

## Some Farm Labor Myths and Realities

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	<b>Myth</b>	<b>Reality</b>
1.	If farm profits allowed higher wages, worker motivation problems would disappear.	More money would not solve most motivation problems. Money helps for a few days or weeks. Then other problems, e.g., lack of training, lack of appreciation for a job well done, boring work, aggravating co-workers and muddled communication, cause motivation problems to return.
2.	Farm employers cannot compete with nonfarm employers to attract high quality people.	Some people prefer what farm work can offer them, e.g., challenging and rewarding work, work with animals and high tech equipment, opportunity to learn and develop new skills, little chance of unemployment and being part of a small, informal and caring farm team.
3.	A farm can succeed even if its people are failing.	Longer-run, employee success such as career growth, happiness in the job and a sense of being important to the farm are crucial to the success of the farm.
4.	People who grew up on farms are better farm employees than people with no previous farm experience.	True if a farm employer has little or no orientation and training for new employees. However, many farm employers actually prefer new employees with no previous farm experience. No previous farm experience means there are fewer bad habits to be changed.
5.	Employees who own some livestock or equipment, or farm some land on their own on the side will be more motivated than people who have no ownership interest in the farm.	Many highly dedicated and motivated farm employees do not have and do not want ownership interest in the farm. They want rewarding jobs, appreciation for their contributions and fair compensation. They are not necessarily attracted to the risk and sometimes low returns from farm investments.

6.	Wage incentive plans work. People who are paid directly for their accomplishments are motivated to work harder.	Wage incentive plans work when they are tied to results directly determined by employees, e.g., coming to work on time or not causing an accident to oneself or another worker. Wage incentive plans tied to such things as crop yields, production per cow, pigs per sow or equipment repairs per acre usually fail because of so many factors uncontrollable by employees.
7.	Farm employees do not care about the success or failure of the farm business. They just want their checks on payday.	Employees can take great pride in the farm where they are employed. Being an important part of a respected farm can be highly satisfying to an employee. The best employees usually have other jobs available to them. They often have turned down higher paying offers from other employers.
8.	Newly hired farm employees with many years experience on other farms will object to training for their new jobs.	Employees who have done their jobs well on previous farms will almost always want to do well in their new jobs. The fact that some training is essential for all new employees can be made clear in job interviews, again at the time offers are made and also during orientation the first day on the job.