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F Noon - 1:50; BalE 118
M 8:00 - 9:50; BalE 118

AG PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

AREc 476, Fall 2007
(CRN 15125; 2-Credits, P/N)

Course Objective: That you will acquire a working knowledge of the concepts, principles and terminology of agricultural personnel management through participation in seminar presentations by industry guest speakers, informal post-seminar luncheons, and work on related case studies.

Prerequisites: None. However, upper division standing is encouraged.

Sessions: The detailed schedule and possible topical areas are:

Friday, September 28

Topic: Introductory material.

1. Overview of the topical content and speakers to be providing seminar leadership for discussions related to those topics — AREc Staff Paper 07-101, “Agricultural Personnel Management: Developing and Using Case Studies.”
2. Determine student interest and backgrounds through discussions in class and a written student profile survey. Discuss possible refinements to the content of the seminars.
3. Overview of economic principles related to ag labor/management relations.

Speaker: Larry Burt, Ph.D. — utilizing various resource materials and primer concepts of labor economics.

Friday, October 5

Topic: The hiring process.

1. Managing people in an agricultural enterprise: components of effective personnel management including written employee policies, wage level, working conditions, opportunity to learn and grow within the job, social and environmental climate, and need for recognition.
2. Getting ready to hire: the importance of matching applicant skills with a specific job; distinguishing between skill, knowledge and ability areas; and focusing on the ideal candidate for a position vis-a-vis a replacement for a former employee who held the position.
3. Guidelines for creating a job description.
4. Developing a recruitment ad to properly describe the position and attract strong employee candidates.

5. Creating a job application to facilitate the selection process and assure that information is gathered uniformly on all applicants.
6. Interviewing practices and the concept of prospective employer/employee mutual evaluation.
7. Employee selection and the possible need for practical tests to screen applicants.

Speaker: Mike Gerig, Training & Asset Manager, Wilco Farmers, Inc., Mt. Angel.

Readings: Staff Paper 07-101: introductory material on pages 1-6; case problem, “Mid-Valley Services, Inc.: To Hire or Fire.” on pages 6-9.

Monday, October 8

Case Study

Topic: The Hiring Process: “Mid-Valley Services, Inc.: To Hire or Fire.”

Friday, October 12

Topic: **Performance appraisal, wage/benefit compensation, and promotion.**

1. Record keeping requirements.
2. The importance of communication between employer and employee as an interactive team process that encourages feedback, involvement and creativity.
3. Improving rating reliability in a subjective evaluation environment.
4. Principles of incentive pay — why some systems work and others fail.
5. Picking a benefits package and creating associated paperwork systems and summary statements.
6. Promotion incentives for employees and impacts on peers and supervisors.

Speaker: Jerry Bumgarner, CCP, Director of Research & Compensation Services, Cascade Employers Assoc., Inc., Salem

Reading: Staff Paper 07-101: case problem, “Performance Incentives: An Issue of Safety” on pages 9-14.

Monday, October 15

Case Study

Topic: Performance Appraisal: “Performance Incentives: An Issue of Safety.”

Friday, October 19

Topic: Personnel management from the employer perspective.

1. Practical problems and potential solutions for labor relations.
2. Supervisory structures for improved worker productivity.
3. Perspectives on unionization and the collective bargaining process.

Speaker: Mel Omeg, Owner/Operator of Omeg Orchards, The Dalles

Reading: Staff Paper 07-101: case problem, “Big☺Berry Farms, Inc.: To Expand or Not Expand” on pages 14-19.

Monday, October 22

Case Study

Topic: Employer Perspective: “Big☺Berry Farms, Inc.: To Expand or Not Expand.”

Friday, October 26

Topic: Personnel management from the employee perspective.

1. Practical problems and potential solutions for dealing with employers/supervisors.
2. Supervisory structures that can facilitate worker productivity.
3. Perspectives on unionization and the collective bargaining process.

Speaker: Jenna Reed, J.D., MBA, Director of Human Resource Development Services, Cascade Employers Association, Inc., Salem

Reading: Staff Paper 07-101: case problem, “Creative Evolution: Planning for the Employee Life Cycle & Handbook” on pages 20-23.

Monday, October 29

Case Study

Topic: Employee Perspective: “Creative Evolution: Planning for the Employee Life Cycle & Handbook.”

Grading: This 2.0 credit class is graded on a Pass/No-Pass basis. To earn a Pass, participation is required at all meetings of the class including both seminar and case-study days. In rare instances, an absence will be excused by the instructor provided that the student communicates about a serious matter in advance and receives approval from the instructor. A make-up assignment will typically be required. An un-excused absence is grounds for an Incomplete or No-Pass grade.