# Onboarding New Employees

Having a system in place to orient new employees does several important things for your farm. First, it ensures each employee hears the important information and completes all the necessary forms. This prevents potential problems down the road when an important form is missing, or some important policy does not get communicated. Second, having a system in place saves you from having to reinvent the wheel each time a new employee comes onboard. Third, if you are unable to do the orientation yourself, having a system in place will help someone else step into your shoes and get the job done. Finally, it gives that all-important positive first impression to your new team member!

Below are topics to include in your new employee orientation. Customize this list for any key items specific to your farm.

**Initial welcome**

\_\_\_\_ Introductions to leadership team and key teammates.

\_\_\_\_ Clarification of the name the employee prefers to be known by

\_\_\_\_ Share farm vision and mission statements

\_\_\_\_ Relation of the employee’s job to the end-product and consumers

**General information and procedures**

\_\_\_\_ Review offer letter and clarify any questions

\_\_\_\_ Location of restrooms, personal storage areas/lockers, employee bulletin boards, break areas

\_\_\_\_ Policy on personal cell phone use, company equipment, and facilities

**Work time and pay**

\_\_\_ Start time and daily hour expectations

\_\_\_ Meal and break periods

\_\_\_ Overtime requirements or options

\_\_\_ Call-in procedures if unable to work when expected

\_\_\_ Tardiness and absenteeism policy

\_\_\_ Time card or time-keeping procedures

\_\_\_ Paycheck distribution – where, where, how

\_\_\_ Starting pay rate, including any incentive wages or bonuses

\_\_\_ Relation of future pay increases to merit, longevity, or other factors

\_\_\_ Fringe benefits available

\_\_\_ Procedures for use of vacation, sick or personal days

\_\_\_ Performance review and appraisal process

**The job**

\_\_\_ Job duties and scope, review job description

\_\_\_ Tour of farm operation and specific areas where employees will be working

\_\_\_ Introduction to other team members

\_\_\_ Organizational structure and chain of command for questions/concerns

\_\_\_ Standard operations procedures and tools

\_\_\_ Any job specific performance expectations and work standards

\_\_\_ Product quality requirements/expectations

\_\_\_ Potential career path. Any promotional opportunities and anticipated time to achieve them

**Safety**

\_\_\_ Farm safety philosophy

\_\_\_ All elements of the company injury and illness prevention program

\_\_\_ Pesticide safety training and equipment (if applicable)

\_\_\_ Use and care of work equipment

\_\_\_ Identification and location of workplace hazards

\_\_\_ Use, storage, and disposal of any hazardous chemicals

\_\_\_ Use of personal protective equipment including clothes, footwear, respiratory, eye and hearing protection.

\_\_\_ Symptoms of heat/cold related illnesses

\_\_\_ Lifting techniques and ergonomic best practices

\_\_\_ Location and use of fire extinguishers and emergency procedures

\_\_\_ Location of first-aid supplies

\_\_\_ How to report accidents, injuries, or a near-miss

*Adapted from the Farm Labor Dashboard, University of Vermont Extension*