



# Staffing Up

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**Jesse Wright and Seth Wilner**  
**UNH Cooperative Extension**

# Our Goals



Increase your  
knowledge and skills  
in:



Identifying values to  
create your farm's  
culture



Hiring the right people  
for your farm



Training new hires  
effectively



Retaining the  
employees you seek to  
keep

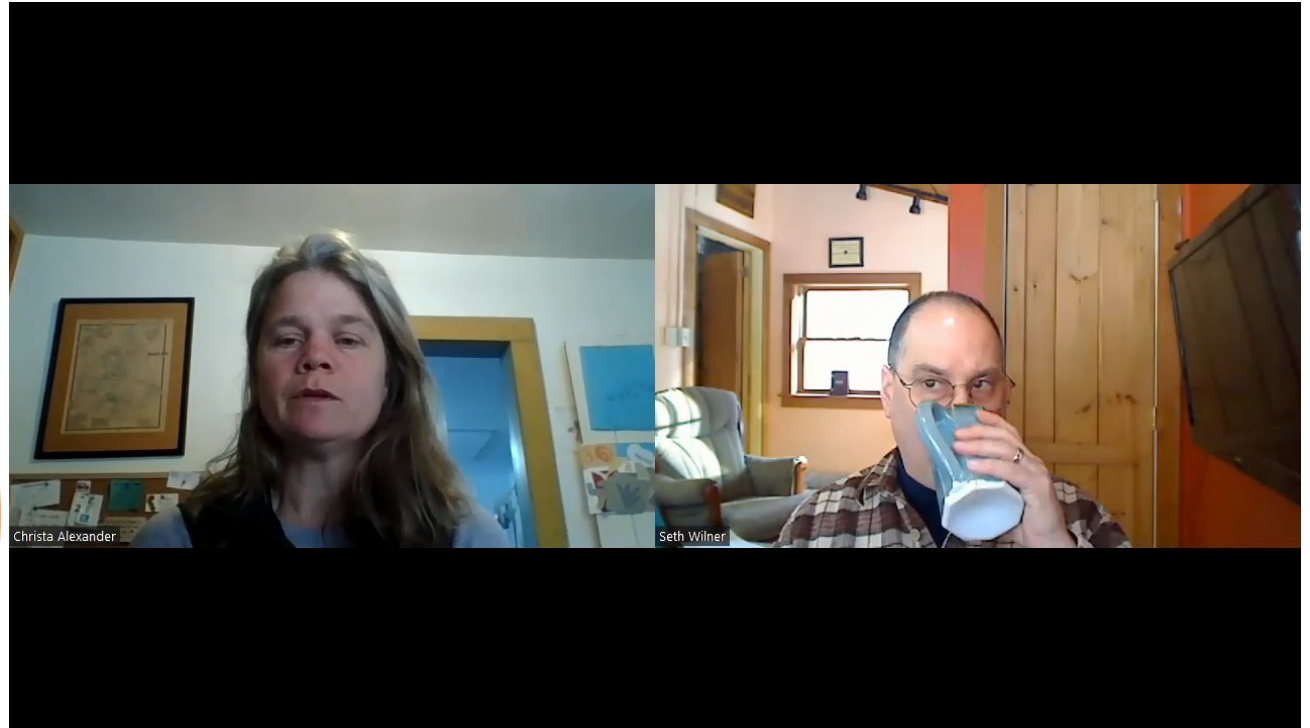
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Meet our  
contributing  
farmers

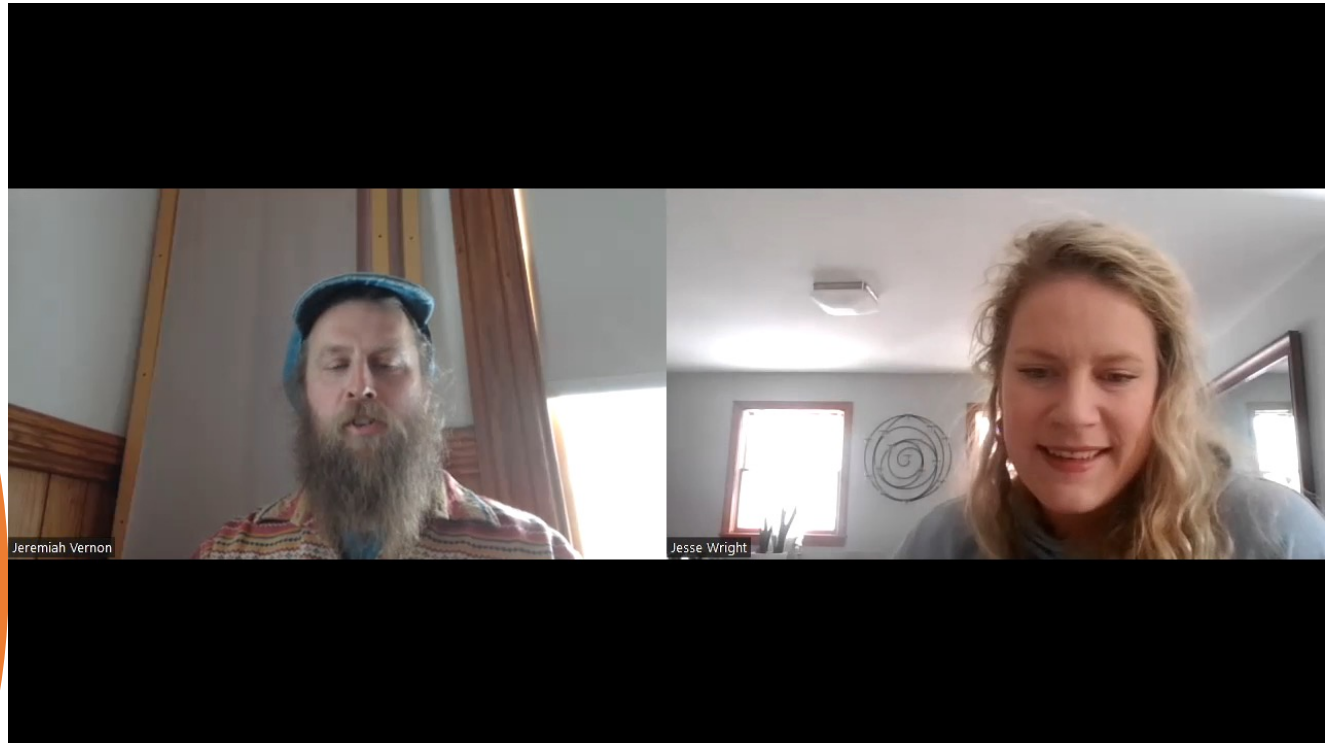
- First – look around the screen – **you** are part of our panel – this is designed to be interactive- we need you to share your input and experiences!



Meet our  
contributing  
farmers:  
Jericho Settlers  
Farm Inc.



Meet our  
contributing  
farmers:  
Vernon Family  
Farm



learn more about supervising and keeping all our employees

Effective ways to motivate employees, how to give them adequate training w/o micromanaging.

Any tips on hiring and retaining employees

how to pay enough to retain employees. attracting appropriate hires. knowing how they are doing.

How to create a work culture that inspires employees and invites long term commitment.

Finding and hiring employees--keeping them and keeping them happy

Matching the right people to the roles/tasks we need help with.

Recruiting has been tough, even before the current tough labor market

there is always more to learn about managing people.

Learn best practices to meet the needs of our staff so we can retain them.

What we hope to learn together today

I want to create an atmosphere of empowerment and responsibility on the farm.

Learn how to better manage staff and effectively train them.

learn how to manage our current employees more successfully, communicating expectations, setting goals, and having clearly defined roles and responsibilities

How to effectively interview, hire, integrate, train, manage, and create a dedicated team of motivated farm workers.

I hope to learn how to delegate tasks and give feedback without coming off as controlling, brash, or rude.

How to be a better manager and create a more positive work environment.


how to get seasonal employees to return for multiple years

ways to improve communication, better offer and solicit feedback, and generally make sure that everyone is engaged and motivated throughout the season.


how to motivate employees of different ages and abilities

How to attract young people who are interested in agriculture

How to encourage crew members to work well together across different departments and roles.



The desired outcomes which you identified in your registration won't *all* be covered in this session, but before we all leave today, we'll list resources you can use for other labor related skill building.

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Farm Culture  
defines  
how you  
want your  
farm to be

Your Farm Culture guides your decisions and actions around:

- the quality of life you seek
- the economic returns you desire
- the environmental health you managing towards





## Today's Session

Your farm culture can be used to guide you on:


- Whether to hire anyone
- What jobs or roles for which you seek to hire
- Who fits well in your operation
- What systems you need to guide your labor force.

### Developing a Values-Based Vision for Your Farm


As farm businesses grow and your management team faces decisions with significant impact - for example, what type and how many employees to hire - it is important that you have a clear sense of the undergirding values you and your management team identify to guide the growth of your business.

**The Developing a Values-Based Vision for Your Farm workbook** helps producers examine their skills, interests, beliefs, expectations, obstacles and strengths to set a holistic vision for their farming operations. The answers to these questions will guide the decisions and direct the choices you make in growing your business.


Authors: Jeremy Delisle, Elaina Enzien, Nada Haddad, Kelly MacAdam, Seth Wilner, Mike Sciabarrasi, University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension.



Are You Ready to Hire? Self Assessment



Employee Cost Estimator



Job Description Generator



Personnel Policy Generator



Resources







# Woodland Farm

Look at the Woodland Farm Vision Statement to see how this tool can be used to guide hiring decisions:

<https://www.uvm.edu/aglabor/dashboard/resources/woodland-farm-sample-vision-statement>

## **Discussion:**

- How do you think this could be used for labor management and staffing?
- How can it be used by your applicants or new hires?

- Please take 1-2 minutes to write down some guiding values to define your farm culture.
- Pair and share — Introduce yourself and take a minute to describe your farm vision to your partner.

Please take 30 seconds to write down things you would like to embed in your farm's culture based on what you heard and exchanged.

Get clear on  
the jobs for  
which you  
are hiring



**Please type into the chat the tasks for which you are hiring.**





Nicole Vernon

I should say, we're  
very excellent.

Dr. [unclear]





# *Attracting Labor*







Christa Alexander



Seth Wilner



# *Attracting Labor*

- What are groups or communities of people in your area whom you could engage?
- What types of shifts or hours might work for your farm?

## Potential Employee Pools

- People in recovery
- College students
- FFA participants
- Church groups
- At-home parents
- Teenagers taking a gap year



# The Interview Process



- Avoiding discrimination in questions
- Situational questions to assess response
- Passion/culture questions for fit



# Avoiding Discrimination

“Employment discrimination happens when an employer treats an employee or applicant differently because of certain characteristics that employee has.”

Farm Commons: [Episode 46: Avoiding Discriminatory Questions in Interviews](#)

The following are characteristics protected by federal law:

- Sex
- Gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Physical or mental disability
- Age
- Veteran status
- Union status
- Race
- Color
- National origin/ancestry
- Religion or creed

There are exemptions to federal anti-discrimination laws:

- Less than 15 employees are exempt from civil rights act and American disability act.
- Less than 20 employees exempt from age discrimination act.

# Avoiding Discrimination

“Employment discrimination happens when an employer treats an employee or applicant differently because of certain characteristics that employee has.”

Farm Commons: [Episode 46: Avoiding Discriminatory Questions in Interviews](#)

**State law can be more restrictive – as is the case in NH:**

- Marital status
- Familial status
- Tobacco use outside of work
- Also expands on federal age exemption from people who are 40 or older to anyone over 18 years.
- Crime and Domestic violence – with 25 or more employees

# Avoiding Discrimination

“Employment discrimination happens when an employer treats an employee or applicant differently because of certain characteristics that employee has.”

Farm Commons: [Episode 46: Avoiding Discriminatory Questions in Interviews](#)

**Focus your interview on the essential functions of the job for which you are hiring and avoid personal questions.**

# Avoiding Discrimination

## Practice

- You have a farm stand that needs labor on Sunday in an area with many churches.
- You grow tomatoes and are afraid of mosaic virus and are afraid of smokers
- You want to know if they can lift 50 pounds but don't want to ask if they are healthy enough to do that.

## **Situational Questions**

Based on the jobs for which you are hiring, craft situations that offer realistic challenges.

- How would you \_\_\_\_?
- What would you do if \_\_\_\_?
- How would you respond to \_\_\_\_?

## Passion Culture

Why do your applicants want to work on your farm? What's their motivation?

- These answers may help guide you in non-monetary compensation
- If learning is an answer this gives you the opportunity to ask their preferred style for learning.

How do they see themselves aligning with your farm culture?

- How do like to receive/give feedback?

**Your turn,  
please**


On the Jam Board please write down questions you might ask regarding your farm.

We can save these and share with farmers over the years to come!

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## *Training & Supervision*

As an employee, what has made a training experience successful for you?

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Jeremiah Vernon



Jesse Wright

# *Training & Supervision*

What tools exist to communicate expectations with employees?

- Direct Communication
- Regularly Recurring Meetings
- SOPs
- Job Descriptions
- Personnel Policy
- Middle Management
- Feedback Forms
- Fast Feedback Loop – [Link to Tailgate Training](#)
- Pat McCabe square












Christa Alexander



Seth Wilner

# Training & Supervision

	Are You Ready to Hire? Self Assessment
	Employee Cost Estimator
	Job Description Generator
	Personnel Policy Generator
	Resources

- ***Farm Labor Dashboard Resources***



## Farm Labor Video Series

Produced by University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension and University of Vermont Extension, the Farm Labor Video Series is six short (about 5 minutes) video lessons on key aspects of managing employees on farms. Topics include:


- Reference checks;
- Training your employees;
- Preventing and responding to harassment;
- Providing feedback to employees;
- Dealing with problems; and,
- Ending employment

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# *Retention*

Creating an atmosphere workers want to be in...

But also includes...

- Raises
  - Health Contributions/Insurance
  - Paid Vacation
  - Continuing Education
  - Staff Parties
  - Food to eat or take home
- 
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Jeremiah Vernon



Jesse Wright



*More on  
retention  
coming in our  
next session*



## The Farm Labor Dashboard

[About](#) [Resources](#) [Tools](#) [Events](#) [My Account](#)

### Practical Techniques to Optimize Employee Performance

February 23, Noon-1:30 pm ET

In this session, we'll explore effective communication practices that share expectations and provide feedback to employees all season long. You'll have a chance to think about how to ensure your farm's values are reflected in your employee relationships. We will also talk through communication practices to improve employee performance on your farm.

We will introduce interactive tools on the Farm Labor Dashboard that can help you develop written materials supporting this human resource management. Farm policy manuals are effective tools to establish consistent expectations with employees, support supervision and help your farm to be in legal compliance.

**Note:** This is an active learning session where we'll talk through several employee management topics, share personal experiences, and work together to develop tangible outcomes.

Prior to the workshop you will receive advance materials to review -- brief video clips and/or short articles -- that will set the stage for discussion and learning during the session. Following the session, there will be opportunities to for follow-up and feedback from session facilitators.

**Facilitators:** Jesse Wright and Seth Wilner, University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension.

**Fees & Registration:** Advance registration is required. Thanks to grant support, the workshop is offered free of charge to participants.

[Workshop Registration](#)



Are You Ready  
to Hire? Self  
Assessment



Employee Cost  
Estimator



Job Description  
Generator



Personnel  
Policy  
Generator



Resources




# Resources

- <https://www.uvm.edu/aglabor/dashboard/welcome>

The Farm Labor Dashboard






About Resources Tools Events My Account




## Tips, Tools, and Techniques

to effectively recruit, hire, train and retain workers




Good decision-making around the type and amount of labor needed on a farm enhances the farm household's quality of life and increases the likelihood farmers will successfully meet their financial goals. This site provides tools and strategies to help small and medium-sized produce and diversified livestock farms make informed labor decisions.



 Are You Ready to Hire? Self Assessment	 Employee Cost Estimator	 Job Description Generator	 Personnel Policy Generator	 Resources
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THE FARM LABOR DASHBOARD IS HOSTED BY:

 EXTENSION

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS:

 Extension  CENTER FOR INTEGRATED AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS  PennState

 THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY  NORTH CAROLINA AGRICULTURAL AND TECHNICAL STATE UNIVERSITY

 **USDA** National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

This material is based upon work supported by USDA/NIFA under awards 2021-49400-35641, 2018-70127-28588, 2014-69006-21873 and 2018-69006-28196.


# Resources

- <https://extension.unh.edu/agriculture-gardens>

University of New Hampshire


Extension 4-H Agriculture & Gardens Community & Economy Educators Health & Well-Being Natural Resources Events About

APPLY REQUEST INFO GIVE




**Farmer Support Networks**

- > New Farmers
- > Women in Agriculture
- > Farm Stress



**Agricultural Business Management**

- > Agricultural Business Planning
- > Agricultural Rules & Regulations
- > Farm Estate and Succession Planning
- > Labor & Financial Recordkeeping & Analysis
- > Marketing Agricultural Products



**Dairy, Livestock & Forage Crops**

- > Livestock Production
- > Dairy Production
- > Feed & Forage Production
- > Soil Conservation & Water Quality on Farms

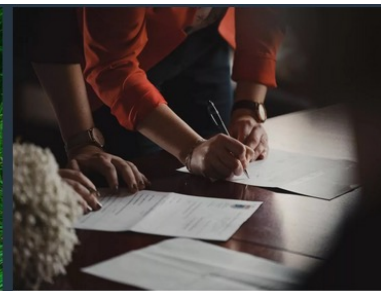
# Resources

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- <https://extension.unh.edu/farmer-stress>



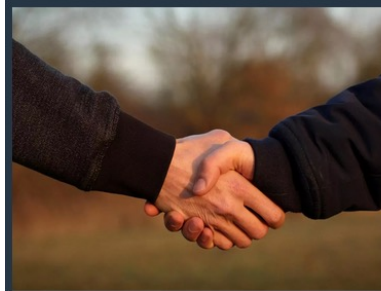
Mental Well-Being



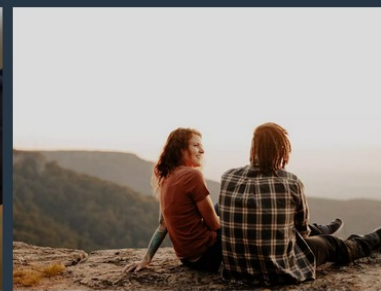
Legal



Financial



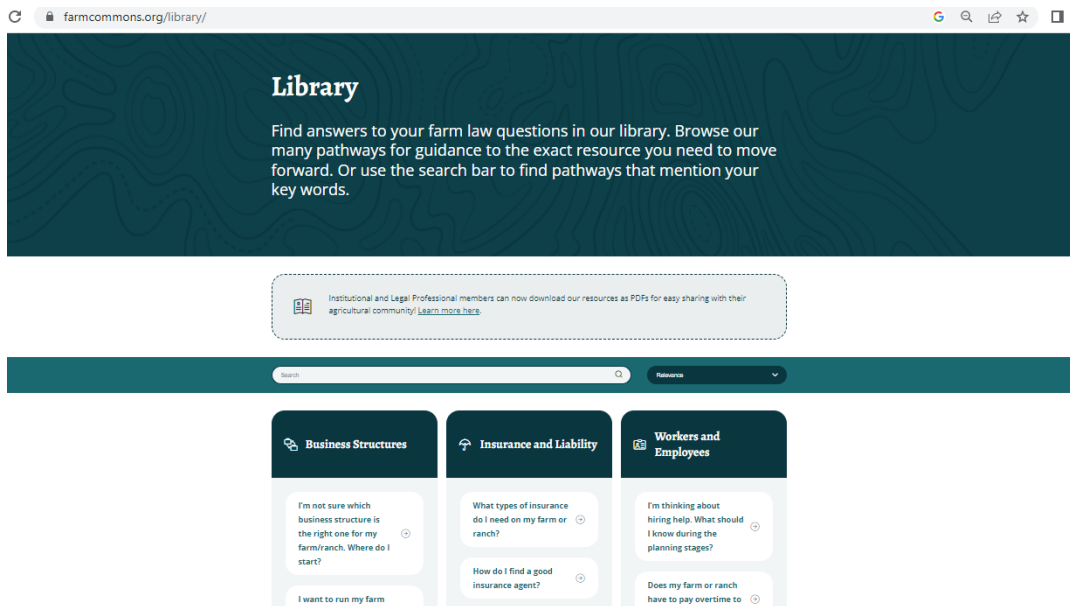
Mediation



Peer to Peer Networks

# Resources

Farm Commons Website:  
<https://farmcommons.org>



Farmers who would like to become a Producer Member can use the coupon code **UNHCE20** for 20% off for their first year. The coupon expires on 9/30/2023.

# Resources

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- Farm Commons Website
- *Hiring Farm Workers Basics:*  
<https://farmcommons.org/resources/articles/hiring-farm-workers-basics/>
- Podcasts on hiring that we created for you:
  - [Episode 42: Avoiding Discrimination in Hiring and Firing on New Hampshire Farms](#)
  - [Episode 48: Hiring Workers Through the H-2A Visa Program](#)
  - [Episode 51: Legal Considerations for Working Interviews](#)
  - [Episode 52: Getting on a Roll with Payroll](#)

# Resources

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## Attracting Workers – Kawasaki Plant

- <https://youtu.be/AAn1PJ3h7E0>

