

# Farmers – Lets Talk Labor!

*The following is a compilation of suggestions shared by farmers at round table events and online surveys.*

## What Helps to Find Farm Staff?

- ✓ Food as compensation/CSA share in addition to wages
- ✓ Crew food shelf
- ✓ Encourage staff to try all of the products, staff should experience the farm, try new things, feedback about product.
- ✓ Swag- t-shirts, hats, staff uniform. Creates sense of team
- ✓ Limit job to 40 hours/week- split shifts(5am-1pm, 1-9pm)
- ✓ Provide pathways to learning- ie. CRAFT, workshops, trainings
- ✓ Encourage staff to ask managers any production questions
- ✓ Increasing responsibilities
- ✓ Asking why they want to work at the farm
- ✓ ID skills staff want to learn/improve
- ✓ Acknowledgement/ communication can ease burn-out/senioritis
- ✓ Providing housing/separate apartment/yurt
- ✓ Walking around farm interviews
- ✓ Mgmt that encourages personal investment in the farm
- ✓ Good quality food for available for crew
- ✓ Eat lunch together
- ✓ Optional lunch education session opportunity
- ✓ Encourage staff to experience all products/appreciate the quality
- ✓ Weekly/monthly staff lunch
- ✓ Crossword puzzles at lunch
- ✓ Swim breaks
- ✓ Fun times
- ✓ Good work environment
- ✓ Specific job descriptions
- ✓ Bartering
- ✓ Flexible scheduling, honoring time-off requests
- ✓ H2A anchor crew
- ✓ Micro-manage the first week or 2 and then let go. Clear expectations and oversight so they don't develop bad habits
- ✓ Community outreach for recruiting employees
- ✓ Be explicit about the job: black flies, rain, ticks, heat, etc.
- ✓ Use personal and professional relationships to recruit
- ✓ Advertise jobs in Valley News
- ✓ Advertise in website for staff
- ✓ Word of mouth/referrals to find staff
- ✓ Good Food Jobs
- ✓ NOFA Apprentice Directory
- ✓ Advertise in food/farm specific places, not local paper
- ✓ Strong connections with high schools/colleges/vo-techs
- ✓ Recruit on town and VVBGA list-servs
- ✓ Local agencies, high school counselors
- ✓ Employee handbook, clear expectations
- ✓ Sharing the pain of weekend/holiday shifts among staff
- ✓ Giving staff responsibility/ownership of projects/areas of the farm/etc
- ✓ Raises/bonuses
- ✓ Morning meeting
- ✓ Written expectations for task and responsibilities
- ✓ Increased responsibility/title for returning staff
- ✓ Setting clear expectations
- ✓ Incorporating education
- ✓ Apprentice program
- ✓ Advertise to regional CRAFT apprentices