

POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

Overview & Examples

CATTLE
ON ROAD

A Position Description is a structured document designed to clearly identify the duties, responsibilities, reporting relationships and expectations of a specific position within a business.

Communication and documentation are areas most family farming enterprises need to improve. Each member of a farming family plays important roles. Without the officework, supporting roles and casual hours spent in the paddock that one partner does the output would not be possible. Without the long hours spent outside, on the phone and in the office done by the other partner the output would not be the same.


Family farms are a team effort. If you employee staff position descriptions are essential management tools. If you do not employ staff it is still a good idea to write position descriptions for your role within your business. It may simply be to validate what you do and the contribution you make.

Often you are so busy getting on with things you don't have time to stop and that is when overwhelm can creep in. By listing the responsibilities, roles and expectations of the position you hold within a business it is easier to assess what jobs could be done by someone else. If this is not possible at least it will help to prioritise jobs. As families grow and new partners join the team position descriptions should be reviewed.

Developing an effective position description

Developing an effective position description is an essential management tool. A few considerations when developing a position description include:

- Ensuring the description reflects the needs of the working environment and describe the position, do not describe the person doing the job
- Use language and content that is correct, up-to-date and reflect the level of responsibility and outcomes expected
- Use gender neutral language
- Ensure the format is concise and provides a good summary of the position
- Minimise the use of jargon and acronyms
- Provide a bullet point list of the responsibilities and duties of the job
- List the essential duties required to perform the job
- Use complete sentences and present tense
- Stipulate any qualifications that are necessary for someone to fill this position including education level, experience, specific skills, personal characteristics, certifications, licences or physical abilities

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- Use an accurate job title
 - Write a brief summary paragraph that provides an overview of the job
 - Provide an overview of your business and if you are a family business provide an overview of your interests and values. If you are keen campdrafters it would be important for a governess to understand the lifestyle is not suited to anyone allergic to horses.
 - Write the job responsibilities that are necessary for this job, not every job

Examples of Position Responsibilities

Management:

- Strategic planning – short and longer-term goal setting. Oversee implementation of the business vision in alignment with shared values of the family
- Operational planning – prepare, review and maintain operational plan in accordance with strategic plan objectives
- Financial management – prepare budgets, monitor cash flow and ensure production targets are realistic and on track
- Negotiate, on behalf of the landholders, co-existence agreements with mining companies
- Liaise with staff, suppliers, contractors, commodity buyers, government departments, neighbours, specialists and bank representatives as required
- Plan finances and production to maintain farm progress against budget parameters
- Supervise junior staff members and provide training and mentoring as required
- Communication – ensure internal and external communication channels and methods are effective and in alignment with the business values
- WH&S – at all times demonstrate a commitment to safety and encourage all staff to take personal responsibility with a positive attitude to safety
- Systems management – responsibility for monitoring the operations of the information technology operations of the business, evaluating staff performance, developing strategic procedures to maximise productivity, and identifying business opportunities that would generate more revenues and profitability
- Records management – ensure financial and production records are accurate and up to date
- Compliance – oversee the implementation and ongoing management of policies to ensure current government regulations are complied with
- Completing all documentation relevant to livestock traceability and Quality Assurance programs
- Coordinate training to stock team members, including conducting competency assessments and identifying individual and team training requirements
- Liaise with Transport companies, Farmers and Livestock agents as required
- Buy supplies, such as lick, fencing equipment fertiliser and seeds
- Arrange the maintenance and repair of farm buildings, machinery and equipment
- Plan activities for trainee staff, mentoring and monitoring them
- Maintain and monitor the quality of yield, whether livestock or crops
- Understand the implications of the weather and make contingency plans
- Make sure animals are ready for trucking deadlines
- Ensure that farm activities comply with government regulations
- Monitor animal health and welfare, including liaising with vets
- Prepare, monitor and review feed budgets for livestock




- Apply health and safety standards across the property
- Protect the environment and maintaining biodiversity
- Supervise staff and ensure they are trained appropriately in livestock management

Farm Overseer:

- Prepare or assist with preparation of annual forecasts, budgets and other business plans
- Recruit, supervise and ensure the ongoing training of farm staff
- Maintain production and other farm records including the estimated operating costs, ordering of farm inputs, marketing of produce and monitoring of animal health and feeding requirements
- Control costs of production in line with budget expectation
- Produce crops and/or livestock to achieve volume, quality and cost objectives
- Clean and maintain buildings, sheds, equipment and facilities to ensure health standards and high quality of produce
- Ensure safe and effective handling of equipment
- Undertake activities to minimise environmental degradation. Monitor environmental effects of farming activities and repair existing damage
- Plan and organise marketing and sale of produce to achieve high returns
- Select crop types and determine area to be sown
- Conduct a wide range of farming operations including cultivation, sowing, spraying and harvesting
- Care and raise livestock for the production of meat, wool, milk and other animal products
- Ensure good animal health is maintained through provision of adequate quality and quantity of pasture and other feed
- Organise and conduct general farm activities including livestock control, pest management, shearing, milking and mating

Station Hand:

- Property maintenance – inspect and maintain fencelines, watering points and infrastructure as required. Undertake or co-ordinate necessary repairs.
- Yard Repairs and Maintenance - including fencing & welding
- Undertake practical activities, such as driving tractors, operating machinery, feeding livestock or spraying fields
- Assist with vehicle and machinery maintenance and repairs
- Follow safe operating procedures
- General station maintenance
- Diagnosis of animal health symptoms
- Administration of animal health treatments
- Maintaining accurate records of animal treatments and stock movements
- Mustering, drafting and trucking of cattle
- Competent use of horses and bikes
- Servicing small motors



Personnel Management

- Ensure compliance with award wages and conditions
- Conduct orientation, skills development and performance reviews as required
- Ensure all training is alignment with business goals and identified skills gaps
- Oversee reinforcement of the WH&S policies and procedures
- Ensure policies and procedures are relevant, up-to-date, practical and compliant with legislation
- Encourage a culture that reflects the core values of the business

Cook

- Menu planning, preparation and cooking of food for staff, contractors and family members in a timely manner and at a high quality
- Stores management – monitoring and ordering foodstuffs and kitchen supplies
- Preparing food to meet special dietary requirements
- Ensure the kitchen, cold-room's, dining room and storeroom are maintained at a clean and tidy standard at all times
- Preparation, serving and storing of food must be of a very high standard, neatly and hygienically presented

Financial Record Keeper

- keep financial records up to date
- Recording the financial transactions of a business in bookkeeping software (such as XERO, Phoenix, MYOB or QuickBooks), spreadsheets or databases
- Arranging payment of accounts
- Preparing and sending invoices and receipts to debtors
- Processing payroll and maintaining employee records
- Carrying out bank reconciliations
- Reporting for preparation of a Business Activity Statement (BAS)
- Checking figures and reporting for accuracy
- Reporting any irregularities in data to management
- Producing balance sheets, income statements and other financial documents

Examples of General Required Skills

- a knowledge of food production and an awareness of customer demand, food standards and sustainability
- organisational and time-management skills
- the ability to work under pressure
- supervisory skills and management ability
- numerical aptitude



- willingness to be outside in all weathers and patience to undertake all sorts of practical, sometimes repetitive jobs
- an open drivers licence
- self-motivation, with the ability to motivate others
- larger-scale business awareness
- marketing skills
- negotiation skills
- genuine commitment to farming
- IT skills
- good technical knowledge
- a good understanding of modern farming methods
- a strong commitment to animal welfare
- an understanding of the ways in which farming impacts the environment
- planning skills
- problem solving skills
- work independently
- computer skills
- like working outdoors
- communication skills
- mechanical skills
- enjoy working with animals
- management and organisational skills