

# William H. Miner Agricultural Research Institute



## EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

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## ***Introduction***

The William H. Miner Agricultural Research Institute was chartered in 1951 by the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York "to provide for the operation and maintenance of an experimental farm, with facilities and opportunities for experimental and research work, for training young men and women in practical and theoretical farming...to advance the science of agriculture."

## **WILLIAM H. MINER AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Miner Institute offers quality programs on *demonstration, research, and education* on agricultural and environmental issues that the North Country needs and no other organization provides.

#### **Demonstration**

Miner Institute *demonstrates* the best practices for the North Country in dairy farming, equine management, and environmental conservation through its own dairy, crops, horse, and forestry operations and through outreach activities in the region.

#### **Research**

Miner Institute conducts practical *research* for the North Country on the dairy-crop interface, equine reproduction and management, and environmental concerns. Its research activities combine a national reputation with a regional application.

#### **Education**

Miner Institute offers a range of credit and continuing *education* programs in dairy agriculture, equine management, and environmental studies. It provides short-term training sessions and conducts residential undergraduate and graduate programs in cooperation with New York and Vermont colleges and universities. Its summer farm and equine management program draws students from agricultural colleges across the country.

## **Vision Statement**

The dedicated and talented staff of Miner Institute seeks to bring to North Country residents the benefits of world-class practices in *research, demonstration, and education* involving dairy, equine, and environmental management.

## **Values Statement**

We value the Miner tradition of high quality agricultural programs serving North Country needs, conducted by friendly and cooperative professionals in a beautiful historical setting. We especially value combining the latest innovations with a cherished heritage.

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## ***Equal Employment Policy Statement***

Miner Institute is an equal opportunity employer. All decisions concerning employees and applicants for employment are made without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual preference or on any other unlawful basis. Miner Institute complies with all applicable federal, state and local laws governing nondiscrimination in employment in every location in which Miner Institute has facilities. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including, but not limited to, hiring placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leaves of absence, compensation and training.

Miner Institute will not allow any form of unlawful employee harassment to occur in the workplace. Improper interference with the ability of Miner employees to perform their expected job duties is not tolerated and will result in disciplinary penalties.

### **-Regarding Harassment**

Miner Institute is committed to maintaining a working environment that is free of unlawful harassment. This includes conduct and communication of a sexual nature, especially when such conduct is imposed by one employee on another or adversely affects an employee's working relationship.

Sexual harassment is any repeated or unwanted verbal or physical sexual advance, sexually explicit derogatory statement, or sexually discriminatory remark made by someone in the work place that is offensive

or objectionable to the recipient or which causes the recipient discomfort or humiliation or which interferes with the recipient's job performance.

Examples of this type of behavior might include suggestive looks, sexual gestures, remarks, jokes, or teasing; sexually offensive pictures, cartoons, or written materials; and improper physical contact, such as touching, hugging, or pinching.

It is the duty of a Miner Institute employee not to engage in conduct that interferes with their colleagues' work performance or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

If an employee feels they have been subjected to harassing behavior, they should report the incident(s) to any supervisor, or officer of the Institute.

A complete harassment policy along with guidelines for handling a complaint will be provided to all employees of the Institute.

### **-Smoking Policy**

In compliance with Article 13-E, S139N et seq., of the Public Health Law of New York, Miner Institute has adapted the following policy on smoking of tobacco products in this workplace.

No smoking is permitted in any Miner Institute building including, but not limited to, the following areas:

- Miner Center
- Farm Office
- All Farm Buildings
- FitzPatrick Library
- Middleton Miller Dormitory
- Shadow Lawn Guest House
- Director's Guest Residence
- Company Vehicles
- Duplex Guest Apartments

Smoking in a no smoking area will not be tolerated.

### **-Personal Use of Institute Property**

Personal use of Miner Institute property, including facilities, equipment, vehicles or land, is prohibited unless prior approval has been granted.

Employees should make their request for light-duty equipment use to their supervisor or applicable department head, as far in advance as possible.

Requests for personal use of facilities or land should be made directly to Kirk Beattie at the Farm Office for approval.

Any personal use of Institute property by an employee without prior approval will be not tolerated and will result in disciplinary action.

For further information, please review the Personal Use of Facilities and Equipment Policy.

### **-Continuing Educational Programs**

The Institute may assume the full cost of personnel training where such training is to meet a specific immediate need or a need in the foreseeable future. This will include school courses and seminars.

An employee interested in taking an educational course should discuss the request with their supervisor. Upon approval from the employee's supervisor, the request should be submitted to Kirk Beattie, Treasurer for final approval of reimbursement for the course.

### **-The Workweek**

The workweek consists of forty (40) hours scheduled within seven (7) consecutive days. The workweek is Sunday through Saturday.

### **-Pay Periods**

Hourly employee pay periods will be the 11<sup>th</sup> through the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> through the 10<sup>th</sup>. Salaried employee pay periods will be the 1<sup>st</sup> through the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> through the last day of the month.

### **-Paychecks/Direct Deposits**

Paychecks will be issued the 15<sup>th</sup> and the last day of the month for all employees. In the event either day falls on a weekend or a holiday, paychecks will be issued the working day prior to the payroll date. The only exception will be the Christmas Holiday week when paychecks will be issued on the 31<sup>st</sup>. If December 31<sup>st</sup> falls on a weekend, paychecks will be issued on the prior Friday.

Inquiries regarding pay adjustments or payroll information should be made through the Payroll Department at the Farm Office. In the event an employee loses a check, they should notify the Payroll Department immediately so a stop payment can be placed at the bank and procedures started to replace the loss.

### **-Overtime/Holiday Pay**

Overtime/Holiday pay is applicable to NON-EXEMPT employees. There are numerous laws that govern the status of the EXEMPT and NON-EXEMPT employee.

At the time of employment, employees will be advised of their exempt status. They will also be notified of any change in their status that may occur during the course of their employment.

Hours worked over the regularly scheduled forty (40) hour workweek will be paid at the Overtime rate of time and one-half.

Hours worked on a holiday will be paid at the Holiday rate of double time for up to 8 hours. Additional time will be paid at overtime rate, if applicable.

### **-Meal Periods**

Employees working in excess of six (6) hours in one day are required to take a meal period. Meal periods will be thirty (30) minutes except as may otherwise be scheduled to meet necessary coverage or New York State Labor Law. According to Labor Law, an employee whose workday begins before eleven o'clock AM must take their lunch break between eleven and two o'clock. If their workday extends past seven o'clock PM, they must take an additional break between five and seven o'clock.

If you have any questions, regarding your right to a meal period break, please contact Kirk Beattie at the Farm Office.

### **-Rest Period**

Under normal circumstances (8 hr. workdays), an employee is allowed a fifteen (15) minute paid rest period each morning.

Rest periods should be taken in the designated area nearest a job to avoid down time in travel from job site to rest area.

Occasionally an employee may be requested to forego or postpone a rest period in order to meet an important deadline or finish a critical task.

## **-Vacation**

An employee will become eligible for vacation benefits as set forth in the following schedule:

| <u>Number of Weeks</u> | after | <u>Time of Service</u> |
|------------------------|-------|------------------------|
| 2                      |       | 1 years                |
| 3                      |       | 5 years                |
| 4                      |       | 12 years               |

A new employee hired, prior to July 1<sup>st</sup>, for a permanent, full-time position will receive five (5) days vacation. These days will be credited to the employee upon the completion of a 90-day training and probationary period. An employee who will be completing his 1<sup>st</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, or 12<sup>th</sup> year of service during the current year, will be credited with 2, 3 or 4 weeks vacation as of January 1<sup>st</sup> of that year.

Vacation must be taken in the current calendar year. Vacation days will not be carried forward unless requested by the employee's supervisor and approved.

The Institute reserves the right to schedule vacation periods to insure continuity of its operations.

A temporary employee is not eligibly for vacation time, however, dependent upon the individual circumstance, vacation benefits may be granted.

Upon termination of employment an employee will be eligible to receive compensation for unused vacation benefits.

The vacation week consists of the number of days or hours an employee is regularly scheduled to work during a regular workweek.

In cases of absenteeism without prior approval, the Institute may apply such time against the employee's unused vacation time.

When an employee is on vacation they may pick up their paycheck on payday or request that their check be mailed to their home.

In the event a holiday falls within scheduled vacation time, compensatory vacation time will be allowed.

## **-Holidays**

The Institute will observe the following holidays per year:

Memorial Day  
Independence Day  
Labor Day  
Thanksgiving and following Friday  
Christmas Day through New Year's Day

If an employee is scheduled to work the day prior and/or the day after the holiday, he/she must work these days to receive holiday pay unless, however, the employee can prove his absence was due to illness.

Employees will be paid holiday pay subject to the conditions stated above, however, the holiday or additional time in connection with the holiday must occur on their scheduled day of work - Example: An employee scheduled to work on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, would not receive holiday pay for a holiday falling on a Tuesday or Thursday.

Vacation days are not permitted on a scheduled holiday. An employee scheduled to work on a holiday, who is granted time off, will receive the holiday pay only and will not be deducted any vacation time.

### **-Sick Leave**

A non-exempt employee receives seven (7) days sick allowance with pay and an exempt employee receives nine (9) days sick allowance with pay.

Sick days will be credited to each eligible employee in the month of January for the current year. Such allowance is cumulative.

Sick leave credits cannot be used for additional vacation or time off.

Accumulation of sick leave credits will be based on the employee's continuous services. A break in this service constitutes an automatic forfeiture of any accumulated leave. An approved leave of absence does not constitute a break in service.

Upon retirement at age fifty-five (55) or older with a minimum of twenty (20) years of service an employee may receive the monetary value for accumulated sick time, up to a maximum of forty-five (45) days.

Only those absences caused by an employee's own illness or family members (father, mother, spouse, dependent child, father-in-law, mother-in-law or grandparent) will be considered applicable against sick time.

Absences caused by job-related accidents or illness that are covered by Workers' Compensation, will not apply against an employee's sick leave credits.

If an employee continues on Miner Institute payroll, during a period of disability their sick time will be prorated based on disability reimbursement rate.

### **-Personal Time**

Exempt employees will be entitled to three (3) personal days per year. These days are in

recognition of the additional hours required by salaried employees from time-to-time. Personal days are non-cumulative.

### **-Jury Duty**

An employee called for jury duty on a scheduled workday will receive full pay provided they submit to the Institute a signed notice from the commissioner of jurors confirming their attendance, including time of departure. Employees are expected to return to work for the remainder of their scheduled workday following jury duty.

### **-Leave of Absence**

Requests for a leave of absence by an employee must be in writing and submitted through the appropriate Department Head for approval.

Salary and contributions to the Pension Trust will be automatically suspended during the approved leave period, as well as insurance and associated employee benefits unless management approves to continue compensation.

A leave of absence will not be granted to any individual for the purpose of taking other employment.

Request should be submitted at least thirty (30) days prior to commencement of leaves unless of an emergency nature.

### **-Funeral Leave**

If a death occurs in an employee's immediate family, they will be allowed time off with pay for up to three (3) days to attend the funeral and/or to make funeral arrangements. An employee's immediate family is considered to be parents, parents-in-law, grandparents, grandparents-in-law, spouse, child, brother, brother-in-law, sister, or sister-in-law.



For funerals of other close relatives and friends an employee may take a maximum of one (1) day.

### **-Termination of Employment**

Upon termination of employment, an employee will return all Institute property such as keys, uniforms, equipment, etc. If the decision to terminate employment is made by the employee, the Institute will expect prior notice of at least two (2) weeks.

## **Benefit Highlights**

### **-Uniforms/Clothing Allowance**

The Institute provides uniforms for employees in the following Departments: Maintenance, Dairy and Field Crops. Upon leaving employment, all uniforms must be returned to their supervisor. Employees will be held responsible for any lost uniforms. Employees will also be notified of their annual clothing allowance at the beginning of each year. Clothing allowances are to be used for work-related clothing only. Any request for reimbursement deemed non work-related will be refused.

### **-Statutory Insurances**

Regulatory bodies mandate the following insurances, the terms of which would be too lengthy to include in this policy. Further information can be obtained from the Personnel Department at the Farm Office:

Workers' Compensation  
NYS Disability Insurance  
NYS Paid Family Leave Insurance  
Social Security Insurance  
Unemployment Insurance

### **-Medical Coverage**

Miner Institute provides a regularly scheduled full-time employee (30hrs/week) who has

completed two (2) months of continuous employment with medical insurance. Coverage will begin the first of the month following completion of two (2) months employment.

An employee is required to pay 20% of the premium. An employee who provides evidence of medical coverage may be eligible for a buy-out option. Miner Institute will continue paying its share of the medical insurance premium for employees on workers compensation for a maximum period of 6 months.

In the event Miner Institute employs both husband and wife, the Institute will provide family (or individual coverage depending on cost) medical coverage. However, the spouse that is not the contract holder will not be eligible for the buy-out option offered by Miner Institute to an employee who has medical coverage from another source.

Coverage also includes those members of the employee's family eligible within the terms of the policy. Children are covered to the age stated within the elected policy.

In the event an employee, hired prior to 1/1/93, voluntarily elects early retirement at age fifty-five (55), and has completed twenty (20) years of continuous service, the Institute will pay one-half of the premium until the employee attains the age of sixty (60); at which time the Institute will pay for 85% of the premium.

In the event an employee, hired prior to 1/1/93, voluntarily elects retirement having attained the age of sixty (60), with twenty (20) years of continuous service, the Institute will pay for 85% of the premium.

In the event a retiree, who is under their spouse's health insurance plan, should incur a change in status, the retiree will be eligible for enrollment under the Miner Institute retiree benefits provided they are eligible for the retiree health insurance plan stated above.

The Institute will provide dependent coverage for a retired employee's spouse. The premium is to be paid as previously set forth for the employee until the employee's death. Upon the employee's death, a surviving spouse may continue coverage under the Miner Institute Plan at their own expense.

An employee hired after 12/31/92 is not eligible for post-retirement health insurance benefits but, with 20 years of service, may continue on the Institute Plan at their own expense.

### **-Maternity Leave**

An employee has up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in a 12-month period for the birth or adoption of a child. An employee is requested to use accumulated sick time first. Vacation time may be used if an employee does not have enough sick leave credit accumulated. You may also be eligible for disability benefits during this period.

Miner Institute complies with the labor laws regarding Breast Feeding. If you have any questions regarding these provisions, please contact the Personnel Dept. at the Farm Office.

### **-Life Insurance**

After the completion of six (6) months of continuous employment, the Institute will provide life insurance coverage for employees and their families at no cost to the employee. The employee's coverage equals two times their annual earnings, the spouse is covered

for \$2,000 and dependent children \$1,000 each, until the age of 19.

In addition, upon completion of six (6) months of continuous employment, each employee is covered under a travel insurance policy in the amount of \$50,000.

An employee must regularly work a minimum of thirty (30) hours per week to be eligible for coverage.

Each employee will be provided a copy of their policy and advised of their coverage upon eligibility.

Upon retirement at age fifty-five (55), with twenty (20) years of service, an employee will be covered for \$5,000 and the spouse will be covered for \$2,000. The Institute will pay the full premium for the policy until the employee's death.

### **-Long-Term**

#### **Disability Insurance**

After the completion of six (6) months of continuous employment, the Institute will provide long-term disability insurance at no expense to the employee.

An employee must regularly work a minimum of thirty (30) hours per week to be eligible for coverage.

Each employee will be provided a copy of their policy and advised of their coverage upon attaining eligibility.

**-Accidental Death and  
Dismemberment Insurance**

After the completion of six (6) months of continuous employment, the Institute will provide accidental death and dismemberment coverage at no expense to the employee.

An employee must regularly work a minimum of thirty (30) hours per week to be eligible for coverage.

Each employee will be provided a copy of their policies and advised of their coverage upon eligibility.

**-Pension Plan**

The William H. Miner Agricultural Research Institute Pension Plan is a defined contribution plan. To qualify, an employee must complete one thousand (1,000) hours of employment during a twelve (12) month period.

A summary of the plan is provided to each employee upon eligibility.

**-Tax Deferred 403(b)  
Retirement Plan**

The 403(b) plan is a supplemental retirement program that enables an employee to set aside a predetermined amount of money on a regular basis prior to the deduction of state and federal taxes. Employees are immediately eligible to enroll in a 403(b) retirement plan upon being hired.

Employees can receive further information from the Personnel Department at the Farm Office.

**-Service Award**

An employee retiring at age fifty-five (55), with a minimum of twenty (20) years of service, will receive a service award amounting

to one hundred dollars (\$100.00) per year of completed service.