

MEDIA CONTACT:

Beth Holtzman
(802) 476-2003, ext. 204
Email: beth.holtzman@uvm.edu

NEW FARMER ONLINE WORKSHOPS ADDRESS LABOR QUESTIONS

Burlington--Finding and retaining good labor is one of the biggest challenges that beginning farmers face.

To help these farmers gain the knowledge and tools needed to successfully recruit and manage employees, the University of Vermont (UVM) Extension New Farmer Project, in collaboration with University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension and the University of Wisconsin Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems, will host an online workshop series, beginning January 19.

The workshops are geared to produce and diversified livestock producers who are new to managing employees and to farmers who are considering changes to how they arrange for, and manage, labor on their farms.

The fee for each two-part workshop in the 2022 Farm Labor Dashboard Workshop Series is \$35. Scholarships and discounts if registering for multiple workshops are available but must be requested and approved in advance of registration and payment to receive a voucher code. Decisions are typically made within three business days although individuals are encouraged to apply early.

Advance registration is required for each workshop. For details about the sessions, financial assistance or to register, go to <https://go.uvm.edu/farmlabor-wrkshp>. To request a disability-related accommodation, contact UVM Student Accessibility Services at access@uvm.edu or (802) 656-7753.

All workshops will be held from 1-2 p.m. with the exception of the February 1 session, which will run from 1-2:30 p.m. Dates and topics are as follows:

January 19 and 26: Practical Communication Tools for Employee Management. This workshop will introduce common and effective tools and practices to improve communication and employee performance with an opportunity to use an online personnel policy generator to develop a customized farm policy manual.

February 1: Building Successful Work Teams. This session focuses on strategies for farmers to be better communicators and better managers of employees, customers and family members. By using the DiSC Workplace Profile, they will identify communication and management preferences and how these impact recruitment, hiring and retention of employees. Note that this

session is 90 minutes and requires preregistration by January 26 to allow time to complete a self-assessment prior to the workshop.

February 9 and 16: Hiring and Retaining Employees on Your Farm. Participants will learn effective strategies for hiring and keeping employees and ways to help them optimize their talents. They will learn how to use an online job description generator to develop job descriptions for their operation with feedback from educators.

Feb 23 & March 2: Planning Your Payroll: Estimating employee costs and trade-offs with mechanization. Participants will learn how to estimate the complete cost of their employees, including payroll taxes, workers' compensation, and any benefits beyond regular hourly wages, as well as explore how investments in mechanization can affect labor needs and costs.

March 8 and 15: The Art of Negotiation: Getting What You Need. This workshop will delve into what negotiation is, including preparation and execution of a successful negotiation and how to preserve a relationship when the negotiation is unsuccessful. Participants will role play negotiation approaches relevant to common labor management situations and develop a written plan for a negotiation.

April 5 and 12: Cultivating a Safe, Healthy and Productive Crew workshop. The discussion will focus on training employees to safely use tools and personal protective equipment and ergonomic approaches to farm tasks that will support season-long productivity and prevent injuries and lost work time.

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