

April 2016

Not much to do today Boss.

One of the most common frustrations employers tell me about is employees who are good “so long as I’m there to keep them busy! and as soon as I’m gone nothing gets done. Sometimes the excuse is “Oh – it was raining so we thought there was nothing to do (aside from milking)” and sometimes there really isn’t an excuse at all

Now there are times when a days planned work was dependant on good weather and the weather had turned by the time breakfast after the morning milking was done - what happens then? Or a contractor expected has had to postpone for a day?

Many times we hear that employees think “great, a day off and I’m into town” and are gone without even a “by your leave” with the boss. Others just simply stay at home thinking well it’s wet so the jobs off. Without generalising too much this is more often the case with those employees less experienced in the industry who simply may not be aware that there is always something else that can be done (they are also usually completely unaware just how frustrating this behaviour is for their employer as well).

These other tasks can include anything from taking the chance to give the cow shed a really good clean to tidying up and cleaning up implement sheds, cleaning out calf pens, equipment maintenance, even other maintenance and such outside (there is a reason the employer provides wet weather gear afterall).

The real issue is usually not the weather, that can often put off one job or another, the issue was not communicating effectively between employer and employee to know all the tasks that were there to be done when time permits or something planned could not happen..

These issues can again be quickly solved by good induction programmes and a set regular team meeting to discuss what is happening on farm – the weekly coffee meetings I have mentioned several times before.

Later on in the season the situation could arise where as an employer you may not have a lot to do but would like your staff to help the neighbour with a project for the day or you might want the employee to do some painting for you instead of farm work – can you tell them to help out? Yes, so long as the task is not illegal or placing an employee in unnecessary danger or unreasonable; then you as an employer are entitled to send them next door to assist or instruct them to assist with the painting. You still pay the wages though.

So down time should really just be a quick change of plans as there is usually plenty of other things to do. And if there really isn’t much to do and some time off is in order – then a discussion ensures all know this and feel good about having a chance to relax and recharge.

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If you need any help regarding these issues or any other employment issue please call me. John Brosnan, Human advisor at CooperAitken Accountants, Morrinsville, Matamata and Thames, DDI 07 889 8838 or email john@cooperaiken.co.nz.
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