

# Covid-19 Update - Labour shortages; Recruitment opportunities & advice

Information correct as at 16:00pm on 09.04.2020

- Labour challenges currently being seen on farm due to illness, self-isolation and European workers leaving to return home
- Write clear adverts and consider advertising locally for general farm work or milking roles
- Make the role attractive and be flexible about who you will employ and on what terms
- Ensure you induct new starters and provide necessary Personal Protective Equipment

Workloads on farm haven't changed significantly due to Covid19 but the number of workers available to complete the work has been affected. We are seeing an increasing number of workers and relief staff taking time off work due to illness or self-isolation. In some cases, significant numbers of European workers are leaving to go home, often at short notice, with neither the worker or employer knowing if or when they will return.

This is presenting significant challenges in terms of workload for those who remain. Although most farms would usually split to workload between the existing team until colleagues returned to work, given we currently have no clear indication of how long current restrictions will remain in place, you may need to reconsider.

**With pressure on time and resource here are some top tips on successful recruitment during Covid19:**

## 1. Write a clear advert and put it in the right place

- Be clear about the specifics of the role you are advertising – what are the working hours and pay and what experience or skills are required
- If looking to recruit to fill general farm worker role or for milking staff then the local shop, Facebook and Indeed are great places to advertise. More senior farm roles requiring experience might be better advertised nationally

## 2. Make the role attractive

- Don't insist on employees working 12 hours a day, 6 days a week – many people, especially at this time, will need to work around other commitments
- Ensure you give adequate breaks and rest periods for any long days or consecutive days worked
- Describe the steps you are taking to keep employees safe in relation to Covid19, – as a minimum, by complying with Government advice and any additional measures you have put in place (our authorised visitor guidance and key worker templates might help)
- Ensure you are aware of and competitive in relation to other roles available in the local area and the associated pay rates



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### 3. Be flexible about who you will employ

- Consider those you wouldn't typically – those without previous farm experience or from other industries or sectors
- Look for transferrable skills such as: team working, attention to detail and data analysis
- Be open to employing more people; each working fewer hours or on a more casual basis

### 4. Give new employees the information and equipment they need

- Give any new employees, especially those who haven't worked on farms before, some guidance before they arrive on their first day about things such as: what to wear; what facilities are available for making lunch/hot drinks and what Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be provided
- Aim for senior people in the business to deliver at least a basic induction including explaining what the main aims of their role should be and what a good job looks like
- Use short video clips or written/visual protocols to demonstrate more complex tasks and make sure these resources available and to hand for employees throughout their shift

*This factsheet has been prepared by Kite Consulting for Farming Connect.*



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