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MOTIVATION OF



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DOMESTIC SEASONAL FARM WORKERS

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Employees, whether on a farm or in a factory, need some desire or reason, in addition to money, for working effectively. This need is established in the initial work stages and should be recognized and satisfied throughout the employment period. Unfortunately, the employer is not always aware of his employees' motivations. Motivation refers to the needs and desires that push or urge the worker towards certain goals. The grower desires that these goals, when provided, will result in an efficient worker on the ranch. A study of the workers' opinions regarding characteristics of a good place to work should be useful to a grower.

In the fall of 1962, a survey was made in Fresno County, California, to obtain the workers' opinions about job characteristics. Opinions were obtained mostly from workers applying at various farm labor offices. An attempt was made to sample workers in camps and housing areas with limited success. A total of 263 questionnaires were completed with some 223 confined to applicants at the employment offices. These data will be found in the following tables (3 and 4). Studies similar to this one are rare in agriculture but are fairly common in industry.

In making any survey of a large group of people you are always faced with the problem of various degrees of interest in filling out the survey as well as understanding of the terms. In all cases the terms were explained to those filling out the questionnaire. It is difficult to obtain equally accurate opinions from all persons taking part. This is partly due to their educational experiences and the newness of this type of undertaking to them. It seems logical that as agriculture makes progress and workers may change, that slightly different opinions might be expressed five years from now.

PREVIOUS RELATED STUDIES

There have been a series of similar studies made with industrial and commercial workers (1, 7), but only one agricultural study has been located. The most useable study (6) was made in Ontario, Canada in 1953 and has been reproduced in Table 1. While farming methods may be somewhat different in Eastern Canada the general reactions of workers and farmers are of interest.

*This study received the generous cooperation of the California Department of Employment staff in their Fresno office. The interest and suggestions of S. J. Barrick, G. B. Fullenwider, and R. A. Chapman were greatly appreciated.

The study of Mackworth (7) is of interest since much of our harvesting of agricultural crops in California is performed under moderately warm conditions (Fig. 1). The men in this test were doing heavy muscular work under different temperature conditions. Temperatures, both low and high, are important factors affecting worker output. While in most farm operations it is not practical to consider modifying temperature, this factor should be kept in mind since it may have application to some situations. Providing shade for the workers on the canning tomato harvesters is a good application of these principles.

CALCULATION OF PREFERENCE RATING

Since in none of the twelve characteristics of a good place to work was there unanimous choice, the calculation of a "Preference Rating" was essential. This is a simple arithmetic calculation:

Example--amount of pay for single local worker.

$$\frac{(7 \times 1) + (10 \times 2) + (3 \times 3) + (2 \times 4) + (1 \times 5) + (1 \times 7)}{24} = 2.33$$

Seven persons selected amount of pay as first in importance; ten gave it second choice; three--third choice, et cetera.

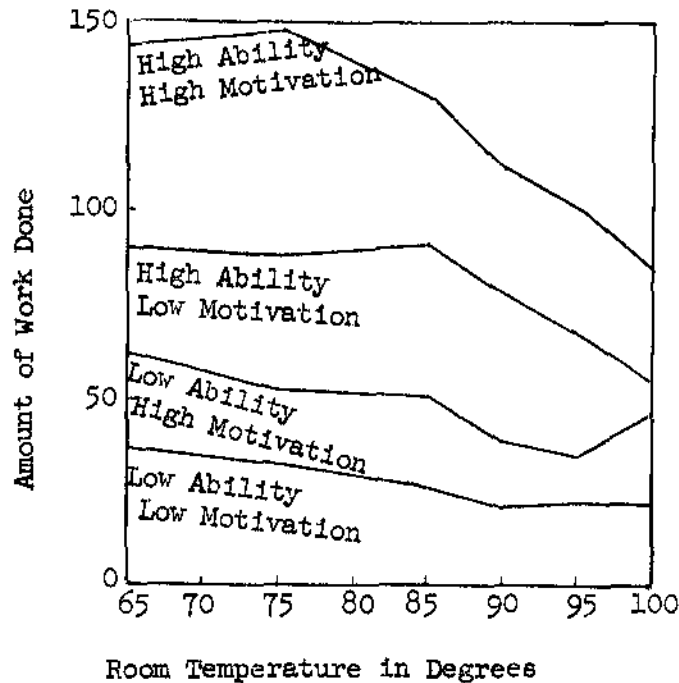


Figure 1. The effects of level of motivation, temperature, and ability upon heavy muscular work (Mackworth, 7).

Table 1. How farmers and workers answered the question*--"What are the most important things for a farmer to keep in mind if he intends to hire and keep good help?" (7)

<u>Order of importance</u>	<u>Farmers</u>	<u>Workers</u>
1.	Reasonable and regular hours.	Reasonable and regular hours.
2.	Good food and living quarters.	Good food and living quarters.
3.	Good wages.	Good wages.
4.	Work with men.	Mechanization (labour saving, good repair)
5.	Share undesirable jobs.	Be a successful farmer.
6.	Prompt regular pay.	Get most done with least effort.
7.	Take personal interest in men.	Avoid harsh criticism.
8.	Avoid harsh criticism.	Work with men.
9.	Mechanization (labour saving, good repair)	Definite agreement re wages and employment.
10.	Give men responsibility.	Prompt regular pay.
11.	Time off or vacations.	Plan work with men.
12.	Most done with least effort.	Take personal interest in men.
13.	Plan work with men.	Share undesirable jobs.
14.	Be a successful farmer.	Extra pay for extra work.
15.	Make sure men get to town regularly.	Time off or vacations.
16.	Definite agreement re wages and employment.	Make sure men get to town regularly.
17.	Extra pay for extra work.	Give men responsibility.
18.	Cash bonuses or profit sharing.	Hire men by the year.
19.	Hire men by the year.	Cash bonuses or profit sharing.
20.	Have enough work to hire several men.	Have enough work to hire several men.

*Lane, S. H. and D. R. Campbell. 1953. How to keep your farm help. Ont. Agr. College, Ont. Dept. of Agr. (Guelph), Cir. 177, 6 pp.

This procedure summarizes these data and not only gives the order of importance of different characteristics, but also the relative spread between job characteristics.

The number of questionnaires filled out was as follows: Local singles--24; migrant singles--41; local family--67; and migrant family--91.

DISCUSSION OF THE DATA

An examination of the data in the tables indicates that in no case was there unanimous agreement as to the importance of different characteristics. However, in preference rating the amount of pay was always first and the facilities to use spare time always in 12th place. A copy of the questionnaire used will be found in Table 2. The detailed data are presented in Table 3 and a summary of these data in Table 4. There were six interviews with persons in camps and eleven with those living near farms in town. These were too limited to be considered other than in the discussion. There was a good correlation between the rating of the twelve characteristics selected by Farm Labor Office fieldmen and the workers interviewed at the offices. The γ values were as follows: local singles 0.68; migrant singles 0.72; local families 0.80; and migrant families 0.78. Most of the following discussion will deal with the questionnaires filled out at the Farm Labor Offices, but these other data will be given consideration. In the following discussion the percentage preference has been calculated for three groups as follows:

Rated as 1-4; 5-8; and 9-12, as well as the number selecting the number 1 rating.

1. Amount of Pay. All four types of workers listed in Table 4 indicated that pay was the most important characteristic. A total of 93.3 per cent of the workers rated wages from 1-4. First place for wages was chosen by 49.8 per cent of the workers. Good housing was the next most important consideration for 30 out of 91 persons of migrants with families. It also rated high for local men with families and migrant men without families. In the case of single men in camps 5 rated wages as most important and 1 gave food the first choice. In the case of families living in town near farms all eleven gave wages as the most important item. Field men rated wages very high with all four types of workers, but in the case of migrant men with families housing was rated higher than wages.

The importance of pay to California workers seems more important than other studies in agriculture (Table 1) and industry. A survey made in Ontario, Canada, found both growers and workers rating wages in third place following "reasonable and regular hours" and "good food and living conditions." In industry wages may be rated as low as fifth or seventh place. However, in reasons given for dissatisfaction, usually wages are rated as most important.

2. Housing. This is a characteristic whose importance varies greatly with the worker's social situation. Both migrant men with and without families give a high rating to this factor. In the following percentages the first number indicates the per cent rating this factor

first, and the second percentage those that rated it in the top four: Local men without families 8 and 29%; migrant men without families 24 and 90%; local men with families 15 and 56%; and migrant men with families 33 and 77%. In this characteristic, in all cases, housing was rated from 1 to 12 showing there were other factors affecting their choice. In the Ontario study both "good food" and "living quarters" are second in order of importance. In industrial studies this factor was not applicable.

3. Length of Work Day. This factor considers how important is the number of hours worked per day. It considers primarily whether the employee wishes to work long hours of over ten each day. While this factor is of secondary importance, all groups give a high percentage of choice in the first four ratings. These percentages range from 42 to 53 per cent with migrant men with or without families placing 53 per cent of their choices from 1 to 4. In the Ontario study first rank was given to "reasonable and regular hours." This factor is not covered in industrial studies since workers usually receive better wages for overtime work.

4. Fairness. Fairness refers to honesty and other conditions which make up fairness such as freedom from false accusations and listening to complaints. In all groups of workers this factor was rated fourth in importance twice and fifth twice. Fairness seems to show a wide range of importance. It seems slightly more important with men with families. The top four ratings were selected 30 per cent by the men with families and 20 per cent with those without. Migrant men without families gave the lowest rating of 18 per cent. Close to 55 per cent of all groups chose the ratings of 5-8 in the middle of the table. This factor was not considered in the Ontario study and in industry was rated medium high in one case and unimportant in the other.

5. Kind of Work. Some workers have a strong preference for the type of work they wish to do. Tree harvest versus "stoop labor" makes a difference to some people while others are not concerned. Local men without families placed 50 per cent in the first four ratings. Other employees rated this item in the first four 17-34 per cent of the time. Migrant workers without families gave this characteristic the least importance. In the Ontario study the farmers rated "share undesirable jobs" in fifth place while workers placed it in 13th place.

6. Foreman Takes Interest in Workers. This item covers many conditions that may vary from ranch to ranch. The supervisor shows that the employees are important to the ranch's success, takes some personal interest in men, praises in public, and corrects mistakes in private. Some 24 per cent of the workers rate this characteristic in the top four as to importance. From 5 to 8 it is a common choice. The percentage selected from 5 to 8 are as follows: Local men without families 58%; local men with families 43%; migrant men without families 63%; and migrant men with families 51%.

7. Length of Employment Period - Weeks. This factor refers to whether work lasts for one day, a month, or several months. This condition is rated from 1 to 4 some 25 per cent of the time and 50 per cent from 5 to 8. Workers feel this is of moderate importance.

Migrant men without families gave it the lowest rating. In the Ontario study "hire men by the year" was rated 19th by farmers and 18th by the workers.

8. Good Food, if Provided. There is great variation in the rating of this item, depending upon where the worker lives and whether married or single. Food is an important item to almost all workers. In this survey the migrant single workers rated it higher than any of the other three groups. Some 71 per cent indicated a choice from one to four. Migrant men with families gave this item the lowest rating (20 per cent). Both local men with and without families gave food an intermediate rating. Perhaps local men with families were rating more for good food than a characteristic of employment. Field men rated food much higher for local single men than did the workers. In the Ontario study "good food and living quarters" was rated as the second most important factor.

9. Foreman Gives Directions to Perform Work. While most workers have some knowledge as to how the work should be performed, it is desirable to give some directions or suggestions as to how the foreman wishes the work done. This is more effective than correcting poor workmanship. This characteristic did not rate very high among the workers. All workers place this factor in the 5 to 8 classes 51 per cent of the time. The groups rated it very uniformly with a range of 45 to 58 per cent.

10. Travel Distance to and from Town. The distance of ranch from town could be important to all workers. People living on or near the ranch need supplies and other materials. Workers living in town contribute their travel time twice a day. Most workers rated this item below fourth place. Almost one-half indicated the importance of this factor as from 9 to 12. Some 71 per cent of the migrant men without families rated this item in the 9 to 12 group. Local men with or without families regarded this factor more important than did migrant people. In the Ontario study the factor of "make sure men get to town regularly" is listed 16th place by farmers and workers.

11. Incentive Pay. The workers seemed unfamiliar with this term and it is possible this characteristic was rated lower than was justified. There are three types of incentive pay--piece rate, piece rate with an increase at higher rates of output, and a completion bonus. With all four types of workers about one-half of the choices were from 9 to 12. Migrant men with families and local men without families showed a slightly greater preference for incentive payments.

12. Facilities to use Spare Time. This item deals primarily with men living in ranch camps or families living on the ranch. In camps there may be television sets, radios, or living room for single men. For families it could be a play yard for his children. All groups of workers agreed this was the least important of all the characteristics. This factor was rated in rating 9 to 12 from 84 to 90 per cent of the time. The ratings of the fieldmen on this characteristic were in agreement with the workers.

SUMMARY

This study brings out some definite information. "Pay" was always in first place. Three groups rated "housing" in second place. Three rated "length of work day" in third place, one in fourth place. Three rated "fairness" in fourth and one in fifth place.

Provision to "use spare time" was always listed as lowest in importance. "Foreman's directions" also received a low rating. "Incentive pay" and "Travel distance" were also unimportant items.

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Table 2. Questionnaire used in survey of domestic farm workers in Fresno County, California.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD PLACE TO WORK

There is need to know the characteristics of a good place to work. In order to provide good working conditions, we and the farmer need to be familiar with the worker's desires. To determine YOUR most important desires we are asking for your help to develop this information. Thank you very much.

Type of worker:

1. Seasonal Casual Day worker
2. Local Migrant Interstate Intrastate
3. Single person Person with family

Where is your home? _____

Importance of working conditions:

Mark "1" for item most important to you; mark "2" for the second most important item, and so forth, and mark "12" for the least important item.

1. Good housing	
2. Good food, if provided	
3. Length of work day	
4. Amount of pay	
5. Foreman takes interest in workers	
6. Fairness of employer	
7. Incentive pay	
8. Foreman gives directions to perform work	
9. Facilities to use spare time	
10. Kind of work	
11. Travel distance to and from work or town	
12. Length of employment period	

Table 3. Evaluation by domestic farm workers of characteristics of a good place to work. Frequency of choice expressed in percentage.

	<u>Percentage of workers who rated this item</u>												<u>Preference rating*</u>
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
<u>Good housing</u>													
Local singles	8	13	4	4	8	8	4	8	-	8	8	25	7.25
Migrant singles	24	34	22	10	-	5	-	-	-	-	3	3	2.83
Local family	15	19	13	9	6	4	3	4	-	6	10	9	5.25
Migrant family	33	26	7	11	1	2	2	3	2	3	7	3	3.73
<u>Good food</u>													
Local singles	8	8	13	4	-	4	-	8	4	8	38	4	7.54
Migrant singles	5	34	27	5	12	-	-	5	-	-	2	10	4.17
Local family	4	19	9	7	6	1	7	4	4	6	21	9	6.64
Migrant family	2	4	4	10	3	4	3	6	4	9	22	28	8.73
<u>Length of work day</u>													
Local singles	-	-	21	21	8	13	17	4	8	4	-	4	5.79
Migrant singles	5	2	7	39	10	10	2	2	10	2	7	2	5.54
Local family	-	9	16	19	7	12	4	10	9	7	3	1	5.75
Migrant family	2	13	24	14	8	10	9	7	7	2	3	1	5.01
<u>Amount of pay</u>													
Local singles	29	42	12	8	4	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	2.33
Migrant singles	49	17	22	10	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.00
Local family	51	19	19	-	6	2	2	2	-	-	-	-	2.09
Migrant family	55	19	20	1	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.90
<u>Foreman takes interest</u>													
Local singles	4	4	4	17	8	4	25	21	4	8	-	-	6.21
Migrant singles	5	3	-	7	24	24	12	3	7	5	3	7	6.42
Local family	6	3	9	7	12	15	6	10	7	12	7	4	6.66
Migrant family	1	7	3	14	17	11	13	10	11	8	6	-	6.37
<u>Fairness of employer</u>													
Local singles	4	4	13	4	17	21	21	-	8	4	-	4	5.88
Migrant singles	5	3	3	7	12	24	15	17	12	3	-	-	6.27
Local family	6	9	3	13	13	18	13	7	4	6	7	1	5.82
Migrant family	3	9	10	8	16	11	13	11	9	6	6	-	5.99

* Low preference rating indicates the most desired choice.

Table 3. Evaluation by domestic farm workers of characteristics of a good place to work. Frequency of choice expressed in percentage. (Continued).

	<u>Percentage of workers who rated this item</u>												<u>Preference rating*</u>
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
<u>Incentive pay</u>													
Local singles	4	8	4	4	-	13	4	21	21	13	-	8	7.33
Migrant singles	-	2	2	5	10	5	12	12	5	12	24	10	8.44
Local family	-	4	4	9	6	7	7	9	21	15	10	6	7.81
Migrant family	-	11	8	6	10	3	10	8	12	21	7	6	7.23
<u>Foreman gives directions to perform work</u>													
Local singles	4	4	4	-	8	8	8	21	33	4	-	4	7.33
Migrant singles	-	-	7	-	7	2	20	27	12	12	10	2	7.93
Local family	-	-	3	4	12	9	22	15	12	9	13	-	7.61
Migrant family	1	-	2	9	13	14	11	7	21	11	7	4	7.47
<u>Facilities to use spare time</u>													
Local singles	-	-	-	-	4	-	4	4	13	25	25	25	10.17
Migrant singles	-	-	-	2	2	-	5	5	5	7	17	56	7.39
Local families	-	-	-	4	-	2	2	5	5	10	21	54	5.82
Migrant families	-	-	2	-	1	3	5	3	4	13	22	45	6.56
<u>Kind of work</u>													
Local singles	33	8	13	4	8	8	-	-	-	8	8	8	4.71
Migrant singles	2	5	5	5	10	7	10	12	15	24	-	5	7.39
Local family	6	7	9	12	15	9	9	10	16	3	1	1	5.82
Migrant family	1	4	6	14	9	21	8	14	9	6	4	4	6.56
<u>Travel distance to and from work or town</u>													
Local singles	4	-	8	21	25	-	8	4	-	8	8	13	6.54
Migrant singles	-	-	-	2	2	10	12	2	15	22	29	5	8.68
Local families	-	4	6	9	10	10	12	10	10	12	7	7	7.30
Migrant families	-	2	3	8	7	6	18	9	16	12	14	7	8.00
<u>Length of employment</u>													
Local singles	-	8	4	8	13	21	4	8	8	8	13	4	6.92
Migrant singles	5	-	5	7	7	15	10	15	20	12	2	2	7.12
Local families	12	4	7	9	6	10	12	12	7	13	1	4	6.22
Migrant families	1	6	10	7	14	13	9	22	7	7	2	2	6.41

* Low preference rating indicates the most desired choice.

Table 4. Characteristics of a good place to work--worker's opinions. Arranged in order of importance with preference rating.

	Single worker				Family man or man and family			
	Local		Migrant		Local		Migrant	
Most important	1. Pay	2.3	Pay	2.0	Pay	2.1	Pay	1.9
	2. Kind of work	4.7	Housing	2.8	Housing	5.3	Housing	3.7
	3. Length of work day	5.8	Food	4.2	Length of work day	5.8	Length of work day	5.0
	4. Fairness	5.9	Length of work day	5.5	Fairness	5.8	Fairness	6.0
	5. Foreman's interest	6.2	Fairness	6.3	Kind of work	5.8	Foreman's interest	6.4
	6. Travel distance	6.5	Foreman's interest	6.4	Work period--weeks	6.2	Work period--weeks	6.4
	7. Work period--weeks	6.9	Work period--weeks	7.1	Food	6.6	Kind of work	6.6
	8. Housing	7.3	Kind of work	7.4	Foreman's interest	6.7	Incentive pay	7.2
	9. Incentive pay	7.3	Foreman's directions	7.9	Travel distance	7.3	Foreman's directions	7.5
	10. Foreman's directions	7.3	Incentive pay	8.4	Foreman's directions	7.6	Travel distance	8.0
	11. Food	7.5	Travel distance	8.7	Incentive pay	7.8	Food	8.7
Least important	12. Spare time	10.2	Spare time	10.7	Spare time	10.9	Spare time	10.5