities based on the questions you answered “no” to. To write objectives, you:

1. Start with the word “to.”
2. Specify a single key outcome to be achieved (make sure the outcome is stated in terms that can be measured and verified).
3. Set a target date for achieving the outcome.

Here are two examples of written objectives:

Objective	Outcome that needs to be achieved	By when
“To have a checklist in place to onboard new employees by June 1, 20XX.”		

Objective	Outcome that needs to be achieved	By when
“To develop managers through training to become better managers by Sept. 15, 20XX.”		



EXERCISE: Write your objectives in the chart below to start the process of making your farm “an employer of choice.” **Two examples have been done for you to use as a guide.**

Objective is to:	Why do you need to accomplish this?	By when?
<i>Have a checklist in place</i>	<i>to orient and train new employees</i>	<i>June 1, 20XX</i>
<i>Develop managers through training</i>	<i>to become better managers</i>	<i>Sept. 15, 20XX</i>

Step 4: Create a to-do list

Now that you know what your objectives are, you can start creating a “to-do” list to ensure each objective is completed.

Make sure you track the progress of each objective to ensure it gets done by the due date.



EXAMPLE: Here is an example of a to-do list for the objectives you create.

OBJECTIVE #1: “To have a checklist in place to orient and train new employees by June 1, 20XX.”

Tasks to complete objective	Task Owner	By when?	Completed
<i>Mike will create a new employee orientation checklist for new employees.</i>	<i>Mike</i>	<i>Jan. 30, 20XX</i>	
<i>Jen will review the first draft of the checklist with other stakeholders on the farm to ensure all documents are in place and key stakeholders understand their roles when a new employee is hired</i>	<i>Jen</i>	<i>March 1, 20XX</i>	
<i>Mike will finalize any changes from Jen and file new hire checklist in company binders.</i>	<i>Mike</i>	<i>May 30, 20XX</i>	



EXERCISE: Go to the Forms Appendix (at the back of this manual) for a blank form to create your own to-do list for each of your objectives.

The background features a series of dashed lines that curve from the top left towards the bottom right. There are several solid-colored rectangular blocks: a black one at the top left, a dark blue one at the top right, a light blue one in the middle left, a medium blue one in the middle right, a large dark blue one in the center, and a grey one at the bottom right.

CHAPTER 2

**Developing an Identity
for Your Farm Business**

CHAPTER 2

Developing an Identity for Your Farm Business

Why is creating an identity and reputation for your farm important?

In marketing and advertising, your farm business's identity and reputation is known as its "brand."

Examples of popular brands include: Tim Hortons, John Deere and FedEx.

Throughout this chapter, we'll refer to this concept as **identity** and **reputation**.

Creating a marketable identity for your farm helps you build a relationship and reputation with your customers and employees.

Your identity and reputation are key pieces to consider when recruiting potential employees. Before you begin creating your recruiting process and strategy, it's important that you know: how people view your farm, how they distinguish you from other farms, and – most importantly – if they would choose employment opportunities at your farm.

By creating an identity, you are building awareness of your farm. It helps people understand what your farm is about and sends a subtle emotional message to employees, suppliers and others. A strong, positive identity helps you recruit and keep employees.

What's in this chapter?

In this chapter, you will learn about the benefits of an identity, complete an exercise to help you create a company profile, and start building an identity for your farm.

What will I have when this is done?

You'll have a company profile to use in recruiting, and in your marketing materials (ex: brochures, ads).

Creating an identity for your farm

A crucial piece of your farm's identity is the message (description) you share with your suppliers, employees, community, industry, and others.

In marketing and advertising, this message is known as your business's boilerplate or profile. Below is an example of John Deere's profile:

Since its founding in 1837, John Deere has seen many changes in its business, its products, and its services. Change always comes with opportunity. And Deere has always been ready and willing to embrace change. Yet, through it all, John Deere is still dedicated to those who are linked to the land – farmers and ranchers, landowners, builders, and loggers. And Deere has never outgrown, or forgotten, its founder's original core values.

Those values determine the way we work, the quality we offer, and the unsurpassed treatment you get as a customer, investor, and employee.

Your farm's profile should be about a paragraph long (three to four sentences) and should combine:

- useful information (ex: product information, year founded, location)
- your farm's personality (ex: values, beliefs)
- anything that is unique about your farm

When creating your farm's profile, think of:

- your farm's qualities or the values that are important to you
- the way other people think about your farm
- the way you think about your farm
- the emotions and perceptions that you elicit, or want to elicit, in other people

To start your farm's profile, you'll find an exercise on the next page to help you write it.

In terms of recruiting employees, a strong farm profile or description will help by allowing candidates to recognize why they want to work for you as opposed to the farm down the road. Not only does this profile yield external benefits – it also helps you internally by aligning your identity with your employees and the business decisions you make.



CASE STUDY: Smith Dairy Farms Inc. has always had trouble attracting employees to its farm. Jason, a second-generation dairy farm owner, always looked for employees the same way his father did: by placing a “generic” four-line job ad in the local paper. Unfortunately, times have changed and the generic approach won't work anymore.

Jason fills out the following exercise to start. Once he has a solid idea of his farm's identity, he's ready to try his luck again. To find out how he incorporates his farm's identity into his job ad, read the case study in the following section on recruiting (page 22).



EXAMPLE: In this section of the document, you'll uncover your farm's identity and profile. Go to the Forms Appendix (at the back of this manual) for a blank form.

Start the process of creating your farm's identity and profile by answering the questions below.

Step 1: What's your personality?

List the five most important words that describe your farm.

1. *family-owned*
2. *quality*
3. *respect*
4. *safety*
5. *teamwork*

Step 2: What makes you different?

What are the things that make your farm different from others? What could be said about your farm that cannot be said about another farm?

- ✓ *We invite vendors to the farm to explain new processes, to make the farm more efficient.*
- ✓ *We hold monthly staff/family meetings to discuss new ideas and reward staff/family with gift cards for successfully implementing those ideas on the farm.*
- ✓ *We are environmentally conscious.*
- ✓ *We care for our livestock and ensure they are treated with respect.*
- ✓ *We have written farm processes in each barn/ shed to ensure safety and work processes are done appropriately.*

Step 3: What are your values?

What are the values of your farm or family?

We value:

<i>integrity</i>	<i>quality</i>
<i>a job well done</i>	<i>efficiency</i>
<i>safety</i>	<i>hard work</i>
<i>livestock</i>	<i>customers</i>
<i>the environment</i>	<i>loyalty</i>
<i>family and friends</i>	

Step 4: What promise does your farm want to make to its employees and customers?

What can your farm genuinely promise to deliver? You can phrase this section either as a slogan by starting with “We will always...”, or as a mission statement by starting with “To.....”

To always provide wholesome dairy products and honest service to our customers, and a safe environment for our staff/family, while rewarding them for their hard work, and high levels of customer service.

Step 5: What’s your vision for your farm’s future?

What does your farm wish to be? Think BIG by asking yourself: “What do I want my farm to be known – or famous – for doing?”

I want my farm to be known as an environmentally-friendly farm that provides the best quality and wholesome dairy products and service to its customers.

Step 6: What’s your farm’s name?

That’s your farm’s (business) name, or perhaps your name.

Smith Dairy Farms Inc.

Step 7: Your farm’s logo

If you don’t already have a logo, you may wish to hire a graphic designer to draw or design a logo with a font style and original graphic appropriate for your farm. A logo can help you create a visual identity for your farm.

Step 8: Farm profile

Write three to four sentences, based on the questions answered above, that describe your farm's "story" in an interesting way – the way you'd explain it to a stranger who asks you about your farm.

My parents, who owned the farm before me, believed in providing wholesome milk to their customers and that the key was to work as a team, create a safe workplace, and respect our environment and livestock. In 2007, I took over the dairy farm and continue to grow the business and improve the processes and sustainability of our family farm.

Now that you've written your profile, you can incorporate it and the identified elements above, into your job postings, descriptions, etc. to make them more appealing to applicants, employees, suppliers and customers, and to show your farm's identity and personality.

The background features a series of dashed lines that curve from the top left towards the bottom right. Overlaid on this are several rectangular shapes: a dark grey rectangle at the top left, a dark blue rectangle at the top right, a light blue rectangle in the middle left, a medium blue rectangle in the middle right, a large dark blue rectangle in the lower middle, and a grey rectangle at the bottom right.

CHAPTER 3

Recruiting

CHAPTER 3

Recruiting

Why is recruitment important?

How and where you find employees directly affects the effectiveness of your team and business.

Recruitment is the process of planning, selecting, and hiring employees. The goal is to identify and hire the most suitable employees you can find. The process starts with a marketable farm identity and a pre-planned recruitment process and strategy.

What's in this chapter?

In this chapter, you will find steps and exercises to help you create a recruitment strategy, which includes identifying vacancies, creating job descriptions and determining advertising options.

Remember, recruiting requires your effort and commitment. It's an important step in the HR process that will help you find great people to increase your overall profitability.

What will I have when this is done?

You'll have the framework for planning an effective recruitment process and strategy to find and hire the best employees for your farm.

What is recruiting?

Recruiting means becoming involved in finding and attracting employees. Finding includes seeking, sourcing and locating employees.

Many farm businesses struggle with recruiting – often believing that they can't find good people.

Recruiting employees requires a strategy, effort and commitment. Think strategically about:

- Skills needed in your farm business.
- The type of person and behaviours that fit best with your leadership style and the culture of your farm business.
- What value your farm business offers a successful candidate.
- Key places to advertise so you can find the right person.

Recruiting is a proactive process versus a reactive process. In fact, many farm businesses that hire reactively (i.e. when they are in a panic for labour during harvest), end up with bad hires that ultimately cost the business money.

By hiring proactively, you'll understand what job needs to be filled, the skill sets required, the personality attributes important for the position, and what type of person would best fit with you and your team.

How do I recruit?

Recruiting has changed in the past few years, particularly in the farming industry. As farms continue to grow, and some rural populations decline, it may be harder to find staff nearby with the right skills for the job. Many of the traditional skills have become more sophisticated.

Also, today's younger generation wants to find employment with a business that offers more than a paycheque. Use your brand statement, and the qualities that differentiate you from other farms, to create job ads that are exciting, interesting and appealing. You need to let potential employees know not only what you're looking for, but what you can offer them.

You also need to know where to find potential employees. The rise of social media has changed how organizations recruit. Learning how to use LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and other social-media sites will help you promote your job openings and your farm. Don't ignore the growing demand and importance of social media for recruiting.

How does recruiting work when I hire family members?

Recruiting family is often easier, since you already know your family members' work ethics, personalities and behaviours.

However, when recruiting family, you must make it clear to the family member what job skills, expectations, and personality are required for the job, your farm business and your team. Just because someone is family, it is no guarantee that they have the skills required or that their personality will fit the farm's culture.

Think carefully before hiring family members. Ensure that they fit the job and culture, and that they understand what's expected of them.

The recruitment strategy

Now that you've created your farm's identity, it's time to develop a recruitment strategy.



EXERCISE: To develop your recruitment strategy, follow the steps below. Go to the Forms Appendix (at the back of this manual) for a blank form.

Step 1: Identify the vacancy

It's important that employee recruitment on your farm is an ongoing process. If you wait to think about hiring until you're desperate for a person to fill a position, it may result in a mediocre or bad hire.

You should be constantly analyzing your farm's needs and speaking with your employees to find out where the employment gaps may be.

Once you identify a gap, you should either:

- review your current staff, skills and workloads to see if an existing staff member could easily fill the gap
- or
- create a new position for a new employee

Once you've completed this form, review your answers. Determine the positions, skills and personalities that you need to hire on your farm in the next six months to a year.

1. How many people did you hire in the past year?
2. When did you hire them? Spring Summer Fall Winter
3. In terms of the hiring process, what seemed to work and not work?

What Worked?

What didn't work?

TIP: Many existing employees would be open to new or different challenges.

4. What are your actual, and anticipated, hiring needs for the next season?
5. Do you have any hiring needs beyond that? Are you anticipating expansions or changes in the farm's structure, or an increase or decrease in production?
6. What tasks are performed on the farm? Who is responsible for each task? Are there any tasks for which no one is responsible?

Task	Person Responsible

7. How much time and money do you estimate that it costs you to hire a new employee (including advertising, recruiting, interviewing, communicating and training)?

8. Is there any other relevant information that might affect your desire or ability to hire new employees over the next year?

Step 2: Create the job description

Once you've identified whether an existing employee or new hire will take on the new job tasks, it's time to create a new job description or revise an existing one to include the new tasks.

One of the most common reasons for poor employee performance is lack of clear expectations. Employees – especially new ones – don't really know or understand what you want or expect from them, unless you tell them and put it in writing.

Benefits of job descriptions. They:

- ensure that you, your family, and your management team agree on what the job is
- help you identify the skills, traits and experience that you need for the job
- keep you focused during the interview process to ensure you are asking the right questions, and hiring based on the skills, traits and experience needed for the job
- make it clear to candidates whether they can or can't do the job
- protect you from legal issues, such as disability claims

TIP: Job descriptions don't have to be long or complicated. They should be short, clear lists of the specific responsibilities and expectations you have for each position.



EXAMPLE: Here is an example of a completed job description:

Employee Name:	Date:
JOE SMITH	[Insert date]
Job Title:	Supervisor's Name:
DAIRY MANAGER	DAN FARMER
Type of Position: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full-time <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time <input type="checkbox"/> Contract <input type="checkbox"/> Seasonal	

Job Description Overview:

This position is responsible for the management of the farm's dairy herd, including milking, herd health and breeding, and dairy facility cleanliness and maintenance.

Job Duties:

- *analyze and maintain the dairy records*
- *direct production*
- *supervise dairy employees*
- *work with the owner and oversee the daily operations, logistics, maintenance, safety and quality in the dairy facility*
- *talk with nutritionists and veterinarians for health management of the herd*
- *hire employees, train staff, and conduct performance evaluations*
- *follow regulatory and company standards to ensure the farm is compliant*
- *create and review plans to increase the farm's profitability*
- *keep records of production and sales in an effort to make sure the dairy stays profitable*

Behavioural Expectations:

- *superior communication skills*
- *ability to organize people, equipment and facilities*
- *ability to lead and monitor employee performance and take correct action when necessary*
- *excellent team-building skills*

Education and Licensing Requirements:

- *post-secondary degree*
- *ability to work in an automated feeding system environment*
- *record-keeping experience*
- *two to three years' experience working on a dairy farm in a managerial position*

Working Conditions:

- *generally works 39 hours per week, but may be expected to work paid overtime when necessary*
- *early morning, evening and weekend work may be necessary*
- *works inside and outside during extreme weather conditions in a dusty environment*
- *involves standing, bending, lifting and carrying*

Employee's Signature: I have read the above information and understand and agree it is a description of my job duties.

Employee's Signature

Date

Step 3: Determine the most effective way to advertise the position to the appropriate candidates

With every position, you can assess and identify the best way of attracting and advertising for the most qualified candidates -- those who will meet the needs of the position and your farm.

Examples of ways you can recruit candidates:

- advertising:
 - on your website or using social media (ex: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn)
 - with internal staff to let them know the position is available and to spread the word with their friends and family (Offer staff a referral bonus if they help fill a position.)
 - with local and industry-specific newspapers, organizations and magazines (online and paper)
 - in farm journals and on websites
 - at industry trade shows and conventions
 - with the federal Job Bank
 - at colleges and technical schools
- reviewing applications from recent candidates who applied for work on your farm
- hiring a recruitment agency to advertise the job through its network of people and advertising websites
- talking with local and retired farmers to see if they may know a possible candidate
- contacting the government about new immigrants and work programs
- using “antenna recruiting” – always observing people around you and looking for people who could make good employees now or in the future



EXERCISE: Advertising Checklist

Below is a checklist to use when advertising your job openings. Go to the Forms Appendix (at the back of this manual) for a working form.

- your company's website
- social media
- staff and family
- local community paper
- local community centre (post on bulletin board and website)
- local organizations (post on bulletin boards and websites)
- industry trade shows
- local colleges and technical schools
- farm print publications
- federal Job Bank (www.jobbank.gc.ca)
- Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives
- other job-posting websites like eBrandon, Kijiji and Steinbach online



CASE STUDY: SMITH DAIRY FARMS INC. OVERVIEW:

Jason, a second-generation dairy farm owner, recognizes that he can no longer run the dairy farm without a manager. The farm is growing quickly and Jason realizes that he no longer can give detailed attention to farm processes and procedures to maintain a sustainable and profitable farm.

Jason and his wife own the farm, and they have two small boys under the age of 10. Jason employs one farmhand to help with the daily tasks. Jason doesn't have anyone with enough dairy farm experience to fulfill a management role; he knows it will be cheaper to hire a person with two to three years' experience rather than someone with five years or more.

Jason, his wife, and farm hand fill out a blank job description (page 23) based on the requirements they need for the position. After completing it, they create a recruiting strategy aimed at hiring a younger, less experienced, dairy farm manager. The strategy includes buying ads on Facebook (www.facebook.com/advertising) to advertise the position to this young target audience, posting the job on Monster.ca website, and putting up posters in local stores, halls and colleges/universities with agriculture programs.

They use the job description to create a compelling job posting that identifies the job requirements, gives candidates an understanding of the farm's culture, and reflects the "identity" or personality of their farm.

DAIRY FARM MANAGER JOB AD:



Welcome to our farm. Welcome to our family. Smith Dairy Farm seeks experienced dairy farm manager.

Smith Dairy Farm is a progressive, well-established, second-generation farm in the Steinbach area. We believe the key to success is working as a team, creating a safe workplace, respecting the environment and our livestock, and rewarding employees for their hard work and loyalty.

We are looking for a Dairy Farm Manager to join our team. In this role, you will analyze and maintain our dairy records and help oversee the daily operations, such as feeding livestock, milking and cleaning.

Skills: Strong verbal communication skills and the ability to work independently and with a team.

Experience: An Ag. degree and two to three years' experience working in a similar role.

Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Monday – Friday). Some overtime required.

We hope to hear from you soon.

To apply, please email your resume to jason@smithfarms.com.

You may also want to create an application form for applicants who drop by to apply, or don't have a resume, to ensure that your key questions are answered.



EXAMPLE: Here is an example of a blank application form. Go to the Forms Appendix (at the back of this manual) for a blank form.

Applicant name:	Date of application:
Position applying for:	Type of position:
	[] Full-time [] Part-time [] Contract [] Seasonal
Address:	Phone:

Education: List your education, certificates or special training:

Institution Attended	Diploma or Certificate	Year Received or Grades Completed

Work Experience: Do you have experience in any of the following?"

- Feeding Cattle (Dairy) Tractor - Type: _____
 Dairy Tanks Milk Processing Equipment - Type: _____

Do you have your driver's licence: No Yes Class: 1 2 3 4 5 (Circle one.)

Work History: List previous employers for the past 10 years (beginning with the most recent):

Employer Name	Job Title	Dates Worked

References: Please provide three work-related references that we can contact.

Name	Phone Number	Relationship

Additional Comments:

To the best of my knowledge, the above information is correct.

Employee's Signature

Date

If you wish, you can attach your resume to this form.

The image features a complex abstract design. At the top, there are two solid rectangular blocks: a dark grey one on the left and a dark blue one on the right. Below these, a large, light blue rectangular area contains the text 'CHAPTER 4' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A large, dark blue horizontal band spans the middle of the page, with the word 'Hiring' written in a large, white, sans-serif font on its right side. The background is filled with numerous curved, dashed lines in various shades of grey and blue, creating a sense of movement and depth. A dark grey rectangular block is positioned in the bottom right corner.

CHAPTER 4

Hiring

CHAPTER 4

Hiring

Why is hiring important?

There are few things in business that are more important than hiring the right people. Some say that without the right people, no amount of money can make a business succeed. Likewise, your farm depends on qualified staff to make it run smoothly.

Don't ignore the importance of following all the steps in the hiring process. Ignoring steps in the process can lead to a bad hire.

What's in this chapter?

This chapter outlines a step-by-step process, including who on your farm is involved in the hiring process, reviewing applications, short listing and interviewing candidates, and making the final hiring decision.

It'll help you understand how to create a hiring process.

What will I have when this is done?

When you're finished, you'll have taken the first steps toward creating an effective hiring process that allows you to select the right and most qualified candidate for the job.

What is hiring?

Hiring sounds easy, yet it's one of the most difficult decisions that business owners make.

Traditionally, farm businesses simply hired someone that another farmer recommended. It was quick and easy – no need to go through applications or interviews. However, it was also common for the individual hired to have had little or no experience, which led to trouble later on.

When you make a mistake hiring someone who can't do the job, or won't do the job the way you want, the cost to your farm, you, and your family is incredibly high. Your stress level increases and your profitability decreases. You are no longer focused on running your business, but rather, on ensuring the bad hire isn't making mistakes or causing problems.

An employee is there to add value to your farm business. A bad hire impacts your business' bottom line, staff morale, equipment and assets.

In order to avoid a bad hire and risk making a decision that could potentially cost you money and stress, you should implement a standard process for hiring.

The process doesn't need to be tedious or involve more work, but rather, help you pick the best person for the job and your business.

To create a hiring process, follow these four simple steps:

1. Establish who on your farm should be involved in shortlisting and interviewing candidates.
2. Review the applications.
3. Shortlist applicants.
4. Interview.

Detailed information about these steps is included on the following pages.

Hiring family employees?

You should follow the same hiring process you use when hiring a non-family member, to ensure they fit your farm business before you hire them. Does this person have the skills and behaviours that my farm business needs? Can he or she do the job? Does he or she have the same values and behaviours as the farm's culture?

A four-step hiring process

In Chapter 3 (Recruiting), you learned how and where to get candidates to apply for jobs.

Now, we'll look at taking the next steps in the process: selecting and hiring the right candidate from all of the applications you've received.

Step 1: Establish who from your farm should be involved in shortlisting and interviewing candidates

As the owner, you may not always be involved in the day-to-day activities of each job. Determine who will be, and include these people in shortlisting and interviewing the candidates. If staff are involved in hiring, it can make them more accountable for the new hire's success.

For example:

- If the position is for a general labourer, perhaps the farm owner and position's supervisor need to be involved.
- If the position is for a farm manager, perhaps the farm owner and family need to be involved.

Make sure each person involved in any step of the hiring process:

- has a copy of the job description
- understands the position's role and accountabilities
- understands the selection criteria

Also, ensure that you designate associated tasks to a staff member, including receiving resumes, reviewing the applications, shortlisting, pre-screening and interviewing.

Step 2: Review the applications

You can start the review process in two ways:

1. You can have a formal discussion with staff who are directly involved in hiring for the position.
2. You can distribute a folder, containing copies of the applications and resumes, to each person involved in the selection process.

We recommend that you review all of the applications at the same time, so you can compare them. Also, have a list of what the job requires to ensure an applicant fits the position. It's easy to get excited about an applicant who has hobbies and characteristics similar to yours. However, you need to ensure he or she also has the skills to fill the position.

Step 3: Shortlist the candidates

After reviewing the feedback – either as a group or with the person in charge of hiring – you can shortlist the candidates you wish to interview. Select two to three of the best candidates for each position.

Step 4: The interview process

Now that you've shortlisted the candidates, you can start the interview process.

Some common mistakes farm owners make when interviewing are:

- talking too much or not asking enough or the right questions
 - Remember the 80/20 rule – the candidate should be talking 80 per cent of the time and you should be talking 20 per cent of the time.
- Interviewing at the kitchen table, coffee shop or machine shed
 - This may feel more comfortable, but it isn't effective. The casual nature of the discussion may result in not asking the right questions and getting caught up in small talk.

Pre-screen Interviews

To save yourself time, start the hiring process with a pre-screen phone interview. This can be a five-to-10-minute discussion. Ask questions such as:

- Why are you interested in the job?
- What do you know about our farm?
- Why are you no longer at your last job, or why do you want to change jobs?
- What type of manager do you like to work for?



CASE STUDY: Below is an example of what can happen when you don't use a pre-screen interview:

Sara just graduated from high school and heard about a job at the Wilson farm. The farm is located only 10 miles from her home. Sara was thrilled that the farm was close to her home, and that the position would provide on-the-job training she needs for a career in farm management.

However, she missed the line in the job ad that said the Wilson farm was only looking for an employee for a two-month contract, not a permanent position.

Sara scheduled an appointment with the Wilsons and prepared for the interview. She entered the interview hoping for a new job, only to be disappointed when she learned that the position was short-term.

The Wilsons were disappointed that they wasted their time interviewing a candidate looking for another kind of position.

A pre-screen interview would have saved a lot of time and a disappointed candidate.

In-person Interviews

After completing the pre-screen interviews and finding a number of candidates you wish to meet in person (and who remain interested in the job), you can start the in-person interview process.

Here are four tips when interviewing candidates in person:

TIP #1: The interview should last no longer than an hour.

TIP #2: Plan for the interview and organize it before it begins. Have the job description and interview questions written down and ready to reference. Use behavioural-based questions during the interview.

You are in the agriculture business, not in human resources, so it's especially important to spend time planning and preparing for interviews.

What are behavioural-based interview questions?

Behavioural-based interviewing helps you better understand a candidate's experience and behavioural style – the way they do things. Behavioral-based interview questions reveal to you how a candidate acted in the past, which is a predictor of how he or she will act in the future. With behavioral-based questions, not only do you hear what the candidate has accomplished, but also how the candidate went about accomplishing it. These questions also help you understand how candidates react, think and behave.



EXAMPLE: Below is an example to help you understand the difference between non-behavioural-based interview questions and behavioural-based interview questions. Go to the Forms Appendix (at the back of this manual) for an example list of questions.

Non behavioural-based interview question:

Interviewer: “On our farm, we need to get things done and tend to multitask all the time. Are you able to multitask?”

Candidate: “Yes, I am.”

Outcome: Not only is this a close-ended question, but the interviewer doesn’t ask the candidate for an example of past behaviour.

Behavioural-based interview question:

Interviewer: “Can you give me an example of a time when you had to do a lot of multitasking?”

Candidate: “I remember in my last job when I had to repair two pieces of equipment and then my boss asked me to drive into town and get some supplies he needed.”

Interviewer: “How did you handle the extra request?”

Candidate: “I did what my boss told me and then I did everything else. It was a tough day and I didn’t like the extra task. I just wanted to focus on the repairs.”

Outcome: This candidate has given you a real-life experience in which multitasking seemed challenging. From the response, this person may like to stay focused on one task at a time.

Creating behavioural-based questions

When creating behavioural-based interview questions, it’s important to consider the “core competencies” of the position. Core competencies of a job are the behaviours, skills and knowledge a person needs to have to be successful in the job.

The phrasing of behavioural-based questions is key. Typical behavioural-based questions might start out with: “Tell me about a time...” or “Describe a situation...” This structure encourages the candidate to think about a real-life situation that will demonstrate the ability that you’re looking for.

We’ve included a sample list of behavioural-based questions in the Forms Appendix section.

TIP 3: If you are interviewing more than one person, ask each candidate the same questions and take notes (or have one of your staff/family take notes), or create a form, like the one on the next page, which allows you to quickly rate each answer during or immediately after the interview.



EXAMPLE: Sample interview question and rating form. Go to the Forms Appendix (at the back of this manual) for a blank form.

Candidate name:	Date:
Position being Interviewed for:	Interview completed by:

Ratings: Write one question on each line. After the candidate has answered the question, please rate the answer by circling number one, two or three.

Rating Number	Description
1	Vague answer; no examples; wasn't specific; has no experience.
2	Strong answer; provided examples; directly answered the question; has some experience.
3	Exceptional answer; provided strong examples; directly answered the question; lots of experience and talent.

Candidate Interview Questions:

Question Rating	Rating (Circle One – based on the descriptions above)
	1 2 3
	1 2 3
	1 2 3
	1 2 3
	1 2 3
	1 2 3
	1 2 3
	1 2 3
TOTAL	

NOTES: Please add any comments or feedback that you would like to share about this candidate:

TIP #4: Don't make on-the-spot hiring decisions – even if an interview went extremely well. You need to allow yourself time to reflect on the candidates before you make a decision. The candidate also needs time to reflect on the interview and consider whether the job is right for him or her.

You'll also need to check references to ensure the accuracy of the candidate's statements. If the candidate provides no references on his or her resume, be sure to ask for the names and titles of at least three work-related references at the end of the interview.

When you call the references, it helps to have a reference form to guide your questions and record the answers, like the one below.



EXAMPLE: Below is a sample of a blank reference form. Go to the Forms Appendix (at the back of this manual) for a blank form.

Applicant Information	
Candidate:	Date of Reference:
Position applied for:	Reference check conducted by:

Reference Information		
Reference provided by:	Company:	
Current title:	Working relationship with candidate:	Phone:

Previous Job Information for Applicant	
Dates worked with previous employer:	
Reasons for leaving:	
Job title:	

Reference Check Questions:

1. How would you describe the applicant in the following areas (rated on a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being the strongest):

Question	Rating	Notes
Attendance		
Reliability		
Interpersonal Skills		
Verbal/Written Communication Skills		
Sense of Urgency/Initiative		
Ability to Deal with Stress		
Time Management		
Meeting Deadlines		
Customer Service (Internal & External)		

2. What were the major areas of the applicant's job responsibility?

3. What were the main strengths of the applicant?

4. Were there any job areas requiring improvement?

5. What level of supervision did the applicant require?

6. How did the applicant get along with co-workers? For example: Was he/she a team player or did he/she prefer to work independently?

7. Would you re-hire this person?

Additional Comments:

TIP: You may also consider other forms of interview assessments and tests for the candidate before you hire them, including skills and aptitude tests (having the candidate demonstrate skills in person, such as driving the combine).

Step 5: Make a written offer of employment to the candidate

So, after you've interviewed, completed testing for the position, and checked the candidate's references, you're ready to put the offer in writing. You should write the letter of offer and either email or mail it to the candidate or schedule a time for him or her to come to your office to review it and sign.

Make certain that you meet all legal requirements. Ignorance is no defence when it comes to labour laws, so be certain that you have an up-to-date copy of your province's employment regulations, which you can find online.



EXAMPLE: Below is a blank sample of a Letter of Offer:

[INSERT DATE]

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

[INSERT NAME]

[INSERT ADDRESS]

[INSERT CITY, PROV., POSTAL CODE]

Dear [INSERT NAME]:

I'm pleased to offer you the position of [insert job title] with [insert name of business], starting [start date of job]. You'll be reporting to [insert name of supervisor].

The below sets out the terms of your employment with [insert name of business]:

Compensation: Your hourly salary will be [insert salary amount].

Vacation: You will be entitled to [insert number of vacation weeks – ex: two] per year after the completion of one year of employment with [insert name of business], in addition to the usual paid general holidays observed by the company. Future vacation entitlement will follow provincial employment standards legislation.

Probation: You will be on probation for a period of [insert number of months] month(s). While you are on probation, and subject to employment standards legislation, either [insert business name] or you may terminate your employment without notice or cause. During this probationary period we will review whether you are able to meet the requirements of the job and if you are compatible with the company.

Please indicate your acceptance of this offer in the space provided and return a signed copy to my attention. A copy is provided for your files.

We look forward to working with you on our team and if there are any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours truly,

[Insert owner name, Name of Business]

My signature confirms that I accept this offer of employment and I had the opportunity to obtain legal or other advice, understand the employment terms and conditions, and accept them voluntarily without pressure.

Employee's Signature

Date

The background features a series of dashed lines that curve from the top left towards the bottom right. There are several solid-colored rectangular blocks: a black one at the top left, a dark blue one at the top right, a light blue one in the middle left, a medium blue one in the middle right, a large dark blue one in the lower middle, and a grey one in the bottom right.

CHAPTER 5

New Employee Orientation and Training

New Employee Orientation and Training

Why do we need new employee orientation and training?

Employees who start off on the right foot tend to be happier, more productive, and stay with your business longer.

The first few weeks on the job are a very important time for new employees to adapt, feel welcome, and get educated about your business and their new job responsibilities.

New employee orientation is the way new employees learn the knowledge, skills, and behaviours to become effective and productive workers. It allows a new employee to quickly feel connected to the people and culture of your farm business. The sooner employees understand what's expected of them, what they need to know, and where to go for help – the quicker they'll become productive.

Your new employee orientation and training process should cover all aspects of job responsibilities, people, policies, and procedures to ease employees into the job and make them feel comfortable and confident. It should also help new employees to:

- know the purpose of the job and what to do
- understand the processes involved and what you expect of them
- know where to go for assistance
- know how to do the job safely and correctly

Don't assume that the new employee knows everything you know about the job, farm, process and culture.

Use common sense when doing new employee orientation and training – and consider what you would like to know if you started a new job. Something as simple as showing the new employee where he or she can eat lunch can remove stress and increase production earlier.

What's in this chapter?

This chapter will help you understand and create a specific orientation process and training plan for your farm business. We've also included a new employee orientation checklist to make sure you've covered the bases in the Forms Appendix section at the back of this manual.

What will I have when this is done?

You'll have a new employee orientation process and confirmation checklist, so that new employees have what they need to start their job off with ease – from forms that need to be completed to co-worker introductions and job responsibilities. Ultimately, you'll have high-performing staff, who can quickly and directly make a positive impact to the bottom line of your farm business.

What is new employee orientation and training?

Orientation and training helps you incorporate new employees into the culture of your farm business, so they can become more productive on your farm and in their jobs. It also creates a faster employee ROI (return on investment), also known as return on individual. The time you put in now to orient and train your employee will be returned in how quickly the employee can become a productive worker.

Orientation and training also helps your new employees work smarter and safer. When an employee can't work due to an accident, it can cost you money, time, and stress. When employees are trained to perform their jobs in the correct manner from the beginning of their employment, they will have less frustration, better morale, higher productivity and safety.

How do new employees feel when they arrive at your farm to begin work?

New employees will probably have a desire to succeed and be anxious about working in a new environment. A strong new employee orientation and training program will show them they've made the right decision to work on your farm.

Remember – new employees can form opinions about their employer early, so it's important their immediate experiences be positive. Many new employees are reluctant to ask too many questions for fear of looking stupid. New employee orientation and training helps you address questions and uncertainties that they may have, but may be afraid to ask, like:

Questions	Your orientation responsibility	Outcome
Will I like working on this farm?	Set a warm and welcoming tone, and spend time with the new employee on the first day.	You'll boost the new employee's confidence and belief that he or she made the right decision to work for you.
What exactly will I be doing and what is expected from me?	Show work procedures and equipment, discuss safety protocols, review the job description and clarify the new employee's areas of focus.	You'll show a confirmed commitment to the new employee's well-being, your farm's organization, and clear job and performance expectations.
Who else works in the farm business, how do I fit in, and are there any family members working on the farm?	Introduce the new employee to staff, including family, and review your organizational chart to explain the relationships among staff members.	You'll help produce a motivated new employee, who understands where he or she fits in and who has a sense of community.

Questions	Your orientation responsibility	Outcome
Who is my real boss and who do I take instruction from?	Confirm the new employee's immediate supervisor and discuss job priorities with the supervisor present.	The new employee has clarity about the job, supervisor, and job priorities.
What are my work hours and when and where can I take lunch breaks?	Explain work schedules, including hours, overtime, lunch and coffee breaks and time off.	The new employee has clarity about work hours and time off.

Other questions may include:

- What are the rules and how do we do things around here?
- How stressful do things get?
- Who do I go to if I need help or have questions?
- How will I know if I am doing a good or bad job?
- What are the hours during peak and non-peak season?
- Who do I call if something breaks down, or should I try and fix it?
- When and how do I get paid?

TIP: Try not to hire at the peak of your busy season so that you have more time and patience to provide proper orientation and training.

Planning your new employee orientation and training program

Carefully plan your orientation and training program so that it suits your farm business. An orientation and training program is a powerful tool that ensures your new hires clearly understand your expectations and feel a sense of pride in being part of your team.

Orientation and training vary in length. Seasonal workers may only require a half day's training, while a full-time manager may require weeks or months to learn the job and business. As we've mentioned, be sure to create a program that provides a great first impression and helps new employees be productive and successful quickly.

Orientation and training tips:

1. Use a new employee orientation checklist to ensure you don't forget anything (we've included an example in the Forms Appendix – it's important to customize this checklist for your farm business).
2. Explain how and why a particular task is performed.

3. Demonstrate the correct way of performing a task. Review the task at a normal pace and repeat it at a slower pace, pointing out the various steps along the way, and answering questions.
4. Point out potential hazards associated with the job and ensure you explain **safety procedures and regulations**. Check to make sure the new employee understands them.
5. Have the new employee perform the task while you watch.
6. Check in with the new employee often for the first few days or weeks.
7. Consider having someone interpret your orientation and training if you hire employees who may not speak English as a first language.

You may also want to have a welcome get-together on the employee's first day. Something quick and simple – coffee and introductions – goes a long way toward making a new employee feel welcome.

Creating a training plan

Although you may hire employees who are already experienced in the position, they will still need training to do the tasks to your standards and expectations.

When creating the training plan for your new employee orientation and training program, you should consider:

1. the specific tasks for the position
2. whether the tasks are better taught with an explanation or a demonstration
3. the time required to teach each task
4. what result the employee is trying to achieve by performing the task, what impact that task has on the farm business and other positions, and why it's important
5. incorporating a measurement to ensure the employee understands and can perform the task (for instance, you may want the new employee to perform the task while you watch)

You can use this step-by-step process to train an employee on a job task:

1. **Get ready.**
 - Prepare employees by explaining what you plan to teach, including why the task or skill is important. Remember to outline possible hazards, safety procedures, or regulations they need to know about when doing this task.
2. **Explain.**
 - Explain the task and break it down into steps, if possible.
3. **Demonstrate.**
 - Show exactly how the task should be done by demonstrating it in front of them. Make sure you involve them by asking questions and getting feedback.
4. **Repeat.**
 - Ask new employees to explain the process back to you to ensure they understand it.
5. **Confirm.**
 - Ask employees to perform the task while you watch.

When you have implemented a new employee orientation and training plan, you'll see the immediate and long-term results, including less time spent supervising, fewer errors and breakdowns, and increased productivity.

Is orientation and training necessary when I hire family?

A formal orientation process, regardless of whether the employee is family, welcomes new employees and gives them a sense of value, which allows them to fit into the culture of the farm business. When you're hiring a family member, it might also clarify to that person, and other employees, that the family member will be treated the same way as all employees and will not receive special privileges.



CASE STUDY: Conir Farms in southwest Manitoba hired Carlos for a few months to help out with the fall harvest.

Peter, the owner of Conir Farms, didn't do a new-employee orientation, since Carlos would only be with the farm for a few months, and had already worked at a nearby farm for a couple of years.

Carlos' first day on the job was frantic – the farm had already started harvesting. Within five minutes, Peter told him to jump into the truck and haul grain to the bins on the south farm. Carlos couldn't find the south farm and had no one to ask. He drove around for 30 minutes until he found it, but then wasn't sure what to do when he got there.

As the day continued, Carlos felt confused, stressed and inadequate. He struggled through the day and made many mistakes. At the end of the day, Carlos told Peter that he wouldn't return to work the next day: his first day on the job would be his last day on the job.

What could Peter have done differently?

The image features a complex abstract design. At the top, there are two solid rectangular blocks: a dark grey one on the left and a dark blue one on the right. Below these, a large, light blue rectangular area contains the text 'CHAPTER 6'. A prominent dark blue horizontal band spans the width of the page, featuring the word 'Communication' in white, bold, sans-serif font. The background is filled with numerous curved, dashed grey lines that originate from the top left and fan out towards the bottom right, creating a sense of movement and depth. In the bottom right corner, there is a dark grey rectangular block with a diagonal line running from the top-left to the bottom-right.

CHAPTER 6

Communication

CHAPTER 6

Communication

Why do you need to provide communication and feedback to your employees?

Everyone on the farm – owners, family, managers and employees – should commit to making effective communication a priority.

Constant and effective two-way communication with your staff should be one of your core values – it's the best way to ensure your farm is moving forward toward its goals and that everyone is onboard. It is a common mistake that strong communications get set aside during busy production seasons; however, during these times, it should be a priority. Effective communication allows workers on the farm to be higher performers who work together, are happier, and work safer.

Simply put, no communication or feedback can harm your farm business. Like any relationship, communication is key to making it stronger. No matter what size your farm business, you need to let your employees know what's happening on the farm, how they're doing and any processes and procedures that may change or be put in place.

Likewise, feedback must be built into the process. Whether you agree with the feedback or not, it will provide you with insight into how your staff is feeling, and for them to know that you care enough to listen.

Communicating will allow you and your employees to be on the same page, and reach your business goals that much faster.

What's in this chapter?

This chapter contains a Q&A to help you understand your communication style and whether you're an effective communicator, and tips on how to implement communication and feedback techniques into your farm business.

What will I have when this is done?

You will have improved communication skills and new ways to introduce effective communication on your farm.

What is communication?

Communication is the sharing of ideas and information. It's an essential part of work and life and, at times, it's not easy to do. Differences in people's personalities, communication styles and skills can play a part in how well we communicate with each other.

Being an effective communicator starts with an understanding of how you communicate. Below is a list of communication skills to think about and work on:

1. **Message:** Know what message you want to communicate. Organize your thoughts so that your message will be clear and easy to understand. Unorganized thoughts can lead to misunderstandings and be confusing to the listener.
2. **Plan:** Important conversations should be planned. When planning a conversation, think about the different scenarios, reactions and outcomes that can occur and also the personality and behaviour of the person you will be communicating with. Plan what you will say and do with each reaction, and prepare a solution for each reaction, so that you know beforehand how you will respond.
3. **Body Language:** Non-verbal signals (body language) play a significant role in communication. Your facial expression, posture and gestures directly impact your message. Your body language should be aligned with your words in order for your communication to be clear.
4. **Positive language and tone:** Stay positive during the conversation. Negative statements often elicit a negative reaction, while positive statements often elicit a positive response.
5. **Listening:** It's very important that you listen to what the other person has to say.

Sometimes, the hardest part of good communication is listening. You have a million things you need to take care of and it's hard to concentrate on the conversation. Below are some tips to help you listen better during a conversation:

- Concentrate on what the other person has to say.
- Listen for content and emotion to understand the entire message.
- Maintain steady eye contact so the other person knows they have your attention.
- Provide feedback to confirm your understanding of what they are saying.
- Stay patient.
- Acknowledge feelings that are important to the message you're hearing.
- Listen without passing judgment and don't rush in to give advice.
- Communicate with respect in every interaction regardless of whether you like the person or not.
- Focus on issues, not personalities, when you discuss work matters and problems.

Something's gone amiss – miscommunication

Good communication is essential to maintaining an efficient farm business, but miscommunications can happen at any workplace.

An example of a simple miscommunication:

You tell your farm hand on a Monday, "I'll meet you in the barn at 3 p.m. next Wednesday to fix the tractor." By "next Wednesday," you meant "this week," but your employee assumed it was next week.

This is a simple miscommunication. Before you place blame, talk to the employee first to find out what happened and to clarify the situation. You should also encourage your employees to ask questions if they don't fully understand something – because anyone is capable of being unclear and/or misunderstanding something someone has said.

Here are ways to prevent miscommunications:

1. **Take responsibility for your communications.** Make sure the message or instructions you communicate to an employee include all of the appropriate information. If the message is complicated, consider writing it down. Ask your employee if he or she understands or has any questions.
2. **Match your message to your listener's communication style.** Observe the person you are speaking with, respond to cues (like facial expressions), and adjust your communication style accordingly.
3. **Handle a misunderstanding immediately.** If you discover that there's been a miscommunication, make sure you act immediately to correct it.

It's important that you look into the situation first, before placing blame on an employee. Often, it takes two to have a miscommunication. Speak with the employee to clarify what happened and, if miscommunications become a regular occurrence, it's time to follow up with written instructions.

TIP: Make sure that when communicating with employees who speak English as a second language, you ask them if they need clarification of words or phrases that you've used in your instructions. As well, follow visual cues, like facial expressions, to ensure understanding. You may need to speak with a translator if there's a significant language barrier.

How do I communicate with a family member?

Everyone, including family members, requires information in order to do his or her job well. When communicating with family members who are employees, be patient, understand their communication style, and communicate the same information that you would to a non-family member.

You can use all the tips in this chapter when communicating with family at work.

What's your communication style?

Part of effective communication is understanding your communication style. Below is a chart of the four most popular communication styles.

Read through the chart and select which communication style fits you. Think about the people you work with and select their communication style and read how best to communicate with them.

STYLE	DESC.	TRAITS	COMMUNICATE BY
DRIVER	"Do it"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct and to the point • Decisive • Focused • Confident • Task oriented 	Tell Drivers what you want, the result you need and let them decide how to get it done. Let them control their work.
CONTRIBUTOR	"The idea is..."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive • Easygoing and laid-back • Listens before speaking • Slow to initiate, but will often accept change • Likes to follow the team and contribute 	Don't rush the discussion, and come up with ideas and solutions together.
SOCIALIZER	"Let's talk over coffee"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talkative • Likes socializing • Keen and eager • Very approachable and often liked by most • Known for organizing social events and team gatherings 	What others think of them is important Start conversations with small talk and talk about how their job affects others and the team.
INVESTIGATOR	"Put a detailed plan together"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analytical and detail oriented • Cautious • They like to review details or research before making final decisions • High standards • Risk-adverse 	Provide a lot of detail and allow time for processing and analyzing thoughts and ideas. Be patient when they ask questions.

Ways to implement communication on your farm

Even small businesses need structured and regular ways to share important information that may affect employees. Below are five ways for you to implement communications into your farm:

MOST IMPORTANT: SCHEDULE STAFF MEETINGS WITH AN AGENDA

Meetings allow you to communicate directly to the farm staff and get feedback immediately. It also creates a strong team that can be more positive, better able to deal with interpersonal issues and brainstorm ideas or overcome roadblocks.

If you have just one employee or family member working on the farm with you, there are enough people to have a meeting.

Remember, meetings don't need to be long.

Effective meetings:

- Improve overall communication – by offering staff a regular chance to participate.
- Increase morale – by helping staff to feel involved and connected.
- Ensure focus – by setting priorities.
- Increase farm efficiencies – by making sure everyone is on the same page.

Ensure you create an agenda before the meeting and, if possible, distribute or post it before the meeting to allow employees to prepare any questions or discussion points they may have. You may also wish to invite staff to add items to the agenda before the meeting.



EXAMPLE: Below is a sample of a meeting agenda:

AGENDA

DATE: *January 12, 20XX*

LOCATION: *Barn office*

TIME	AGENDA ITEM	WHO
<i>8 a.m.</i>	<i>General farm update (new processes and procedures)</i>	<i>John</i>
<i>8:10 a.m.</i>	<i>New equipment and maintenance issues</i>	<i>Roger</i>
<i>8:20 a.m.</i>	<i>New fence project update</i>	<i>Mary</i>
<i>8:25 a.m.</i>	<i>Weekly priorities</i>	<i>John</i>

Other Effective Tools to Consider

BULLETIN BOARD

Create a bulletin board to hang in your main office, barn, etc. Make sure it is regularly updated with information about the farm, employee news and any new or updated processes and procedures.

To organize the board, you can section it into four sections (quadrants) and have each section represent a different topic.

If you're technologically savvy, you can also create a bulletin board online, using a simple blog interface, like Blogger or WordPress.

MEMOS

A memo is still an effective way to communicate with staff – especially on a farm where email may not be commonplace. Prepare a weekly, bi-weekly or monthly memo that is distributed to all farm employees and family. You can also include the memo with your employee's paycheques.

FARM POST OFFICE

Setup a post office on your farm. Find an area to set up mailboxes or slots – one for each employee. Ensure that you set it up somewhere your employees or family visit daily. You can update your workers about farm matters by delivering information to their mailboxes. As part of this process, you might want to set up a mailbox where staff can leave you anonymous comments (like a suggestion box).

EMAIL / TEXT MESSAGES

Not every business has the luxury of mobile email or text messaging, but if you do, you can update and communicate with employees through these devices.

Remember to always give the email or text message a consistent subject line (ex: farm updates), so employees know it's a communication coming from you about the farm. Also consider the time of day when you send the message. Generally, employees will appreciate getting text messages more during working hours than late at night.

Summary: While any of these methods can help improve communication, in-person meetings are one of the most important things you can do to communicate with your staff. Meetings give staff an opportunity to talk with you directly, ask questions, and clarify and resolve issues on the spot.

You can mix and match all of these methods, as needed, to create a complete communication program and process for your farm. As always – keep doing what works best, amend your communications process based on your own observations, and ask staff to weigh in if you're not sure.

What type of communicator are you?

Communication starts from the top down, and allows for feedback. It's one of the most important skills a manager or owner can have. It's hard to be a leader and fulfill the goals of your farm business if you can't communicate your vision, and your staff can't be motivated if they don't understand what you want.

TIP: Effective communication allows workers on the farm to be higher performers who work together, are happier, and work safer.



EXERCISE: Below is an exercise to help identify areas for improvement in your workplace communication. Go to the Forms Appendix (at the back of this manual) for blank form.

From the list of the five statements below, choose the two you could work on and identify ways to deal with them.

	I actively listen when someone speaks to me.	I tell my staff about important things that are happening with the farm.	I communicate clearly and often to my employees about what I expect from each of them.	I consult with my staff before making important decisions.	I encourage and ensure my staff members are comfortable to share their opinions and suggestions with me.
Put a check under the two that you will work with					
Identify reasons why this needs work					
List some possible ways to improve					

TIP: When it comes to communication skills, practice makes perfect.



CHAPTER 7

Motivate Employee Performance

Motivate Employee Performance

Why do you need to motivate your employees?

Motivation is the process that initiates, guides, and maintains our goal-oriented behaviors and causes us to act.

Some managers think that to motivate employees, you just need to give them money or verbal praise.

However, the key to successful motivation is to know your employees well enough to reward them by giving them what they really want (what motivates them). It could be time off, asking them for their opinion, a vacation, paid training, a store coupon/certificate (ex: gas, groceries), borrowing equipment or a raise.

Motivation is key to keeping employees happy, creating a better work environment, and having a positive relationship with them. When you acknowledge employee performance and contribution, you show your employees that you value them. This motivates them to work harder, have a personal stake in your business, and help make your farm run like a well-oiled machine.

What's in this chapter?

In this chapter, you will learn:

- the definition of “motivation”
- attributes of a motivated employee
- how you can encourage motivation among your employees
- common “motivators” and “demotivators”
- the definition of performance management, and how to measure it and use the results to improve your employees’ performance

What will I have when this is done?

You’ll have:

- the techniques you can use to motivate your employees
- high-performing employees who are engaged and motivated

What are the attributes of motivated employees?

An employee needs motivation. Motivation is simply the willingness to achieve a goal – to get something done. Motivation is not a personality trait as we are all motivated by different things. Understanding what motivates an employee is difficult – for one employee, it might be work-life balance and, for another, it may be money.

Some characteristics of motivated people are those who:

- enjoy their work
- work well in a team and co-operate to get things done
- focus on achieving results
- never say: “That’s not my job” or “I can’t help you”
- take an interest in their surroundings (ex: take care of and clean their equipment, workspace, etc.)
- celebrate successes and don’t blame others when something goes wrong
- are reliable, punctual and attentive
- ask questions and want to learn more

Learn about your employees

As an owner or manager, it’s your job to learn about your staff and find ways to motivate each person by answering the question, “What’s in it for me?” from the employees’ perspective.

Manitoba farm workers are no different than employees from other industries. They want to:

- be appreciated and recognized in a sincere and appropriate manner
- work in a fair and safe environment
- understand the big picture and feel involved
- have goals – a target to work toward and celebrate when accomplished
- use their talents

Start by observing, speaking with, and taking an honest interest in, your employees. Ask questions to find out what motivates them. For instance: “What is your favourite part of your employment? Why do you continue to work here? What new challenges would you welcome?”

Keep notes about these observations in your employee files, so when the time comes to reward an employee, you’ll do so with something they’ll really appreciate. In turn, they’ll appreciate the time you took to learn about them. This is an ongoing process that promotes motivation.

What motivates and demotivates an employee

There are some common motivators and demotivators that you should be aware of when trying to motivate an employee. Demotivators directly impact performance and are often minor, daily activities that frustrate employees and affect their performance, consciously or unconsciously. Demotivators weaken morale and affect almost everyone, as well as the operation’s profit line, over the long term.

Below are examples of how you can increase motivators and decrease demotivators.

Motivators	Demotivators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being appreciated • Safe working conditions • Interesting work • Fair compensation • Fun work environment • Celebrate success • Loyalty from the company to the employee • Feeling part of the team/family • Tactful discipline • Effective feedback • Sympathy for personal problems • Job security • Room for growth • Good communication – knowing what’s going on and why 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of appreciation • Unfair wages • Unsafe working conditions • Public criticism • No or ineffective feedback • Not following up • Not listening to ideas • Unachievable goals or deadlines • Not explaining decisions • No fun – too serious, no time for laughter • Not caring about individuals as people • Micromanagement • Not honouring creative thinking and problem-solving



EXERCISE: Create your own list

Write a list of motivators and demotivators for your farm business, and ask yourself, “What can I do to eliminate the demotivators in my farm business?”

Ways to motivate employees

You can motivate your employees in a variety of ways. Different approaches will work on different employees; you could try a variety of activities and rewards throughout the year in an effort to motivate as many employees as possible.

For example:

- eating lunch together or going to a restaurant as a group
- contracting a perk with another company (ex: free coffee from a local coffee shop)
- taking the team on a tour, outing, or team-building activity, like a zip-line, laser tag or rock-climbing wall
- rewarding staff with gift certificates, based on the places they like to go
- sending employees to local conferences, industry meetings, or dealerships

Motivation and performance management

Managing your employees' performance is directly linked to motivation.

Two common questions employees ask are "What is my job?" and "How am I doing?"

Providing feedback should be a primary and ongoing responsibility for supervisors and owners.

Once a year, or at the midpoint of a seasonal worker's term, meet with your employees to discuss their performance and give feedback. This is known as a performance-review meeting.

TIP: When an employee isn't doing what you expect, a common reason is that they don't know what you expect from them.

Performance review tips:

- **Meeting day**
Book the performance review meeting with the employee. Make sure you give the employee two to three weeks' notice before the meeting. Ensure that it's held in a private room where you and the employee won't be interrupted.
- **Set the tone**
Start the discussion with a friendly greeting and upbeat attitude. This will set the mood for the rest of the meeting.
- **Outline the meeting**
Let employees know what the meeting is about and the areas you will cover.
- **Focus on performance**
Keep the conversation and feedback on your employee's performance, in terms of finishing tasks, achieving results, and handling work situations.
- **Feedback and discussion**
Go through each section of the performance review form (sample on next page) with your employee and provide feedback and specific information about why he or she received the rating. Also, make sure you ask the employee if he or she has any questions. Encourage feedback, and write it down.
- **Listen actively**
Make sure you understand what your employees say by rephrasing, summarizing, and writing down their comments.
- **End the meeting**
Summarize the discussion, ask the employee if he or she has any final questions, set followup dates for setting goals, and make sure employees sign a hard copy of the performance evaluation. Make sure to provide the employee with a copy and keep one for your files.

Performance review forms:

There are many different types of performance review forms. It's important that you have one that fits your farm business.

As you develop your own forms, focus on things you can observe – what employees do and how they actually do the job. Also consider how you will measure the performance. If one of the duties is to maintain equipment, how will you measure that?



EXERCISE: This is to be completed by both employee and manager. Go to the Forms Appendix (at the back of this manual) for a blank form.

1. Each person chooses two skills under the “Skills Related to this Competency” column where the employee has demonstrated proficiency and strong capabilities. Each person then provides an example of how this skill has been demonstrated. If a skill is not listed, choose the most appropriate competency that aligns with the skill, write the skill in the space provided and provide an example.
2. Each person chooses two skills under the “Skills Related to this Competency” column where the employee has experienced challenges and needs to improve capabilities. Each person then provides an example of how this skill has been demonstrated. If a skill is not listed, choose the most appropriate competency that aligns with the skill, write the skill in the space provided and provide an example.
3. Employee and manager meet to discuss the exercise.
4. Based upon discussion, goals are established.
5. NOTE: Identifying strengths is an opportunity for the manager to establish internal mentoring among staff, and to align staff with their strengths.

Competency	Skills Related to this Competency	Examples of How You've Demonstrated this Skill Related to the Competency
Co-operation:	Ability to adapt to changes in schedule.	<i>Proficiency: During spring calving season, I was able to adjust my schedule and come in as necessary during the time when first-calf heifers were calving.</i>
	Works collaboratively with others.	
	<i>Other Skills listed here</i>	
Attendance/ Punctuality:	Reliable with minimal absences.	
	Never late/never leaves work early without notice.	
Specific Job Skills:	Has appropriate knowledge of agriculture as it relates to his or her job.	
	Has appropriate skills to operate farm equipment.	
	Ability to learn new technology and processes when introduced into job.	
Safety:	Performs job tasks and activities in a safe manner.	Challenge: I am sometimes in a rush and skip looking over the equipment for any defects.
	Understands and upholds the farm safety program and policies.	
	Encourages others to perform duties in a safe manner and recognizes unsafe working conditions.	
Equipment care:	Checks equipment proactively to ensure good working condition.	
	Repairs equipment quickly and efficiently.	
Productivity:	Completes job tasks.	
	Performs tasks in an organized and efficient manner.	
	Ability to verbally communicate in an effective manner.	
	Ability to handle multiple job tasks and activities.	

The background features a series of dashed, curved lines in shades of gray that sweep across the page. Several solid-colored rectangular blocks are overlaid: a dark gray block at the top left, a dark blue block at the top right, a light blue block on the left side, a medium blue block on the right side, a large dark blue block in the center, and a dark gray block at the bottom right.

CHAPTER 8

**Important Handbooks,
Employee Manuals and Standard
Operating Procedures (SOPs)**

CHAPTER 8

Important Handbooks, Employee Manuals and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

Why do you need an Employee Manual and Standard Operating Procedures?

Employee and Standard Operating Procedure manuals are two documents that allow you to communicate to your employees the way you want your farm business to run – even when you're not available to help them. Think of the manuals as how-to books. They hold the work knowledge you've accumulated over the years and they are readily available for your employees to reference.

Why do you need an Employee Manual?

An employee manual is one of the most important documents at any business. It states the expectations you have for your employees, and describes what they can expect from your farm regarding policies and procedures and how they are expected to behave and perform.

Why do you need Standard Operating Procedures?

Standard operating procedures are a written document or instructions detailing the standard steps and activities you use on your farm to get a job task done. Basically, it's a document detailing how your farm operates and answers the question, "How do we do things around here?"

As the owner or manager, you usually "just know" what needs to be done and how to do it. By creating written SOPs, you give your employees step-by-step instruction on how to complete job tasks and get things done to the standards you've set.

What's in this chapter?

In this chapter, you will learn about employee manuals and SOP manuals; why they help employees perform better; and how to create them for your farm business.

You will also have access to an employee manual template to help you start writing your own manual. Go to the Forms Appendix at the back of this manual for a copy.

What will I have when this is done?

The main reason for poor employee performance is unclear expectations – employees not knowing or understanding what their employer wants from them. If you want your farm to maintain high standards, these manuals will let everyone know how to stay at that level.

In this section, you'll have all the tools you need to create your farm's customized employee manual and SOPs manual. By keeping your knowledge written down and in a central place, it will allow your employees to better access the "whats" and "hows" when they need them.

Do I need an employee manual and SOPs manual when working with family?

An employee manual and SOPs manual gives people working on your farm a sense of value, structure, and allows them to understand the policies and procedures of your farm business, regardless if they are family or and outside employee. It sets the tone and standards about “how things are done” within your farm business. Whether they are family or non-family, they must follow the same policies and procedures.

Section A: Employee Manuals

A. Why do I need an Employee Manual?

There are a number of reasons why you should have an employee manual, including:

- having clear uniformity and standards
- saving your managers time with a well-planned and written manual, so they don't have to re-explain policies
- giving employees a written resource that clearly explains information about your policies, including holidays, guidelines, leave, work hours, overtime, pay procedures, employee safety measures and procedures

Having an employee manual is also an effective way to protect your farm from potential lawsuits. Employee manuals should be written in simple language. Avoid legal jargon, and make sure they include enough detail to avoid confusion, but not so much that it's overwhelming.

Employee manual – where do I start?

We've included a sample of an employee manual in the Forms Appendix. Use this sample to create an employee manual for your farm business by selecting the sections that you want in your manual and adding your specific information to it.

NOTE: Depending on what information you add, you may need to contact the MB Employment Standards office to confirm any regulations or policies:

Phone: 204-945-3352 or toll free 1-800-821-4307 [in Canada]

Fax: 204-948-3046

Email: employmentstandards@gov.mb.ca

Website: www.manitoba.ca/labour/standards

When you've completed your manual, it's a good idea to have your lawyer review it to ensure it meets all current laws – or contact an HR consultant who can help you create an employee manual.

Remember to modify and update your employee manual when required and as laws change.

Once you have the final, approved version, give each employee an acknowledgement letter (part of the employee manual located in the Forms Appendix) to sign. This confirms that they have read, understand, and agree to the employee manual's contents.

Section B: Standard Operating Procedures

Section B: Why do you need SOPs?

SOPs are similar to a recipe. In a recipe, you find the exact measurements for each ingredient, the oven temperature, and cooking time. By following the recipe, you can achieve the same results each time. This is the same way an SOP works. It describes how to perform a job, who does it and how frequently it's performed. The goal? To achieve consistent results each time.

TIP: SOPs should be used together with equipment operating manuals (ex: operating instructions).



EXERCISE: The paper-airplane challenge.

The paper airplane challenge is a great way to demonstrate to your team why you need SOPs.

1. Hand out a variety of pieces of paper and ask each team member to make a paper airplane (give them a reasonable time limit – no more than 15 minutes). When they have finished, compare the planes and note the differences. See whose plane flies the furthest.
2. Next, hand out identical sheets of paper, and get the winner of the airplane challenge to walk the other staff members through the step-by-step process on how to make a paper airplane. Compare the airplanes at the end of this process. Again: see whose plane flies the furthest. This time, the planes should be closer in design and distance flown.

The lesson: How, with training, there is less variation even in how simple tasks are completed.

SOPs manual – where do I start?

To start writing an SOPs manual, it's best to gather your team together and explain why you need SOPs. Go through the steps for each task and the outputs you want to achieve together.

TIP: By working on the manual as a team, you're allowing your employees to take ownership of your farm's success.

There are three steps to creating a SOPs manual.

For every SOP there is an output to measure your success.

Step 1: List your key tasks and procedures

List all of the SOPs (work tasks and procedures) that you want to include in the manual. The outline will act as your guide to ensure you don't leave any tasks off the list.

"I didn't know where to start. I gathered our team and talked about SOPs and why we need them. We decided we'd spend a week or so thinking about the key tasks and results we are looking for. This exercise was an eye-opener, as we started to question the steps we take, and asked ourselves why we are doing something a certain way and are we getting the results we intend. Then, we met again to talk about the procedures each of us started to develop. Collectively, we came up with great ideas about how to make things better. At the end of the day, the staff felt ownership and, when we were done, we, as a company, had new-and-improved processes."

– Jim, southwestern grain farmer

Step 2: Write the steps to complete the tasks

You have different options here. You can either write out the steps as a group, or you can distribute the tasks to the task owners and have them write out the steps individually. If you opt to have people write the procedures individually, ensure that you meet as a group again later to review the steps and get feedback to make sure that the instructions are accurate and easy to understand.



EXAMPLE: Below are two examples of written procedures:

EXAMPLE ONE: PROCEDURE: IMPLEMENT GRAIN-MONITORING MEASURES

DESCRIPTION: *These are step-by-step instructions on how to implement grain-monitoring measures within grain storage facilities.*

Steps	Procedures to complete step
<p>1. Install grain quality-control equipment</p>	<p>We:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>identify procedures for maintaining the quality of stored grain from work plans, climatic conditions, types of storage and general environment</i> • <i>install aeration equipment to maintain appropriate grain temperature and moisture content</i> • <i>confirm inspection/sampling equipment and procedures</i> • <i>check equipment to ensure correct setup and operation</i> • <i>maintain equipment according to workplace requirements and manufacturers' instructions</i> • <i>rectify faults in equipment according to workplace procedures</i>
<p>2. Monitor the quality of stored commodities</p>	<p>We:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>inspect stored commodities for signs of damage or potential for damage</i> • <i>report required facility repairs to appropriate personnel for action</i> • <i>regularly complete monitoring for pest infestations and climatic contamination/damage to grain, according to workplace sampling/inspection procedures</i> • <i>record and report results of sampling/inspections according to workplace procedures</i> • <i>undertake follow-up action to protect grain quality according to workplace procedures</i>
<p>3. Output</p>	<p>We:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>monitored commodities</i>

EXAMPLE TWO: PROCEDURE: SAFETY PROCEDURES TO CHECK GRAIN BINS TO SPUR FLOW

DESCRIPTION: *These are step-by-step instructions on the safety procedures required to check a grain bin to spur the flow toward the auger unloading the bin.*

WARNING:

- *The only time you should enter the grain bin is when it's absolutely necessary to spur the grain flow.*
- *You are only allowed to enter a grain bin if you've had safety-procedure training.*

STEPS:

1. *Use bin/grain-handling equipment to check the bin before entering.*
2. *If you must enter the grain bin, do not enter alone. Have another person (you both must be trained in safety procedures) on standby, who can respond and call emergency personnel if there is a problem.*
3. *Before entering a bin:*
 - *Completely turn off and disengage mechanical equipment and ensure that no one can inadvertently turn on the equipment while someone is in the bin.*
 - *Put on a safety harness and secure a lifeline to a reinforced point on the bin to ensure someone can assist you in escaping a life-threatening situation.*
4. *Work out signals with your spotter in case of emergency or if you need help.*
5. *Desired Output:*
 - Grain is checked safely.*

Step 3: Compile the binder

Once you've completed all the tasks you want to include, gather them into one binder or bound manual.

Make sure you include a cover sheet with the name of the manual, a table of contents, the introduction and the SOPs, in the same order as the table of contents.

TIP: Make sure you give a copy to all employees and encourage feedback and updates. Keep the original copy in a location where everyone can reference it and make sure that when there is an update, you distribute a copy to all employees.



CHAPTER 9

Resolving Employee Conflict

Resolving Employee Conflict

Why do you need to resolve employee conflict?

Conflict happens in all businesses – even on family farms. Conflict can happen over real and tangible issues, or when people have different values or priorities.

When you don't deal directly with employee conflict, it can lead to resentments and antagonisms that can build up over time and flare up destructively. Until it's confronted, and the issues explored and resolved, it's a barrier that will negatively affect your staff and your farm business.

The longer you wait to take action, the greater the negative impact on your business and the more difficult it is to change.

What's in this chapter?

In this chapter, you will learn how to manage conflict between employees by following five steps.

What will I have when this is done?

You'll have a better understanding of how to quickly address conflict to help alleviate the effects it has on your farm business.

Understanding employee conflict

As a manager, you must deal with conflicts, difficult employees and workplace issues when they arise. A good manager will have a plan in advance to ensure problems don't impact the farm business. Ignoring these issues can have dire consequences on employees, their performance and the business.

Overlooking conflict will usually:

- allow it to grow, get more complicated and be harder to resolve
- negatively impact morale
- reduce employees' confidence and trust in you as a manager
- increase turnover and affect the reputation of your farm business
- negatively affect employee performance and productivity

It's important to remember that some employee conflict may never truly be resolved. Employers should be encouraging employees to work together in a professional manner.

Use this checklist to determine that you've reviewed, and understand, the conflict before speaking with employees.



EXERCISE: Employee conflict assessment checklist. Go to the Forms Appendix (at the back of this manual) for a blank form.

This will help you keep the conversation on track, understand both sides and have the ability to help resolve the situation.

To resolve this conflict, I've determined:

- who is involved in the conflict
- why this particular conflict is occurring (ex: difference of opinion, power struggle issues)
- a policy in the employee handbook that addresses this conflict (if applicable)
- whether I want to intervene in the conflict or let the employees work things out on their own (This is very important. Analyze this carefully – sometimes it may be better to let employees work things out on their own, especially if you think there's a good chance they can.)
- the consequences of intervening and not intervening
- whether I need to consult with an outside party for advice (ex: another farm owner whose judgment you trust, an outside conflict management contractor)
- an appropriate conflict resolution that takes into account the dignity and rights of the individuals

How do you manage conflict between employees?

Follow these steps to help resolve conflict that arises between employees. (Of course, if the conflict involves criminal activity or alleged criminal activity, you should involve the local authorities immediately.)

1. Speak with the employees involved in the situation individually to hear each person's side; then, speak with them again together. They may not realize that their conflict is causing a problem.
2. Describe the issues objectively. Use facts and examples to describe what they were doing and why it isn't acceptable. Your role isn't to be a judge, but to resolve the conflict so that it doesn't impact the business. Don't just tell the employees that what they are doing is unacceptable. Describe in detail the behaviour that is unacceptable.
3. Give the employees the big picture. Describe what you want to see from them and why and how their conflict has been affecting the farm's operation. This gives them a sense of the importance of their role in the farm business, why the conflict needs to be resolved and gets them looking at the big picture. The main reason for poor employee performance is lack of clear expectations. They don't know or understand what you want from them.
4. Ask the employees to create a plan on how they can resolve the conflict. Empower them to take responsibility to change. Ask the conflicting employees how they will interact, moving forward. Listen to what they say, and don't offer advice unless they really struggle with the resolution.

5. Confirm and write down expectations and next steps. Confirm a date when you will reconnect to discuss the progress. Have each employee sign and date the document. You should sign it too and provide each employee with a copy. Make a meeting a week or a month later (depending on the conflict) to ensure that they are sticking to their agreement.

REMEMBER: You should always be:

- **well prepared**
Before the meeting, make sure you have all the necessary documentation, notes and facts to discuss the conflict with confidence. Role-play in your mind, so you can be prepared for any questions that may occur.
- **non-judgmental**
Make it known that you are not taking sides and that you haven't made any preconceived judgments or decisions. Remain objective and see each person's perspective. Your goal is to find resolution, which requires lots of listening and mediating.
- **documenting everything**
You'll need documentation for any future disciplinary actions that may be required if the conflict cannot be resolved.



EXAMPLE: Employee conflict situations. Go to the Forms Appendix (at the back of this manual) to use a conflict assessment checklist.

Situation 1 – Unfair workload:

One of your employees (Tom) resents another employee (Joe). Tom feels Joe has a lighter workload than he does, even though they have the same job title (farmhand).

Solution: Remember that it's not unusual for a person to overvalue his or her contributions, undervalue others' contributions, and have the perception that he or she is "doing more than everyone else."

1. Assess the employees' workloads by meeting with each one individually:
 - Ask each employee about his job (ex: What's involved in your job? What are you responsible for? Is there an overlap between your job and Joe's/Tom's job?)
 - Ask each employee whether he feels the workload is fair. Make sure you dig a bit deeper into the answers by asking probing questions such as, "What could you do more of? Less of?"
 - Evaluate the discussion, consider observing the employees on the job, and do your best to assess whether the workloads are fair.
2. If you believe the workloads are fair, meet with the employee (Tom) who says they are not.
 - Explain the workloads. Describe the tasks, activities and importance of each role. The employee might not be fully aware of the other person's role and responsibilities.
 - If he still feels strongly that the workloads are unfair, discuss the issue in more detail by identifying the root cause for his perception. Discuss the issue fully to understand the reason for the conflict.

- Ultimately, you will need to make a decision that may or may not satisfy the employee. Either way, make sure you communicate your decision to the employee clearly.
3. If you believe the workloads are unfair, it's important for you to identify ways to balance the workloads and explain the situation to each employee, so they understand your decision and why you're making it.

Situation 2 – Employee/family rivalry:

Roger has two sons who love farming and want to eventually take over the farm. Roger and his wife (Irene) have had casual discussions during family dinners about passing on ownership to them.

Zak, the youngest son, is a strategic thinker. He is analytical, excels at finances, negotiating and relationship-building. He's often involved in making decisions about new equipment. Last year, he negotiated a great deal for some new equipment that saved the farm \$15,000.

Nelson, the older son, is a "get things done" person. His main skill is fixing and maintaining the machinery and equipment. Over the years, he's even built equipment that the farm couldn't afford.

Lately, there seems to be rivalry between them. The conflict is about who has more authority, is responsible for what and borders on being rude and disrespectful. This difference in opinion is now affecting their performance, other employees' performance and family time.

Solution: Conflict in any business can be difficult, but when it occurs between family members, it can be harder to solve. When employees, family or not, don't understand the "big picture" and how they fit in, there will be confusion. This confusion often turns into resentment, jealousy, poor performance and disengagement.

Here's how Roger and Irene handled it. They:

1. discussed their future on the farm and decided what they would like to see for the farm's future, their retirement and the possibility of the sons taking over
2. met with each son, individually, to discuss the plans and where they see each son fitting into the farm business
3. formulated a plan for the farm business and the family's future (This was a four-year plan, which they worked on backwards from the date they want to retire.)
4. met with the sons together and discussed the plan – clearly communicating each son's roles, responsibilities and futures with the farm
5. will review and edit the plan, if necessary, to ensure there is agreement. (If there was still resentment, they would bring in an outside mediator to help.)

This discussion has removed the tension between the sons. Each understands their parents' views and how they both fit into the long-term plans.

How do I manage conflict when the employee is a family member?

Each family member plays a different role in your farm business. One family member can see his or her role and responsibilities in one way, while other employees may see the same roles and responsibilities very differently.

Different perceptions and expectations often lead to confusion and frustration, which result in conflict. Address any family work conflicts the same way you would address non-family work conflicts – develop a plan and communicate. The discussion will clarify roles, responsibilities and expectations that will lead to more effective, collaborative and respectful relationships within your farm business and your employees, whether family or not.

Tips to help you resolve conflict

Here are some recommendations for farm managers and employees who wish to better manage conflicts:

- Emotion and anger can be an indication of people's needs or fears. Rather than taking negative emotion or anger personally, attempt to find out what might be bothering a person before making a decision on it.
- Truly listen. Let the other person talk by listening to the words, tone and body language of the other person.
- Reduce arguing by not reacting defensively. Focus on mutual benefits to create a scenario where everyone wins.
- Choose "what" over "why" type of questions to remove personal blame.
- Remove the word "but."
- Avoidance and aggressiveness seldom lead to effective conflict resolution.
- Be open to hiring an outside mediator if required.

The background features a series of dashed lines that curve from the top left towards the bottom right. There are several colored rectangular blocks: a black rectangle at the top left, a dark blue rectangle at the top right, a light blue rectangle on the left side, a medium blue rectangle on the right side, a large dark blue rectangle in the center, and a grey rectangle at the bottom right.

CHAPTER 10

**Handling Discipline
Issues Effectively**

Handling Discipline Issues Effectively

Why you need to implement a disciplinary process?

No one wants to think about having to discipline an employee, but there is a need for it from time to time.

Discipline is used to help an employee understand about a performance problem or an opportunity for improvement. Creating a disciplinary procedure will help you track employee discipline and progress, and it's also important to have in case legal issues arise.

Low morale, production and damage to the reputation of your farm business could be the results of not addressing employee performance problems. It's also important, to prevent any legal issues, that you ensure your disciplinary procedures follow the Manitoba Employment Standards Regulations.

Information about Manitoba Employment Standards can be found at www.manitoba.ca/labour/standards and information specific to agriculture settings can be found at www.manitoba.ca/labour/standards/category,agriculture,factsheet.html.

What's in this chapter?

This chapter includes four typical disciplinary steps and a form to help you create a disciplinary process for your farm.

What will I have when this is done?

A progressive and formal disciplinary procedure for your the reputation of your farm business.

Dealing with employee performance problems

Dealing with performance problems and taking disciplinary action can be frustrating and is one of the stressful issues that management faces. You should have an established and consistent process for dealing with discipline. Your goal is to work out a strategy so that your employee becomes an effective member of your team.

Think before you discipline

Sometimes your first reaction is to discipline an employee. However, you should find out what's really going on before you give the employee an initial warning.

Sit down with the employee and discuss the issue. Start the conversation with "What can you tell me about (issue)?" Allow them to explain what's going on and then offer guidance on correcting the issue.

An employee may have legitimate reasons for the issue (ex: medical, personal). Don't jump to conclusions until you sit down and gather the facts. This will also help you build a relationship with the employee.



EXAMPLE: Discussion on how to explore what's going on with your employee.

Below is an example of a positive way to handle an employee who is late. Ed is the employer and Roger is the employee.

Ed: Roger, good morning!

Roger: Good morning. I am sorry I am late.

Ed: What happened?

Roger: I just came from the hospital. My son has been there most of the night.

Ed: I'm so sorry to hear about that. How is your son now? What happened?

Roger: Well, actually, I am really relieved. He is doing much better right now. [They continue to talk about Roger's son for a while.]

Ed: It sounds as if you didn't get any sleep last night.

Roger: Well, I didn't get much.

Ed: Why don't you take some time off and get some rest?

Roger: Right now I feel really fine, don't worry.

Ed: That may be so, but I think it would make a lot of sense for you to get some sleep. You'll probably have another long night at the hospital, too. Will you take the time off?

Summary: Had Ed accused Roger of being late without asking questions, he would have missed an opportunity to show consideration for his employee, and felt foolish when he found out the truth about why Roger was late.

Now, let's assume that a few weeks later, Roger has come in late a few times for an unrelated incident. Any one of them on its own would have been a good excuse, but when put together within such a short period of time, Roger's tardiness has begun to disturb farm operations. In talking to Roger, it's clear that there has not been a major issue involved here and that the problem has worsened. Today, Roger arrived late again.

Ed: Good morning, Roger.

Roger: Good morning.

Ed: Hey, is everything OK? I noticed you were late.

Roger: I am sorry I came in late. I had another problem with the alarm clock. I don't think I heard it go off.

Ed: We talked last time about the importance of being on time. Do you have any idea what you might do to deal with this problem?

Roger: I think I am just going to have to be more careful.

Ed: Any specific ideas?

Roger: Well, I tried putting the alarm closer so I would hear it better, but I don't remember it going off.

Ed: So what do you plan to do?

Roger: Maybe I'll just have to go to bed earlier.

Ed: Sounds like a good idea. You also might want to set two alarms. I do the same thing: I put one close to me and I put a backup alarm in the bathroom. That forces me to get out of bed.

Roger: I'll try that. I really don't like letting you down and coming in late.

Ed: Roger, I want to let you know how much I appreciate your work. You are one of our best workers because you take such care in the details.

Roger: Thank you. I'll really try to make sure I don't come in late again.

Ed: Thanks, Roger. It's important for you to be on time, so everything gets done. I hope there isn't a next time but if we encounter this issue again, you will be given a written warning.

Roger: I understand - it won't happen again.

Summary: Ed covers each of the key points in a formal disciplinary process without getting angry, using harsh language or adopting a negative tone. He is firm and fair.

Ed gives Roger a chance to explain and – only after Ed finds the excuse unacceptable – does he go on to the disciplinary consequence. He also gives Roger the opportunity to offer his own suggestions and makes it clear he's not acting toward the person, but the behaviour. Ed closes by saying what will happen if the behaviour continues, but – again – finds a positive way to end the discussion.

Coaching your employee before disciplinary action

A few coaching discussions are often more effective than taking formal disciplinary steps.

Plan your coaching discussions even if they are informal chats. The goal is to work out a strategy to make the employee effective. Don't react emotionally or talk about disciplinary actions at this point. Be positive and encourage the employee. Tell the employee you have confidence he/she can correct the issue, and ensure that the employee knows what the issue is and the effect it's having on other employees and your business.

If it's an issue with a job task, and you have a Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) manual, review it with the employee. Make sure you clearly outline what is expected from him/her to solve the issue.

Follow up regularly with the employee as long as the issue continues. After two or three face-to-face coaching sessions – if the employee is not addressing the issue or performance hasn't improved, it's time to move to the next step: progressive discipline.

Implementing a progressive discipline procedure

It's essential to implement and follow the same steps when disciplining employees.

Instituting a proper disciplinary procedure will, among other things, help protect you from a wrongful dismissal claim.

If you're not aware of the Manitoba legislation for termination of employment, you need to be, as it could save you a lot of time, money and stress. Visit www.manitoba.ca/labour/standards to view Manitoba legislation and information on termination of employment.

There are two possible outcomes to using a formal progressive discipline procedure:

1. The employee turns things around and the issues are resolved.
2. The employee is terminated. This is used when all else fails and the only remaining course of action is termination.

An important aspect of discipline is that you first ensure your employees are aware of the policies, rules and regulations of your farm business. An employee manual will help you communicate the policies, rules and regulations of your farm business to your employees. You should always have a letter of acceptance and acknowledgement when giving an employee your manual. This will confirm they've received and read it.

Below is how a typical progressive disciplinary process is structured:

1. **Initial notification:** This is the first step in a progressive warning. It informs the employee that his/her job performance or work conduct isn't measuring up to your operation's standards. The owner, or the person's manager, should deliver this initial warning at a one-on-one meeting. At that time, you should complete the first Official Disciplinary Notice.
2. **Second warning:** This applies if the performance or conduct continues or worsens. The owner or person's manager should hold another one-on-one meeting to discuss the performance issue and complete the second Official Disciplinary Notice. Make sure you let the employee know his/her performance is affecting the business and ensure that he/she understands what is being communicated. You should also create a written action plan with the employee, which provides concrete goals and a timeline for achieving them.
3. **Final warning:** This warning informs the employee that if the performance or conduct does not improve, the employee will be subject to termination.
4. **Termination:** This is the last step in the process when all other corrective or disciplinary actions have failed to resolve the problem. The tone of a termination meeting should be one of cordiality and empathy. In some cases, the best way to start the meeting is to say something like, "You will probably not be surprised to find out that things are just not working out."

IMPORTANT: Make sure you and the employee sign each notification and you give a copy to the employee, and file the original in his/her file. This will help prevent a wrongful dismissal claim.

REMEMBER: Your disciplinary action may be considered punitive if it's intimidating, aggressive, provocative, lacks professionalism, is applied hastily, or seems out of line with the offense. An injustice may also be done when guilty employees are permitted to get away without any consequences. If rules have not been enforced, credibility can be an issue.

In the event of a termination situation, it is always best to consult with Manitoba's Employment Standards Branch.

TIP: Many farms are run and operated by a single family. The disciplinary process is still a good process to follow when disciplining employees who are family. However, your familiarity with this person can make this process harder or easier, depending on your relationship. Use your best judgment.



EXAMPLE: Below is an example of a disciplinary form. Go to the Forms Appendix (at the back of this manual) for a blank form.

OFFICIAL DISCIPLINARY NOTICE

Date: _____

Employee Name: _____ Supervisor's Name: _____

- Notice:**
- Initial Warning Notice
 - Second Warning Notice with Action Plan for Correction
 - Final Warning Notice with Letter

Describe the problem (ex: violation of rules, policies or procedures, unsatisfactory performance):

(Complete if second warning) Summary of corrective action to be taken (include dates for improvement and plan for follow-up):

Consequences if failure to improve performance or correct behaviour:

Employee Comments:

Effective _____ (date) you are placed on "performance improvement." If, at any time after this date, you fail to meet expectations, or make sufficient progress toward expectations, disciplinary action may be taken up to, and including, termination.

Employee's Signature _____ Date _____

Supervisor's Signature _____ Date _____

Congratulations

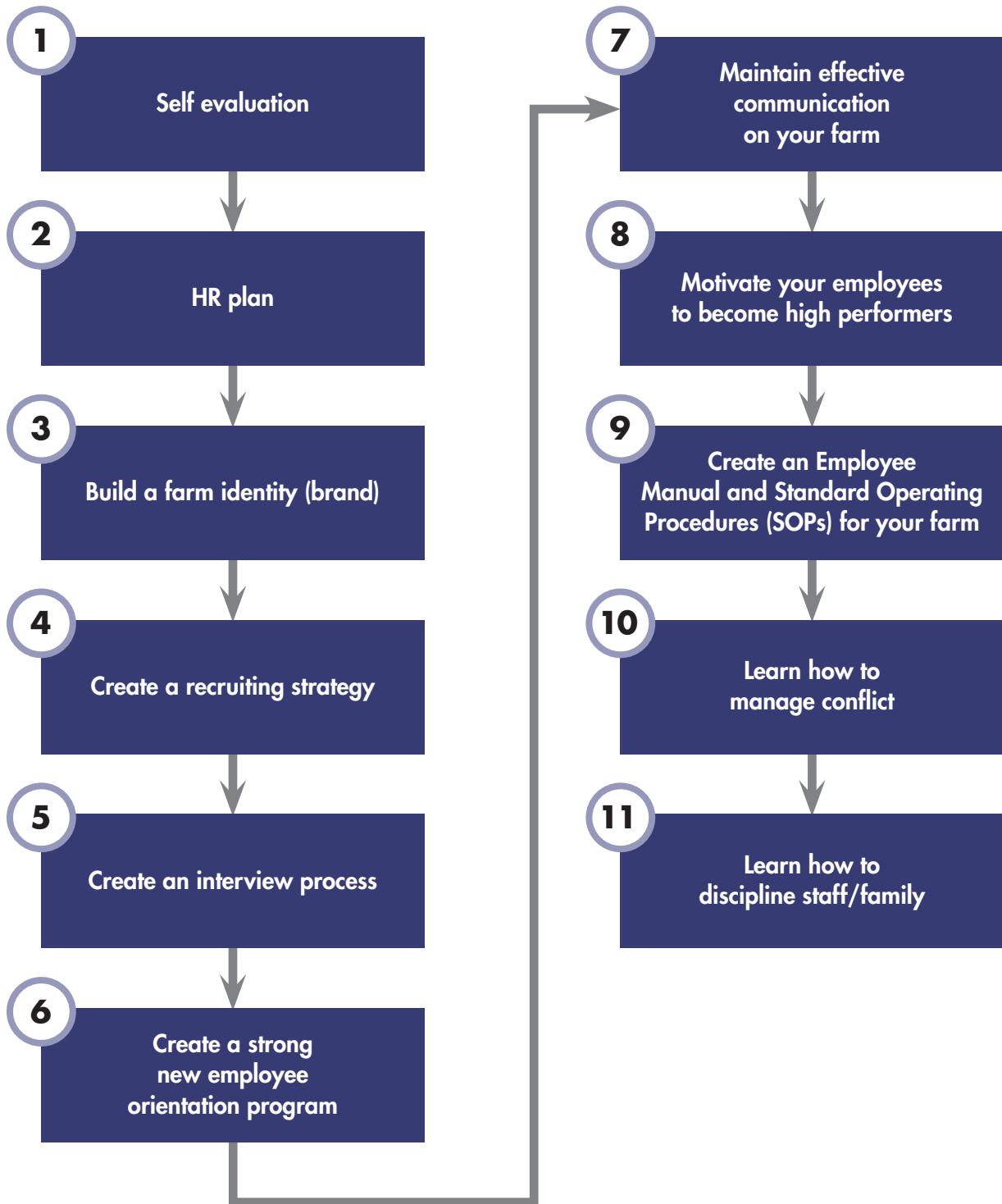
As the agriculture industry continues to evolve and change with increased efficiencies, higher yields and state-of-the-art technology, it's more important than ever for farm businesses to develop an HR plan that remains competitive and meets industry demands.

By simply learning about and implementing a human resource plan into your farm business, you've taken an important step in helping it succeed.

Remember: Human resources has a direct impact on your overall success and profitability by harnessing your most important asset: your employees.

We hope you continue to take the time to learn, grow and embrace human resources planning on your farm.

Your blocks to building an HR plan for your farm business



The image features a complex abstract design. A large, dark blue horizontal bar spans the middle, containing the word "Glossary" in white, bold, sans-serif font. Above this bar, there are several overlapping rectangular blocks in various shades of blue and a dark grey block. A series of dashed, light grey lines originate from the top left and curve downwards and to the right, passing through the blue blocks and extending below the main bar. The overall composition is layered and geometric.

Glossary

Glossary

Antenna Recruiting: Observe people around you by watching their attitudes, skills and behaviours – when you see people who suit your farm business, remember who they are - they could possibly be employees now or in the future.

Background Checks: Background checks objectively evaluate a job candidate’s qualifications, character and fitness, and identify any potential safety and security hiring risks.

Behavioural-based Interview: A job interview focused on discovering how an applicant acted in specific employment-related situations. Instead of asking “How would you behave?” the interviewer will ask “How did you behave?” The interviewer wants to know how a candidate handled a certain situation, instead of what the candidate might do in a certain situation.

Brand: It’s the emotional and psychological relationship you have with your customers and the personality of your farm. Strong brands elicit thoughts, emotions and, sometimes, physiological responses from customers.

Candidate: A person who applies for a job.

Candidate Testing: Testing candidates before you hire them will help you accurately assess their skills, training needs and suitability. There are several companies that offer pre-made tests for all sorts of positions in a variety of industries.

Compensation and Benefits: The total amount of money and benefits (ex: dental insurance, vehicle allowance) provided to an employee by an employer in return for work performed as required.

Core Competencies: The behaviours, skills and knowledge a person is expected to demonstrate and perform to fulfill a job position.

Culture: The values and practices shared by members of a group.

Employer of Choice: A place where people want to work and remain working for many years (because the employee enjoys the workplace and chooses to work there).

Employee Referral Bonus: A system where existing employees recommend prospective candidates for jobs offered in an organization. If the suggested candidate is hired, the employee who referred the candidate receives a bonus. A bonus can be in the form of cash, gift certificates or other incentives.

New Immigrant Considerations: Immigration in Canada continues to grow. There are several internationally trained individuals who can provide your farm with a competitive edge in new global and ethno-cultural markets domestically. There are also several tax incentives for hiring a new immigrant to Canada.

New Employee Orientation: An on-the-job introduction for new employees to gain the necessary knowledge, skills, and behaviours they need to become effective employees. This might include a period of mentorship, an orientation session, a tour and/or a recap of benefits and policies.

Psychological Testing: Written, visual, or verbal evaluations given to assess the cognitive and emotional functioning of a person. They are used to assess a variety of mental abilities and attributes, including achievement and ability, personality and neurological functioning.

Social Media: It's an online platform where you can build an audience to speak on topics, and spread your information (ex: job postings, ads) to others. Social media includes Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and others.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs): A written document or instruction that details all the steps and activities required to complete a process or procedure.

Structured Interview: This type of interview allows you to collect responses from each candidate you interview and compare responses to hire the best person for the job.



Forms Appendix

Forms Appendix

In this section, you'll find blank forms, exercises and checklists that have been created, throughout this manual, for you to use when implementing your HR plan into your farm business.

To create electronic customized forms for your farm, go to www.manitoba.ca/agriculture.

From Chapter 1: Self Evaluation and HR Priorities Form

From Chapter 1: Objective and To-Do List Form

From Chapter 2: Branding Exercise

From Chapter 3: Recruitment Exercise

From Chapter 3: Advertising Checklist

From Chapter 3: Application Form

From Chapter 4: Sample Behavioural-Based Interview Questions

From Chapter 4: Interview Question and Rating Form

From Chapter 4: Reference Form

From Chapter 5: New Employee Orientation Checklist

From Chapter 6: Communication Exercise

From Chapter 7: Motivate Employee Performance

From Chapter 8: Employee Manual Sample

From Chapter 9: Employee Conflict Assessment Checklist

From Chapter 10: Official Disciplinary Form

Self Evaluation and HR Priorities Form

This exercise will help you understand where your farm business is excelling and where it needs improvement, when it comes to hiring and keeping your employees.

Step 1: Complete the self-evaluation form

YOUR FARM'S IMAGE	YES	NO
We are considered a great place to work in our community and the agriculture industry.		
If someone asked one of our present or past employees, they would say positive things about working on our farm.		
Our vendors, suppliers, and customers speak positively about our farm and the employees.		
Our employees are encouraged to attend agricultural events and trade shows, and promote the farm.		
Every year, we conduct an employee satisfaction survey to understand what our staff members are thinking and feeling about working for us.		
Total your "yes" and "no" answers:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

RECRUITMENT	YES	NO
We always keep our eyes and ears open for possible future employees.		
We understand how a "bad hire" directly impacts our profitability.		
We've integrated a social media campaign to attract people.		
We pay bonuses to employees who refer new hires to us.		
We are willing to consider training a candidate who is new to agriculture and has no experience in this industry.		
Total your "yes" and "no" answers:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

SELECTION	YES	NO
Our hiring decision is based on more than just doing interviews, and background and reference checks.		
More than one person from our farm is involved in interviewing a candidate.		
More than one person from our farm is involved in selecting the final candidate.		
We use behavioural-based interview questions to ensure our interviews are effective. (If you're not sure what these are, select "No").		
Our compensation and benefits packages are individualized to meet the needs of each employee.		
Total your "yes" and "no" answers:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION	YES	NO
We have a formal new-employee orientation program.		
We make a great first impression during a new employee's first week on the job.		
Our process for training new employees is designed to instil values, not just teach procedures.		
Our entire team/family is involved in creating a positive new-employee experience.		
We have a 30-day check-in meeting to ensure the new employee is still engaged in his/her work and is proud to work for us.		
Total your "yes" and "no" answers:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP	YES	NO
All of our managers and supervisors have training and experience to be effective leaders.		
Our managers and supervisors are great at motivating our employees.		
We have regular staff meetings that are effective and informative.		
We reward people – not necessarily with money – for going above and beyond.		
Our employees assess their manager or supervisor every year about his or her leadership performance.		
Total your "yes" and "no" answers:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

RETENTION	YES	NO
We are focused on creating an environment that minimizes employee turnover.		
We practise strategies to avoid losing a valuable employee.		
We conduct exit interviews with departing employees, so that they feel free to explain why they are leaving.		
We help our employees achieve their personal and career goals.		
We meet on a regular basis (no less than annually) with each employee to discuss his/her future employment goals.		
Total your "yes" and "no" answers:	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Step 2: Review the results

Calculate your totals: Calculate the total number of “yes” answers for each category.

CATEGORY	TOTAL NUMBER OF YES ANSWERS
Your Farm’s Image	
Recruitment	
Selection	
New Employee Orientation	
Management and Leadership	
Retention	
Total number of “Yes” answers:	

Congratulations, you’ve just evaluated the HR priorities of your farm business. If you have:

- **25 or more “yes” answers:** Your farm’s HR plan is on the right path to becoming an employer of choice.
- **24 or fewer “yes” answers:** Your farm’s HR plan has areas of opportunities for improvement.

Branding Exercise

Your brand can be a snapshot of who you are right now, or a blueprint of who you hope to become. Start the process of creating your farm's brand by answering the questions below.

Step 1: What's your personality?

List the five most important words that describe your farm.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Step 2: What makes you different?

What are the things that make your farm different from others? What could be said about your farm that cannot be said about another farm?

Step 3: What are your values?

What are the values of your farm or family?

Step 4: What promise does your farm want to make to its employees and customers?

What can your farm genuinely promise to deliver? You can phrase this section either as a slogan by starting with "We will always...", or as a mission statement by starting with "To....."

Step 5: What's your vision for your farm's future?

What does your farm wish to be? Think BIG by asking yourself: "What do I want my farm to be known – or famous – for doing?"

Step 6: What's your farm's name?

That's your farm's (business) name, or perhaps your name.

Step 7: Your farm's logo

If you don't already have a logo, you may wish to hire a graphic designer to draw or design a logo with a font style and original graphic appropriate for your farm. A logo can help you create a visual identity for your farm.

Step 8: Farm profile

Write three to four sentences, based on the questions answered above, that describe your farm's "story" in an interesting way – the way you'd explain it to a stranger who asks you about your farm.

Task	Person Responsible

7. How much time and money do you estimate that it costs you to hire a new employee (including advertising, recruiting, interviewing, communicating and training)?

8. Is there any other relevant information that might affect your desire or ability to hire new employees over the next year?

Advertising Checklist

Below is a checklist to use when advertising your job openings. Put a check-mark beside the best places to advertise the job you are looking to hire.

- your company's website
- social media
- staff and family
- local community paper
- local community centre (post on bulletin board and website)
- local organizations (post on bulletin boards and websites)
- industry trade shows
- local colleges and technical schools
- farm print publications
- federal Job Bank (www.jobbank.gc.ca)
- Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives
- other job-posting websites like eBrandon, Kijiji and Steinbach online

Application Form

Applicant name:	Date of application:
Position applying for:	Type of position:
	[] Full-time [] Part-time [] Contract [] Seasonal
Address:	Phone:

Education: List your education, certificates or special training:

Institution Attended	Diploma or Certificate	Year Received or Grades Completed

Work Experience: Do you have experience in any of the following?"

Feeding Cattle (Dairy) Tractor - Type: _____

Dairy Tanks Milk Processing Equipment - Type: _____

Do you have your driver's licence: No Yes Class: 1 2 3 4 5 (Circle one.)

Work History: List previous employers for the past 10 years (beginning with the most recent):

Employer Name	Job Title	Dates Worked

References: Please provide three work-related references that we can contact.

Name	Phone Number	Relationship

Additional Comments:

To the best of my knowledge, the above information is correct.

Employee's Signature

Date

If you wish, you can attach your resume to this form.

Sample Behavioural-Based Interview Questions

General Work Experience and Background Questions:

1. What were the most important responsibilities in your last position?
2. Tell me about a typical day in your last job.
3. What special skills did you use in your position at [company name]?
4. What achievements were you most proud of in your last position?
5. How did you feel about your workload at [company name]?
6. Why have you changed jobs so frequently?
7. What have you learned in the jobs you have held?
8. Why are you interviewing with us?
9. Why do you want to leave your current position?
10. What are you looking for in a job/position?
11. What would your references say about you? What would your current boss say about you and your work performance?
12. What do you consider your greatest strength? Your greatest weakness?
13. What did you like most and least about your last job?
14. What other information should I know about you that would be helpful in making my decision? Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about yourself?

The Job and Position Questions:

1. How do you feel about the position?
2. What interests you most and least about this position?
3. What can you offer to this position that someone else cannot? What special characteristics about you should I consider?
4. What questions do you have about the job or the department?
5. What qualities do you possess that would help you to be successful in this job?

Accuracy and Attention to Detail Questions:

1. Give me an example of a time when you found errors in your work. What caused the errors? How did you correct your mistakes?
2. Have you ever had to proofread or check detailed information? How well did you do?

3. Tell me about how you make your work as accurate as possible.
4. How do you manage details so that they don't fall through the cracks?
5. Have you had to handle a lot of details in your previous positions?

Analytical Skills Questions:

1. Tell me about a time when you've had to use your analytical skills to solve a problem.

Being Managed Questions:

1. How do you take direction?
2. What kind of supervisor do you like? How do you like to be supervised?
3. Give me an example of something that you and your boss have disagreed about. How did you handle the situation? Have you ever disagreed with a decision that your boss has made? What did you do?
4. How could your boss have done a better job?
5. Which one of your bosses managed you the best? Why?
6. Describe the best boss you have ever had.
7. Tell me about a time when you were reluctant to talk with your supervisor about something.
8. When do you need help from your supervisor? Give me a recent example.
9. What are the characteristics of an effective manager?
10. What was the management style of the last person you worked for? How did you like this style?
11. What kind of direction do you like to receive from your supervisor?
12. What kind of manager do you find most difficult to work for?

Communication Skills Questions:

1. Tell me about a time when you didn't communicate things as clearly as you should have. What would you do differently now?
2. What is the worst communication problem you've ever experienced? Please explain.
3. Give me an example of a time when your communication skills saved a situation for you.
4. Describe a time when you've had to communicate difficult information to someone. Were you successful at it? Why or why not?
5. How did you and your boss communicate?
6. How would you describe your communication style?
7. When do you have trouble communicating with people?

8. How do you manage meetings?
9. What does an "open door communication policy" mean to you?
10. How do you ensure that you communicate clearly and effectively?

Co-operation and Teamwork Skills Questions:

1. Give me an example of a time when working with others produced something more successful than if you had completed it on your own.
2. We all have parts of our jobs that we don't especially enjoy doing. Tell me about a situation when you were asked to perform one of those tasks.
3. Have you ever needed to gain co-operation from individuals who weren't in your department? Were you successful at getting their help? Why or why not?
4. Tell me about a difficult group of people that you have had to work with. How did you resolve the situation?
5. Tell about the most recent success that your team has had. How did you help them to achieve success?
6. Give me an example of a time when you pulled your team together under difficult circumstances.
7. Have you ever had a team effort that wasn't successful? How do you think you might have contributed to its failure? How might you handle it differently now?
8. Have you ever had to lead a team on a project? How did you lead the team?
9. What do you consider to be the advantages of working on a team? The disadvantages?
10. Think of a specific time when you emerged as a leader of a group.
11. Describe a time when you had to work on a project with people outside of your immediate work group. How were you successful in gaining their co-operation?
12. Do you prefer to work independently or on a team? Please explain.

Decision-Making Skills Questions:

1. What is the most difficult decision you have had to make on the job?
2. What kinds of decisions have you had to make in your previous positions?
3. Have you ever had to make an unpopular decision? Walk me through how you handled it.
4. What kinds of decisions are most difficult for you to make?
5. Describe a time when you had to make a decision under severe time constraints.
6. Walk me through how you go about making an important decision.
7. Have you ever had to make an important decision when your boss was away? What were the circumstances?

8. Have you ever had to bend a rule to accomplish something? Please explain.
9. Give me an example of a time when you weren't comfortable making a decision. What did you do?
10. How much decision-making power do you give to your employees?

Interpersonal Skills Questions:

1. Tell me about a time when you worked on a project that required you to interact with different levels within the company.
2. Have you had any interpersonal challenges? How did you handle them?
3. Did you work alone much in your previous job?
4. In working with new people, how do you get to know their work styles?
5. What are your interpersonal strengths?
6. Do you prefer working alone or with others?
7. How do you interact differently with different people?
8. Can you give me an example of a time when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with? How did you handle it?
9. Tell me about a situation where you wish you had acted differently with someone at work.
10. Have you ever had to deal with someone who is very sensitive or easily offended? What did you do?
11. Has your boss ever given you feedback about a concern that you weren't aware of?

Planning/Organizing Questions:

1. How do you organize your day? How did you organize yourself in your position at [company name]?
2. What kinds of tools do you use to stay organized?
3. Do you believe more in planning, or in "diving in headfirst" and starting to work immediately? Why? Give me an example of when this strategy has worked for you.
4. How far ahead do you plan? How has planning ahead benefitted you in the past?
5. Describe a time when you had carefully laid plans and things changed at the last minute. How did you react?
6. Which would you say you are better at doing? Planning or implementing?
7. Give me an example of a situation when you had to follow through on work being done by others. How did you do it?
8. What experience do you have with scheduling and co-ordinating?

9. It's almost the end of your day and your boss gives you a project that's due first thing in the morning. What would you do?

Problem-Solving Questions:

1. Describe a time when you felt you were resourceful in solving a problem.
2. What do you do when you're having trouble solving a problem?
3. How do you stay aware of problems in your work area?
4. Describe a complex issue that you've had to resolve and tell me the steps you took to handle it.
5. What sources of information do you use to solve difficult problems?
6. What are the biggest problems you have faced in the past six months? What did you do to overcome them?

Risk-Taking Questions:

1. Do you consider yourself a risk-taker? Why or why not?
2. What risks have you taken in your last few jobs, and what was the result of those risks?
3. Tell me about a risk that turned out successfully. Tell me about a risk that turned out unsuccessfully. What would you do differently?

Interview Question and Rating Form

Candidate name:	Date:
Position being Interviewed for:	Interview completed by:

Ratings: Write one question on each line. After the candidate has answered the question, please rate the answer by circling number one, two or three.

Rating Number	Description
1	Vague answer; no examples; wasn't specific; has no experience.
2	Strong answer; provided examples; directly answered the question; has some experience.
3	Exceptional answer; provided strong examples; directly answered the question; lots of experience and talent.

Candidate Interview Questions:

Question Rating	Rating (Circle One – based on the descriptions above)
	1 2 3
	1 2 3
	1 2 3
	1 2 3
	1 2 3
	1 2 3
	1 2 3
	1 2 3
TOTAL	

NOTES: Please add any comments or feedback that you would like to share about this candidate:

Reference Form

Applicant Information	
Candidate:	Date of Reference:
Position applied for:	Reference check conducted by:

Reference Information		
Reference provided by:	Company:	
Current title:	Working relationship with candidate:	Phone:

Previous Job Information for Applicant	
Dates worked with previous employer:	
Reasons for leaving:	
Job title:	

Reference Check Questions:

- How would you describe the applicant in the following areas (rated on a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being the strongest):

Question	Rating	Notes
Attendance		
Reliability		
Interpersonal Skills		
Verbal/Written Communication Skills		
Sense of Urgency/Initiative		
Ability to Deal with Stress		
Time Management		
Meeting Deadlines		
Customer Service (Internal & External)		

2. What were the major areas of the applicant's job responsibility?

3. What were the main strengths of the applicant?

4. Were there any job areas requiring improvement?

5. What level of supervision did the applicant require?

6. How did the applicant get along with co-workers? For example: Was he/she a team player or did he/she prefer to work independently?

7. Would you re-hire this person?

Additional Comments:

New Employee Orientation Checklist

Before the new hire's first day on the job, make sure you:

Inform the new hire: when and where to arrive what to wear
 where to park who to ask for upon arrival

Inform your staff/family that: a new employee is starting

Ensure the new employee's: work area, materials and equipment are ready (if applicable)
 computer and phone are ready (if applicable)

General Farm Introduction

Upon the new hire's arrival, give a warm welcome, an explanation of how the day will unfold, and take a few moments to explain the farm's:

- culture (farm background)
- values
- vision and mission (what you believe, how you operate and an explanation of your goals)
- employee manual (policies and procedures), which includes a review of:
 - work or shift hours
 - overtime
 - grooming and dress code
 - vacation time
 - sick leave and absences
 - breaks
 - smoking policy
 - discipline procedure
 - harassment
 - safety policies and procedures
 - training procedures
- the new hire's job, including:
 - job description, key duties and expectations (ensure new employees sign a copy of their job description to ensure they confirm that they understand your expectations)
 - the performance evaluation process and form
- handouts - give the employee any material that pertains to these topics for his or her files, including contact information for the farm

Equipment

Give the employee the required equipment, including:

- keys
- communication devices (ex : mobile phone, walkie talkie)

Complete all paperwork

- Review the pay and payment schedule.
- Make sure the employee signs the appropriate income tax forms.
- Have the new hire complete an emergency contact form.

Welcome and Walking Tour

- Bring the new employee on a walking tour of the farm, including the fields, barns, bathroom areas, etc.
- Introduce the new employee to all staff – explain each person’s role to the new employee, and vice versa. If you have an organizational chart, provide one to the new employee for future reference.
- Assign your new hire a “buddy,” who can answer simple procedural questions that might come up in the first few weeks of employment.

Communication Exercise

Below is an exercise to help you improve your ability to communicate effectively.

From the list of the five statements below, choose the two you could work on and identify ways to deal with them.

	I actively listen when someone speaks to me.	I tell my staff about important things that are happening with the farm.	I communicate clearly and often to my employees about what I expect from each of them.	I consult with my staff before making important decisions.	I encourage and ensure my staff members are comfortable to share their opinions and suggestions with me.
Put a check under the two that you will work with					
Identify reasons why this needs work					
List some possible ways to improve					

Employee Manual Sample

This general employee manual will help you create your own personalized employee manual. We recommend you have your lawyer proofread your final copy before distributing it to employees.

To customize your own employee manual electronically go to www.manitoba.ca/agriculture.

[Insert Farm Name]

Employee Manual

[Insert date]

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PERSONNEL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the Owners	page #
Employee Manual Acknowledgement Form	page #
Personnel Policies.....	page #
Conflict of Interest	page #
Sexual Harassment.....	page #
Alcohol and Drugs	page #
Probationary Period	page #
Annual Performance Review	page #
Inclement (Bad) Weather.....	page #
Payroll Advances and Loans	page #
Work Hours.....	page #
Attendance Policy	page #
Pay	page #
Benefits	page #
Vacation and Holidays	page #
Cell Phones and Other Handheld Devices	page #
Visitors/Guests	page #
Disease Control.....	page #
Smoking.....	page #
Farm Vehicles	page #
Termination of Employment.....	page #
Work Rules.....	page #

MESSAGE FROM THE OWNERS

Welcome to [insert farm business name]:

Since XXXX, we have produced [insert product or service.] Through our strong commitment to quality and customer service, we have developed a solid reputation within the [industry name] industry and among our community.

It is only through the dedication and commitment of loyal employees that this achievement has been possible. We sincerely thank all employees for their dedication and hard work.

As a new employee, you probably have many questions about our organization. This employee manual has been prepared with this in mind. We encourage you to read it closely – it is your guide to learning about our overall team effort and your individual contribution to that effort.

Please be advised that this manual may be amended (changed) at any time, at our sole discretion (in any way we wish).

We offer you our very best wishes for a satisfying and rewarding position in our farm business.

Sincerely,

[insert names]

Employee Manual Acknowledgement Form

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the [insert farm business name] employee manual, which provides general information and highlights about the farm business, its core values, expectations of employees, and the rules and policies the farm operates under.

I recognize that [insert farm business name] has not explained every policy, rule, or benefit in detail in this manual, and that this will be considered no more than a general summary of [insert farm business name ('s)] expectations of employees and policies. I understand that it is my responsibility to review the handbook and be familiar with the policies and procedures – I will talk to my supervisor about any questions I have concerning the manual.

In addition, I understand and agree to the following:

- [Insert farm business name] may implement additional information, guidelines, policies and procedures in the future, which I will be required to read.
- If I have any questions about the employee manual, I will ask my supervisor.
- I acknowledge the receipt of the employee manual, I understand its contents, and I have no further questions at this time.

Each employee has the responsibility to read, understand and comply with the policies and procedures outlined in this employee manual.

Employee name (please print)

Date

Employee Signature

Date

Personnel Policies

It's our goal to provide a relationship of mutual trust and respect, which will allow you to receive personal satisfaction from your work and contribute to our farm's success.

[Insert farm name]'s policy:

1. We select and hire the most qualified people regardless of race, creed, colour, age, sex, national origin or religion.
2. We provide wages, salaries and employee benefits that are competitive with those provided in the local area and in our industry.
3. We provide safe working conditions by maintaining an orderly operation, and developing and adhering to policies and practices that ensure our employees' safety and health.
4. We encourage an individual's self-development by providing educational programs, training and other opportunities for skill development and advancement.
5. We keep employees informed by providing open communication through weekly team meetings.
6. We encourage open discussion of all ideas, suggestions, problems and concerns among employees.

Conflict of Interest

Employees are prohibited from having an interest in any business or operation that would compete with the business interests of [insert farm name].

Also, any information gained about operations, results and performances while employed at [insert farm business name] is to be kept in strictest confidence within the farm business, and is not to be disclosed to others or used for personal gain.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of misconduct that can undermine the integrity of the employment relationship. No employee – male or female – should be subjected to unsolicited and unwelcomed verbal or physical sexual overtures or conduct.

Sexual harassment, whether committed by supervisory or non-supervisory personnel, is specifically prohibited.

[Insert farm name] is responsible for taking action to effectively deal with all acts of sexual harassment occurring in the workplace, or as part of the employment relationship, regardless of how the company becomes aware of the conduct. This includes acts of supervisory or management personnel, non-management employees and third parties.

Sexual harassment is defined as either:

- unwelcome sexual advances, or requests for sexual activity, by an employee in a position of power or authority over another employee

or:

- other unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, by an employee to another employee, when:
 - submission to, or rejection of, such conduct is used explicitly or implicitly as a condition for employment decisions
 - the purpose or effect of such conduct is to interfere unreasonably with the work performance of the person being harassed,
 - or:
 - the purpose, or effect, of such conduct to a reasonable person, is to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment

Sexual harassment does not include the occasional compliment, or other conduct or actions, that arise from a personal or social relationship, and which are socially acceptable and not intended to have a discriminatory effect on employment.

Alcohol and Drugs

[Insert farm name] expects and requires all employees performing on behalf of [insert farm name], or on the property, to report to work in and maintain while at work, an unimpaired and alert physical and mental condition. To provide employees with a safe, healthy and secure workplace, [insert farm name] has adopted the following policy regarding drug and alcohol use and abuse:

[Insert farm name] policy prohibits the use, sale, dispensing or possession of illegal drugs, narcotics and alcoholic beverages on its property or during working hours, regardless of whether on farm property or not. This prohibition also covers all legal or prescription drugs, which may impair an employee's ability to perform his or her job. An employee shall not report to work under the influence of any drugs or alcoholic beverages.

The use of an illegal drug or controlled substance, or possession on or off duty, is cause for termination.

The sale, trade or delivery of illegal drugs or controlled substances by an employee to another person, is cause for termination and for referral to law enforcement authorities.

Probationary Period

New employees are regarded as probationary until they have completed 60 days of continuous service. This period is intended to allow the employee time to learn the job and become familiar with [insert farm name].

The probationary period serves two purposes:

1. It's an opportunity for the employee to experience the job, become adjusted to required standards and expectations, and decide if he/she would like to continue the employment.
2. It's an opportunity for [insert farm name] to evaluate the employee on job skills, co-operation, attitude, dependability and other factors that make a good and valuable employee.

This period is used to assure that the employee is a good match for the job (ex: capable and willing to perform up to standards and expectations). A written evaluation and conference is conducted at 60 days.

Employees are not eligible for employee benefits, except worker's compensation, until their probationary period expires.

An employee may resign without notice at any time during, or at the end of, the probationary period.

The employee may be terminated without notice at any time during, or at the end of, the probationary period, for misconduct, wilful failure to meet the standards and expectations required for the position, or when it's apparent to the manager the employee lacks the skills, ability or motivation necessary for successful job performance.

Annual Performance Review

All full-time employees will be evaluated annually based on their hire date. Performance reviews will be conducted by the immediate supervisor.

Inclement/Bad Weather

Bad weather increases management needs and endangers the life of the livestock. All farm operations employees should report to work as scheduled, if possible. If you are unable to do so, you should contact your supervisor immediately.

Payroll Advances and Loans

[Insert farm name] policy does not allow payroll advances or loans to employees. Employees are encouraged to participate in [insert farm name]'s payroll savings plan and prepare for financial emergencies should they arise.

Work Hours

Hours of Work:

For payroll purposes, the work week varies. The standard work week is from Monday to Friday [be aware of the Manitoba employment standards regarding hours worked].

Meal Periods:

All employees are entitled to, and expected to take an unpaid meal period, determined by their supervisors.

Attendance Policy

Attendance and punctuality are important to [insert farm name], and the efficiency of an entire work group is impaired if every individual is not at work at the designated starting time.

Any unscheduled absence is to be reported daily to the supervisor as soon as the employee is aware of it, or at least two hours before the start of the shift (work day).

An employee who has excessive absences will be subject to disciplinary action up to, and including, termination. An average of two or more absences in a 30-day period is considered excessive.

Failure to call in for three consecutive days will be viewed as a voluntary separation of employment from [insert farm name].

An employee who is absent from work for three consecutive scheduled shifts due to illness or injury must provide a physician's note.

Pay

Employees are paid biweekly. Cheques can be picked up at the main office.

Note: Earnings of employees are a personal matter and should be treated that way. Discussion of wages and salaries with anyone other than your immediate supervisor is discouraged.

Benefits

Benefits are a large part of your total compensation and play an important role in your personal and family financial planning. [Insert farm name] strives to provide you with a benefit package that:

- is competitive with, or better than, others in the industry and the communities where the operations are located
- can be financially supported in both favourable and unfavourable economic times
- best meets the most important needs of the majority of employees

Many benefits are described in detail in booklets that you will receive. This handbook covers only the major features.

Group Insurance Programs:

All regular, full-time employees are provided with a comprehensive group insurance package. Contact [insert name of benefit group company] with any questions about the group insurance programs.

The following coverage is provided:

- Life Insurance
- Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance
- Hospital and Surgical Insurance
- Major Medical Insurance
- Short-Term Disability Insurance (weekly)
- Long-Term Disability Insurance (monthly and semi-monthly – salaried only)
- Dental insurance (offered by [insert company name])

Vacation and Holidays

Vacation time is accrued, or accumulated, but may not be taken during the first six months of employment. However, employees needing to take time off during their probationary period may use paid leave days or, with supervisory approval, leave- without-pay in increments of whole days or less. After six months of continuous employment, accrued vacation time may be taken with supervisory approval.

Statutory Holidays: Statutory holidays occur on the following days:

- New Year's Day
- Louis Riel Day
- Good Friday
- Victoria Day
- Canada Day
- Labour Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas

Eligible employees working on a statutory holiday will be paid their overtime wage rate for all hours worked, in addition to their statutory holiday pay. Remembrance Day is not a statutory holiday and is not paid if not worked. Employees working on November 11 will be paid the same as for a statutory holiday.

Cell Phones and Other Handheld Devices

The purpose of this policy is to protect your safety by banning you from using cell phones and other wireless devices when driving.

We know our employees may use their cell phones, personal digital assistants (PDAs), or other handheld devices, whether these devices belong to the employee or are issued by the company, for work-related matters.

Employees are prohibited from using cell phones, PDAs, or other handheld devices for work-related matters while driving. This is out of concern for your safety, and for the safety of other drivers and pedestrians. Using a cell phone or PDA while driving can lead to accidents.

As of July 15, 2010 you can receive a \$200 fine under the Highway Traffic Act of Manitoba if you are caught texting or using a handheld cell phone or device while driving.

If you must make a work-related call or send a text message while driving, you must wait until you can pull over safely and stop the car before placing your call. If you receive a work-related call or text while driving – again, you must pull over safely and stop the car before answering the call or text – or let the call go to voicemail.

A hand-operated electronic device is:

- a cellular phone
- an electronic device that may include a telephone function, may be capable of transmitting and receiving email or text messages, and normally is held in the user's hand during use, or requires the user to use his/her hand to operate any of its functions
- any other electronic device defined as a hand-operated electronic device

The word "use," in relation to a hand-operated electronic device, means doing any of the following actions:

- holding the device in a position that allows you to use it
- operating any of the device's functions
- communicating on the device with another person or device, by speaking or otherwise
- looking at the device's display
- receiving or placing calls, or receiving or responding to email or text messages
- surfing the Internet
- checking for phone messages
- any other purpose related to your employment, the business, our customers, our vendors, volunteer activities, meetings or civic responsibilities performed for, or attended in the name of, the company; or any other company or personally related activities not named here; while driving.

Visitors/Guests

Visitors will not be allowed at [insert farm name] facilities except for work-related matters.

Disease Control

Employees are required to stay out of contact with any other farm animal facilities (ex: swine facilities, dairy farms, livestock farms). It's critical that every employee arrives to work in a clean vehicle that's not been in contact with other animals. The employee's clothes and shoes must be clean upon arrival to work.

Work clothes and boots will be provided by [insert farm name]. Employees must follow the shower-in-shower-out instructions posted at the door.

For any business to continue to operate, even through adverse times, risks need to be assessed and reduced to an acceptable level. To decrease the risk of disease in this unit, the following areas are defined as clean areas: hog barns, alleyways, load-out buildings, feed mill, office (past shower area) and shower rooms past the incoming dressing area.

Smoking

We do not allow smoking in, or within, 10 feet of any buildings, whether clean areas or not.

Farm Vehicles

Some employees will be assigned a vehicle (ex: car, pickup, road tractor) on a permanent or daily basis. Only those with a valid driver's license of proper classification are allowed to operate any farm vehicles. Employees who commute to and from home on certain farm vehicles will have an appropriate amount reported in their gross income.

Employee responsibilities with issued vehicles are:

1. The vehicle must be kept in good-working, safe-operating condition at all times. Any malfunctions must be reported to the supervisor.
2. The vehicle must be kept clean, inside and out.
3. Only the designated employee is authorized to operate the vehicle.
4. The vehicle is to be used for business purposes only, in a conservative manner, to complete one's work.
5. The employee will maintain required vehicle logs covering all mileage registered on the vehicle's odometer and hubometer.
6. Any accident or damage to the vehicle is to be immediately reported to the supervisor and certain written reports may be required for insurance purposes.
7. No unauthorized people will be allowed to ride in farm-owned vehicles.
8. The employee must maintain a good traffic record to continue to operate any farm-owned vehicle.
9. The employee must notify his/her supervisor of any change in their driving record. (Please remember: It's important that your vehicle look good and be operated in a responsible manner.)

Termination of Employment

Upon termination of your employment, you will deliver all documents, tools, equipment, materials and other property in your possession, related to [insert farm name] or its clients. You may not keep copies of any documents or keys.

Work Rules

Employees are expected to observe "common sense" rules of honesty, good conduct, general job interest and safe practices; and to adhere to generally accepted customs of good taste when relating to one another.

Occasionally, it is necessary for [insert farm name] to take disciplinary action against an employee for violating a rule, regulation, or policy. The type of disciplinary action taken may be in the form of a verbal or written warning, or immediate termination, depending on the severity and frequency of the offence.

Our rules and regulations are all easily understood and are essential for the efficient and orderly operation of our facilities. They include – but are not limited to – the ones noted in this manual.

Disciplinary action usually occurs in a progressive sequence: verbal warnings, written warning, final written warning, suspension and termination. It's not necessary for all five steps to be followed. Discipline may begin at any step, depending on the seriousness of the offence. Also, the offence does not have to be of the same nature, to constitute a violation serious enough to move on to the next step of the disciplinary sequence.

Employee Conflict Assessment Checklist

Use this checklist to determine that you've reviewed and understand the conflict before speaking with the employees.

This will help you keep the conversation on track, understand both sides and have the ability to help resolve the situation.

To resolve this conflict, I've determined:

- who is involved in the conflict
- why this particular conflict is occurring (ex: difference of opinion, power struggle issues)
- a policy in the employee handbook that addresses this conflict (if applicable)
- whether I want to intervene in the conflict or let the employees work things out on their own (This is very important. Analyze this carefully – sometimes it may be better to let employees work things out on their own, especially if you think there's a good chance they can.)
- the consequences of intervening and not intervening
- whether I need to consult with an outside party for advice (ex: another farm owner whose judgment you trust, an outside conflict management contractor)
- an appropriate conflict resolution that takes into account the dignity and rights of the individuals

Official Disciplinary Form

Date: _____

Employee Name: _____ Supervisor's Name: _____

- Notice:**
- Initial Warning Notice
 - Second Warning Notice with Action Plan for Correction
 - Final Warning Notice with Letter

Describe the problem (ex: violation of rules, policies or procedures, unsatisfactory performance):

(Complete if second warning) Summary of corrective action to be taken (include dates for improvement and plan for follow-up):

Consequences if failure to improve performance or correct behaviour:

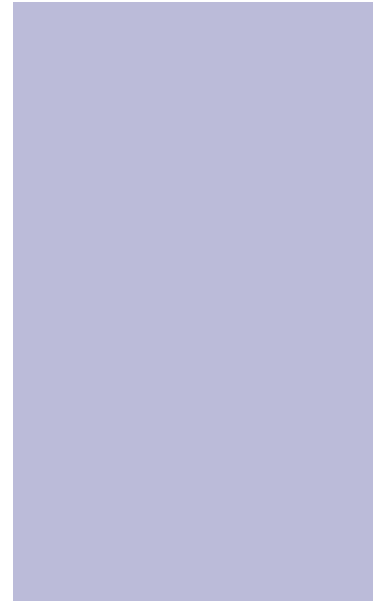
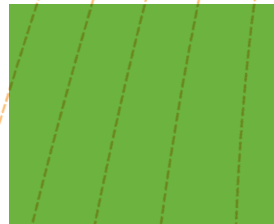
Employee Comments:

Effective _____ (date) you are placed on "performance improvement." If, at any time after this date, you fail to meet expectations, or make sufficient progress toward expectations, disciplinary action may be taken up to, and including, termination.

Employee's Signature _____ Date _____

Supervisor's Signature _____ Date _____





For more information

- Contact your local Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (MAFRI) Growing Opportunities (GO) Office.
- To find your nearest GO Office, call Manitoba Government Inquiry, toll free at **1-866-626-4862**.
- To find out more about the federal-provincial *Growing Forward* initiative and provincial programs and services, go to manitoba.ca/agriculture.

Canada 

Growing Forward 
A federal-provincial-territorial initiative

Manitoba 