

Create the Right Team

Mentor and manage employees to ensure husbandry and consumer satisfaction.

by *Kasey Brown*, associate editor

‘Engaged employees start with engaged employers,’ Tracey Erickson, dairy field extension specialist for South Dakota State University, told attendees of the Range Beef Cow Symposium in Colorado last November. She added that values are



► Tracey Erickson suggested hiring employees based on shared values.

what connect employers, employees and consumers.

A consumer study from the Center for Food Integrity reported that consumers value safe food, quality nutrition, appropriate animal care and environmental stewardship. These are values that cattlemen and agricultural producers share, so why not communicate those values more often?

She explained that all producers should share their mission, vision and purpose. She added that the purpose answers the “why,” and should last 100 years, even if the methods to achieve it change. She cited that Disney’s purpose is to create happiness for others.

She suggested hiring employees based on shared values. She said it allows you to connect with employees, and

those new hires will emulate the same values and work ethic, even if they don’t necessarily have an ag background. “Hire for attitude; train for aptitude,” she added.

To build a successful team, Erickson shared five tips.

1. Share the purpose, mission and vision.
2. Train employees; have an onboarding system.
3. Communicate and evaluate.
4. Include employees in farm planning and overall direction.
5. Celebrate success.

As part of the *Angus Journal’s* full meeting coverage, you can listen to Tracey Erickson’s presentation at <http://bit.ly/1ML8IGS>.

Training is a key area of this because it creates the first impression for employees. Those in agriculture are generally kinesthetic learners, she said, which means you should show them and tell them simultaneously. Teach employees and have them

show you what they learned, and observe them to correct mistakes early. Provide feedback, because people want to know how they are doing and that you are invested in their success.

She added that leadership is not micromanaging people; it is holding them accountable and empowering them to make decisions. This means employers must learn to delegate and transfer control, which she admits is not easy to do.

Successful teams communicate, respect each other, have a shared purpose and goal, organize their skills and understand their roles, encourage each other, and have fun working together, she concluded. Communication is truly important.

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Fig. 1: Good teams do this



Editor’s Note: This summary is part of the *Angus Journal’s* online coverage of the 2015 Range Beef Cow Symposium hosted Nov. 17-19, 2015, in Loveland, Colo. For additional coverage, to review this presentation’s PowerPoint or to listen to the presentation, visit the Newsroom at www.rangebeefcow.com. The *Angus Journal’s* coverage of the event is made possible through collaboration with the event committee and sponsorship of LiveAuctions.tv.