

# Dairy Farm Business

**Job  
Descriptions:  
The Building  
Block of  
Organizations**



- **ORGANIZATION**
- **TRAINING**
- **RECRUITMENT**
- **EVALUATION**
- **DEFENSE**

PENNSTATE



**COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES  
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND COOPERATIVE EXTENSION**



The primary objective of a job description is to help employees and supervisors reach a mutual understanding about important details of a job in order to avoid future problems. This publication discusses the need for job descriptions, how to prepare them, and how to make use of them for more effective human resource management. In addition, some examples of job descriptions for positions in the milking center are included. Job descriptions should never be considered final; they should be open to changes and should be reviewed at least once per year by both employee and supervisor.

## REASONS FOR JOB DESCRIPTIONS

There are many reasons for using good job descriptions—some of the most important include the following:

1. **Organization.** The job description helps people understand their responsibilities and how their work contributes to the overall mission of the business.
2. **Training.** It serves as a useful tool for training purposes because it lists the specific tasks that make up the job.
3. **Recruitment.** Clear job descriptions promote an understanding between the employer and the prospective employee. You are more likely to hire the right person if both of you clearly understand the job.
4. **Evaluation.** Employer and employee can compare actual job performance to the expectations outlined in the job description. This helps you recognize a job well done or a need for retraining or discipline.
5. **Defense.** In the unfortunate event that you must terminate an employee for poor performance, the job description gives you a basis for defending your decision.

## PREPARING JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Job descriptions are really not difficult to write. The best way to begin is by writing your own. This will get you thinking about your responsibilities and how you fit into the organization. It will also help you prepare for questions that your employees might have. Next, take some time to sit down with your current employees and help them to begin writing their job descriptions. Make sure that you explain why you need to develop job descriptions and how you expect employees to benefit from them as well. Your employees might have ideas about parts of their jobs that you might not have thought to include. Finally, you will need to review and make changes to the job descriptions. For new positions you will need to write the job description from scratch.

Generally, keep descriptions brief and to the point, but don't leave out important information. Most job descriptions should easily fit on one page. Your goal is to provide a clear picture of the job so that you and your employee will fully understand each other's expectations.

A good job description will include the following:

- 1. Job title.** The job title should accurately describe the job. For example, do not call a job that involves only milking a herdsman position.
- 2. Summary.** This is a concise definition of the job's major responsibilities, where, and when it is performed. You might use the summary when advertising the position.
- 3. Qualifications.** A description of any experience, training, or education that is necessary to perform the job. Also, any physical characteristics that are essential to perform the job, such as the ability to lift and carry a certain weight. Be sure to avoid statements that might be discriminatory on grounds of race, gender, age, or national origin. Be aware that there are some jobs that young people are not legally allowed to do.
- 4. Duties or Tasks.** This is the list of all activities that the person will perform. The number of different duties depends on how specialized workers' roles are on the farm. Most employers add at the end of the list "other duties as assigned by supervisor" as a way of including those activities that are not routine. It may be helpful to include the approximate percentage of the worker's time that each duty will require.

- 5. Work relationships.** All workers need to know where they fit in the organization. The work relationship section should clearly define who the worker's supervisor is and how the worker's position relates to other positions. Be sure that each position only has one supervisor. Job descriptions relate to the staff organization chart—each position that appears on the organization chart should have a job description associated with it.

The following two categories are optional. If you use them, don't be so specific that no changes can be made in the future.

- 6. Compensation and Benefits.** Include in this section all compensation that is offered. An hourly wage range, insurance, vacation, sick leave, and so on should be clearly stated. Housing, use of farm products such as milk or meat, use of equipment, and so forth are all legitimate forms of compensation and should be given a fair market value. You should also specify how much these non-monetary benefits may be used so that there is less chance of abuse.
- 7. Work schedule.** Define work hours as much as possible. Define overtime policy if one applies. If work hours vary with the seasons, make that clear in the description.

## PUTTING JOB DESCRIPTIONS TO WORK

Job descriptions are an essential part of the employee-recruitment process. In today's competitive labor market, dairy farms need to communicate the image of a well-managed and organized business. Well-constructed job descriptions show that management is aware of specific labor needs and the qualifications and skills that a successful candidate will possess. Job descriptions spell out the specific duties that are required of employees and help candidates to decide if the job will be a good fit for them.

Job descriptions help the dairy manager make effective selections. With the required qualifications and duties clearly specified in the job description, managers can more objectively select candidates based on their potential for job success, rather than on personality traits. Once a candidate is selected, the job description serves as a guide to the skills and knowledge that the new employee will need to perform the job. Those skills that the employee already possesses should be refined and applied in the new position, while skills or knowledge that the employee lacks can be acquired through training.

Clarity Farms  
RD3 Box 123  
Qualitymilk, PA 12345  
814-555-5555  
clarityfarms@netnet.net

## **Job Description**

### *Job Title*

Parlor Operator

### *Summary*

The parlor operator prepares the milking equipment and bulk tank, milks cows, and cleans equipment and facilities. He/she is responsible for basic maintenance of parlor equipment and some record keeping. Follow-up animal care as prescribed by the herdsman is also required.

### *Qualifications*

- Stand and walk for up to 6 hours
- Lift up to 50 lbs
- Accurately follow directions
- Gently and patiently handle cows

### *Duties*

- Prepare milking equipment
- Prep and milk cows
- Clean and sanitize milking equipment
- Clean milking parlor and milkhouse
- Change milker inflations
- Detect mastitis or abnormal milk
- Perform follow-up treatment as directed by herdsman
- Other duties as assigned

### *Relationships*

Supervised by the parlor manager. Works closely and maintains communication with parlor manager, other parlor operators, and the herdsman.

### *Hours*

Full-time parlor operators work 45 to 55 hours per week. Milking shifts typically last 6 hours. The parlor manager maintains the milker schedule.

### *Compensation*

Parlor operators start at \$\_\_ per hour for a probationary/training period of 60 calendar days. After the 60-day probationary/training period, qualified parlor operators base pay increases to \$\_\_ per hour and health care coverage is extended to the employee and dependents. The parlor manager will determine if a milker is qualified based on established work quality and efficiency standards found in the incentive program. Qualified parlor operators who receive cross training to become qualified to work in other parts of the business are eligible for pay increases.

Clarity Farms  
RD3 Box 123  
Qualitymilk, PA 12345  
814-555-5555  
clarityfarms@netnet.net

## **Job Description**

### *Job Title*

Parlor Manager

### *Summary*

The parlor manager trains, supervises, and schedules the parlor operators. He/she is responsible for the maintenance of all parlor equipment. In addition, the parlor manager is expected to be an important part of the management team and to contribute to the business' overall success and continuous improvement.

### *Qualifications*

- Read, speak, and write English. Spanish skills a bonus
- Operate computer with herd management software
- B.S. degree in agriculture or 4 years experience in milking related field
- Supervisory experience or classes/continuing education in supervisory skills

### *Duties*

- Train, supervise, and provide performance feedback to parlor operators
- Assist general manager with parlor personnel decisions
- Schedule parlor staff
- Schedule routine parlor maintenance
- Ensure that all parlor systems operate correctly and arrange for any necessary repairs
- Coordinates management activities with herdsman and feed manager
- Continuously increases knowledge of milking physiology, disease prevention, and new technologies
- Perform any duties required of the parlor operators
- Additional duties as assigned

### *Relationships*

Supervised by the general manager. Works closely and maintains communications with parlor operators, herdsman, and feed manager.

### *Hours*

Full-time position of 45 to 55 hours per week. Milks not more than 5 times per week.

### *Compensation*

The parlor manager starts at \$\_\_.\_\_ per hour for a probationary/training period of 60 calendar days. After the 60-day probationary/training period, base pay increases to \$\_\_.\_\_ per hour and health care coverage is extended to the employee and dependents. Qualified parlor managers who receive cross training to become qualified to work in other parts of the business are eligible for pay increases.

[Company Name]  
[Address 1]  
[Address 2]  
[Telephone Number]  
[E-mail Address]

**Job Description**

*Job Title*

---

---

*Summary*

---

---

---

*Qualifications*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

*Any additional items*

---

*Duties*

---

---

---

---

---

*Any additional items*

---

*Relationships*

---

---

*Hours*

---

*Compensation*

---

Prepared by Richard Stup,  
Penn State Dairy Alliance

Visit Penn State's College  
of Agricultural Sciences on  
the Web:

<http://www.cas.psu.edu>

Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences research, extension, and resident education programs are funded in part by Pennsylvania counties, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

This publication is available from the Publications Distribution Center, The Pennsylvania State University, 112 Agricultural Administration Building, University Park, PA 16802. For information telephone 814-865-6713.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work, Acts of Congress May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Pennsylvania Legislature. T. R. Alter, Director of Cooperative Extension, The Pennsylvania State University.

This publication is available  
in alternative media on  
request.

The Pennsylvania State University is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to programs, facilities, admission, and employment without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. It is the policy of the University to maintain an academic and work environment free of discrimination, including harassment. The Pennsylvania State University prohibits discrimination and harassment against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

Discrimination or harassment against faculty, staff, or students will not be tolerated at The Pennsylvania State University. Direct all inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy to the Affirmative Action Director, The Pennsylvania State University, 201 Willard Building, University Park, PA 16802-2801, Tel 814-865-4700/V, 814-863-1150/TTY.

Produced by Information and Communication Technologies in the College of Agricultural Sciences

© The Pennsylvania State University 2002  
CATUD012 2.5M902acg ICT4510

