

May 2015

Gypsy Day & on farm orientations

June 1st is racing towards us again; bringing the start of a new season upon us. This is marked with 'gypsy day' with many rural families shifting to new farms. This is the ideal time to ensure that your on-farm policies are right up to standard and that your orientation plan for new staff is ready for action.

- The first few days with new staff on farm are perfect for completing a solid orientation which should cover the following:
- A walk over the entire farm explaining everything of relevance such as gully's and creeks to plans for improvements, how you manage your pasture rotations and why, what paddocks have risk factors at what times – i.e. wet weather, bloat etc.
- The milking shed, ancillary buildings, the set up for calving and the systems used on farm.
- Walk them through the herd and around the livestock on farm – it's important your workers get to know the animals as quickly as possible.
- The health and safety policies on farm.
- Training on any new gear and machinery the new worker is expected to use but may not be familiar with.
- An overview of the expected season plan for the farm – when you generally expect calving and mating finished by, when supplements are planted, harvested etc and if this is done on farm or by contractors, when you herd test and any other key markers you have in your farm calendar.
- If new to the district you should also include information on where things are, bus stop locations for children, sports groups, locations of medical centres, schools, garages for vehicle servicing, supermarkets and any good local recreation spots for fishing, tramping etc so that your new employees are able begin finding their way into and becoming a part of the community.

Just think back to when you were last moving to new places on gypsy day and all the things that could have helped make it better for you. Clear policies and good communication from day one help set the employment relationship up for every chance of being the successful partnership you want in your farm business.

If you have any questions or concerns around this or any other employment issue then give me a call. John Brosnan, Human advisor at CooperAitken Accountants, Morrinsville, Matamata and Thames, DDI 07 889 8838 or email john@cooperaitken.co.nz.
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