

Effective Communication is The Key

Farmers, supervisors and employees need to commit to making effective communication a priority at their workplace and one of the core components of their job.

We listen to people every day, but how well do we do it? Truly effective communication relies on people listening with the intent to understand. Being able to talk freely with your farm team and feel that they understand what you are needing is a huge gift! Farm businesses sometimes get stuck with problems when they get trapped in the miscommunication cycle.

Talking to staff is part of the job

Decide today that you are going to become more self-aware and self-controlled around the way you communicate to your farm team. Good communication is the foundation of successful farms. Talking and listening well is the ultimate risk management tool.

1. Accept that Solving Problems is Up to You
2. Know your communication style
3. Ask for what you need
4. Be aware of your communication 'Hot Buttons'
"I have trouble with the "strong silent types" who say "I don't know" when I ask them a question"
 Farm coaches are wired to ask tough questions which can cause discomfort, but the outcome of knowing what everyone is thinking, feeling, and wanting is a huge benefit to courageous conversations.

5 TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE

COMMUNICATION



1. **COMMUNICATE** RELENTLESSLY
 Communicate information, thoughts and ideas clearly – and frequently – through different media
2. **SIMPLIFY** AND BE DIRECT
 Say what you mean. Be direct, . Simple communication can be smart communication.
3. **LISTEN** AND ENCOURAGE INPUT
 Hold your thoughts and encourage the other person to offer ideas and solutions before you give yours.
4. **ILLUSTRATE** THRGHOU STORIES
 When you tell a good story, you give life to a vision, goal, or objective.
5. **AFFIRM** WITH ACTIONS
 if people hear one things from you and see another, your credibility is shot. People need to trust you.

Small Steps Make a Huge Difference:

1. Speak in a calm and respectful tone. Look each other in the eye.
2. Choose the right time for the type of communication; "is this a good time to talk about..."
3. Paraphrase what you heard the other person say to check that you got the correct intention of the message. Texting doesn't have this dimension of tone of voice, which is why texting causes lots of communication breakdown and conflicts.
4. Make requests to deal with hot issues in a formalised meeting session, at a certain date and time, so that folks can process their responses and do research on the issue before the meeting.
5. Ask better questions. – see Ask Effective Questions
6. Accept that people communicate and think differently
 - a. Know your style
 - b. Identify other's styles
 - c. Bridge the gap and speak their language
7. Build a safe environment
 - a. Trust
 - b. Respect open to thinking differently
 - c. Comfortable to speak up
8. Acknowledge other's view points
 - a. Listen
 - b. You don't have to agree
9. Talk about common vision and goals
10. Establish goals and objectives
11. Have a purpose or intention for every communication
12. Know what you want/ everyone to leave knowing/doing
13. Know what you need form others
14. Be positive and have fun

Put your message in writing

Scenario:

Writing it down helps to make sure it gets done

- The Robinsons have two full-time milkers on their farm and a relief milker who works on Wednesday afternoon and weekends. On Wednesday morning the full-time milkers noticed a problem with the milk vat and reported it to the farm manager. The manager has contacted the mechanic, but he can't make it until the afternoon when Julie will be in to relieve the full-time milkers.
- As Julie is not aware of the problem, Steve left her a note to bring her up to speed with the situation.

To: Julie
From: Steve
Date: 6/8/09

VAT REPAIRS

The vat has been cutting in and out and not cooling below 5°C.

Jim has contacted the mechanic and he will be coming in the afternoon at 4pm to look for the problem during milking.

The mechanic is Sam McConnell, mobile n° 0402 3531333.

I will be sorting heaters on the dry block, so call if there are problems (0400 221000).

Besides leaving notes you can also use message boards or whiteboards, which everyone checks when they arrive at work. Give someone the responsibility of keeping the information on the board up to date and for transferring the important information to a permanent location (e.g. the computer).

In recent times, text messaging has become a common form of communication. It is an effective way of relaying messages accurately, time efficiently and with minimal use of technology.

There are times when dialogue between people is important for relaying messages and in these cases it is better to speak with someone.

Tip: Follow up with a conversation if it is important

When something is important, don't just rely on written communication to inform people as there is no guarantee they will read it and read it in time. Follow up with a conversation.

7Cs Of EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

1

CLARITY

Be clear with your message, keep it simple.

2

CONCISE

Least possible words saves time for sender and receiver

3

CORRECT

Accurate facts and figures, proper use of grammar, spelling and language

4

COMPLETE

Must convey all the facts required to convey your ideas

5

CONSIDERATION

Consider the audience and their requirements

6

CONCRETE

Be definite and specific, not vague

7

COURTESY

Think about the receiver, their view point and be respectful