

# 2007 Cattle Industry Annual Convention & Trade Show

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## Sharpen Your Employer Skills

Consider six ways to be the kind of employer for whom you would want to work.

by **Mathew Elliott**

NASHVILLE, TENN. (Jan. 31, 2007) — When it comes to labor management, there is one golden rule: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you,” Sarah Fogleman, K-State Research and Extension, told Cattlemen’s College® attendees. With that in mind, she suggested the following six ways to be a better employer:

- ▶ communicate more;
- ▶ use job descriptions;
- ▶ recruit and hire the right people for the right positions;
- ▶ provide proper training;
- ▶ lay out the ground rules; and
- ▶ meet the employee’s needs.

“It’s important to look at who contributes to your business,” Fogleman said. There can be anyone, from your in-laws to children to friends and neighbors. It’s important to have good working relations with them. “You live with these people, and this is your livelihood,” she added.

Fogleman said that improving communications can remove barriers from your business, help everyone maintain their

composure and help everyone find a “common language.” She added that a good job description should include the title, a position summary, qualifications needed, opportunities and responsibilities, and clear performance expectations.

“Not every person is well-suited for every position,” Fogleman said. “Then not every position is well-suited for every person. That’s why it’s important to hire the right people for the right position.”

When providing proper training, remember that even you were once new and needed training, she said. That’s why it’s important to give people a clear understanding of their job and what tools they will need to do their job well.

After training your new employee, it’s important to lay down the ground rules. Fogleman said this is important to do early, so it doesn’t look like you’re making the rules up as you go along. Ground rules can cover anything from personal policies to compensations.

Concluding the list is to meet your employees’ needs through compensation and wages by understanding the needs of

your employees. To do this you must communicate, review regularly and understand the current labor market.

Fogleman gave a few final hints to end her session. “Work backwards with problems, give more feedback (no matter how much you were already giving, give more), make time to celebrate and above all, communicate!”

Fogleman presented her comments Jan. 31 during the Cattlemen’s College session “RM103: Be the Kind of Employer You Would Want to Work For” at the 2007 Cattle Industry Annual Convention and NCBA Trade Show in Nashville. The Cattlemen’s College is sponsored by Pfizer Animal Health. Fogleman’s PowerPoint presentation (as a pdf file) and two audio files for the presentation are posted to the [www.4cattlemen.com](http://www.4cattlemen.com) newsroom.

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