

Coaching staff reduces work errors and therefore helps ensure that work is completed correctly. Improved work performance leads to better business success. Coaching also increases job satisfaction and motivation for staff and can help in retaining good employees.

What is on-farm coaching?

Coaching or training can be delivered in two forms:

The coaching method used to introduce new skills to employees while they are on-farm performing the job is known as on-farm coaching. The impact of on-farm coaching is direct, rapid and significant.

Off-farm coaching involves the coaching of employees outside the farm location.



Effective on-farm coaching:

On-farm coaching is usually very specific and practical to the tasks a person is required to perform in their job role. To make on-farm coaching effective you need to create a good atmosphere for learning in.

You need your employee to feel comfortable enough to try new things tasks and if not successful the first time to give it another go. This means you need to be careful not to talk down to employees or dismiss any ideas they have from previous experience. However don't assume what knowledge or experience your employee has - ask them. This will help to ensure that you don't under-explain concepts.



How to start the process for coaching staff on-farm

1. Explain to the employee why the skill or task is important.
2. Find out from the employee what they already know about the skill and determine what knowledge is missing.
3. Break down the skill or task to be taught into simple components.
4. Demonstrate and explain the skill to the employee slowly. Pause between steps and be sure all steps can be clearly seen.
5. Allow the employee to go through a skill step-by-step while you talk through what is to be done and help out where needed.
6. Allow the employee to demonstrate the skill on his/her own without input from you. Ask the employee to give feedback on how they did. For example:
 - What did they do well?
 - What did not go well?
 - What do they think they can improve?
7. Give feedback to the employee on how they performed the skill. Don't forget to note the positive points.
8. Repeat steps 4, 5, 6 and 7 as needed – until the employee is competent performing the task.
9. Encourage the employee to ask questions at any time



Ensuring that coaching leads to learning:

Coaching a person does not automatically lead to learning. Here are four effective on-farm coaching methods to implement with your next recruit:

1. One-on-one coaching

Coaching is a positive way to train your new recruits. It is role-specific and seeks to comprehensively train new employees on the duties of their role. On-farm coaching is also an excellent way to immerse new recruits with the farm culture, fast-track their networking within the industry, and embed them with your farm values and practices.

2. Mentoring

Mentoring is a mutually beneficial coaching technique in which a more senior staff member provides support and guidance to a new staff member. This is important for onboarding as it helps to effectively develop bonds between new and more experienced staff, fostering cohesion throughout the farm business.

3. Computer or online-based coaching modules

These modules are an easy on-farm or off-farm coaching solution, as they are comprehensive and don't require the presence or time of other staff. Most modules can be tailored specifically to the needs of your new employee and the team in which they will work.

4. Job rotation

Job rotation is the practice of moving a new employee between different roles on your farm. This can help to give them broader experience and train them in a variety of skills. This approach will improve your new staff knowledge of the work other employees are responsible for on a daily basis. It will also help them to understand who the best points of contact are for each team.