

FIRST FRESHENERS: FINDING NEW TEAM MEMBERS AND GETTING THEM OFF TO A GOOD START

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Topics - Highlights:



- Importance of job analysis and descriptions
- Recruitment and selection considerations
- Orientation and onboarding

Top challenges on the dairy?

- **Difficulty of hiring and retaining qualified employees.**



Dairy Farm Challenge:

- **Increasing cost of labor.**
- **Second greatest expense – just behind feed expense.**



Dairy Farm Challenge:

- Increased labor productivity = Increased cow productivity.



Before hiring . . .



- Consider labor needs.
- Analyze jobs on the farm and how they fit together.
- Write good **job descriptions**—and let these guide the hiring processes.

Dairy Job Analysis

- Gather information about duties, responsibilities and context in which jobs are performed on the dairy.



Key Job Analysis Inquiries:

- Identify all positions, including owner & manager tasks
- List every task, from most minor to major and complex
- Include length of time required plus frequency
- List equipment, tools required
- Conduct individual or small group interviews



Assemble Job Descriptions based on Job Analysis - Why?

- Job descriptions help workers know what is expected of them.
- Job descriptions serve as a fundamental basis for employee communication and development.
- Key to effective recruitment, selection and onboarding.



Job Descriptions-Elements:

- Job title and overall summary of major responsibilities
- Qualifications: knowledge, education, experience necessary
- List all tasks—from most- to least-frequently performed
- Relationships
- Conditions



Job Descriptions: Recruitment, hiring, selection



- More likely to recruit appropriate applicants.
- Essential aid in interviewing and selection process.
- Keeps interviewer "on-task" - reviewing necessary qualifications and duties of the position with applicants, asking about training and past experience.
- Communicates requirements with potential employees.

Job Descriptions: Training and Employee Development

- Basis for understanding past experience and future training needs.
- As experienced employees move into advanced work, employers can continue positive training and employee development experiences.
- Increases employee satisfaction and productivity.



Recruitment: Best source for **new** employees (applicants)?

- **Current** employees.
- Research: Up to **45-50%** of new employees are recommended by current employees.
- Many offer the current (referring) employee a **bonus** if (for example) the new employee remains successfully employed for **6 months**.



Other recruitment sources?

- Word-of-mouth
- **High school ag programs; 4H & FFA**
- Area technical and community college programs
- **University dairy & animal science programs.**
- On-line, social media



Interview questions?

- Using the **job description** as a guide ensures that questions are related to a BFOQ (bona fide occupational qualification).
- Assumes well-written job descriptions!
- BFOQ = a quality or attribute reasonably necessary to the normal operation of the business or occupation.



Interview Process - Questions:

- Consider regular screening interviews even without an immediate opening
- Ask about challenges applicant faced in prior employment
- Ask questions designed to learn about how to get along with co-workers



Challenge to Dairy Labor Productivity?

- **Turnover** is the single factor with the most significant impact on dairy labor productivity



Costs of Turnover?

Losses measured in multiple categories:

- Productivity
- Recruitment
- Selection, hiring
- Safety issues
- Investment in orientation and training



Turnover rates?

- Employee turnover = # of employees leaving **divided by** the average total number of employees, **multiplied by 100** (to arrive at a percentage value).



Turnover Cost Calculations:

- Estimates are 150 to 250 percent of an employee's annual wage.
- Employee making \$10-12/hour
- Turnover cost = \$37,500 to \$45,000 at 150%



Example:



- Dairy with 20 employees and 10% turnover
- Cost = \$75,000 to \$90,000 per year.

Reasons for Turnover?

- Research = Exit interviews and follow-up surveys
- **Top reasons:**
- Compensation and benefits top the list
- Working conditions
- Lack of time off



How accurate are these reasons?

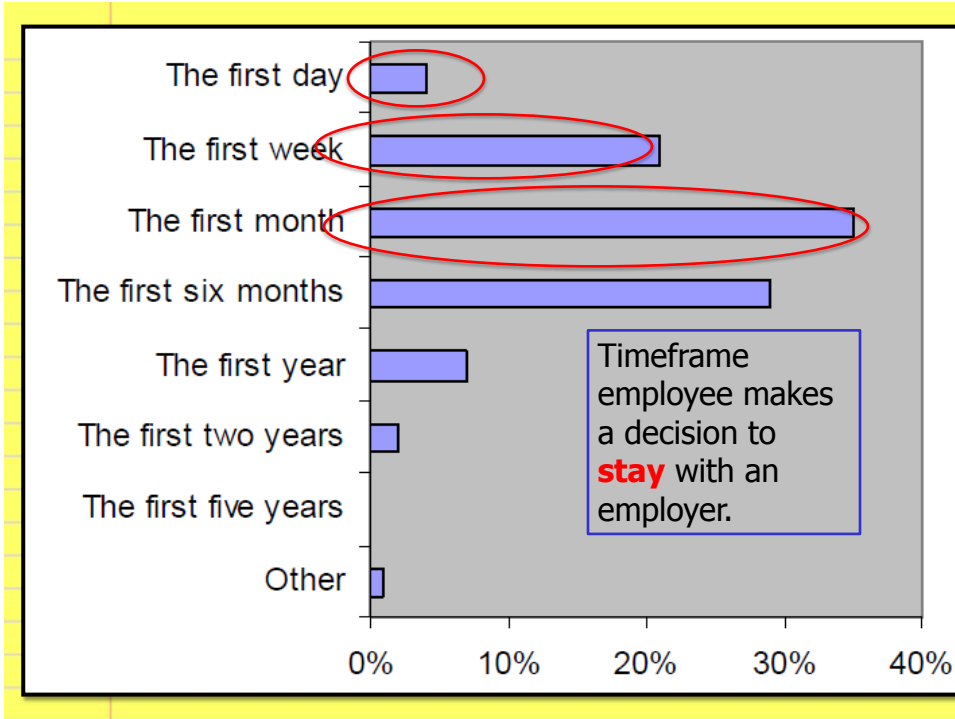
All dairy producers **should** give due attention to working conditions, communication, employee motivation - to retain workers.



But **when** do employees make a decision to leave?



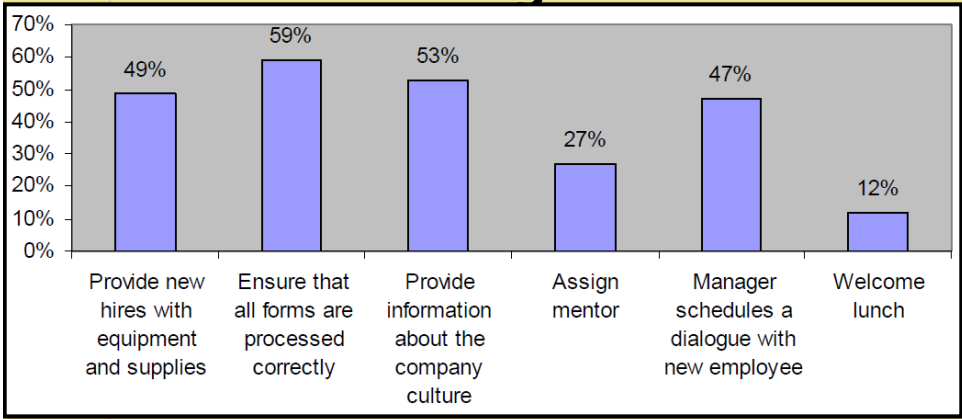
- Research: 90% of employees make their *stay-or-go* decision within the **first six months**.



Onboarding and Orientation - what do these terms mean?

- Often used interchangeably
- **Onboarding** = broad process of building new worker engagement - from first contact to commitment
- **Orientation** = early stage of onboarding

What activities do orientation or onboarding include?



Is this enough to ensure the new employee is making that **early** decision to **stay** at the dairy?

Recruitment and Hiring?

Significant investment in the processes of recruitment, interviewing, reference checks, evaluation, selection --



Without a good start on Day One

. . . . all those hiring efforts can quickly go "down the drain."



What difference does effective **Onboarding** really make?

- They were hired to do a job - just get them working and productive as quickly as possible - right?

Research says otherwise:



Orientation Group A:



- Senior Leader and a lead worker spent 15 minutes talking about why this is a great place to work.
- New employees spent 15 minutes writing answers to questions such as, "What did you hear about our Company today that you would be proud to tell your family about?"
- They discussed their answers.
- New employees received fleece sweatshirts embroidered with the company name, along with a badge. They were asked to wear them throughout training.

Orientation Group B:

- Senior leader spent 15 minutes discussing ways in which "working here will enable you to express your individuality."
- New employees ranked individual strengths they would exhibit if stranded on a life raft at sea; spent time discussing /considering how their responses might differ from colleagues.
- New employees answered questions about individual strengths such as, "What is unique about you that leads to your happiest times & best performance at work?" - then spent time discussing and sharing this.
- New employees were given fleece sweatshirts embroidered with their individual names, along with a name badge. They were asked to wear them throughout training.



Seven Months Later . . .

- Turnover rate in Group A was **47.2%** higher than that of Group B.
- Group B earned higher customer satisfaction scores during the seven months than those in Group A.



What difference could it make to the cows? - to the KPIs on the dairy? Productivity?

What **Four Questions** do Millennials* ask after the **First Day** on the Job?



*18 to 33 years old,
born 1981-1996

- Why did they hire me for this job?
- Will I enjoy working here?
- Are any of my coworkers *friend* material?
- Who can I talk to about . . . ?

Onboarding Starts Early: Establish the Start Date

When the employment offer has been accepted, a start date should be agreed upon as soon as possible.



Before that start date . . .

Inform the new employee of **what** will happen on the **first day** of work.



Clearly Communicate:



What time they are expected to arrive -
plus other basics!

It may seem fundamental to the producer --

-- but, focus on the new worker.

- ▶ Reduce nervousness, apprehension.
- ▶ New employees have common questions.
- ▶ Provide a "Frequently Asked Questions" (FAQs) document by regular mail and/or email or in-person.



What should I wear?

- Many new employees do not have farm background, need guidance.
- Footwear, gloves, other appropriate attire.
- Biosecurity guidelines
 - some items may be provided.



→ Inform new worker that they will be trained on biosecurity procedures.

Lunch, snacks, beverages?

- Noon or evening meal provided?
- Snacks, beverages?
- Go to town for lunch?
- Inform the new employee of farm practices and what they should/may bring to work.
- "Welcome" lunch ?



Vehicles and Parking

- Vehicle required for job?—should have been communicated during the pre-employment process.
- Where do I park?
- Areas reserved for visitors, vendors, family?
- Employee of the month?



What documents should I bring?



- Documents needed for new employee forms - as required by the jurisdiction.

What else should I bring (or not bring) to work?

- Cellphone?
- Other electronic devices?
- Tobacco-free workplace?
- Weapons?



What will I do on my first day?



- First day(s) or week
- Clearly communicate work hours, break policies
- General outline of initial orientation/training.
- Decreases apprehension or confusion
- Helps to prepare worker for planned orientation program as well as initial training.

The First Day

- Greet & **Welcome** Promptly
- Introductions - with connections
- Nametags, list, organizational chart
- Restrooms, break areas
- Key supervisor, mentor, partner
- Safety, biosecurity? New employee accompanied by a trained person.

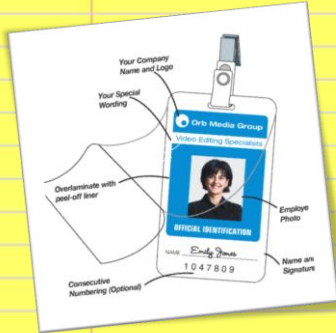


Who is on the Orientation Team?

- Consistency: Have the same person(s) conduct orientation.
- Identify supervisors or more experienced co-workers to participate in the process.
- Assign key **Mentor(s)**
- All orientation team members should share a positive attitude.
- Constructive, upbeat messages geared toward positive, early impressions.



Name Tags-Employee Badges



- Consider laminated clip-on photo ID badges for owners & employees.
- ID fosters worker socialization
- Farm security and biosecurity protocols are enhanced



Shirts—Uniforms or other printed wear?



- Identifies employees
- Pride
- Farm publicity!

At the
end of
the first
day . . .



- Any questions?
- Offer assurances.
- Offer information, reminders about the days to come.
- Ask: Good answers to those **4 Questions**?

Are there good answers to those
Four Questions?



- Why did they hire me for this job?
- Will I enjoy working here?
- Are any of my coworkers *friend* material?
- Who can I talk to about . . . ?

After Day One: Do you have an Orientation program in place?

- Enhances socialization, reduces natural anxiety.
- **Research:** Orientation results in an employee who develops and maintains a positive attitude toward the employer.



- Positive attitude = earlier & higher productivity, longer retention, less turnover.
- Less stress = better concentration, learning, absorbing substantive information about job tasks

Planning & Content of Orientation Program



- Planning may seem overwhelming, but resources are available.
- **Ask current employees for input.**
- "What do **you** wish you had been told when you first started working here?"
- "What do **you** view as important information for newcomers?"

Job Descriptions



- **Orientation:** Use job description as a guideline for discussion.
- **Discuss tasks including future training.**
- **Emphasize basic safety & importance of ongoing safety training, awareness.**
- **Discuss relationship and importance of position to other jobs & functions on the farm.**

Onboarding & Orientation: From Day One



- **Well-planned program requires time & effort.**
- **Sets the tone for a positive employment relationship.**
- **Employees treated with respect have greater job satisfaction.**
- **Translates into productive, long-term employees - good for the farm, good for the cows!**

THANK-YOU!
**PLEASE feel free to contact
me with any questions.**

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