Finding the right people for our operation, and keeping them, is the key to an efficient, productive, and profitable business. In this job aid, we focus on the first part of that equation - recruiting and hiring the right people.

**Preparing to Hire**

**Make Time to Find the Right Employee**

You want qualified employees, who fit with your culture and understand the role they play in the success of your operation. It takes time to figure out what "right" is. You first need to explore what knowledge, skills, and abilities you need for this job, now and in the future. Therefore:

- Do not rush the hire.
- If under pressure, use a temporary service, or ask someone for short-term help.
- Explain to the rest of the farm team the importance of keeping a position open until you get the right person. Create team support, which is critical to get through turnovers.
  - While the position is open, your remaining crew must work harder and/or longer hours.
  - Cross-training is valuable in support of this.

**Know Your Position Needs**

If you are looking for a good fit now and for the future, how do you determine what you need in this position? Plan to involve your team as you:

- Identify skills and abilities needed.
- Update/create a job description.
- Clarify if this open position is full-time or other.

**Expand Your Recruiting Options**

Recruiting today may look different than in the past. Consider that you may get candidates through walk-ins, employee referrals, and word-of-mouth, as well as traditional advertisements.

**Interviewing**

- **Know what you want to ask, and create a list of interview questions** so that you are appropriately organized and can apply pre-thought-out needs and cultural fit questions in the interview process.
- **Involve others in the process.** Team members should be prepared in advance for this opportunity, understand that their responsibility is to participate in the interview and give input afterward, but also know the end decision is your responsibility.
- **Ask all candidates the same questions.** This assures consistency and a fair comparison of candidates. It also supports the idea of creating the interview questions in advance.
- **Take notes and review them with the team.** Let the candidate know up front you'll be taking notes. Take time after the interview to review your notes and gather input team, if they are involved in the interview.
Selection

• **Use multiple methods to gauge a candidate’s skills and characteristics**, such as written applications, written tests, oral tests, interviews, practical tests, and references.

• **Avoid basing your decision on the first impressions.** You’ve heard this before, but it’s an easy trap to fall into. Though your gut reaction and initial impression may be part of the process, make sure you give the candidate fair opportunity to change that impression (for good or bad!) through pre-prepared interview questions.

• **Do not make up your mind until you have interviewed all the candidates.** Remember, your goal is to find the BEST candidate, not just an acceptable one. Make time to interview all qualified candidates. Making time will save you time later!

• **Observe the sample candidates completing tasks that reflect the job.** This will give you more information upon which to base a decision, and it gives the candidate a better perspective on the job that awaits.