



Brockett's Ag Advice

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More On Farm Labor

The most important part of hiring and keeping good employees is learning what they want from the job and from the employer. Sometimes this discovery is difficult to make, other times the employer and employee are in tune so well that it is an easy task.

1. Wages or total potential income is, of course, a major consideration. People of different ages and with different goals have different expectations as far as wages are concerned. Some people are satisfied with relatively low wages if there is some future incentive such as a built-in program for asset ownership, management responsibility, bonus based on quality of work, or fringe benefits such as a house. Others are interested primarily in a job that allows them to take time off, at what to them are critical times of the year such as for hunting or fishing. Others, of course, look only at the bottom line which for them is the wage and fringe benefits being paid. At the same time the employer must know what he is willing to pay for the assistance of an outside person we often call the hired person. Sometimes the employer can put together a package that is attractive to both parties even though the base wage can not compare to that of the competition.

2. Honesty on the part of the employer is a factor in employee satisfaction. Nothing turns off an employee faster than for him to perceive that the employer has done him wrong. If a farmer offered an employee bonuses, work incentives, or guaranteed raises, they should be part of a written agreement with stipulations under which those items would be forthcoming and when they would be payable. Often I have found that the wrong an employee feels was done is really a misunderstanding.

The employer was not aware of the way an employee understood a statement made by the employer. Or the employer misread the desires of the employee.

3. Complaints about the employee's work habits can become a bone of contention between the two. One of the biggest areas was "break time." Most employees feel they are entitled to a well-earned break if they finish a job sooner than the employer expected. Some employers feel that they must keep the employee busy every minute. The two attitudes often lead to a confrontation between employer and employee. Both may have to give in to some degree. However, it is the employer's responsibility to make the first move towards compromise. Perhaps the employer may be able to put things in proper perspective if he or she recognizes that an employee who finishes up in less time than expected is thinking and may need the break as an incentive to continue working. Or perhaps the employer should recognize that the particular job is "boring" and requires frequent breaks if the employee is to stay with it. Made work or work put upon the employee's shoulders with inadequate instructions will lead to a poor attitude on the part of the employee about the job. Job attitude is a critical factor in employee efficiency. If job attitude is very positive, the employee feels good about the business and thus puts more effort into doing a good job.

4. Simple recognition of an employee's efforts can be critical in employee-employer relationships. Many farm employees leave one job and move to another lower paid job because they did not feel appreciated in the first job. Appreciation can be shown in several ways. One is an unexpected bonus or raise. Another even more im-

portant one is public recognition if the efforts of the employee helped the employer win an award. One incentive recognition for the employees of a good dairyman is the sharing of the milk quality bonus the dairyman's milk company pays. The dollar amount is not high but the thought appears to bear results as the hired help strives for additional months of quality bonus milk. One form of recognition that is useful for several reasons is sending hired persons to seminars or schools or meetings in subject matter areas where the hired help has expressed an interest. Paying the hired persons way to a banquet or picnic or inviting him to attend one illustrates interest in the thoughts and feelings for that hired person.

5. A real ticklish area that can cause some problems with hired help is having too many bosses with conflicting opinions. Just as bad is contention between husband and wife over the duties, pay, or work habits of the hired person. Either one of these situations can cause confusion in the mind of hired help and leads to the general attitude "Why try, I'll only be criticized and told to do it differently by the next person who comes along anyway?". These conflicts can be reduced, if not eliminated, by the "bosses" or husband and wife discussing the problem away from the hired person then abiding by their compromised solution. If the employers involved can not come to a compromise solution, they should either discontinue hiring employees or one of them agree to take full responsibility for the labor and the other accept the decision. Of course, if one of the employers should be able to show the other employer that the labor bill is too high for either the work

being done or the family pocket-book, the solution may be to rethink the goals of the business.

6. Finally is the problem of taking management financial worries to the hired help. Often the hired person looks at that kind of discussion as a way for the employer to renege on a promise or to pay the employee less or to down grade the employees contribution to the business. Do not confuse this with a frank discussion of tem-

porary financial problems that you and the hired person may be able to solve together. That can actually be beneficial with some hired help. But the constant harping on the economic doldrums of farming, or your particular farm, may cause the hired person to feel that doing a good job may not be worthwhile, because things are so bad the business is going down the tubes anyway.

Farm Bill Slide Show Available

Want to learn if the conservation provisions of the Farm Bill will affect your farm operation? A slide show is available from the local office of the USDA Soil Conservation Service which explains the four conservation provisions of the bill.

The conservation provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985 will affect the way that many farmers crop their land in the future. In simple terms, farmers who grow crops on highly erodible land will have to control soil erosion or lose eligibility for some USDA programs.

The slide show explains the four parts of the bill - sodbuster, swampbuster, conservation compliance, and conservation reserve. It also tells which USDA programs are denied if erosion provisioners are not met.

The slide show operates on a carousel projector and has a narrated tape. Organizations interested in using the slide show should contact the USDA Soil Conservation Service office at the Agricultural Center, P.O. Box 520, Leesport, PA 19533-0520 (215) 372-4655.

Md.-Del. Forage Council To Meet

NEWARK, Del. - The Maryland-Delaware Forage Council will hold its annual winter meeting December 9 at the Caroline 4-H and Youth Center in Denton, Md.

The day-long meeting is jointly sponsored by local farmers, agribusinesses and the Cooperative Extension systems of Maryland and Delaware. Lunch

and exhibits will be part of the program, which will begin with a series of speakers at 9 a.m. and conclude following group discussions at 2:15 p.m.

The \$5 tickets must be purchased by Dec. 1 from county extension offices in Newark (451-2506), Dover (736-1448) or Georgetown (856-7303).

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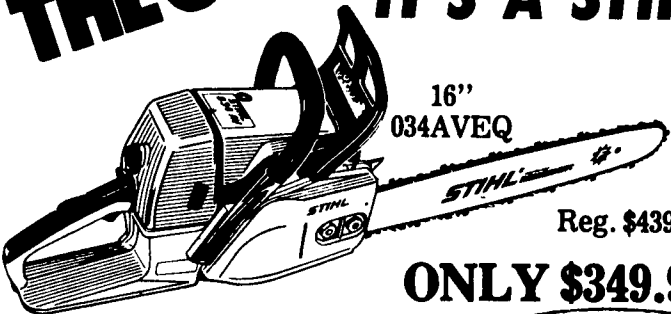
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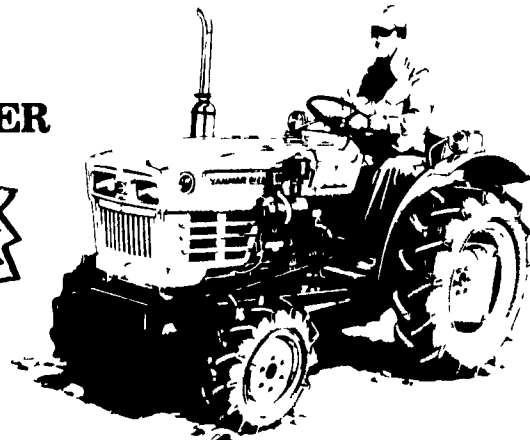
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