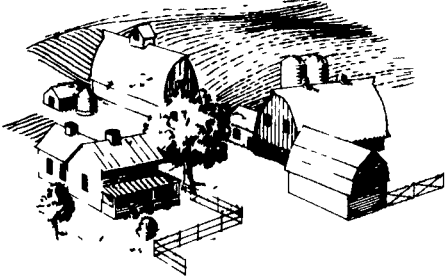


FARM MANAGEMENT



Recruiting Farm Labor

BY RUSSEL D. POWELL
Multi-County Business/
Management Agent

The process of recruiting farm labor should follow the preparation of a job description, which we discussed last week. Recruiting is becoming more difficult and time consuming as many farmers are finding fewer qualified people that are available and willing to work. Recruitment is simply the process of searching for qualified applicants for the job and getting them interested enough to apply.

The main purpose of the recruiting process should be to generate a pool of qualified candidates from which you can choose

the best for your job. It is important to note that there is a difference between generating a pool of "warm bodies" and attracting qualified job applicants. One of the best ways to attract qualified applicants is to be specific about the qualities you want. If you are unsure about exactly what you are looking for in an employee, take time to think about what the job entails and what skills are required and then outline the position and requirements in a written job description.

There are numerous methods of recruiting job applicants. Let's take a look at some of the more common methods of attracting good farm help and discuss the value of each in your recruiting program.

Suggestions from Current Employees

Current employees can be an excellent source of contacts for

new workers because they know people in the community and have at least some idea of your labor needs. They also have a stake in the process since they are likely to be working with the person they have suggested, if the person is hired. However, this approach should be used with caution because there could be friction between you and the employees making the recommendation if the new employee does not work out. This points out the need for a business-like relationship with all employees and continual monitoring and appraising of employee performance.

Word of Mouth

This technique is commonly used with good success. Friends, neighbors, salespeople, veterinarians, and others who come in contact with many people can send applicants your way if they know you are looking.

Want Ads

Want ads in newspapers and agricultural magazines have several advantages. They are a quick, relatively inexpensive and easy way to reach a potentially large audience. The most common complaint about want ads is that you get many applicants, but none that you want to hire. However, a clearly written and specific ad may solve this problem. Compare the following ads and consider the applicants they might attract.

Wanted: Worker for dairy farm.
Call 555-5555

OR

Farm Employees for 100-cow dairy farm. Responsibilities include milking, feeding, and some machinery operation during peak crop periods. Competitive wages, health insurance, one week paid vacation, and one day off each week. Write Box 111 Anytown, PA.

Government Job Services

State Employment Job Service offices, located in each county are often overlooked by agricultural employers. You can call the Job Service and talk with a counselor, who will write-up the vacancy announcement and post it in the office (without the employer's name). Counselors screen applicants and only refer qualified applicants to you.

Bulletin Boards

Posting a vacancy announcement in areas where farmers and potential farm workers frequent, such as farm credit offices, farm supply stores, grange buildings, or even college placement offices is an inexpensive and effective method of "spreading the word." The following information should be included in the job announcement.

- Title of the job;
- Description of responsibilities;
- Description of skills required;
- Description of working conditions;
- Key components of the wage/benefit package;
- How to apply.

It may be helpful to distribute the written announcements to key salespeople and others who are spreading word of the vacancy. This will help insure that "the word" is accurate.

Employment Agencies

Many private agencies make it a business of finding employees for prospective employers. Although most are located in the Midwest, their ads can usually be found in popular agricultural magazines. These firms represent another legitimate source of qualified employees, but they tend to be expensive - typically charging employers a commission of 10 to 30% of the new employee's annual salary.

In today's job environment, aggressive marketing of your jobs is important and will be rewarded if done carefully. One thing is certain: effective recruiting in a competitive job market requires time, effort, and patience.

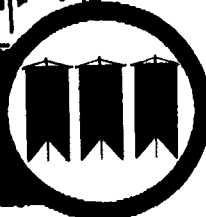
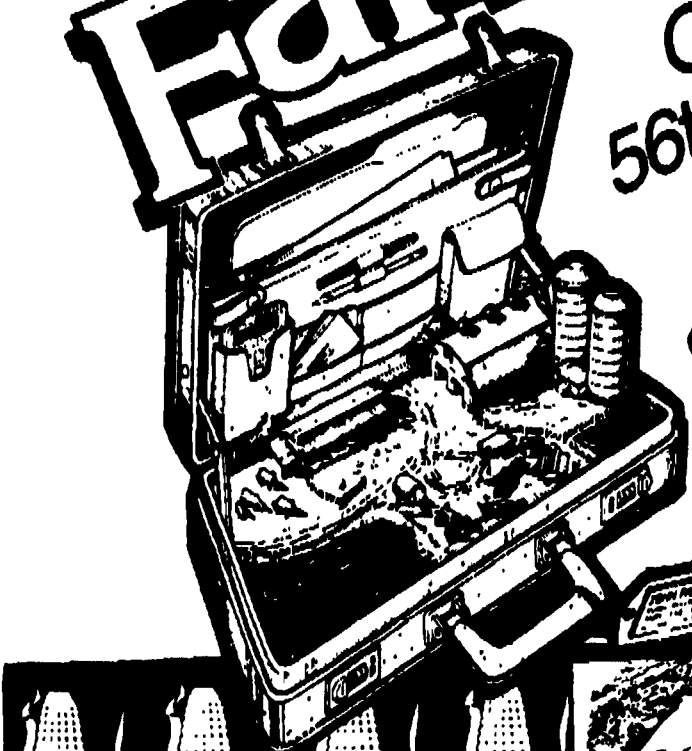
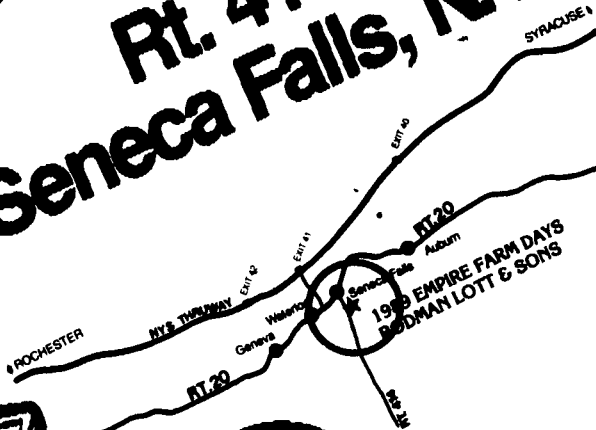
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