



Employee engagement: Insights on leading a dairy team in the 21st Century

MIGUEL RANGEL, DVM

A little bit of history

- Farms are not managed as they were 50 or even 15 years ago
- We have witnessed an unprecedented development in recent years
- We produce 60% more milk with 30% less cows than 50 years ago



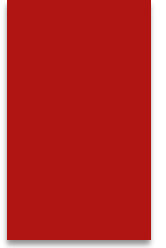
Why?

- Demographics
- Size of the farm
- Technology
- Advances in veterinary medicine
- Generational change
- People factor
- Type of leadership



Leadership evolution

Although some core qualities remain the same, effective leaders have gained a few more.



From the trenches...

- ▶ Employee turnover is often overlooked
- ▶ The way it is addressed is ineffective
- ▶ The root cause of the problem remains unseen for most

FAQs

- Why nobody wants to work these days?
- Why are employees leaving?





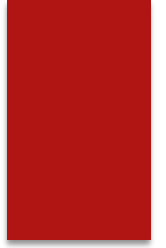
The 1st aspect that you need to know is the **culture** of your farm.

What is the culture of a place?

- ▶ “A set of shared values, goals, attitudes, and practices that characterize an organization”

Ask yourself

- Do you know why your employees leave your place?
- Have you ever asked one of them?
- Have you asked your current ones what they think of the farm?
- Do they like to go to work?
- What kind of employees do you have?



“

People leave managers, not
companies.

”

MARCUS BUCKINGAM

Keep questioning

- What is the culture at my place?
- How am I contributing to it?
- How is my team contributing?



A few examples...

- Employee missed work. He didn't know he had to call the supervisor.
- 2 calves born overnight in the alleyway of the close-up pen. Maternity employee found them in the morning.
- Down cow left in the pen. Pusher didn't know what to do.
- Employee quits after being scolded in front of coworkers.
- Employee thinks he can't be fired despite what he does.



Know your farm

- Do we have clear expectations?
- Do we have clear trainings?
- Do we have clear protocols?
- Do we offer growth opportunities?
- Who are my leaders?
- Who are my best employees?
- Why are they my best employees?
- Who are my worst employees?
- Why are they the worst?





Culture permeates to all
areas...



Employee turnover is a direct
consequence of the culture.

What's next?

- DISCUSS AT YOUR MEETINGS
- KEEP THE ISSUE ACTIVE
- IMPLEMENT BEST PRACTICES

Hire right

- ▶ Experience
- ▶ Character
- ▶ References
- ▶ Match the candidate to the position
- ▶ Involve your team

Onboarding

- ▶ Farm organization
- ▶ Physical site
- ▶ Farm logistics
- ▶ Clear duties and responsibilities
- ▶ Goals
- ▶ **Realistic expectations**
- ▶ **Trainings**
- ▶ Employee handbook (Rule book)
- ▶ Paperwork (W-4,I-9, SSN, Drivers license, bank account)

During employment

- ▶ Review goals
- ▶ Measure performance
- ▶ Cristal clear communication
- ▶ Maintain a positive work environment
- ▶ Listen to your employees (Feedback)
- ▶ Address issues promptly
- ▶ Team meetings

After employment

- ▶ Conclude the employment relationship in a professional manner
- ▶ Why did they leave?
- ▶ Where are they going?
- ▶ What could you have done differently?

Be a leader

- ▶ Genuinely care
- ▶ Be open to change. Consider other view points; opinions vs facts
- ▶ Work a shift with your employees. Ask for suggestions, attend to their needs
- ▶ Recognize and praise. Reinforce good actions, make them feel valuable
- ▶ Empower employees. Develop them and delegate
- ▶ Model the behavior that you want to instill
- ▶ Know yourself

Keep in mind

- ▶ Not all people are suitable to lead
- ▶ Improve communication (Body language, conflict resolution, etc.)
- ▶ Cultural awareness
- ▶ Understand the personality and strengths of your team
- ▶ Don't work alone. Team work



¡Gracias!

Miguel Rangel, DVM

Optimum Dairy Consulting and Recruiting

miguelrangel.dvm@gmail.com