



Opportunities for working in the grains industry

There are plenty of opportunities to gain employment on a grain farm.

The main attribute sought by farm employers is **attitude**. Employers are looking for individuals that are willing to:

- Operate with a high level of accountability and attention to detail
- Work outdoors
- Work additional hours in the peak periods
- Use initiative and problem solve
- Ask questions and communicate effectively
- Be flexible and reliable
- Live in a regional area, sometimes this means a short drive to the closest town and services

Benefits

The benefits of working in the grains industry include:

- Technology – work with innovative technology developed to save time, reduce costs and ensure a safe and comfortable working environment
- Growth – agriculture remains a growing industry as demand for food remains strong
- Diversity – you will have a diverse farm role, working in different areas, with different teams and in varied work conditions (experience the seasons, indoors and outdoors)
- Reward for effort – see your efforts come to fruition as the grain is harvested at the end of the season, be paid well for hours worked, and contribute to a team

The most common role that farmers recruit for is an entry level position with base experience required. This may be called a farmhand, machinery operator or **farm assistant**. Within this role, the employee will be expected to:

- Have a car license
- Operate large machinery including tractors
- Undertake basic vehicle and machinery maintenance
- Assist with property maintenance including fencing
- Handle livestock in a humane manner
- Maintain records and operate technology such as autosteer
- Work safely and follow instructions

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Experience

Farmers value experience in:

- Tractor driving including operating an airseeder, chaser bin or roller
- Truck driving, including loading and unloading grain or hay
- Operating forklifts or frontend loaders
- Working in other outdoor roles that require peak periods of work
- Computer skills and the ability to adapt to new technology
- Welding and light fabrication
- Willingness to learn and good work ethic

Finding each other

Where do employers and employees find each other in grains?

- Word of mouth
- Seek www.seek.com.au
- Local newspapers
- Stock Journal (agriculture focussed newspaper, published Thursdays)
- Gumtree and/or social media
- Recruitment services

Positions are often advertised in the lead up to peak periods, these include February/March prior to seeding and September/October prior to harvest.

Workplace basics

- Hours of work – an average week is 38 hours. In peak times there will be a requirement to work additional hours, often 6 or 7 days per week.
- Rates of pay – the Modern Pastoral Award sets the minimum wage. Given tight labour supply, employees with experience are paid over \$27 per hour.
- Many farms provide additional benefits such as a vehicle, accommodation or mobile phones.

Where do I make a start?

- Go for a drive and observe what is happening out in the paddock.
- Develop a relationship with a local farmer and ask for work experience.
- Some farms have facebook pages or twitter accounts. If you look there you will become familiar with what is happening on farm throughout the year.
- Try casual work during seeding or harvest (tractor skills are useful here).
- Ensure licenses are current and if possible gain your truck license.
- Consider accredited training www.ruralcareers.net.au/grain-crops/.
- Apply for jobs and give it a go.
- Communicate how your existing skills will be beneficial on a farm.

For more information, please contact
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