



Section 1

The Decision to Hire

by Valerie Farrell, Pat Clarke

Introduction

You need to have clarity on why you are employing a person to assist you to operate your farm business before you start the employing process. You need to be sure that your business needs additional labour and that the business can afford to pay for this labour. Employing labour will require you to work differently and you may need to develop existing skills and acquire some new ones.

- ① How will you know that additional help is needed on the farm?
- ② What are the alternatives to employing a full time labour unit?
- ③ Are you clear about why you are employing a labour unit?
- ④ What are your concerns about employing labour and how can these be minimised?
- ⑤ What new skills are needed to be an employer?
- ⑥ What are employee expectations likely to be?
- ⑦ What attributes do you require in an employee?

The Decision to Hire

1 How will you know that additional help is needed on the farm?

As herd size increases, the labour resources on farm become stretched. Initially, this is dealt with by adopting labour efficient techniques and systems. These include compact calving, efficient calf feeding system, good milking routine etc. Complete the labour efficiency checklist on this page for your farm. Highly labour efficient farms would tick “Yes” to the majority of these questions (80%+). If you answer a lot of “No’s”, then you should examine your current system before employing someone.

Another approach with increasing numbers is to increase the use of relief workers e.g. milkers and, make more use of contractors e.g. slurry, fertiliser, heifer rearing.

But as numbers increase further a full-time labour unit or part-time labour needs to be considered. This can be difficult for you to see as you attempt to complete all of the work yourself.

HOW TO:



Recognise the need for help

In addition to increasing numbers, there are other signs or triggers that indicate you need additional help on your farm. These relate to yourself, both your health and your relationships with family and friends. They include:

- Being continually tired and under pressure, working long hours
- Farm and animal performance is less than it was a few years ago
- You have less time with family
- You haven't taken a week's holidays for a few years
- You have little time for friends, social life and hobbies

If you are experiencing these symptoms, you need to reduce the time you are working on the farm. This is where a full-time employee should be considered.

Labour efficiency checklist – Complete for your farm

	Yes/No
Milking	
Do you finish work before 6.00pm each evening (outside of the calving period)?	
Do you start milking before 4.30pm each evening?	
Is total daily milking time (in pit) less than 3hrs (2 x 1:30) ?	
Is the daily milking interval less than 9hrs 30mins ?	
Breeding	
Is the breeding season less than 13 weeks ?	
Is there a working drafting facility ?	
Is the parlour closed over winter?	
Calf rearing	
Are calves over three weeks of age fed milk once a day ?	
Are calves put to grass before March 10th ?	
Calving	
Do you get up fewer than 15 nights during the calving season?	
Are less than 5% of cows assisted (jacked) at calving?	
Contracting	
Is greater than 50% of slurry management contracted out?	
Is greater than 50% of fertiliser application contracted out?	
Are heifers contract reared ?	
Grassland	
Are paddocks topped once or not at all ?	
Is the grazing season greater than 40 weeks (cows out, cows in)?	
Are there three grazings available per paddock in summer?	
Yard management	
Is less than 15 minutes spent scraping yards each day in winter?	
Is there a working handling facility on all parcels of land?	
Are there four or fewer groups of stock over winter?	
Office	
Do you complete all office work in the morning ?	
Is there a farm map available?	



2 What are the alternatives to employing a full time labour unit?

Before beginning the process of looking to employ labour you should examine other options. These could include:

Contractors: Most farm tasks can be contracted out e.g. silage-making, slurry handling, fertiliser application, reseeding, silage feeding, heat detection, AI, milking, maintenance etc. Contracting out some or all of these tasks will make your workload more sustainable.

System of production: Look at your system, a change may be what's needed e.g. once a day milking (OAD); reducing the number of enterprises; shorter calving season; spring calving only etc.

Increased mechanisation: e.g. automated feeding, milking parlour additions may reduce the need for labour. There will be capital investment required for this approach.

Share a worker: Two farmers sharing one employee rather than taking on one full-time labour unit.

Contract rearing of stock: e.g. outsourcing management of heifers, dry cows, calf rearing where appropriate for your farm.

Scale back: Reducing livestock numbers, especially if overstocked, could be an option. You need to be clear on how your working day will change and how that will benefit you. You must also prepare a financial budget to see the impact on cash flow.

Relief labour: e.g. Farm Relief Service, students. But remember, they must be treated like an employee in terms of providing appropriate working conditions, and complying with most employment legislation.

KEY POINT:

Collaborative farming: Consider partnerships with existing dairy farmers or other farming neighbours. Such arrangements have great potential to make the farm(s) more labour efficient and sustainable.

3 Are you clear about why you are employing a labour unit?

You must be sure that your workload is unsustainable and your farming system cannot continue as efficiently as before without additional help.

You must also have adopted and changed your system so that it is using the resources on farm efficiently. Have you shed jobs which can be reliably carried out by a contractor? Use the previous checklist to indicate your current labour efficiency.

You must also be confident that the employee will bring added benefit to your family and business. Employing someone to do work such as scraping yards or topping paddocks is not sensible. It is an added cost to do unproductive work.

KEY BENEFITS:

The added benefit could be in the form of:

- **Greater efficiency - due to increased likelihood of tasks being completed on time**
- **More income - extra dairy cows milked to generate additional income for personal use**
- **Higher gross margin - to invest and grow the farm business**
- **Better work/life balance - more free time and greater flexibility for family and other activities**
- **A safer working environment - farms tasks operated at appropriate speed, therefore making the farm a safer place to work for all**

There must be clarity on how you will pay for the employee. This requires technical efficiency and forward financial planning so that you (and your family) know that this employee can be paid for by your farming business. You must sit down with your advisor/accountant and prepare a six year financial plan.

It is important that you and your family have discussed the implications of taking on a full-time employee. The family must be clear about the financial consequences of implementing the business plan. They must also be clear on the role that the employee will have on the farm.

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Cash Flow	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
RECIPTS							
Milk Sales	196,868	210,918	182,975	243,750	263,900	275,925	281,125
Dairy Calf Sales	8,335	5,800	5,500	10,800	11,200	11,700	11,700
Dairy Cow Sales	9,520	8,250	7,700	8,800	13,750	13,750	13,750
Replacement Sales		14,400	0	0	22,500	15,000	15,000
Cattle Sales	1,440	0	0	0	0	0	0
FARM PAYMENTS							
Dairy Feed	22,418	16,320	18,700	26,350	27,200	27,200	27,200
Calf Feed (8-Weeks)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Drystock Feed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Replacements Feed	2,775	2,208	4,227	3,362	2,859	2,753	2,501
Fertiliser & Lime (Stock)	15,575	16,445	21,824	26,213	25,989	25,804	25,364
<u>Tillage Vairable Costs</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vet	5,141	5,431	7,204	8,652	8,579	8,517	8,372
AI / Breeding	3,600	3,831	5,022	6,219	6,163	6,163	6,052
Contractor (Stock)	11,110	11,737	21,461	24,578	24,567	18,490	18,175
Contractor (Tillage)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Variable Costs	9,423	9,955	13,204	15,859	15,724	15,612	15,346
Labour	20,000	21,341	28,587	34,680	34,728	34,825	34,574
Machinery (Including Leases)	6,181	6,530	8,661	10,403	10,314	10,240	10,066

Table 1: Prepare a six year business plan to confirm that you can afford to pay an employee.

4 What are your concerns about employing labour and how can these be minimised?

It is natural that employing someone for the first time raises concerns. Think through your concerns in advance and put in place a system or process that minimises these concerns. Some of the issues and possible solutions include:

Being able to afford an employee: Prepare a full financial plan for your farm, including the cost of the new employee. Use a range of milk prices to give you the confidence to say “Yes, I can afford an employee, even at a below average milk price.”

Not having enough work for the employee:

You reached a decision to employ because of work pressure. Now you need to decide what the employee will do, and what you will do with the time freed up. As herd size increases you will need to spend more time on management decisions.

Lack of ability in employee: Define in advance what skills you want your employee to have. Operate a simple system so that somebody else can do it, instead of you. Check references from previous employers. Interview potential employees on your farm, pose practical questions and scenarios.

KEY RISKS:



Non-compliance with legislation: Know the legislation in advance of employing labour. Put systems in place to ensure that your farm meets standards such as health & safety, pay slips, annual leave, working times etc. There is professional help you can access for this advice, you don't have to be an expert on everything.

Accidents/ claims: Have an up to date health and safety statement. Get a neighbour or friend to observe your farm; they will see it differently than you. Ensure you have adequate insurance.

Losing the employee: It is important to have good working conditions to help retain employees. Ensure your farm is an attractive place to work. If you hire the right person, it makes sense to keep them motivated. Invest in their personal development.

Getting on with the employee: On selection, be clear about the personal attributes that you are looking for and that are important to your farm. Usually, an employee takes a position because they respect the employer and what the farm is trying to achieve. Be a good communicator and provide feedback to your employee on a regular basis, take an interest in them as a person.

Absenteeism: Have a plan in place if either employee or employer is unexpectedly unavailable e.g. due to illness, funeral etc.

Further details on management and retention of employees are included in section 3.

5 What new skills are needed to be an employer?

At the start of the employment relationship, both parties have made major decisions. The employer has agreed to pay a wage from the business. The employee has decided that they will use the business as their livelihood. Up to now you (individually) have been making all the decisions, now there are two people (a team) on the farm. As an employer you will need to use a new set of skills to ensure the arrangement is successful. These include:

Communication: You now have to listen (a new skill for many) and give clear feedback or instruction. Adopt an open channel of communication, “If you are not sure – then ask”. This may take numerous forms e.g. verbal, text, written, email. The critical point is that the content of the message is clear and is clearly understood by the employee. You must also take feedback ‘on board’ and be attentive to any concerns raised. It may be useful to develop a norm where you both check-in and have a standing meeting each morning for 10 minutes; this could be in person or over the phone.

Financial: The farm business must be able to pay employees, even during periods of low milk price. Therefore, good technical and financial knowledge is essential to keep the farm financially viable.

Office: Record keeping and paper work will increase when labour is employed. You need an office. There needs to be appropriate systems / templates put in place, for example recording of hours worked, annual leave taken etc.

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Vision: There must be an overall vision and plan for the farm which incorporates the role of employed labour.

People management skills: These are often called 'soft skills' and are more difficult to quantify, than technical skills e.g. the ability to motivate people, the ability to connect and have empathy. The farmer must realise that it takes time for an employee to adapt to a new workplace or new work practices.

Time management skills: You will now have to roster your employee. The day will need to be more organized. An employee will have a finishing time so you need to ensure that a realistic plan for getting the work done is scheduled within the working hours.

Team player: This will involve the team (farmer/employee(s), family) negotiating, delegating, setting goals, measuring performance, agreeing rosters, planning etc. As the farmer, you must realize that the new employee is part of the team.



What skills have you got? What do you need? It is likely that you have strengths in some areas, but also areas you must work on. These human resource skills can be learned. There is professional help available to further develop such skills.

6 What are employee expectations likely to be?

A new employee will have a set of expectations when they commence work. The following are likely to be the minimum:

Trust: Employee will be expected to be trusted and be granted ownership of certain tasks by the employer.

Wages: Clarity on what their rate of pay will be, will they be paid overtime (when and how much?), the frequency of payment and how they will be paid e.g.: cheque, bank lodgement.

Employment contract: Sets out the terms and conditions of employment.

Safe workplace: Employee will not expect to carry out jobs which could cause them injury.

KEY POINT:

Respect is essential for both the employee and employer. Employees will expect to be treated fairly, as you would expect to be treated yourself, by an employer (could be difficult to envisage if you have never worked as an employee).

Opportunities: Employees will expect opportunities/incentives to develop themselves, while in employment. These don't necessarily have to be financial.

Good atmosphere: There should be a good working environment on the farm.

Clarity of role: Clear job description and clear terms and conditions (both conditions of contract and working/environmental conditions).

Consistency: Each day the main tasks are consistent e.g. milking times, feeding. The employer is expected to be well organised and not chopping and changing the employee's role on an ad-hoc basis.

Holidays: Holidays and days off should be agreed at an early stage. Have a plan in place should either employee or employer suddenly become unavailable e.g. due to illness, funeral etc.



Good working environment and facilities:

Provision for having tea, lunch, toilets, etc.
Advance notice: Of important changes that are occurring on the farm.

Variety: Employees will expect some variety in their work duties. It is not good practice to keep giving all the dirty and difficult jobs to the new employee. Be prepared to share these.

7 What attributes do you need an employee to have?

An attribute is a quality or characteristic of a person. You could have a very suitable qualified person in terms of skills but they may not be appropriate for your farm.

Decide on the type of personal attributes you are looking for in advance. They could include the following:

- Honesty and good attitude to work
- Willingness to learn
- Willingness to work in a team
- Capacity to do the job
- Ability to communicate
- Ability to interact socially with the family
- Ability to show initiative
- A flexible approach

Some employers will focus strongly on these traits, rather than the skills of farming. You must like the person and, the person must like you. If the person has the right traits, skills can be taught and developed where the person is interested and willing.

Attributes and skills are discussed further in terms of the job description and hiring process.





Section 1

The Hiring Process

by Valerie Farrell, Pat Clarke

Introduction

International studies show that replacing an employee is costly. Therefore, it is critical to spend time thinking and clarifying the type of person you need for your business, and the best way to recruit them. This will ensure that they remain with you long term and you will not be facing the cost and inconvenience of regularly replacing an employee.

- ① Why is it important to recruit the right person in the right way?
- ② What are the legal considerations in advance of employing?
- ③ How do I write a job description?
- ④ How do I write a job advertisement?
- ⑤ Where do I start looking to source a new employee?
- ⑥ How do I assess applications and interview candidates?
- ⑦ What are good tips for attracting new employees to work on dairy farms?

The Hiring Process

① Why is it important to recruit the 'right' person in the 'right' way

There is a major return on investment in time spent preparing to recruit the right person for your farm. The cost of recruiting the 'wrong person' for your farm can run into the thousands of euro in terms of time wasted, under-utilization of your farms assets, damage to the reputation of your farm, and the negative impact and cost it can have on other employees and family members.



② What are the legal considerations in advance of employing?

Before you hire an employee it is important to be aware of the laws relevant to agricultural employment. These laws and others will be dealt with in later sections of this manual:

- Employment law – Section 2
- Taxation laws – Section 4
- Health and safety – Section 5

You do not need to be an expert, but you need to know the basics. There are other professionals that you already engage with who can help e.g. your accountant, and solicitor, employment agencies etc.

③ How do I write a job description?

The job description sets out the **duties and responsibilities** required of the new recruit. The job description should also include the infrequent tasks that the person will need to carry out from time to time. You want to hire someone who is flexible and can carry out a range of duties on the farm.

HOW TO:



Create a job description

The work task chart in Appendix I is a useful template. Before employing, brainstorm all the major work carried out on the farm. Write it up in a list similar to Appendix I. Use the examples provided in the “Before employing” section as a starting point. Add or remove tasks to the list so that it fully reflects your current farm situation. Indicate whether yourself, family or the contractor completes these tasks.

Then start the second section, “After employing”. You decide who will carry out these jobs, incorporating the new employee. Start with yourself. You have the opportunity to decide what you wish to continue doing yourself, and what others will do. This is closely linked with the business planning process in terms of managing your work / life balance and meeting lifestyle goals. Divide the remainder of the work between contractor, family and new employee. Using this process, you will start to see the type of person you need and the skills they must have.

Be sure the responsibilities being assigned to each individual role are realistic. A further consideration is whether the job can be done in a reasonable time frame. Initially it may not be possible to assign all vacant areas of responsibility to the new employee because of their lack of skill or experience. This means that you will have to do these jobs until the appropriate skills can be hired or trained.

Farmer quote: *“Time freed up needs to go to managing a better business. You need to be prepared for this change in advance of employing”.*



Farm Tasks - Before and after an employee is recruited

		Before Employing					After Employing					
		Farmer	Family	Other	Other	Contractor	Farmer	Family	Other	Other	Contractor	New employee
MILKING	Gather cows	x	x				x	x				x
	Prepare milking machine	x	x				x	x				x
	Prepare cows	x	x				x	x				x
	Milk cows	x	x				x	x				x
	Plant hygiene Wash down	x	x				x	x				x
	Bulk tank washdown	x	x				x	x				x
	Return cows to paddock	x	x				x	x				x
	Milk weekdays am	x	x									x
	Milk weekdays pm	x	x									x
	Milk at weekends	x	x	x			x	x	x			
	Identify and treat mastitic cows	x					x					x
	Decide when cows are dried	x					x					x
	Dry off cows	x					x					x
	Communication with co-op	x					x					
	Replacement of rubberware	x					x					x

The Hiring Process

Once you are clear about what each person will do, you can complete a job description for the person. See the following template

Job Description	
Title of Job:	E.g. Farm Assistant
Location:	E.g. BallyBrown
Reporting To:	Tom Smith
Basic Function:	To carry out day to day farm labour duties on a dairy farm, herd size of 180 cows, rearing all replacements, on 150ha
Range of Duties and Responsibilities: List the main duties and responsibilities of the role <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List • List • List • 'To carry out any other duties, as may be assigned from time to time' 	

In addition to the job description, you should also think about completing a Person Specification. This is an important summary of the type of person you ideally want to hire. It sets out the qualifications, the knowledge the skills and, equally importantly, the attributes of the person that would best fit your farm. You should also consider whether some of these requirements are essential. For example, if you need someone to drive to an out farm, then it is essential that they have a current driving license.

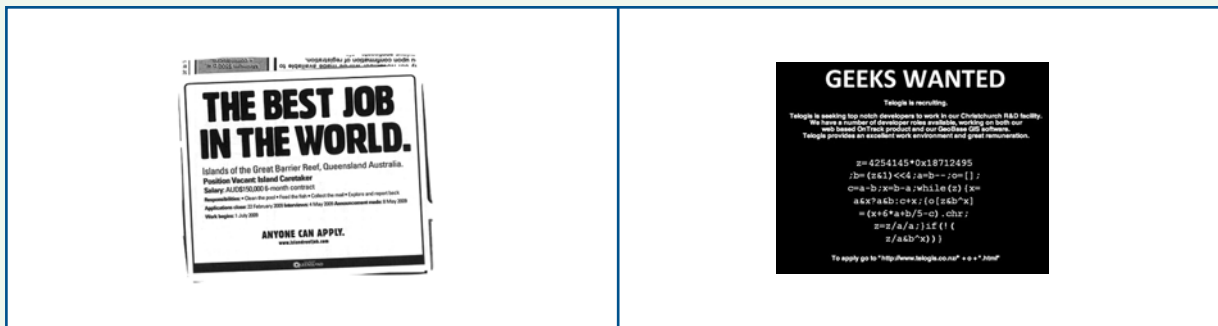
Person Specification		
	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	<i>For example</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 6 Green Cert 	<i>For example</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Dairy Diploma
Knowledge/ Skills	<i>For example</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can milk cows • Can drive tractor 	<i>For example</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a grass cover
Attributes	<i>For example</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honest, trustworthy, good communicator, flexible, ability to work in a team • sociable (interact with family at meal times), etc 	
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be important to state things like ...Candidates must satisfy legal requirements to drive unaccompanied on Irish public roads. 	

④ How do I write a job advertisement?

The wording of the job advertisement should be short and snappy. The essential information is the job title, the role described in 2-3 lines, the location, the duration of the contract, how to apply and where to get more information.

Ensure that the job description and the advert is attractive to people who are seeking employment. If there are training opportunities, travel opportunities etc. always highlight this in the job advertisement.

Don't write long or rambling job adverts, it may give the impression you are unorganized and unclear employer. Similarly, don't make the job advert too much fun or humorous, this could deter potential candidates



The following are some sample dairy job advertisements:

Post:	Dairy Farm Assistant
Location:	Midlands
Status:	Full time
Date advertised:	1st November 2017
Salary:	Negotiable

A full-time dairy job available on a 200 cow spring calving herd. Job entails milking, feeding, yard management and calf rearing. Modern farm facilities. Experience of milking is essential. Person must have a good attitude, be willing to learn and work as part of a team. Accommodation available if required. Contact 087 123456 or tom.tom@tom.ie to arrange a meeting.

Post:	Dairy Farm Worker – South East
Farm Owner:	Joe Bloggs
How to Apply:	Contact Joe - 087 1234567
Closing Date:	1st July 2017

Dairy farm worker required for 125 cow dairy farm. Will be expected to milk cows twice daily, manage replacement animals, manage grassland, and operate machinery. The ideal candidate should be from a farming background or have three years' minimum experience in a similar operation.

The Hiring Process

5 Where do I start looking to source a new employee?

There are many options for sourcing a new employee, but it is best to start locally. Farmer experience has shown that communicating (word of mouth) with local people can be a great source of potential employees.

Other options include:

Discussion group: Get the topic on the agenda for your group. You will get the experiences of group members in employing and, potentially, some contacts of people seeking work.

Neighbours: Talk to neighbours who have employees, and talk to their employees.

Employment Agencies: There are numerous employment agencies that can assist you. The Farm Relief Service (FRS) can source people to fit your job description. They can also handle the payment and taxation transactions. Visit www.frsrecruitment.com. You should also check local employment agencies at www.jobs.ie

Teagasc courses: Talk to Teagasc course co-ordinators of dairy training programmes. These include the Teagasc Professional Diploma in Dairy Farm Management (PDDFM) and Teagasc Advanced Dairy Courses at Agricultural Colleges. Check www.teagasc.ie for further details.

Other farm employees: They can suggest potential employees.

Bulletin boards: You could place your advert on local notice boards/shops/hairdressers etc.

Newspaper advertisements: Local newspapers are ideal and not expensive.

FAS office: Check local office for vacancies and advertisements.

6 How do you assess applications and interview candidates?

Once applications have been submitted by the closing date, you need to assess the applications. In preparing for the interview, you should pick out the 5-6 important areas that you want to focus on in the interview, based on your job description and specification. Areas of importance for the job might be:

- Qualifications
- Skills
- Personal attributes

You should prepare a few questions for each area which will help you gather evidence of the suitability of the person for the position.

Allow a similar amount of time for each person. For farm workers, add a practical dimension to your selection process. For example, take them on a farm walk to evaluate their grassland skill, watch them milking, etc.

For a position that requires some farm management responsibilities, the interview could be conducted partly indoors and outdoors.

When you have completed your face to face interview and/or farm walk, you need to sit down and write down your assessment of each candidate and rank them using either a marking or rating system.



⑦ What are good tips for attracting new employees to work on dairy farms?

The following are tips that farmers have found useful in attracting employees.

- Build a reputation for being a solid employer; it is the best recruitment policy
- Pay is important, so pay fairly and on time
- The description of the position is important for a new employee, it should be written down
- Be committed to training a new employee, either on the job or via external courses
- Be flexible with time off
- Remember, everybody does things differently
- Potential new employees must be compatible with other employees/family members
- It's easier to make a model employee than find one
- Most employees start a job with respect for their employers. Remember this.
- Regular meetings - inform the employee of what is new
- Have some social interaction with employees/celebrate achievements
- Give additional responsibility over time
- 'Take on board' employee suggestions/involve employees in planning
- Have a safe workplace
- Reassure staff about job security to retain them
- Provide facilities for meals, changing-room/toilet/shower
- Develop your people skills
- Share some difficult jobs with the new employee
- Provide non-monetary gifts once a year (make sure you give it to all employees not just some)
- Always give advance notice of major changes to your farm. You don't want employees finding out at the weekend that a major change has happened e.g. land purchase.
- Be well organized

KEY POINT:



The image your farm projects is important to potential employees. A potential employee starts forming an opinion once they reach the entrance of the farm. When your system becomes labour dependent, you must be able to attract good employees and retain them by having a positive farm image.





Section 1

Just Hired, What Next

by Valerie Farrell, Pat Clarke

Introduction

Once a suitable candidate has been identified and recruited, they must become familiar with your farming processes. They may also require training if there is a particular skill deficit. In addition you need to set out how this person will interact with other family members. Also, consider if there is someone else who can help the person in their early days on your farm.

- ① How do I decide what employee training is needed?
- ② Are family and other farm workers aware of the role of the new employee?
- ③ Who can help/mentor the new employee?

Just hired, What next

① How do I decide what employee training is needed?

You will have to train your new employee. Be prepared for this. Firstly, you will have to spend time training a new employee on your farm processes. This is employee orientation, where the employee becomes familiar with your milking system, machinery operation, animal handling etc. This usually occurs in the first few months and is essential.

The second type of training is individual skills training. You should be clear about:

1. What skills you need in your new employee - from your job description.
2. What skills your new employee possesses - from your interview process.

You may have selected an ideal candidate but there may be a few skills that are not at a satisfactory standard. The new employee may lack experience. In this scenario, you must make provision for these skills to be developed. The employee could be trained by yourself or someone qualified to give instruction. Or it could be a mixture of on-the job and external training.

Employee training can save money in the long term as it will result in fewer mistakes. But even when mistakes do occur, it is the approach to rectifying the situation which will determine recurrence and the ultimate cost to the business.

Further details are available in chapter 3



② Are family and other farm workers aware of the role of the new employee?

You may initially think that a new employee will work with you alone. This will not be the case. There will be interaction with your family and others (contractors, relief workers, etc.). You need to think about these relationships, in advance. Equally, you need to let your employee know about your family and the input they have in the running of the farm. The following issues need to be clear with your family from the outset:

- Why the employee is on the farm
- Employee's main role and skills
- Employee's part of the farm business (financial plan)
- Employee's use of farm equipment & machinery
- Eating, washing and toilet facilities for the employee
- Use of family dwelling by the employee
- How family knows when employee is present on farm (roster)
- Any specific requirements of employee, e.g., dietary, family circumstances
- The expected interaction with other family members

③ Who can help/mentor the new employee?

A new employee will have certain skills that they bring to your farm. You will also spend time with them so they understand your farming system and its operation. But new employees need more support than this. They need to be able to contact a more experienced and knowledgeable person to guide them through the initial year(s). This person is what we refer to as a 'mentor'. It is usually someone outside your farm. In advance of employing someone, give consideration to a possible suitable mentor for your new employee. Options include:

- Previous employee (if you have had one)
- Previous employer (of your new employee)
- Neighbour
- Discussion Group member
- Employee on another farm

A mentor must be someone that both you and the employee trust. The mentor must remain confidential to both.



Checklist for clarity on employment

	Yes/No
Have you considered the alternatives to employing a full-time labour unit?	
Are you clear on why you are employing?	
Have you written a six year business plan including the full cost of labour?	
Have you identified some concerns and solutions about employing labour?	
Have you identified the new skills that you need as an employer?	
Have you identified what skills you need an employee to have?	
Are your family members aware of the role of the new employee?	
Have you identified a mentor for the new employee?	
Have you written a job description?	
Have you identified five areas to improve, to make your farm more attractive to employees?	

