## Level 2 Training Reminders

Six hours of level 2 training are required every two years to earn/maintain Level 2 Certification—one of the six hours must be the regulations session offered each year at the annual meeting. Courses that qualify at the annual meeting this year are marked on the agenda with an * (also on page 4). In order to obtain credit, you will need to show your certification card to the person tracking attendance (new employees/those without cards will be able to sign a sign-in sheet).

## Level 1 Training

The level 1 training program has been revised, and a new exam developed. Sessions will be scheduled around Wisconsin in February and March—watch your mail for updates. The new Level 1 Certification will be offered at the annual meeting on Monday, January 21, 2013—pre-registration is required for this session, as seating is limited.

### DOT Looking to Update Implements of Husbandry Statutes

**By: Cheryl Skjolaas**

What should be the definition of an Implement of Husbandry (IOH) based on current and future agricultural practices? This question serves as a guiding issue for a workgroup convened by the Department of Transportation (DOT) initiated in October 2012. An overall goal of this process is to remove some of the many shades of gray in the current statutes based on older agricultural practices and align the laws with current or future agricultural equipment and practices. Issues that have been discussed include oversize tractors and machinery plus related permit considerations, use of commercial motor vehicles (CMV) and conversion CMV’s, road and bridge design factors, and areas for potential policy changes. The group is also looking at potential best practices and implications based on current practices by PNAAW members. An initial report will be completed by the end of January 2013 for potential legislation.

Dana Cook and Chris Lindstrom are members of the workgroup representing PNAAW. Additional workgroup members include representatives from Wisconsin Custom Operators (WCO), WI Farm Bureau Federation, Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin (PDPW), Wisconsin Agribusiness Association (WABA) Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), WI Sate Patrol, Wisconsin Towns Association, Wisconsin County Association, Association of Equipment Manufacturers (AEM), UW-Extension and UW-Madison, and a number of Department of Transportation representatives.

On Tuesday, January 22 from 4:30-5:00 pm, Cheryl Skjolaas, UW Agricultural Safety and Health Specialist will provide an update on the DOT actions during the Annual Symposium. PNAAW members are welcome to attend.
Engaged employees are more productive, safer, and less likely to leave for another job.

Gallup, a research based management consulting firm, defines an engaged employee as “someone who works with passion and has profound connection to the company, driving results and moving the organization forward.” In other words, engaged employees are those who show passion about their job and the business they work for, making them highly productive and efficient at work.

Gallup’s statistics say that highly engaged employees can improve overall performance by 78 percent! Furthermore, engaged employees can improve:

- Employee retention by 44 percent
- Labor safety by 50 percent
- Productivity by 50 percent
- Profitability by 33 percent

So, are your employees highly engaged or not?

If they are good for you! If they are not, I suggest starting by looking at your leadership and communication skills. We all recognize that good communication is critical for effective teamwork on the farm or in any business. Not only do we recognize that, but we often say that it is a priority for us. And yet, it is still a problem area for many.

As manager or business owner, you tend to assume that others understand what you want. You think that they give the same urgency to tasks as you will. You believe that they will have the same standards for how the job gets done that you have. But, unfortunately many times this is not the case.

You probably aren’t the only one with questions and misconceptions. Many employees don’t know much of the business outside their duties, what your goals are as an owner or how they are doing compared to your expectations. The primary reason they don’t know it is because many owners don’t do a good job sharing that information.

That’s where many owners get stuck. They recognize the importance of good communication and engaged employees, but aren’t sure what to do differently. Meanwhile, many employees seem adrift. They may not contribute much beyond doing the minimum and aren’t active participants in advancing the operation to a new level.

So what can you do to have highly engaged employees? Here are five things that you must have:

1. Strong leadership and communication
2. Well defined job roles and organizational structure
3. Effective performance management system
4. A well defined recruitment and orientation process for new employees
5. A good training and development program

Over the winter months when things are less hectic, is the time to start thinking about how you can create a more engaged team.

If you are interested in learning more about this, contact Phil Durst at 989-387-5346 or via email at durstp@msu.edu.

Improvement is possible but it begins with considering employees as valuable teammates working with you to reach shared goals.

(used with permission of Phil Durst, MSU Extension, adapted by Kevin Erb)
Business confidantes are the most common and influential small-business decision. Business confidantes have typically served in that capacity since the business was founded.

Twenty-three (23) percent of small-business owners do not engage any person or persons in their deliberations when confronting a difficult business problem or critical business decision. They rely on themselves.

Engaging different people for different situations appears to be the most productive consulting style in terms of profitability and employment increase/loss of the three styles examined. Relying on confidantes appears less productive and not engaging anyone appears even less so.

The firms/occupations that small-business owners most frequently solicit for advice and/or counsel are accountants, insurance agents/brokers, other business owners, suppliers, bankers, IT consultants, including Web designers, and lawyers in that order. Thirty-five (35) percent consulted an accountant more intensively in the last 12 months than any other outside advisor.

The median amount of time that a small employer of his/her designee spent with the firm/individual that he/she worked with most intensively the last year was 16 hours.

The median amount of money spent on it was about $2,000. The average was significantly higher.

Small employers who solicit advice tend to implement that received. However, most carefully filter it, picking and choosing what they find useful and discarding the rest. About two of three who solicited advice in the last 12 months were able to implement a majority of what they received.

The subject matter of the year’s most critical decision varied widely—sales or marketing 22 percent; operations or purchases, 21 percent; finance, 17 percent; and disposition or changing size of the firm, 13 percent. Fifteen (15) percent claim the year’s most significant decision involved the very existence of the business.

Discovering critical problems that need to be addressed is often more challenging than resolving them. In one of three cases, owners were surprised to find the matter that created the year’s most critical business decision.

Within a week of discovering the matter that required the year’s most critical decision, half of small-business owners began to pursue a corrective course of action. Those waiting longer solicited counsel from more people about the matter. But the speed of instituting corrective action was not related to the seriousness of the matter.

Small-business owners are substantially more likely to solicit information than they are to solicit direction. They also typically consult more people when the business decision is more serious.

The most helpful advice paid consultants and vendors and suppliers typically provide is adding detail and depth to the owner’s basic ideas.

Forty-seven (47) percent of small employers did not seek out anyone to discuss the year’s most significant business decision. The most frequent reason (56%) offered for pursuing this closely held course of action is that they knew what they needed to do as soon as they recognized the matter. The second most frequently cited reason was privacy (22%).

National Small Business Poll: Advisors on Critical Decisions
William J. Dennis, Jr.
NFIB Research Roundation
Executive Summary
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PNAAW Level 1 Certification

What to Expect in the Unlikely Event of an Accident

The Millionaire Next Door

New Technologies in Manure Separation


Roadside Maintenance/Preparing for Roadside Inspection

Motor Carrier Safety Basics: Federal & State Requirements Overview

Nutrient Availability of Manipulated Manure

Manure Advisory System & Runoff Risk Forecast Tool

The Grass Isn’t Always Greener on the Other Side: Communication with Employees & Compensation

Nutrient Management Regulation Update

Cost of Hauling & Applying Manure

Agitation & Manure Consistency in Application

2013 Annual Symposium Certification Topics