

The Personnel Planning Process

Effective personnel management creates of a work environment where workers can fulfill their needs while meeting the objectives of the firm. This social, personal, creative and financial environment doesn't happen by chance; it requires planning.

Whether you already have farm employees or whether you have just made the decision to hire an employee, careful and detailed planning is needed. Planning provides a basis for seeking out employees who have the skills and personal characteristics that best meet the needs of your business. The planning process should result in the employment of the correct number of staff, with the necessary talents and skills, doing the appropriate job, performing the right activity and above all working as a team towards the achievement of objectives.

By taking personnel planning seriously and giving the process the time and effort it requires, you will reduce problems that can arise if the most effective employee isn't hired. Not having the most effective person or team employed can have high costs. These costs include accidents and injuries, costly repairs, lost time, high employee turnover, lower yields and a variety of other problems which any manager would rather not have to handle.

Personnel Planning Process

- Assess Current Situation
 - Goals
 - Yourself
 - Labour Needs
 - Labour Component
 - Working Environment
- Is There a Match?
- Are New Employees Needed?

The personnel planning process has three steps.

1. Assess your current situation

- your goals
- yourself
- your labour needs
- your current labour component
- your working environment and labour practices

2. Decide if your labour needs and labour component match

3. Decide if new employees are needed and proceed with the hiring process.

Step 1: Assess Your Current Situation

Personnel Planning Process	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Assess Current Situation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Goals
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yourself
<input type="checkbox"/>	Labour Needs
<input type="checkbox"/>	Labour Component
<input type="checkbox"/>	Working Environment
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is There a Match?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are New Employees Needed?

Goals

Know where you want your farm to go. What is your vision for your business one year, five years, or ten years from now. Do you plan to expand, improve, change or stay the same?

The more specific you are about your goals, the more accurately you can determine your personnel needs. For example, "I want to increase my dairy herd to 65 cows" will offer much more guidance than "I want my dairy to grow."

Write down your specific goals and a time when you want to achieve them. For more information on objectives and goals, refer to the first section in Book Two, "Hiring", in the *B.C. Farm Employers' Handbook*.

Assess yourself

Do a self-assessment. What are your personal characteristics? What experience and supervisory skills do you have? What are your attitudes toward employees?

Self analysis isn't easy and often isn't accurate, but it is an important start. In farm businesses, managers often strive for close working relationships with their employees, often need to delegate important responsibilities, and want employees to feel a commitment to the goals of the business. Having an employer and employee who are compatible is essential, but it is unlikely to happen by chance. Start by asking yourself the following questions. You may wish to have your spouse or another person involved in the review.

What are my strengths and weaknesses? _____

Am I a good teacher? _____

Do I have patience to work with people with no farm background or little farm experience? _____

Am I a good listener? _____

Do I trust my employees? _____

Do I have biases which could get in the way of developing a good relationship with my employees? e.g. tobacco, alcohol, politics, breed of livestock, race, religion, _____

Am I a perfectionist? _____

Do the current employees respect and like me? _____

Do I tend to be a pessimist or an optimist? _____

Do I delegate well? _____

Think about the answers you gave to the above questions and imagine the effect they may have on a person who works for you.

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Assess your labour needs

Next, assess your labour requirements. How much labour do you need and when? How much do you need during various seasons?

Use the Labour Estimate Worksheet on the next page as a guide to determining your personnel needs. You'll end up with a statement of the kind and amount of work to be done.

The first two sections of the worksheet help you analyze the types of tasks that need to be done, when they need to be done and how long they take.

The third section gives you a total of your labour requirements. Be sure to include time for management.

The fourth section (on the following page) helps you determine how many employees you need and what they need to be: regular or occasional, skilled or unskilled, technical or management. Your own farm records will be useful in completing a labour estimate worksheet. Realize as you complete this worksheet the labour requirements will vary with the abilities of your workers and with the circumstances under which they work.

Labour Estimate Worksheet

Crop Enterprises

Type of Crop	Length of Time	Total Hours	People Required

Animal Enterprises

Animal Care	Length of Time	Total Hours	People Required

Total Farm Enterprises

Type of Work	Total Hours Per Year	Total Hours Per Week	Who Does It	No. of Hours Per Week Per Person

Labour Estimate Worksheet (cont'd)

Annual Hourly Analysis By Employee _____

Employee	# of Normal Weekly Hrs.	# of Normal Daily Hrs.	# of Weekly Hrs. Including Overtime	# of Daily Hrs. Including Overtime	# of Possible Overtime Weeks

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Assess your current labour component

Look at your current labour component in your farming operation. As you take this inventory, include yourself and any family members who are actively involved in the farm. Describe the job each of these people do. As you write out these descriptions, think about the duties of the position, the qualifications that are required, the level of responsibility that the employee is expected to take, and the reporting structure. For assistance in doing this, refer to the section on "Job Description" in Book 2 of the *B.C. Farm Employers' Handbook*. An abbreviated Job Description Form is shown below.

Now think about your individual employees and appraise their past experience and performance as well as their personalities, needs and desires.

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: _____

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION: _____

KEY TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES: _____

SUPERVISED BY: _____

SUPERVISE: _____

SKILL REQUIREMENTS: _____

EXPERIENCE: _____

TRAINING: _____

SALARY RANGE: _____ WORK HOURS _____

BENEFITS: _____

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Assess your working environment

To attract good employees, your working environment needs to be attractive to the worker; it needs to be a place where your prospective employees might want to work. Efforts need to be taken to create an environment where employees are appreciated and recognized.

Think about your organizational structure. Who is the boss? Who reports to whom? What can each employee decide on his or her own? These questions are especially important in a family operation. Having to report to two bosses is very difficult. It is one of the major reasons employees leave.

Organizational structure must be dealt with. No two farms are organized alike because managers, employees, families and the work involved vary from one farm to another. Keys to effective organizing include proper planning of the organization, clear relationships among the people in the organization, delegation of authority, clear limits to delegation, authority accompanied with responsibility and a structure that is not too complex or too simple.

How many of these advantages can you offer?

- competitive wages
- flexible work schedule
- opportunity for training
- an appealing incentive program
- a good work environment
- good people to work with
- good equipment in safe condition
- future potential - chance for growth and responsibility

Unless you checked several of the items in this list, you may have trouble attracting good employees. How many of the features you didn't check could you incorporate into your work place?

Step 2: Decide If Your Labour Needs and Labour Component Match

Now that you've taken a look at your skills, your labour requirements, your current labour supply and your work environment, you can see if your current labour supply and your needs match. Look again at the labour requirements you outlined and at the abilities and skills of your current employees. There are a variety of findings your assessment might produce.

Possible Findings

1. You have a good match. Your current employees have the skills and desire to do all the jobs your farm operation requires.
2. You have the right number of good employees but some changes in the jobs they do would work better.
3. You have too many employees or the wrong employee for the job you need done.
4. You don't have enough employees to do the work that needs to be done.

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If your assessment shows finding #1, your employees will continue in the present jobs.

If your assessment shows finding #2, spend some time assessing your employees and developing new job descriptions that would match your needs and their talents.

If your assessment shows finding #3, consider if an employee could be retrained. Or, you might consider expanding your operation to make use of valued employees. If neither of those options works, the dismissal of an employee may be necessary. This might be the outcome of a major change in your business where you no longer require an employee's particular skills, or it may be the result of previous unsatisfactory employee performance. Read the section on Dismissal and Termination in Book 5 before dismissing an employee.

If your assessment shows the fourth finding, proceed with the next step in the personnel planning process.

Step 3:

Decide if New Employees are Needed and Proceed with Hiring

Before you hire a new employee, you will want to assess the job that you need done and think carefully about the qualifications an employee would require to do the job. The key is to hire employees who fit the job description in the essential areas.

How to hire an employee is discussed in detail in Book 2 of the *B.C. Farm Employers' Handbook*.

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Step 1: Assess Current Situation

A Case Example

James Brown is a 39-year old dairy farmer. He is married to Nancy and has two children, Robert 16 years old and Shannon 12 years old. James enjoys good health and has to this point been able to run his operation with his wife, one full-time employee, one part-time milker and seasonal labour. His son does some work on the farm during the summer and occasionally on weekends.

James is looking to expand his operation by purchasing a 40-cow dairy operation about two kilometres away. The purchase would include land, buildings, cows and quota. James realizes that the expanded operation would be too big for him to run with his current staff and must decide what his labour requirements will be should the purchase go through.

Here's how James Brown could use the Personnel Planning Process.

Goals

One of James' goals is to expand his herd of 90 purebred Holsteins with 15 followers and calves. He knows his farm buildings and equipment are in good repair. Another of his goals is to continue to make his farm a well kept and run operation. With his 80 hectares (200 acres) in crop (hay and corn), he aims at harvesting 4 crops in a good season (2 silage and 2 hay).

The farm he is looking to purchase is a 40-cow herd with only four followers and calves. There are 24 hectares (60 acres) of land and the farm buildings are in need of repair and the equipment is fair. If he were to purchase this farm, he would move the operation to his present location.

Self Assessment

As James thinks about his strengths and weaknesses, he sees himself as being a competent and caring employer but realizes that he may lack in

assertiveness. He thinks he would be a good teacher but also can see that his tendency to be a perfectionist may make him impatient with an inexperienced employee. At times in the past, he has tried to delegate jobs but has often ended up doing them himself because he thinks he can do them better. He knows he's a good listener and certainly understands the need to treat an employee well.

Labour Needs and Labour Component

As James considers the implications of expanding his operation, he asks himself some questions: Will my current staff be adequate or will I have to hire more people? If I hire more staff, what jobs will I assign to them? Will I need to reassign some duties to my current staff? How will this change affect my family? Should I bring my son into the operation? Is he interested in taking a more responsible role in the operation?

Having asked himself these questions, James decides that it is time to call his local Agricultural Employment Service for some assistance. The AES representative assisted James in writing a job description for each of the people working on his farm. He was also encouraged to make use of a Labour Estimate Worksheet.

James starts by analyzing his current labour needs and labour component.

Jeff Anderson, the one full-time employee, does one milking a day 5 days per week and the rest of the time does general farm work including feeding. He gets two days off per week, and works long days during hay silage and corn silage harvest time without any time off. This is usually for about 8 to 10 days.

James' wife, Nancy, does one milking a day 5 days per week. James has a part-time milker, Ken Norton, who comes in to do milking 2 days per week. Nancy would like to quit doing the one milking per day should they decide to expand the operation.

James himself looks after all the management duties and all of the herd health care duties as well as assisting Jeff with some of the general farm work. He does the field preparation and planting for the corn crop. He also does all of the hay and silage cutting.

During the hay season, James hires 5 casual employees to help bring in the hay.

Illustration 1

Using his current situation, James completed the Labour Estimate Worksheet. His figures are shown in Illustration 1.

Crop Enterprises Currently 200 Acres Hay & Corn

Type of Crop	Length of Time	Total Hours	People Required
Hay Silage (end of May)	8 days; 10 hrs/day	160	(2) James & Jeff
Hay 8,000 Bales June/July/ Aug	3 days; 10 hrs/day 2 times per year	60	(1) James
Hay 8,000 Bales June/July/Aug	3 days; 6 hrs/day 2 times per year	180	(5) Casual employees
Field Preparation	4 days; 10 hrs/day	40	(1) James
Corn Planting	4 days; 10 hrs/day	40	(1) James
Corn Silage Sept/Oct	8 days; 10 hrs/day	160	(2) James & Jeff

Animal Enterprises Currently 90 cow herd

Animal Care	Length of Time	Total Hours	People Required
Milking 2X/day 3 hrs/shift	6 hrs/day X 365 days	2190	Jeff - 1 shift (3) Nancy - 1 shift Ken - 2 days/wk
Herd Care	2 hrs/day X 365 days	730	(1) James
General - Feeding manure removal	7 hrs/day X 365 days	2555	James - 3 hr/day (2) Jeff - 4 hrs/day
Farm Management	4 hrs/day X 6 days/wk	1248	(1) James

Total Farm Enterprises Currently 200 acres 90 cow herd

Type of Work	Total Hours Per Year	Total Hours Per Week	Who Does It	No. of Hours Per Week Per Person
Milking	2190	42	Jeff Nancy Ken	15 15 12
Herd Care	730	14	James	14
General	2548	49	James Jeff	21 28
Management	1248	24	James	24
Hay Silage	160	140	James Jeff	70 70
Field Preparation	40	40	James	40
Corn Planting	40	40	James	40
Haying	240	240	James 5 Casuals	60 180
Corn Silage	160	140	James Jeff	70 70

Annual Hourly Analysis By Employee Currently

Employee	# of Normal Weekly Hrs.	# of Normal Daily Hrs.	# of Weekly Hrs. Including Overtime	# of Daily Hrs. Including Overtime	# of Possible Overtime Weeks
James	59	8.5	129	18.5	5
Nancy	15	3	-	-	-
Jeff	43	8.5	113	16	2
Ken	12	6	-	-	-
5 Casuals	180	6	-	-	-

Step 2: Decide If Your Labour Needs and Labour Component Match

After analyzing his current situation, James was surprised to see how many hours per week and per day he actually spends working on his farm. It is very clear to James that should he expand his operation, he will need to make significant staff changes. Next, he takes a look at his working environment.

Working Environment

As James thought about the advantages he could offer employees, he came up with the following list:

- good wages and benefits and is considering an incentive program (giving a calf to his employee)
- one day in seven and every second weekend off
- housing with the usual perks
- good work environment - his buildings and equipment are in good working condition
- he's willing to listen and consult with his employee
- he would like to include a good employee in any future growth plans

Having done a labour needs and labour component assessment, James sees that, if he purchases the new place, he will need to make significant staff changes. He discusses possible changes with his family and staff. During the discussion, a number of issues surfaced. Nancy reaffirmed her desire to quit milking. Jeff expressed a desire to take on more responsibility. James also expressed a desire to delegate some of the work he has been doing to someone else. Robert, although he is still in school, expressed a desire to take a more active role on the farm during the summer months and on Saturdays.

After considerable discussion, it was decided that James would expand his operation by purchasing the dairy farm down the road. The staff changes would be as follows: James would continue to take on the management role as well as some of the general farm duties. He would also continue to do the field preparation, corn planting, haying and silage work. Jeff agreed to take on the responsibility of herd care and most of the general farm duties. He would also help James to bring in the silage but would no longer have milking duties. Instead, it was agreed that a new full-time milker position would be needed. That person would be responsible for

Illustration 2

(expanded operation
with staff changes)

milking both shifts five days per week. Nancy agreed to milk two shifts one day per week. Robert agreed to take on the responsibility of milking two shifts one day per week as well as to take on some of the general farm duties during silage and haying. James would continue to hire five casual employees through the AES to bring in the hay.

Using the Labour Estimate Worksheet once again, James comes up with the following figures as shown in Illustration 2.

Crop Enterprises Expanded Operation 260 Acres Hay and Corn

Type of Crop	Length of Time	Total Hours	People Required
Hay Silage (end of May)	12 days; 10 hrs/day	240	(2) James & Jeff
Hay 10,000 Bales June/July/Aug	4 days; 10 hrs/day 2 times per year	80	(1) James
Hay 10,000 Bales June/July/Aug	4 days; 6 hrs/day 2 times per year	240	(5) Casual employees
Field Preparation	6 days; 10 hrs/day	60	(1) James
Corn Planting	6 days; 10 hrs/day	60	(1) James
Corn Silage	12 days; 10 hrs/day	240	(2) James & Jeff

Animal Enterprises Expanded Operation 120 Cow Herd

Animal Care	Length of Time	Total Hours	People Required
Milking 2X/day	8 hrs/day X 365 days 2-4 hrs/shifts/day	2920	milker - 5 day/wk (3) Nancy - 1 day/wk Robert - 1 day/wk
Herd Care	3 hrs/day X 365 days	1095	(1) Jeff
General - Feeding	7 hrs/day X 365 days	2555	James, Robert, (3) Jeff
Farm Management	4 hrs/day X 6 days/wk	1248	(1) James

Total Farm Enterprises Expanded Operation

Type of Work	Total Hours Per Year	Total Hours Per Week	Who Does It	No. of Hours Per Week Per Person
Milking	2920	56	milker Nancy Ken	40 8 8
Herd Care	1095	21	Jeff	21
General	2548	49	James Jeff (& Robert?)	21 28
Management	1248	24	James	24
Hay Silage	240	140	James Jeff	70 70
Field Preparation	60	60	James	60
Corn Planting	60	60	James	60
Haying	320	320	James 5 Casuals	80 240
Corn	240	140	James Jeff	70 70

Annual Hourly Analysis By Employee Expanded Operation

Employee	# of Normal Weekly Hrs.	# of Normal Daily Hrs.	# of Weekly Hrs. Including Overtime	# of Daily Hrs. Including Overtime	# of Possible Overtime Weeks
James	45	8.5	69	12	5
Nancy	8	8	-	-	-
Jeff	49	10	63	12	3
Milker	40	8	-	-	-
5 Casuals	240	6	-	-	-
Robert	(milking) 8 (summer) 40	8 8	- -	- -	- -

Step 3: Decide if New Employees are Needed and Proceed with Hiring

James decides that he needs one full-time employee to make expansion of his dairy herd feasible. He is confident he has or can develop the skills to be a good personnel manager (the first ones he'll work on are assertiveness and delegation skills). He feels that his labour environment is such that he should be able to attract a good employee. He proceeds with the hiring process.