



Good management extends beyond your day-to-day working relationship with existing employees. It begins with the hiring process, and includes regular employee evaluation and feedback.

Hiring:

The first step in being a good manager is effective hiring. It's important to learn how to identify people that will be a good match for your business, and effective communication with potential hires can increase the efficiency of the hiring process and ultimately make for a better working relationship.

The very first step in hiring is to determine your needs. You have more work than you can handle: do you hire a bookkeeper so you can focus on field management? Or do you hire a field hand so that you can devote more time to managing the business? Evaluate your own skills and needs.

Advertising:

- Write as accurate and detailed a job description as possible. The job description should include the job title and responsibilities, the nature and location of your farm, qualifications required for the position, pay grade/salary, hours expected, potential start date, termination conditions, and benefits.
- Be specific about how applicants should apply. Indicate what materials you want to see (resume, cover letter, letters of recommendation, etc) and how and where you want to receive them (mail, email, fax).
- List a deadline or write, "position is open until filled." Also include what applicants can expect from you, such as, "qualified applicants will be contacted by phone."
- Some free classified listings do not allow space for the full posting, so make sure it is available on your website.

Interviewing:

- Develop a list of interview questions and bring

them with you to all your interviews. Ask all the candidates the same questions and try to keep your style consistent. This will ensure that you have complete information from each candidate. *See the list of potential questions in Appendix A on page 3.*

- Make sure you are familiar with the types of questions that are illegal to ask in interviews. *See a list of illegal questions in Appendix B on page 4.*

Management:

Good management of employees is a skill that takes time and effort to develop, and management of people also demands time and effort. You will never simply double your labor by hiring another person- they will not be a replacement for you, and you will have to spend time managing them.



Organization:

- Organize everyone's schedule, including your own. Develop a daily plan for the crew and communicate it clearly.
- Develop a standards sheet for your farm so you can plan effectively. Know how long any given task should take and make sure the crew knows a) what is expected of them and b) when to move on if a task is unusually slow or problems arise.
- Have back-up tasks in place so the crew can move on to other projects if their primary task takes less time than expected, or so slow that they abandon it. Depending on your preference as a manager, the crew should be trained well enough to either be able to work all day without additional input from you, or to know when your input is required.
- Know who on the crew is capable of which tasks. Make sure that any staff member that is leading



a task is aware of their responsibility, if any, to make sure the rest of the crew is completing it properly.

- Be respectful of the crew as people. Keep the work fun and mix up their tasks, and cycle everyone through the group work and the solo work, so everyone has a chance to be social and a chance to be alone. Asking for crew members to volunteer for some tasks is a good way to let people self-select their work.

Communication and Training:

- Provide a written job description. This is the best way to ensure that expectations and roles are clear to everyone. *See sample job descriptions in Appendix C on page 6.*
- Make sure everyone understands the value of their work. No matter how small a task is, it contributes to the overall success of the farm. Make sure they know how much their work is valued, and how much it means to the business.
- Employees generally get paid by the hour, but the farm gets paid by the piece. It's important to make sure the employees understand that efficient work is vital to the success of the farm, even though it is ultimately the manager's job to make sure that the output of employees balances against the income generated by their work.

- Define farm policies clearly. For example, if employees are able to take some vegetables as a perk, make sure you have clarity about when and how much is allowed. Clarity saves you headaches as a manager, makes workers feel more comfortable, and reduces conflict between employees.

Evaluation:

- Not all employees have the same pace, but managers should know what their minimum expectations are and be prepared to talk to any underperforming employees.
- It is vital to provide employees with feedback. This can be a formal, written evaluation, or it can consist of a more casual check-in with every member of your staff at regular intervals. *See a sample employee evaluation form in Appendix D on page 8.*
- Give positive feedback often, even on tasks that employees consistently perform properly. When feedback is given only for tasks done improperly, it can give employees the impression that you have a low opinion of them.

The information on this sheet is based on a workshop series on Farm Labor, organized by CISA in 2010-2011. Speakers included Richard Wiswall of Cate Farm, Dan Kaplan of Brookfield Farm, Jarrett Man of Stone Soup Farm, Sarah Voiland of Red Fire Farm, and representatives from the Franklin Hampshire Career Center.

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Appendix A: Potential Interview Questions

Adapted from a resource provided by the Franklin Hampshire Career Center.

It is important to be consistent about what you ask each candidate. This will make it simpler to compare their performance in the interview.

Open-Ended Questions

- Tell me about yourself.
- How would you describe your ideal job?
- What influenced you to choose this career/job?
- How do you evaluate success?

Informational Questions

- Tell me what you know about our business.
- How has your education/experience prepared you for this position?
- What qualities do you think a successful manager/employee should have?

Situational Questions

- Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.
- Give me an example of a time when you were able to successfully complete a project with another person despite disagreement about the appropriate steps to take.
- Tell me about a time when you had to make a decision, but you didn't have all the information you needed.
- How would a friend describe your strengths and weaknesses?



Appendix B: Illegal Interview Questions

This book is intended to give guidance about the types of questions that are illegal to ask during the interview process. It is not intended as an exhaustive list.

Area of Inquiry	Legal	Illegal
Age	If applicant is a minor, you may require proof of age.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About the age, age group, or date of birth before hiring • For a birth certificate before hiring.
Residence	You may request current address and phone number for the purpose of contacting the applicant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the applicant rents or owns their home. • With whom the applicant lives. • Specific questions about foreign addresses that may indicate national origin.
Ancestry/ Birthplace/ National Origin	Are you legally authorized to work in the U.S.?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the applicant is native-born or naturalized, or where they were born. • About the citizenship or birthplace of the applicant or their family. • About first language, port of entry, date of arrival in the U.S.
Credit Rating	You may not ask any questions regarding credit.	The position may require a credit or background check.
Criminal Record	At the interview or after, you may ask if the applicant was ever convicted of a felony.	You may not ask about arrests, or whether the applicant has ever been incarcerated or convicted of a misdemeanor.
Disabilities	Can you perform the functions of this particular job, with or without reasonable accommodation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General questions about whether applicants are disabled. • Employers may not exclude disabled applicants as a class on the basis of their type of disability, and they must engage in dialogue about whether they can provide "reasonable accommodations" to enable an employee to perform the job.



Area of Inquiry	Legal	Illegal
Organizational Affiliation	You may ask about organizational affiliation as long as affiliation is not used to discriminate on the basis of race, religion, sex, national origin, or ancestry.	You may not request a list of all clubs to which the applicant does or has belonged.
Gender/Sex	Questions about sex/gender (but NOT gender identity) are permissible only when a bona fide occupational qualification exists.	Gender/sex is a bona fide occupational qualification only for jobs such as locker room attendant, not jobs that are traditionally considered “men’s work” or “women’s work.”
Religion	You may advise the applicant about normal hours and days of work required by the job to avoid possible conflict with religion or other personal convictions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may not ask applicant to identify their religious denomination or affiliation or about any specific components of their faith. • You may not tell them that any particular religious groups are required to work on their religious holidays.
Family/ Marital Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may ask whether there are any relatives already employed at your business, and after hire you may ask for emergency contact information. • You may ask whether the applicant has commitments that may hinder the meeting of work attendance requirement. Such questions should be asked of both male and female applicants. 	You may not ask about marital status, for any information about the applicant’s spouse or children. This includes questions about child-care arrangements and their spouse’s work.



Appendix C: Sample Job Descriptions

Sample Job Description #1

Adapted from a resource provided by the Franklin Hampshire Career Center.

ACP Farm Job Description

Job Title: _____

Position Reports to: _____

1. Overall Purpose of Position: A brief statement of what the position is and how it contributes to the overall mission of the farm.
2. Duties and Responsibilities: A brief list of the major daily and/or weekly or seasonal responsibilities that must be performed by the person doing this job. It doesn't have to be exhaustive—just an outline of the primary responsibilities and “other duties as assigned.”
3. Qualification Requirements
 - a. Experience and skills, including whether a driver's license is required. Indicate requirements separately from desired qualifications, and include tradeoffs (ie, 2 years experience or related degree).
 - b. Education. Don't be overly exclusive here- only list educational requirements. List desired language capabilities.
4. Physical Demands: Detail physical demands in a chart like the one below.
5. Signatures: The signatures below indicate that the incumbent and his/her manager have reviewed this description as of the date notes and agree that it is representative of the responsibilities and duties required on this position and accurately reflect the skills, experience, and knowledge necessary to successfully perform these responsibilities.

Incumbent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Manager Signature: _____ Date: _____

Estimate of Physical Requirements:

Physical Effort	Rare (15%)	Occasional (15-40%)	Frequent (40-70%)	Continuous (over 70%)
Lifting under 40 lbs				
Lifting over 40 lbs				
Dusty environment				
Use of oil or chemicals *Indicate type used:				
Standing				
Climbing ladders				
Climbing stairs				



Sample Job Description #2

Provided by Richard Wiswall, Cate Farm.

Job Description: Cate Farm Crew

Welcome to Cate Farm! We appreciate your hard work and want to have clear policies so that both employer and employee understand each other and mutually benefit.

Work at Cate Farm is diverse, ranging from greenhouse seedling production, greenhouse tomato culture, planting, weeding, & harvesting field crops, to building and repairing farm infrastructure. Employees are often called upon to do different and sometimes tedious jobs in all kinds of weather. Be prepared for hard physical labor. Job training will be done by Richard, Sally, or Pete. It is important to remember that no matter how simple, tedious, or insignificant a task may appear, everything that you do is important to the overall success of the farm.

Farming is production work. The farm earns money by what is actually produced and sold. Since production per hour or day is very important, employees are expected to work quickly and efficiently, and keep up with the pace set by the employers, or work quickly on their own.

Conversation during work is a benefit of farm work, but please be aware of keeping your hands moving while you talk. Efficient production is critical to the success of the farm.

Paid time is work time. On a farm, there is rarely nothing to do. If a task is completed before another task is assigned, make use of your time by doing a job on the packhouse bulletin board, such as cleaning up, weeding ends of rows or greenhouses, or making tomato boxes.

Employees may be asked to work around machinery and should exercise caution when doing so. No one will drive a tractor unless trained by Richard.

Farm vehicles will be driven by regular employees only.

At Cate Farm, we ask that you:

- Be on time, and be ready to work at designated hour.
- Bring a water bottle, lunch, and appropriate clothing for the weather and task.
- Keep track of your hours on a Cate Farm timesheet.
- Telephone if you are unable to make it to work.

Paydays are the 15th and last day of each month for regular employees, and the last day of the week for temporary employees.

There will be no alcohol or drug use while working on the farm. On the job, it is expected that all employees will behave appropriately and cooperate with other employees and people on the farm. Employees are expected to keep work areas and fields clean by picking up trash and tools associated with the work.

If you have an issue or problem on the job, please bring it to the attention of Richard or Sally. We want to make things work for all concerned.

We are cooperatively minded and strive for a harmonious workplace.

Thanks for your help.



Appendix D: Sample Employee Evaluation Form

Adapted from a resource provided by the Franklin Hampshire Career Center.

Employee Evaluation Form

Name:
Date of Hire:
Date of Review:
Supervisor:

Rating System:
1= *Unsatisfactory*
2= *Needs Improvement*
3= *Satisfactory*
4= *Exceeds Expectations*
5= *Significantly Exceeds Expectations*

1. Quality of work
Rating:
Comments:

2. Exercise of good judgment
Rating:
Comments:

3. Attendance
Rating:
Comments:

4. Involvement/participation in team effort
Rating:
Comments:

5. Attention to company policies and procedures
Rating:
Comments:

6. Interpersonal relationships and communication with co-workers
Rating:
Comments:

7. Taking initiative to achieve goals and complete assignments
Rating:
Comments:



8. Responsiveness to changing work requirements

Rating:

Comments:

9. Work ethic

Rating:

Comments:

10. Overall performance rating

Rating:

Comments:

Areas of strength:

Areas that need improvement:

Date:

Supervisor's Signature:

Employee Comments:

Date:

Employee's Signature: