

FARM MANAGEMENT

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Why Bother?

Having carefully inventoried the need for labor, researched the legal, tax, and record keeping requirements, formulated the job description, actively recruited qualified candidates, interviewed and hired the person for the job, the next task is to train your energetic new employee.

Training is something "you pay for (directly or indirectly) whether you do it or not." Employees who are challenged and supported in their development, reach full potential early, and are able to improve productivity, and ultimately farm PROFITS.

So training may make you MORE MONEY than anything else you do.

Do You Expect Too Much?

Farmers often hire unskilled workers and expect immediate skilled performance without providing any real training. This often leads to conflicts and misunderstanding, then to open and heated

disagreements and finally to early dismissal.

The employer must pinpoint and overcome the barriers that prevent new workers from being highly productive.

Is Your Farm A Nice Place to Work?

Employees with real potential will not remain on any farm that doesn't help workers to improve themselves. They must think your business is a good place to work, and experience your commitment to their personal growth and to their progress toward higher level responsibilities.

The Key To Successful Training

The employer must make every effort to enlist the participation and support of the employee(s) in the training development process.

Candid meetings or discussions should be held with employees to determine the skills and knowledge training needed, who will be trained and by whom, and how the training results will be measured. Workers are then more likely to "buy in," or assume "ownership"

of the program and feel compelled to make it work.

How Do I Train?

Some training can be done off the farm, in community adult education programs. Examples: welding or tractor safety course at a local vocational center or high school. The employer will often pay for the cost of the training and even provide time off from the job.

Outside training is most effective when the principles learned are reinforced when the employee returns to the job.

The second approach is for the training to be done on farm. Many farm employers report that they feel inadequate in the role of teacher or trainer, yet they are very accomplished at the task they are attempting to teach. Perhaps the key to success in this situation is a systematic approach to training.

Effective Training Techniques

The following steps should help you become a more effective trainer for even the most basic jobs:

- Determine your training objectives. List exactly what tasks, skills, and knowledge are going to be taught, then plan to teach them in a logical order.
- Prepare to instruct. Put the workers at ease and try to make them comfortable as they learn the new skill or task. Make sure that all the materials necessary for doing the job are on hand and that the work place is set up in a manner conducive to learning. When possible, pick a less busy day, so you can take the time required to be a teacher. Take time to show your

unique methods and be very specific.

- Provide supervision until the job/skill is mastered, observing the employee while he/she is doing the job, by coaching through the correct steps and correcting errors immediately. Be sure the employee has ample opportunity to ask questions and that he/she understands the job.

- Follow-up. Allow the employee to work independently, and be sure he/she knows who to go to with questions and/or problems.

- Periodically check, evaluate, and encourage your employees in their progress. Reward workers when performance benchmarks are achieved. Praise and recognition can be as important as pay raises or fringe benefits.

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing you is to invest sufficient

time to make the process work. Time invested in preparation for training, the training itself, and the follow up can have a big payoff later.

Evaluation of Training Program

Training effectiveness can be measured by the worker's improvement in job performance, so it is important that work performance is checked to see if training objectives are achieved.

Evaluation techniques will be covered in a future article in this series.

All of this sounds very time consuming and expensive. But equally costly, are the hours and money spent attempting to correct jobs done poorly.

Next time - Motivating Workers.

Plans Earth Fair

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — Franklin and Marshall College has planned a day of "environmental education and action for all ages" at Earth Fair 1990 on Saturday, April 28, rain or shine.

Beginning at 10:00 a.m. at the college and lasting into the evening, Earth Fair 1990 will feature educational forums, work trips, children's activities, and displays to provide information on conservation methods and practices.

Lectures and discussions on current local and national environmental issues, better farming practices, and improving standards of living will be featured. Earth Fair 1990 culminates the celebration of

Earth Week, presented by the F&M Environmental Action Alliance (a student group) in conjunction with the Earth Day Coalition of Lancaster County.

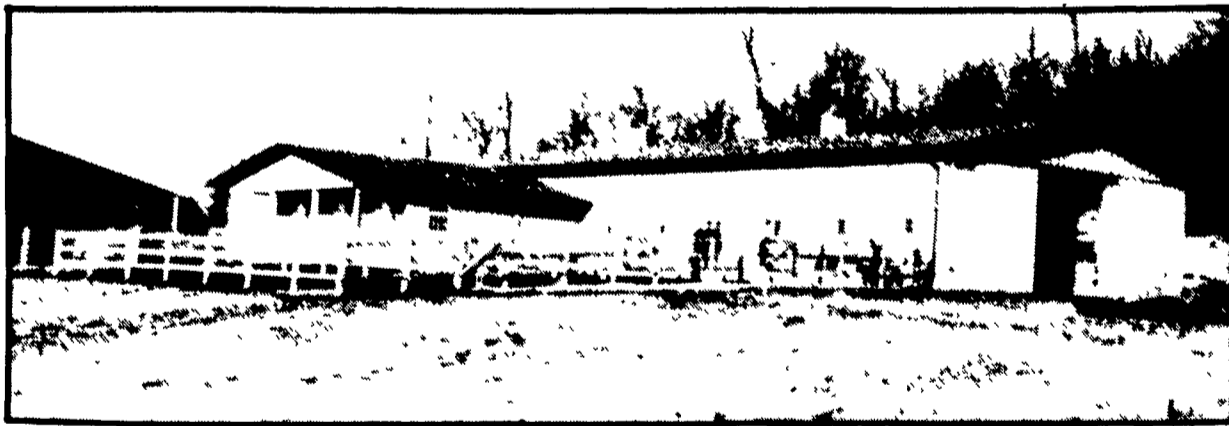
Work trips to help clean roads and parks and plant trees, along with environmental interest displays, will be included. Children's activities will include crafts, mural painting, and activities.

Food and music will be available all day. Special attractions include "Plant-A-Tree" with 3-year old spruces available for 50 cents each, and white dogwoods and sugar maples for \$1.50. An art contest award ceremony will begin at noon and there will be an evening concert at 8:00 p.m. on the Ben Franklin Quad.

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