

Human Resource/labour Management Workshops

Pig Farmer comments – work shop 1

- Employees can have a huge role in how your farm runs (both good and bad)
- Maintaining good workers
 - Money is a consideration
 - Amount of pay
 - Only talk gross pay (net pay gets confusing, let them take care of their own taxes)
 - Sick pay at discretion
 - Weekly pay is standardized
 - Employer compensates for motor travel if they don't live on farm
 - Non-monetary gifts once a year (make sure you give it to all employees not just some)
 - Hours and conditions
 - Has mostly middle-aged workers, understands employees have families, things come up. As long as worker makes it up later that's fine
 - Hours 8 to 5 with 1.5 hr taken off for breaks (1 for lunch, 0.5 for tea)
 - Every second weekend
 - 4 hrs in the morning for the weekends
 - Brings working week into 44 hours
 - Contract with employee is provided
 - Performance of farm
 - Never let an employee damage farm, won't take the risk, if an employee has done something very wrong he's replaced
 - Respect (must be mutual)
 - Everyone's responsible for their part of the farm
 - Farmer personally trains all employees (employee cannot be held accountable if they know or don't know how to do a task)
 - Farmer prefers not to leave training to managers
 - Farmer does weekly walk-around with the managers responsible for each section rather than sit-down formal meetings. Finds this is a good relaxed way to know what's going on
 - Farmer wouldn't use the employees to do jobs they haven't been signed up to do like weeding the family garden just because there's extra time at the end of the day. Let them go home early here and this time can be used again.

Pig farmer comments – workshop 2

Description: Farmer mills and grows all feed and has a number of pig units

- Communicate on weekly basis to all staff
- Each unit has a manager
 - Each manager has no more than 3-4 employees under him
 - Managers relay information to owners
- Recruiting staff
 - Normally go by word of mouth
- New staff - They get a contract, are trained by unit manager, company policies are on contract, 20 days holidays, 40 hr week, pension option with more mature employees
- Health and safety
 - Employees read and sign the Health and safety statement
 - Farm provides protective gear that the employees need
- Training
 - Most come from a farming background so have basic animal understanding
 - Training in their abilities to handle animals (pigs) provided
 - Some of the best employees have no experience with pigs but have worked with animals in the past
 - Managers responsible for training
 - Six month probation period before hired on to full time
 - **Pig management course** offered for free, paid for by farmer to go to training if employee has been with them 2-3 years to help. 2 days a month, after course, they're a safe bet that they'll be a long-term employee
- Communication
 - Monitoring system and reports, Teagasc provides to do reports
 - Figures of farm sent in quarterly
 - Reports studied then owners meet with management and staff to determine where they're doing well and where they can improve
 - When the business is transparent with employees, there's little room for misinterpretation and motivation stays high
 - Every Friday evening brings pig performance data to owners to keep them up to date
- Summary
 - Good employee/employer **relationship** crucial
 - Look for someone you can **get along with**
 - Use **references, word of mouth**
 - **Training** and keeping staff interested and involved is key

