

# Employee Onboarding: The First Step to Develop and Retain the Best People



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## Key Points

- Onboarding can increase employee safety, performance and retention.
- Focus on the new employee as a person is critical.
- Understand the Onboarding Project and tools.

## What is Onboarding?

- It's a relatively new business term.
- It is more than orientation, which typically covers Day 1 and paperwork.
- It is the overall business process to bring new employees into the organization, complete necessary paperwork, equip them with safety and performance knowledge and skills, and make them feel connected to a worthwhile team.
- **Safe, Productive, and Engaged...from Day 1!**

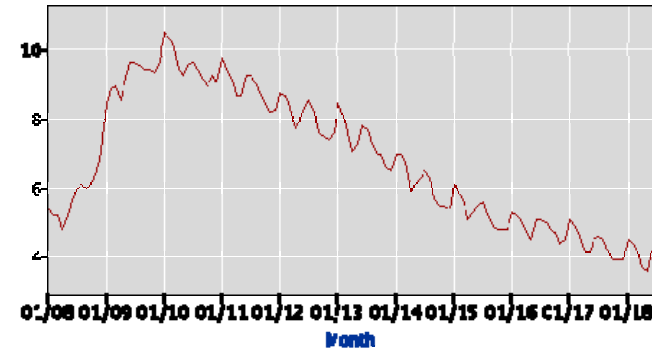
## Why is Onboarding Important?

Because it can:

- Reduce turnover
- Increase employee safety
- Increase productivity



## 10 Year U.S. Unemployment Rate



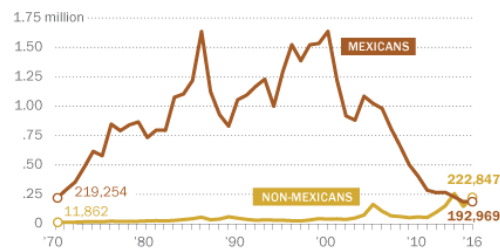
Source:  
U.S. Bureau of  
Labor Statistics

State unemployment as of October 2018: NY is 4.1%,  
PA is 4.1%, U.S. is 3.7%

## Less Immigration to the U.S.? A Smaller Labor Pool?

### More non-Mexicans than Mexicans apprehended in '16

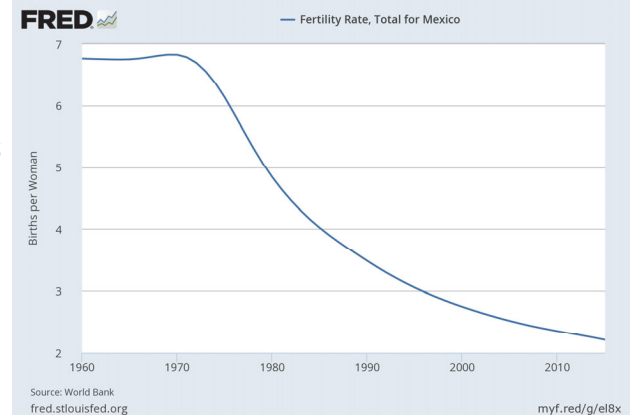
Border Patrol apprehensions, 1970-2016



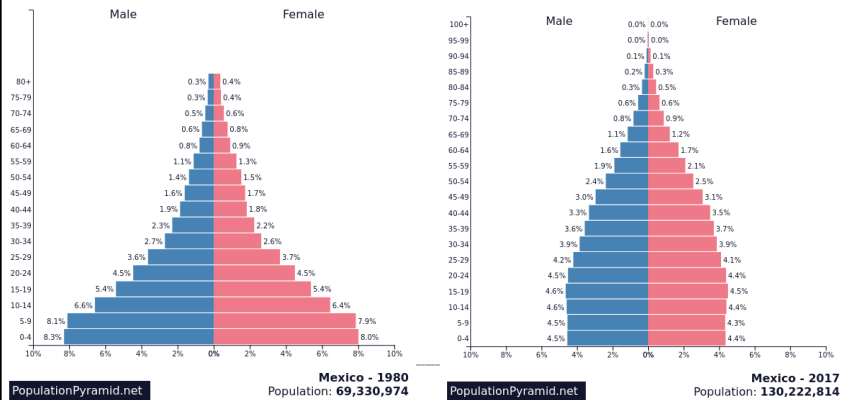
Note: 1976 covers 15 months due to change in fiscal year period.  
Source: U.S. Border Patrol apprehensions table, FY 2000-2016; Immigration and Naturalization Service statistical yearbooks, FY 1970-2000.

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## Fewer Young Mexicans Looking for Work



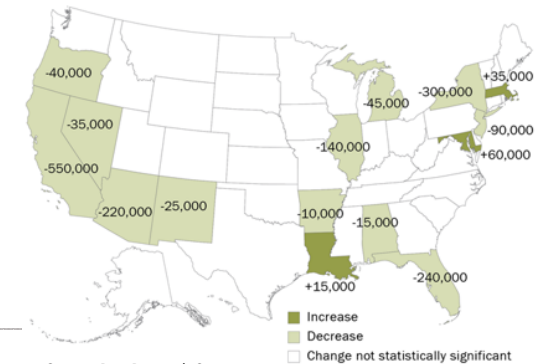
## A Stable Population



## New York's Unauthorized Population is Shrinking

### Unauthorized immigrant populations changed in 15 states over the past decade

Statistically significant change, 2007 to 2016



## The Challenge

- Labor is increasingly scarce, but farmers need excellent employees in order to operate successful businesses.
- Turnover, injuries, poor performance, and noncompliance with regulations threaten employees and farms.
- How can we make the best of every employment relationship?

## Onboarding Research

- High-level, planned onboarding can increase employees' perceived organizational support, organization commitment, and job satisfaction. (Meyer & Bartels, 2017)
- Onboarding focused on the newcomer's identity, strengths, and application of these to the job delivered positive outcomes such as: stronger employee relationships, less turnover, and better performance. (Cable, Gino & Straats, 2013)

## Levels of Onboarding

1. **Compliance:** basic compliance with regulations and policies.
2. **Clarification:** training on safety, work procedures, and expectations.
3. **Culture:** your organization's values, philosophy, traditions, and norms.
4. **Connection:** forging relationships at work and finding one's place to engage and thrive.

## The Onboarding Project

- Identified as a priority area by New York's Ag Workforce Development Council.
- Broad industry team engaged to develop a project that will assist farms.



## Our Team

- Richard Stup, Cornell University, Team Leader
- Libby Eiholzer, Cornell Cooperative Extension
- Eileen Franko, New York State Department of Labor
- Bill Banker, Dairy Farmer
- Jessica Johnson, NY Vegetable Grower's Association
- Tonya Van Slyke, NEDPA
- Julie Sorensen, NYCAMH
- John Sorbello, NY Farm Bureau
- Lisa Ford, Cayuga Milk
- Jessica Ziehm, Dairy Farmer and New York Animal Ag Coalition



## Objectives

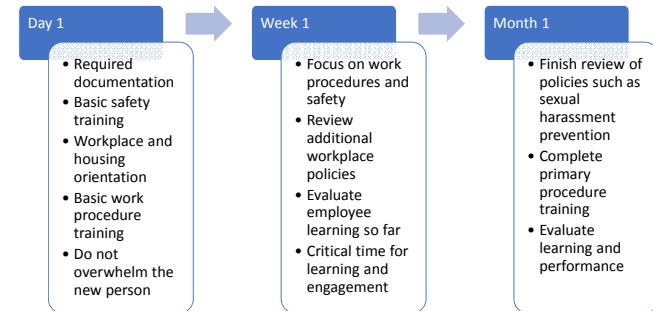
1. Establish a farm culture that is safe, productive and engaging.
2. Set clear, upfront job expectations that employees can fully understand.
3. Provide immediate safety training to avoid injuries.
4. Promote compliance with all employment regulations.
5. Communicate important farm policies and procedures, especially those that may differ from previous employers.
6. Overcome language barriers so that everyone can understand each other.
7. Increase employee commitment and reduce turnover.
8. Provide accessible and realistic support for farm onboarding, even when labor and time are in short supply.

## Project Components

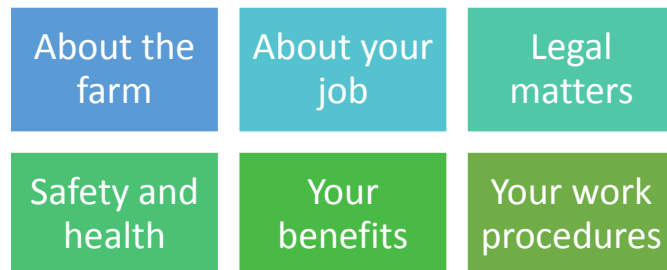
- Onboarding template for farms to easily adapt and use.
  - Overall organization and regulatory compliance.
- NYCAMH safety resources.
- Resources and learning experiences on how to train more effectively.
- Resources about employee records and training documentation.
- Dedicated web presence at Cornell Agricultural Workforce Development ([agworkforce.cals.cornell.edu](http://agworkforce.cals.cornell.edu))



## Planned Onboarding Phases



## Broad Training Areas in Each Phase



## The Onboarding Template: A Checklist

### Items to Complete by the End of Day 1

#### About the Farm

**1. Mission.** Share the mission or vision that guides your farm business. Share important values that your new employee should know and appreciate.

#### 2. Organization Chart.

- Who is your new employee's direct supervisor?
- What other positions should they know about?
- Who should they go to for help or questions?

**3. Facility Overview.** Give your new employee an orienting tour about the farm.

- Provide a map with the location and name of buildings.
- Identify location of important safety resources:
  - Fire extinguishers
  - Safety data sheets (SDS)
  - Eye wash stations
  - Emergency contact numbers
  - Location of equipment operation manuals
  - Show location of personal protective equipment

## The Onboarding Template: Compliance Tool

### About Your Job

- 1. Job Description.** Share a clear description of your employee's new job.
  - a) What are their most important duties or tasks?
  - b) How will they learn their duties or tasks?
  - c) How will their performance be measured and supervised?
- 2. Work Agreement.** Go over the "Pay Notice and Work Agreement." New York law requires that all the information in [Form LS 309](#) be filled out and shared, in writing, with the employee in a language they can understand. Here is the Form in [Spanish](#) and [Haitian-Creole](#). Form LS 309 is available on the NYSDOL website in multiple languages, see the NYS Department of Labor site for more details under "Wage Theft Prevention Act" (<https://labor.ny.gov/immigrants/agriculture-labor-program/services-for-agriculture-employers.shtm>).
- 3. Time Recording.**
  - a) How should your employee track the hours that he/she works?
  - b) What should he/she do if they believe an error was made in time recording or payroll?

## The Onboarding Template: Customize for Your Farm

### Safety and Health

- 1. Safety Culture.** Share your farm's safety expectations. (Add your reasons below.)
  - a) It is important for your new employee to work safely both to protect himself/herself and to protect others.
  - b)
  - c)
- 2. Top 5 Safety.** What are the top 5 safety concerns for your new employee's job at your farm? Include any entrapment risks and hazardous materials.

Safety Risk	How to avoid it...
Example: PTO drive lines	Never work around unshielded PTO's. Don't step over a PTO. Don't wear loose fitting clothing around equipment. Let manager know about any unshielded or damaged PTO shields.
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

## Who Should Lead Onboarding?

- Ideally the direct supervisor leads onboarding.
- One person should be responsible for seeing that onboarding is carried out consistently.
- Trainers should be qualified.
- An owner should be there on Day 1.



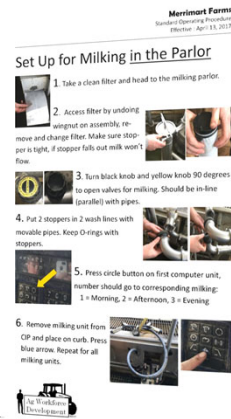
## Compliance and Documentation

- Employment regulations
- Ethical management and worker well-being assurance programs



## Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

- Essential for work consistency.
- Makes training much easier and more effective.
- Required by most quality assurance programs.



## Training Skills

- Just because you can do the job doesn't mean you can teach someone else, not everyone is a trainer.
- Ideally supervisors should train, next choice is designated, qualified and prepared peer trainers.
- The Onboarding Project will include bilingual workshops to teach essential training skills for supervisors and peer trainers.

## Simple Training & Evaluation Plans

**Training Plan Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Learning Goals** (What should the learner know or do after the training is successful?)

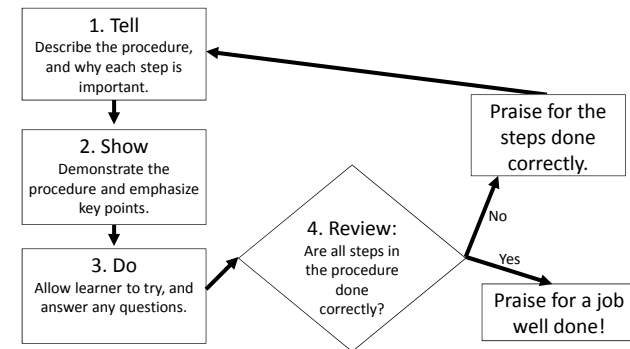
- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What? List the important knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSA's) here.	Why? Define why each KSA is important so you can explain it to the learner.	How to teach and learn it? List any activities you will do or learning aids such as diagrams or videos.
Pre-dip	To begin cleaning and sanitizing teats.	Explain, demonstrate, and practice with actual cows.
Strip	Stimulation leads to good milk let-down, fast milk-out, and better udder health.	Explain, demonstrate, and practice with actual cows. Show video.

**Evaluate Learning** (What key questions or tests will make sure the KSA's were learned.)

- 1.
- 2.

## Train Using: Tell, Show, Do, Review





## Performance Feedback

- **S**pecific, with details
- **C**redible sources of information
- **O**n-time and frequent
- **R**elevant to performance
- **E**nds looking ahead



## Evaluation at 2 Levels: The New Employee and Your Onboarding Program

### Day 1 Onboarding Evaluation Example Questions:

- Who is your supervisor?
- What are three important duties of your new job?
- How should you record your work hours?
- What are three important safety hazards on this farm?
- On what day will you be paid?

### Month 1 Evaluation of Your Onboarding Program:

- Did the new employee gain the knowledge and skills needed?
- At what level is the new employee performing after one month?
  - Below, at, or above standard
- How can onboarding be improved for the next person?

## Why Does Onboarding Work?

1. Gets the farm into compliance with a checklist approach and assigned responsibility for completing.
2. Helps ensure that new employees get all the safety and production training they need.
3. Puts the focus on the new employee where it belongs, helping them to engage.

## Wrap Up

- **Safe, Productive, and Engaged...from Day 1!**
- Organize before your new employee starts.
- Focus on the new person:
  - What are their strengths?
  - How can they contribute quickly?
  - What do they need to be successful?





## References

- Meyer, A. M., & Bartels, L. K. (2017). The impact of onboarding levels on perceived utility, organizational commitment, organizational support, and job satisfaction. *Journal of Organizational Psychology*, 17(5), 10-27.
- Cable, D. M., Gino, F., & Staats, B. R. (2013). Reinventing employee onboarding. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 54(3), 23-28.