



**RealCareer™
Employability
Skills Program**

**AGRICULTURE
CAREER
SCENARIO CARDS**

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Suggested uses for Scenario Cards:

5-minute icebreaker activity

1. Begin your class with a quick 5-minute workplace scenario challenge. Pick one scenario and read it to the class. You could also show it on a document projector.
2. Get students into small groups to discuss the workplace scenario, key questions and various points of view.
3. Have the class come back together and share answers to the key questions.

Journaling activity

1. Choose a Workplace Scenario Card.
2. Use the workplace scenario as a journal-writing prompt and have students answer the key questions in writing.

Pre- and post-assessment (for use with Employability Skills Program)

1. Choose the employability skill you wish to teach. Find the Workplace Scenario Card that matches that skill. Have students answer the key questions in writing.
2. Teach the lesson on the employability skill you have chosen.
3. After teaching the lesson, have students go back to the original Workplace Scenario Card and answer the key questions again using the new skills they have learned.

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Listening

Scenario: You are having a monthly staff meeting and your boss indicates he wants all milkers to start using winter teat dip. Later that week, you notice a fellow colleague using the summer teat dip. When you ask him why he isn't using the winter teat dip, he says he wasn't told to, even though he was at the staff meeting.

Points of view to consider

- Your boss
 - You
 - Your coworkers
-

Key questions

- Should you talk with the employee directly, or talk to your supervisor and have them talk to the employee?
- Why is listening and switching to the winter teat dip important? What issues could happen by not listening to this directive?
- Why is it important to pay attention during staff meetings?

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Respect

Scenario: At the monthly staff meeting, you notice that the owner's son is always texting on his phone and will often take phone calls during the meetings.

Points of view to consider

- You
 - Your boss
 - Your coworkers
 - The owner's son
-

Key questions

- What message is the son sending to the other staff members?
- What message is the owner sending by not addressing his son's disrespectful behavior?
- Is it important for employees to respect their boss?

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Responsibility

Scenario: You feed calves at a farm on Friday/Saturday/Sunday to help give their full-time employees time off. When you get there on Friday, you notice that a few of the calves look dehydrated and have loose stool. When you feed the calves, you notice that they are lethargic and not interested in eating. When you check the records, you don't see any notes about any of the calves being sick. However, with your experience, you know this isn't something that developed overnight.

Points of view to consider

- Your coworkers
 - You
 - Your boss
 - The calves
-

Key questions (Review the definition of responsibility)

Responsibility – A duty or task that you are required or expected to do; something that you should do because it is morally right, legally required, etc.

- When did the calves start to have health issues?
- Why haven't these issues been reported previously?
- What can you do to help prevent this situation from happening again?
- Why is it important for employees to feel a sense of responsibility?

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Patience

Scenario: It is a new employee's first day, and it is your job to train them on how to feed calves. As you are showing them how to mix up milk replacer, they nod their head, indicating that they understand. When you move out to feed the calves you explain the proper procedure for feeding, stressing that the calf should drink the milk at their own pace. After a few calves, you let the new employee feed some of the calves. Thinking that they understand, you leave them to attend to other business. When you come back 30 minutes later, you find that the new employee is already done feeding the calves. You are not sure how they could have finished so soon. Upon further inspection, you notice that the nipple on the bottle has been cut. When you ask the new employee why the nipple has been cut, he tells you he cut it because it was taking the calves too long to drink from the bottle.

Points of view to consider

- You
 - Your coworkers
 - The calves
-

Key questions

- Why is it important to allow calves to drink the bottle at their own speed?
- How do you explain the importance of this to the new employee?
- Who is responsible for replacing the cut nipple?
- When dealing with small animals, why is patience important?

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Presentation Skills

Scenario: You are in charge of creating a training session for the other farm employees on dairy beef quality assurance. You decide to write some notes and talk about it with the employees. During the presentation, you notice that most of your coworkers are no longer interested or paying attention. When you ask them why they don't seem to care about this important topic, they indicate they do care; they just can't follow along because they can't visualize what is happening.

Points of view to consider

- You
 - Your coworkers
-

Key questions

- How could you have presented this information differently so it is easier for your coworkers to follow along?
- Why are pictures worth a thousand words?

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Using Technology

Scenario: Your boss decides to purchase a brand-new chopper. He takes you for a test drive and explains that the new machine can tell you the moisture and tonnage of the product being chopped.

Points of view to consider

- You
 - Your colleague
 - The farms
-

Key questions

- How do you think this new technology would be beneficial to the farm?
- Why do you think the boss invested in this new technology?

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Problem-solving

Scenario: The farm you work on has about 20 calves housed in hutches, and you are responsible for feeding them. You are feeding the calves one bottle and bucket at a time, and it takes you over an hour to complete this task. With current employee losses, you are being asked to do more than what you were previously asked and are finding it hard to get everything done. You would like to find a more efficient way to feed and water the calves. While digging through the feed room, you find an old pasteurizer tank. After talking to your boss, he agrees to let you use the tank and gives you free rein on calf feeding (i.e. you can do what you need to do as long as the health of the calves is not compromised). You decide to create a portable water tank by mounting the pasteurizer tank on the back of an ATV and adding a nozzle. This allows you to fill all the calf water buckets at the same time. Additionally, a large bucket on the front of the ATV filled with starter feed allows you to fill all the feed buckets at the same time.

Points of view to consider

- You
 - Your boss
-

Key questions

- How do you think your boss felt when you asked to create a device that would ultimately do the job you were asked to do quicker?
- How will this contraption help you in the long run?
- What benefits come from taking the time to problem solve?

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Negotiation

Scenario: Your best friend is getting married on Saturday, but you are scheduled to milk cows. When you ask the boss for the day off, he tells you that you must find a replacement for yourself. If you can't get anyone to work for you, then he will unfortunately need you to come in for a few hours to help with the morning milking.

Points of view to consider

- You
 - Your boss
 - Your coworkers
-

Key questions

- How can you get a coworker to work for you?
- What incentive can you offer to get someone to cover your shift?
- If you cannot get a person to work for you what will you do?

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Networking

Scenario: Your boss puts together a Thank You Party every year. The purpose of the party is for him to express his appreciation for all the farm staff's hard work and dedication. It also gives the staff more of an informal opportunity to talk with one another.

Points of view to consider

- You
 - Your boss
 - Your coworkers
-

Key questions

- Why do you think your boss does this?
- How do you think employees feel about these parties?
- How can you use this party as a way to network with your coworkers or to help with new career opportunities?

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Self-confidence

Scenario: Your boss is training a new employee that has no farming experience whatsoever. You notice that every time the person does something just a little bit wrong, your boss yells at them.

Points of view to consider

- Your new coworker
 - Your boss
 - You
-

Key questions

- What is your boss's critique doing to the new employee's self-confidence?
- How can you help the new employee?

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Stress Management

Scenario: With a shortage of employees, you have been running around the farm trying to do the jobs of three people. One day, when a fellow coworker asks you a question, you yell at them for bothering you with such a simple question.

Points of view to consider

- You
 - Your coworker
-

Key questions

- How can you manage your stress?
- Are there standard operating procedures that can be created to reduce questions and clarify things for other staff who haven't done certain tasks in the past?

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Teamwork

Scenario: After working on a farm in many conditions for a few years now, you have learned that you cannot do all the jobs on the farm by yourself. When you take on too many tasks your stress levels rise and you become short-tempered. To better manage your stress, you need to get some help. At the next staff meeting, you discuss how to get the jobs done more efficiently by working together.

Points of view to consider

- You
 - Your coworkers
 - Your boss
-

Key questions

- How can teamwork help get things done on a farm?
- How can teamwork help reduce the stress that certain members of the farm are feeling?
- Why is it important to feel like you work in a team environment?

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Communication

Scenario: Every month your boss requires you to attend an all-staff meeting. At these meetings, you discuss what has been going on around the farm, including things you have noticed or things you think should be improved upon. These staff meetings are a time for everyone to discuss farm operations and come up with solutions to problems.

Points of view to consider

- You
 - Your boss
 - Your coworkers
-

Key questions

- Why is it important to get all of the staff in the room at the same time?
- What value is there in having all of the staff share ideas?
- What can the boss do to ensure the meeting does not become a “blame game” scenario?

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Motivation

Scenario: After work, you have a conversation with a new employee. You make it a point to ask how their day went, things they liked, and things they did not like. You learn that this is their first time on a farm and they probably will not stay long. The new employee confides in you that they are only looking to earn a few bucks to pay off a debt. Once it is paid they plan to be on their way.

Points of view to consider

- You
 - Your coworker
 - Your boss
-

Key questions

- How motivated is this employee if they don't plan to stick around?
- How will this employee's attitude affect the other coworkers, in the short term and long term?
- Should you talk to your boss about what you just learned?

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Work Ethic

Scenario: One of your coworkers is constantly calling in sick for their evening milking shifts. They never seem to miss when they are on the morning shift, but have only made one out of the last ten evening shifts.

Points of view to consider

- You
 - Your boss
 - Your coworkers
-

Key questions

- What added stress does this have on you, other coworkers and the boss?
- How does this coworker's behavior affect team morale?
- Does this coworker's behavior affect the teamwork of all the farm employees?

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Flexibility

Scenario: While you are feeding calves, your boss comes up to you and asks if you can help in the parlor because one of your coworkers had to leave suddenly to get a sick child from school. You complain to the boss that you do not have time to fill in because you have to finish feeding the calves, so he should go ask another person.

Points of view to consider

- You
 - Your coworkers
 - Your boss
-

Key questions

- What effect do you think your inflexibility has on the morale of your coworkers?
- What is the overall effect of not helping out?

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Interpersonal Skills

Scenario: The new employee you are training cut the nipple on the calf bottle. This goes against the training you gave them on giving the calves time to drink at their own pace. You start screaming at them, calling them names and telling them how stupid they are.

Points of view to consider

- You
 - Your coworker
-

Key questions

- How do you think your actions made your coworker feel?
- Why is it important to think about how other people feel?
- How could you have handled this better?

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Time Management

Scenario: Your coworker is always behind on cleaning the stalls and pens. He is supposed to clean them while the animals are being milked so that the animals have a clean area to come back to. However, he isn't getting the job done and the animals do not want to go back to their pen while he is in there. One day, you watch him from a distance and realize that instead of cleaning the stalls while the animals are gone, he is texting and talking on his phone.

Points of view to consider

- You
 - Your coworker
 - Your boss
 - The cows
-

Key questions

- Should you talk with the employee directly or talk to your boss and have them talk to the employee?
- How is your coworker's behavior affecting the other farm workers?
- How is his behavior affecting the cattle?

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Interviewing

Scenario: As the herd manager, the owner of the farm has tasked you with hiring two more employees to help with feeding calves and milking. To prepare for the interviews, you think of questions that you want to ask to each candidate. You come up with 10 questions to ask and then allow each candidate to ask their own.

Points of view to consider

- You
 - Your boss
 - The person being interviewed
-

Key questions

- Why is it important to prepare questions, either as the person conducting the interview or as the person being interviewed?
- Why do you want to ask each candidate the same questions?
- Why is it important to allow the candidate to ask you questions?
- What types of questions should you not ask in an interview?

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