

This resource has been developed for the purposes of assisting in the identification and development of rehabilitation programs for injured or ill employees, and to provide detailed information about **common** job demands. When supporting an injured employee in their return to work this document is used in conjunction with Workplace Specific Details to ensure information is customised.

Description of the role of the Farm Assistant

Farm assistants are appointed in schools that have a farm plot on site. Duties involve maintaining the grounds of the farm, feeding the animals and assisting teachers with classes if required.

Farm assistants work independently, under the direction of teachers, and the duties are self paced.

This document indicates the average time spent across a working day on common work activities/physical work demands that have been identified as essential to the successful performance of the role. The frequency of performance of work tasks is described by either the Descriptor, Percentage of Time, or Amount of Time based on the average working day of 8 hours as follows:

Descriptor	Percentage of Time	Amount of Time based on 8 hours per day
Not present	0%	0
Rare	1% - 7%	<i>From 4 mins to 30 mins</i>
Occasional	8% - 33%	<i>35 mins to 2 ½ ours</i>
Frequent	34% - 66%	<i>2 ¾ hours to 5 ¼ hours</i>
Constant	67% - 100%	<i>5 ½ hours to 8 hours</i>

This table is derived from the US Department of Labor Physical Demand Characteristics of Work, 1996

Hours of Work and Scheduled Breaks

Hours of Work: Full time employee work 8 hours per day, with a rostered day off every 19 days.

Except in the case of employees engaged in attending livestock, the ordinary working hours shall be between the hours of 7.00am and 5.30pm, Monday to Friday inclusive.

The ordinary working hours of employees engaged in attending livestock shall be between the hours of 6.00am and 5.30pm, Monday to Saturday inclusive.

Meal Breaks: Employees who work not less than four hours per day shall be entitled to an unpaid lunch break of not less than 30 minutes each day. A tea break during the morning period of not more than fifteen minutes duration is allowed. An employer may grant a tea break of not more than ten minutes duration during both the morning and afternoon periods of the working day. Where an afternoon tea break is taken the employer may direct that it be taken immediately prior to ceasing time.

Job Profile – Functional Summary For the Position of a Farm Assistant

Frequency of Physical Job demands (Average % of Full Time Work Day)

Demands	Not Present	Rare (1% - 7%)	Occasional (8% - 33%)	Frequent (34% - 66%)	Constant (67% - 100%)	Demands	Not Present	Rare (1% - 7%)	Occasional (8% - 33%)	Frequent (34% - 66%)	Constant (67% - 100%)
Sitting			X			Reaching					X
Standing - Static	X					Handling					X
Standing - Dynamic					X	Pushing				X	
Walking - Flat Terrain		X				Pulling				X	
Walking – Slippery/ Gravel Terrain					X	Lifting				X	
Climbing – Step Stools/ Ladders		X				Carrying				X	
Climbing – Stairs		X				Fine Motor				X	
Stooping		X				Tactility				X	
Kneeling					X	Driving			X		
Crouching – One Off				X		Visual Function					X
Crawling		X				Speech					X
Balancing – Above Ground		X				Auditory Function					X

Tools/ Equipment Handled

Gardening tools, including hoes, rakes, shovels, pitchforks, sledgehammers as well as chainsaw etc.

Farming materials, including 20kg bags of feed (feed scooped out and placed into large drums for easy access, and then placed as required into 5-7kg buckets to carry onto farm)

Gardening equipment, including hand mower, tractor

Animals – cows, geese, chickens etc.

Loads Lifted & Carried (Average % of Full Time Work Day)

Weight range	Not present	Rare (1-7%)	Occasional (8-33%)	Frequent (34 -66%)	Constant (67 – 100%)
0-5 kg				Floor to Waist to Shoulder	
6-10kg				Floor to Waist	
11-15kg		Floor to Waist			
15-20kg		Floor to Waist			
21-25kg+			Floor to Waist		

Note: - Loads are a guide of maximum required in a full time work day.

Job Profile – Functional Summary For the Position of a Farm Assistant

Common Job Activities (used in conjunction with Workplace Specific Details)		Average Time	Critical Job Demand
1	Feeding animals Involves lifting 20kg bags of feed from floor to waist height and into wheelie bins. From wheelie bins, feed is transferred into large bins for storage. Feed is scooped from bins into hand-held buckets which are carried (5-7kg) for feeding the animals. Farm assistants walk through the farm to where the various animals are located to feed them. Water dishes are filled using hose.	Up to 1 ½ hours per day	Yes
2	Picking up food from suppliers Involves driving ute with trailer, lifting and transferring approximately 25 x 20kg bags of feed, lifting and carrying bags one at a time into food shed.	Varies according to school	Yes
3	Collecting produce Involves bending and reaching forward to collect farm produce such as vegetables, eggs, root crops etc	Daily as part of feeding animals	Yes
4	Farm maintenance Includes mowing lawn, mending fences, maintaining vegetable patch (weeding, feeding, spraying, watering, trimming), shovelling mulch on / off trailer and occasionally cutting wood (with chainsaw) or clearing land. Also involves use of power farm small equipment such as a tractor to dig holes, plow field, slash grass etc. Tractor attachments very heavy (reported to be 100kg+), however does not require full lift, only maneuvring.	Range from 20 min to 4 – 5 hours at a time. Time spent varies on need	Yes
5	Caring for farm animals and taking animals to local show or to market Involves constant monitoring of the health of all farm animals and liaison with the agriculture teacher or vet to address problems; drenching and dipping as required, transferring animals into a trailer and supervising interactions with the public.	From 20 min to 4-5 hours per day as required	Yes
6	Administration Involves ordering farm supplies, making telephone calls, liaising with the local vet, maintaining records of stock and farm equipment	Up to 10 – 15 minutes per day	Yes
7	Small equipment maintenance Involves maintaining small farm equipment by doing regular services, completing minor repairs, sharpening blades, maintaining tyre pressures, fuelling up motors etc	Up to 1 hour per day	Yes
8	Assisting classes Farm assistants may be required to assist teachers with some of their classes or practical demonstrations. Generally the teacher will only request the farm assistant's presence to assist in classes that are large in size or that are using power equipment on the farm.	Occasionally – as requested by the teacher	Yes

Job Profile – Functional Summary For the Position of a Farm Assistant

Environmental Factors

The following environmental factors exist in the workplace.

	Low- level ambient noise (from students, traffic, school activities e.g. music practice etc.) requiring moderate voice projection to be heard.
	Work is performed outdoors and exposed to the elements. Nature of work performed may result in risk of exposure to minor burns, cuts, bites or stings as well as risk of sunburn and dehydration
	Worker/ team relationships – the work environment may require the employee to adjust to different management or working styles, and demonstrate an ability to work cooperatively.
	The employee is required to wear Common Protective or Safety Equipment such as Safety Shoes, Glasses, Gloves, Hearing Protection.
	The employee may handle substances, including contaminants which require the implementation of safe work methods for hazardous substances
	The safe control and operation of vehicles (tractor) and machinery are required in this position
	Safe handling of gardening tools and other farm equipment is also required for this position
	Working with animals (cow, geese, chickens), including feeding, cleaning out pens, collecting eggs

Core Workplace Expectations (Organisational, Interpersonal, and Psychosocial).

The following major workplace expectations have been identified with reference to DEC Policies and Guidelines and O*NET (the Occupational Information Network, a comprehensive database of worker attributes and job characteristics).

	All employees have a responsibility to comply with legislation, departmental policy, procedures and the DEC Code of Conduct, perform their duties effectively, provide impartial and accurate advice and act in a manner that promotes a productive and harmonious working environment.
	Negotiating with others - In dealing with other people, employees should be able to accommodate and tolerate different opinions and perspectives, and sort out their disagreements by rational discussion.
	Establishing and maintaining effective communication – includes appropriate communication with supervisors, peers, subordinates, students, parents and community members
	Employees who work with students have a special responsibility in presenting themselves as appropriate role models for those students.
	Organising, Planning, and Prioritising Work - Developing specific goals and plans to prioritise, organise, and accomplish work.
	Making Decisions and Solving Problems - Analysing information and evaluating results to choose the best solution and solve problems.
	Independent work - ongoing requirement to work alone, while maintaining relationships within school community.
	Investigations – participate in reporting investigation and resolution processes, including mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect, and participation as a witness or party to performance, discipline, grievance, WorkCover or other processes.

Job Profile – Functional Summary For the Position of a Farm Assistant

The use of this terminology, referred to in Frequency of Physical Job demands table on page 2, helps to establish a common language for key stakeholders when describing job demands in terms of frequency of activity performance, type of posture or movement and the level of strength/ lifting required.

Definition of Physical Job Demands	
LIFTING	Raising or lowering an object from one level to another (includes upward pulling and/or exerting upward force to hold an object in static position).
CARRYING	Transporting an object, usually holding in the hands, arms or on the shoulder.
PUSHING	Exerting force upon an object so that the object moves away from the force (including stooping, striking, kicking, treading and exerting force to hold an object in static position).
PULLING	Exerting force upon an object so that the object moves toward the force (including jerking and exerting force to hold an object in static position).
SITTING	Remaining in a seated position.
STANDING	Remaining on one's feet in an upright position without moving greater than three steps.
WALKING	Moving about on foot greater than 3 steps.
CLIMBING	Ascending or descending ladders, stairs, scaffolding, ramps, poles and the like, using feet and legs, or hands and arms.
BALANCING	Maintaining body equilibrium to prevent falling when walking, standing, crouching, or running on either elevated and unguarded, narrow, slippery or erratically moving surfaces.
STOOPING	Bending the body forward and downward by bending spine at waist, requiring full use of lower extremities and back muscles.
KNEELING	Bending legs at knees to come to rest on knees.
CROUCHING	Bending body forward and downward by bending legs and spine.
CRAWLING	Moving about on the hands and knees.
REACHING	Extending arms(s) in any direction.
HANDLING	Seizing or grasping, holding, turning or otherwise working with the hands. Fingers are only involved to the extent that they are extensions of the hand.
FINE MOTOR	Picking, pinching, or otherwise working with the fingers, other than with the whole hand or arm as in handling.
TACTILITY	Perceiving attributes of objects, such as: size, shape, temperature, or texture by touching with skin; particularly that of finger tips.

This table is derived from the Queensland Department of Education and Training Job Dictionary