

FACTSHEET

Job Analysis – Staff Planning

Using a simple job analysis to plan how work will get done

Why this is important

Staff planning is the process of determining the work that has to be completed on the whole farm, deciding how many people it will take to do it and how the work will be divided between those people.

This process feeds back into the farm budget and business plan by way of optimising labour inputs and identifying the skills that need to be hired to meet business goals. This process also has implications for the personal goals of the farm owner if they are the employer. It is perhaps the one chance they will have to assert what they do and don't want to do with their time.

In managing employees, staff planning helps communicate the work required to a potential employee during recruitment and selection, and is the first step in managing the performance of an employee.

This factsheet will cover:

- What is staff planning?
- How to write a staff plan
- Uses for staff planning
- Staff Planning example

What is staff planning?

Staff planning is the process of deciding what has to be done on the farm and who is going to do it. The process will identify the number and type of jobs, and then give an overview of the responsibilities of each staff member.

How to write a staff plan

Use the following procedure to develop a simple staffing plan:

1. Brainstorm all the major work carried out on the farm and write it up in a list. Include the whole team in the brainstorming process to ensure all ideas are captured. Use the example provided as a starting point and cross off or add tasks to the list so it reflects your farm.
2. Start with the owner column. In the example the owner or primary manager on the farm has taken the opportunity to decide what it is they want to be doing. This is closely linked with the business planning process in terms of managing work-life balance and meeting lifestyle goals. The owner ticks off the parts of the work load they want to take responsibility for.
3. Divide the remainder of the work between other farm staff by ticking off tasks in one column per person on the farm. This may include unpaid family labour.

Be sure the responsibilities being assigned to each individual role are realistic. In the case of existing employees, this means they must have the skill sets necessary to complete the assigned responsibilities. In the case of a new job, there is more freedom to assign responsibilities as it is possible to go out and recruit someone to fill that role. Be careful to ensure a realistic mix of responsibilities. A further consideration is whether the job can be done in a reasonable number of hours.

Initially it may not be possible to assign all vacant responsibility areas to staff because of lack of skill or experience. This means the manager will have to do them until the appropriate skills can be hired or trained.

Optional extra

To clarify the role, responsibility levels can be added to the work plan. In the column labelled “Responsibility Level”, mark in one of the following for each tick against a work task:

“R” “Responsible” ensures the work is carried out

“A” “Assists” in carrying out the required work

Staff plan template example

HR04

	Owner	Responsibility level	Manager	Responsibility level	Shepherd	Responsibility level
Mustering			✓	A	✓	R
Dagging					✓	R
Fencing			✓	A	✓	R
Shearing			✓	R		A
Docking	✓	A	✓	A	✓	R
Machinery maintenance			✓	R	✓	A
Feeding out			✓	R	✓	A
Lambing/calving			✓	A	✓	R
Shifting stock			✓	A	✓	R
Administration	✓	A	✓	R		
Planning - feed management	✓	R	✓	A		
Planning - financial management	✓	R				
Planning - work management	✓	A	✓	R		

What is the difference between reporting lines and responsibility levels?

Reporting lines denote who a person reports to or who is a person's line manager, e.g. Shepherd reports to the Farm Manager. Responsibility levels refer to who is responsible for ensuring that a range of tasks and duties is completed.

In the previous example, the Shepherd is primarily responsible for shifting stock and therefore must make sure the task is complete. The Farm Manager, through reporting structures, is responsible for making sure that the Shepherd is performing the task to the required standard.

Importance of adapting staff planning to suit you and your business

Business planning

Staff planning links to business planning by optimising staffing levels on a farm and identifying the skills required within the work team to carry out the business plan, thus exercising cost control over wages and salaries.

Splitting work within the team

The completed staffing plan can be shown to all the team and they can use that to indicate areas they would prefer to work in. This will help the manager to better understand their staff and help employees better understand the expectations of their manager. It will also give them a feeling of control over their work and a sense that management is communicating with them, both are key motivators for staff. Obviously not all wishes can be satisfied, but it will help to identify what motivates staff.

Wall chart

The staffing plan template can be used by itself on the wall of the farm office to communicate responsibility areas and to provide reminders of what each duty or responsibility area requires.

Orientation processes

The staffing plan can be used as part of the orientation process to help describe where people fit in the business and how they interact to carry out tasks.

Rostering jobs on farm

Use the staffing plan to rotate people through tasks – this increases their experience and skills in a range of areas on-farm. It also has the benefits of keeping their roles interesting and varied. This may also help to identify training requirements or areas of progression.

Restructuring the workforce

The tick box template can be used to experiment with other job structures and to think outside the square in how to manage the work on the farm. For example, a full time and two half time workers might be hired rather than two full time workers. Experimenting with different structures may also highlight opportunities to streamline roles and improve labour efficiency. This use of a staff plan may be particularly useful in situations where there is a shortage of quality applicants for a job. The selection process will identify a mismatch between the applicant's skills and the requirements of the job. At this point the employer may opt to restructure the job to suit the applicants available. Seek the advice of an employment law specialist before radical restructuring involving redundancy occurs.

Identifying future needs

The employer can use the staff planning template to plan how to structure their workforce as they step back from daily hands-on involvement in the farm. This may identify training needs for current staff, or the need to hire new skills to cover the deficit. This is also referred to as succession planning.

Identifying training needs

Where an employer identifies a shortfall in the ability of their staff to carry out a task, either immediately or in the future, this skill shortage can be developed in the workplace through appropriate training.

What are the benefits to me?

Taking time to work through the staff planning process will increase the likelihood of:

- Achieving optimal staffing levels
- Operating successful teams
- Operating successful performance management
- A successful recruitment and selection process
- Retaining staff
- Clearly communicating peoples roles and responsibilities.

What do I do next?

Try using the templates provided to work out a staff plan that will meet personal and business goals. This can then be discussed with all farm staff to see how it matches their current expectations and what they would like to be doing.

Useful references

Human Resources Kit for Dummies, Max Messmer

For more information and other useful resources visit B+LNZ's Employment Hub <https://beeflambnz.com/knowledge-hub/employment-hub>

Factsheets are made possible by sheep and beef farmer investment in the industry. Beef + Lamb New Zealand is not liable for any damage suffered as a result of reliance on the information contained in this document. Any reproduction is welcome provided you acknowledge Beef + Lamb New Zealand as the source.

