Ag Help Wanted: Guidelines for Managing Agricultural Labor

John P. Hewlett, University of Wyoming
Jeffrey E. Tranel, Colorado State University
Trent Teegerstrom, University of Arizona
What is Ag Help Wanted?

Ag Help Wanted: Guidelines for Managing Agricultural Labor is a full-color, 250-page book presenting principles, practical examples, legal considerations, and leads to more references in six main chapters:

- Roles and Responsibilities of an Agricultural Employer
- Organizational Planning
- Staffing the Farm Business
- Supervising Agricultural Work
- Managing Employee Performance
- Communication and Problem Solving
Ch. 1

Roles and Responsibilities of an Agricultural Employer

Need to Be a Manager
- Functions of Management
- Types of Activity in Managerial Roles

Managers’ Theories
Recognizing and Managing Risks
Managing for Compliance and Beyond
Essentials for the Manager
Getting up and Keeping up as a Manager of People
Functions of Management

1. Planning—Developing the business purpose, philosophy, goals, and strategies

2. Organizing—Establishing a system of roles and relationships to achieve business goals; dividing the work to be done, refining units (e.g., ranches, departments, crews, jobs) responsible for portions of it, and providing a means of coordination among them

3. Staffing—Attracting, developing, and retaining people able and willing to perform the jobs as organized

4. Leading—Directly influencing people and facilitating their work, generally through interpersonal communications
Ch. - 2

Organizational Planning

Taking Stock
The Mission Statement
Goals as Targets for Success
Setting Goals
  * Examples of Goals in Agriculture

Organizational Structure
Agricultural Jobs
Applying Ergonomic Principles
Assessing Needs for Labor and the Current Workforce
Assessing Managerial Capacity
Family Business Points
Operating within Legal Bounds
  * Coverage Varies
  * Unlawful Discrimination
  * Health and Safety
  * Compliance Information

Engaging Labor through Contractors
  * Legal Considerations in Contracting
  * Before Getting Started

Personnel Records
Organizational Structure

All business organizations have a “structure” of relatively enduring roles, relationships among them, and rules that facilitate the division and coordination of work. It would be personally uncomfortable, as well as organizationally inefficient, to start from scratch every day deciding who is responsible for doing what.
Operating within Legal Bounds

Management of human resources on farms and ranches is no longer only about dealing with workers—if it ever was. While agricultural firms in western states exhibit as much variety in their organizations as in their products, they all operate in a legal, as well as market, environment. Relations among people who provide and procure labor to make the system run—farm business owners and operators, employees, and contractors—are subject to a large set of public rules that apply to all but are well comprehended by only a few.
Staffing the Farm Business

Who Gets to Work in an Agricultural Business
Choosing to Hire a Capable Workforce
- Approaches to Selection
- Hiring Less Than the Best
- Employee Selection as Prediction
- Layoff and Recall Priorities

Steps in a Hiring Process
Clarifying the Job Content
- Value of Job Descriptions
- Writing Job Descriptions
- Recruiting
- H-2A Agricultural Work Visas

Assessing Applicants
- Lawful and Unlawful Discrimination
- The Preliminary Interview
- Written Applications and Resumes
- Tests
- Interviews
- Checking References

Making and Communicating the Decision
- Offering the Job
- Notifying Other Applicants

Orienting New Employees
Choosing to Hire a Capable Workforce

Proportion of Applicants

“Could Be”

“No Way”

“Sure Thing”

Likelihood of good job performance
Supervising Agricultural Work

Employees Who Supervise
* Supervisors’ Place and Role
* Lonely in the Middle
* Views of Good Supervision

Assigning Work, Delegating, and Getting Things Done
* Why Not Delegate
* To Delegate or Not
* Delegation and Personnel Development
* Delegation Technique

Supervisory Decision-Making Styles
* Deciding to Manage
* Levels of Employee Participation
* The Right Approach

Leadership and Power in Supervision
* Leaders and Managers
* Leaders Influence People
* Supervisory Power to Influence

Managing Supervisory Work
* Good Management for Better Supervision

Supporting Teamwork
* Stages in Team Development
  Suggestions for the Supervisor
Supervisory Decision Making Styles

- Telling
- Selling
- Checking
- Consulting
- Swelling

Figure 4.5. Goleman’s leadership styles.
Managing Employee Performance

Enabling and Building High Performance
Enhancing Employee Ability
- Training Needs
- Training Methods

Motivation and Work
- Needs-Based Views of Motivation
- An Expectancy Framework
- Rewards from Work

Pay and Performance
- Time-Based Pay Structures
- Incentive Plans to Strengthen the Pay-Performance Linkage
- Considering Change in the Pay System
- Legal Requirements and Constraints

Benefits
- Workers Compensation Insurance
- Health Care Insurance
- Farm Labor Housing
- Aligning Benefits with Business Objectives

Assessing Employee Performance
- Ingredients of Performance Appraisal
- Utility of Performance Appraisal
- Structuring Appraisal Systems
- Better Instruments for More Useful Appraisals
- Types of Appraisal Instruments
Motivation and Work

Physiological
- Physically comfortable work area
- Livable salary/wage

Safety
- Safe working conditions
- Job security
- Good base salary/wage and benefits

Social
- Friendly coworkers
- Social activities on and off the job
- Compatible supervisor

Esteem
- Respect and recognition from managers and coworkers
- Favorable performance evaluation
- Merit pay increases and position advancement

Self-Actualization
- Creative and challenging work
- Learning and growth
- Participation in decision making
- Responsibility, autonomy, and discretion
Communication and Problem Solving

Formal Communication and Written Documents
* Communicating the Employment Contract
* Policies and Employee Handbooks

Standards, Correction, and Discipline
* Policies to Guide Disciplinary Action
* Dealing One-on-One When Things Go Wrong
* Addressing Conflicts

Interpersonal Communications
* Communication Skills
* Applying Skills to Situations
* Considering Culture and Language Differences
* Staff Meetings
* The Exit Interview
Policies and Employee Handbooks

• Introduction: Title Page; Welcome; Organization Description; Introductory Statement; Employee Acknowledgment

• Employment: Nature of; Employee Relations; EEO; Relatives; Physical Exams; Immigration Law; Conflicts of Interest; Outside Employment; Non-Disclosure (of proprietary information)

• Employment Status and Records: Employment Categories; File Access; Reference Checks; Record Updates; Probationary Period; Applications; Performance Evaluation

• Employee Benefits: General; Vacation; Child Care; Holidays; Workers’ Compensation; Sick Leave; Voting Time; Bereavement; Relocation; Jury Duty; Witness Duty; Benefits Continuation (COBRA)

• Timekeeping/Payroll: Timekeeping; Paydays; Termination; Severance Pay; Pay Advances; Pay Corrections; Deductions and Setoffs

• Work Conditions and Hours: Safety; Work Schedules; Phones and Mail; Smoking; Rest and Meals; Overtime; Equipment and Vehicle Use; Emergency Closings

• Leaves of Absence: Medical; Family; Personal; Educational; Military; Maternity

• Employee Conduct and Discipline: Conduct and Work Rules; Drugs and Alcohol; Sexual and Other Harassment; Attendance and Punctuality; Personal Appearance; Return of Property; Resignation; Security Inspections; Solicitation; Drug Testing

• Miscellaneous: AIDS
Ideas in Practice

A separate section of "Ideas in Practice" describes how several farm and ranch employers have successfully applied labor management ideas to reduce risks or improve operational results.
Examples & Experiences

Examples throughout the chapters illustrate concepts, suggest effective ways of avoiding or dealing with common problems, and provide points of comparison for readers reviewing their own operations.

A tractor driver working for $6.50 per hour was paid $455 for 70 hours one week. He thought that working such a long week should entitle him to an overtime minimum rate. But the grower, for whom he worked, told him that exceeding the straight-time rate would set a "bad precedent" on the ranch. The driver found his way to the local labor commissioner, who awarded the state minimum of time and one-half premium pay for hours over 60 in a week. The commissioner stepped in on the grower and asked to prove his payroll records. Later that week, the commissioner ordered the ranch to pay time and one-half for the 10 hours exceeding 60 that the tractor driver had worked, plus another $8.500 in overtime premiums to other employees who had not received their due over the previous three years. Had the grower broken the law? Yes. Did it hurt him to have done so? Certainly.
WWW.AgHelpWanted.org

The companion website, referenced frequently in the book, provides supplementary material online, including:

• Sample forms, posters, and checklists
• Articles and reports that elaborate on topics the book introduces
• Links to public agencies and service organizations that assist compliance with laws and regulations

and

More examples, short cases, and points for discussion
### Problem Work Situations: Working With Employees

Nine sets of brief vignettes that illustrate approaches to one-on-one communication in problem situations includes one scene showing an apparent personnel problem and three scenes showing different supervisory responses to it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tardiness</td>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>Specific Warning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow Work</td>
<td>Vague threat</td>
<td>Humoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inebriation</td>
<td>Imposition of Penalty</td>
<td>Appeal to Values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor Quality Work</td>
<td>Vague Threat</td>
<td>Emphasizing Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>Imposition of Penalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Between Workers</td>
<td>Specific Warning</td>
<td>Humoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insubordination</td>
<td>Emphasizing Authority</td>
<td>Imposition of Penalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleeping on the Job</td>
<td>Imposition of Penalty</td>
<td>Humoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careless Work</td>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>Specific Warning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HIGHLIGHTS

http://AgHelpWanted.org
How to get your copy?

Purchase Information is available at:
AgHelpWanted.org

Or you may write:
AgHelpWanted
PO Box 3354
Laramie Wyoming, 82071

Pricing:
Books start at $25
CDs start at $10

Go online for a quantity pricing schedule
Thank you!

John P. Hewlett, University of Wyoming
Jeffrey E. Tranel, Colorado State University
Trent Teegerstrom, University of Arizona

AgHelpWanted.org