

Missouri

Regional workshops to improve Missouri's farm labor management

When surveyed, some of the biggest challenges that many Missouri agricultural producers recently said they deal with is recruiting and hiring skilled employees, and then keeping them on the job. **University of Missouri Extension** economists and labor specialists delivered a project in 2018 to help Missouri's farmers better understand a key, complex component of the labor market, the labor compliance environment.

MU Extension created a 43-page Missouri Farm Labor Guide to help explain some of the most complex components of the farming labor market and labor compliance. Workshops were held in four Missouri cities -- Kirksville, Marshall, Springfield and Sikeston -- where the Missouri Farm Labor Guide was provided to each attendee and explained. The guide includes farm labor management resources, checklists and templates. Topics covered in the workshops included how to be a good

supervisor, how to recruit employees you want, how to retain good employees, how to let an underperforming employee go, record keeping requirements, managing payroll and more.

Fifty-three people attended the workshops, and 178 additional producers received training about labor management issues via other meetings and webinars. Several workshop attendees were in the earliest stages of their farming careers. They had not yet hired their first workers before attending a workshop. After attending the workshop, one attendee from Southeast Missouri felt confident to hire someone for the first time.

"After attending the class I hired my first full-time employee," the farmer said. "The insight I gained from class was great and really put my mind at ease that I would not miss something on taxes or handle that properly and not get in trouble with (the) government. I also gained insight on how to better manage (workers) and lay out expectations and goals early (so as to) save confrontation in future. Overall I would encourage others to attend the class."

The workshop was also opened to extension regional specialists in the MU system, and many said they plan to use parts of the training information in their local extension programming in the future. The materials developed for the project were also shared with the University of Tennessee Extension for an ag labor program developed there in 2019.



"I am pretty new to this and I learned a lot about how to manage employees at a personal level as well as (managing) the paperwork."

– Workshop Attendee





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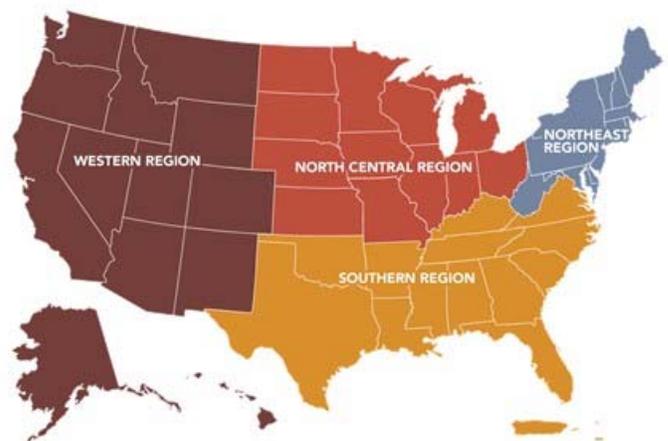
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“Educating America’s farmers and ranchers to manage the unique risks of producing food for the world’s table.”

Extension Risk Management Education (ERME) is delivered through four regional centers that provide grant funding and leadership within their regions.

Projects are producer-focused, results-based and encourage public-private partnerships. Funded projects must identify targeted results that will help producers manage risk and then describe how the project will measure those results.

Extension Risk Management Education has funded innovative programs that have generated tangible results for producers in every state. ERME is committed to funding results, providing transparent accountability, and encouraging collaboration. View the accomplishments of all funded projects on our website.
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